Questioning Forest Service's grazing-water policy

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the May 1 Sacramento Bee.***

Sometimes you wonder if the U.S. Forest Service knows who its employers are.

One of those moments came Sunday, with Tom Knudson's report on how cattle poop has contaminated alpine creeks and lakes in portions of the Sierra Nevada where the U.S. Forest Service allows livestock grazing.

The report noted testing of Sierra waterways by Robert Derlet, a former director of the UC Davis Medical Center. Through methodical testing that the Forest Service won't do itself, Derlet found worrisome levels of E. coli in lakes and creeks where grazing is allowed. By contrast, lakes in national parks where no cattle are around were relatively pristine, with no sign of E. coli.

Read the whole story

El Dorado, Placer ranked high in 2008 income

By Darrell Smith, Sacramento Bee

Median incomes for El Dorado and Placer county residents were among the highest in the state in 2008 and median incomes for that year rose in Sacramento and Yolo counties, according to

figures released last week.

But the nation’s economic crisis took its toll statewide as total adjusted gross income fell to $1.13 trillion, according to the state’s Franchise Tax Board, a 7.2 percent decrease from 2007.

“It’s clearly tied to the declines we saw in the stock market,” said H.D. Parker, a deputy director at the state Department of Finance.

Read the whole story

EDC sheriff candidates reveal a bit about themselves

Publisher’s note: ***Click on the link below to read the Sacramento Bee’s mini Q&A with the six El Dorado County sheriff candidates.***

The candidates are:

John D’Agostini, former Amador sheriff’s deputy and DA investigator

Larry Hennick, retired El Dorado County sheriff’s deputy

Ernie Hillman, former El Dorado County undersheriff

Bob Luca, retired chief, California Bureau of Investigation

George Nielsen, Placerville police chief

Craig Therkildsen, an El Dorado sheriff’s captain

Read the whole story

Tahoe boating rules to be enforced this season



By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Boaters zooming too close to the shores of Lake Tahoe take notice – officials are poised this summer to start getting serious about enforcing rules to slow them down.

With the boating season soon to commence, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency plans to enforce a 600-foot no-wake zone at the alpine lake. The move, part of the agency's newly adopted "blue boating" program, is viewed as a means to reduce boating noise, protect wildlife and enhance public safety.

"We want to try and get it under control," Dennis Zabaglo, the agency's watercraft program manager, said of speeding boats venturing too close to Tahoe's shore.

Read the whole story

Douglas County superintendent search drags on

By Kathryn Reed

Douglas County School District still doesn’t know who its next superintendent is going to be.

The board interviewed two candidates Monday night at the Minden office before a room of more than a dozen people. Board members Cindy Trigg and Karen Chessell were participating via telephone.

The first motion was to have David Jensen be superintendent. That failed 4-3. The next vote was to have Mary Bull be the district leader. That idea failed 5-2.

The board then voted to bring back the other two finalists for interviews. That passed 5-1-1, with Tom Moore voting no and Cindy Trigg abstaining.

District officials hope Heather Henderson-Hill and Lisa Noonan will be available for interviews at the end of next week.

In the meantime, John Soderman continues as interim superintendent. He resumed his old job after Carol Lark left in January.

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2 arrests in weekend stabbing

in Truckee

On May 1 at 1:48am Truckee police officers were dispatched to a reported street fight involving a handgun inside the Donner Creek Mobile Home Park.

Officers located trails of blood that led to one of the mobile homes. Several people were inside the mobile home. Three had suffered knife and assault injuries and one had been hit in the head with a blunt object. Officers also located a bullet casing near the mobile home.

Witnesses told police a large fight had taken place involving about 10 individuals who were armed with knives and clubs. One suspect was said to have pulled a handgun and fired several shots into the air and ground during the fight.

Additional blood trails were located and witnesses led officers to another mobile home where another knife was located. Entry was made into the second mobile home and it was found that the apparent gunman had fled.

A search warrant was later served at the second residence and evidence relative to the handgun was recovered.

Two suspects were identified and arrested on charges of felony assault with a deadly weapon and booked at the Nevada County Jail. Arrested were Manual Miranda Cota, 30, from Truckee, and Jorge Valenzuela-Felix, 24, from Truckee.

The third suspect alleged to be the gunman and has not been located. A felony arrest warrant has been issued for Abraham Cota, 25.

Anyone with information is requested to call Truckee police detectives at (530) 550.2323.

Tahoe travel company on tree planting mission



AdventureSmith Explorations of Tahoe City pledges to plant 100 trees for every new traveler booked on a journey now through May 15.

The active travel company secures matches between adventure-seeking clients and a treasure-trove of small, expedition ships.

“Part of our mission is to give something back to the individuals, communities and environments encountered on each and every AdventureSmith Explorations journey. In celebration of the 40th anniversary of Earth Day our goal is to plant more than 40,000 trees. Plus, we will offer travelers a 5 percent discount on any 2010 adventure cruise or land adventure booked during this promotion,” Todd Smith, founder and president of AdventureSmith Explorations, said in apress release.

This campaign augments the company’s ground-breaking Carbon Free Cruising initiative that since 2006 has offset 692.49 metric tons of CO2 or the equivalent of taking 121 passenger cars off the road or the electricity use of 77 homes for one year.

In addition to its carbon offsetting and tree planting efforts, through a network of local and global conservation partners, AdventureSmith Explorations provides a means for travelers to make personal conservation contributions while at the same time enhancing their own travel experience through education and outreach.

Named by National Geographic Adventure as one of “The Best Adventure Travel Companies on Earth” AdventureSmith Explorations partners with award-winning, small capacity, specialty-oriented ships in operation throughout the world.

Wet winter decreases threat of summer wildfires in Sierra

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Favorable winter weather should reduce wildfire danger across most of Nevada and much of the Sierra this summer, federal experts said in a report released Monday.

While parts of the Pacific Northwest are at significant risk of wildfire, the situation looks more favorable in western Nevada and most of the Sierra mountain range, the National Interagency Fire Center said in its wildland fire outlook for May through August.



2007 Angora Fire

“If you look at Nevada as a whole, it’s going to be below normal,” said Rick Ochoa, predictive services meteorologist for the Boise-based fire center.

Read the whole story

Graffiti cleanup a success in South Tahoe

To the community,

On May 1, the Leadership Lake Tahoe organization from the Chamber of Commerce organized a graffiti coverage effort which resulted in the covering/removal of graffiti at 65 locations throughout the city. The program was well organized and there were no issues. As a matter of fact dispatch received calls from citizens thanking the city for this effort. This project will significantly contribute to our efforts to cover graffiti as soon as possible after it is reported. The weather and reduced manpower resulted in the amount of graffiti to become almost overwhelming.

Bob Albertazzi, SLTPD

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16 Barton employees take early retirement

By Kathryn Reed

Barton Health has trimmed its payroll even further, with 16 people taking early retirement packages at the end of April.

Employees with at least 10 years of service and who are 59 or older qualified for the package.

The South Lake Tahoe health care system offered the incentive in hopes of not having to issue more pink slips. In March, Barton laid off six people and in March 2009 43 people lost their jobs.

It's likely a few more employees will sign up for the retirement package, Barton officials said. The same package has been offered to people who are 55 and will have 10 years of service accrued by the end of the year. Those people have until May 14 to decide.

Barton officials said other cost-cutting measures are possible in the future, but are not likely to involve staff reductions.

"Barton, as most entities in the region, has seen decreased volumes due to the declining residential population, a decrease in tourism over the last year, and an increase in unemployment. Increased unemployment has translated into an increased number of underinsured and uninsured patients in the region as well as those putting off elective procedures," Monica Sciuto, Barton's director of public relations, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "As a double-whammy, reduced reimbursements from federal and state programs have impacted the hospital as well."