Eldorado National Forest lifts fire restrictions

Fire restrictions in the Eldorado National Forest were removed Wednesday as a result of recent rains and future weather forecasts.

Wetter conditions returned to the Eldorado National Forest just in time for deer hunting season to begin on Saturday.

Campfire permits are available for at all Eldorado National Forest offices. They will also be available at special fire prevention information stations that will be staffed on Friday night and Saturday morning at the following locations: Cleveland Corral off the Ice House Road, on the Mormon Emigrant Trail near Bonetti Road, at the Georgetown Ranger Station in Georgetown, and at the intersection of Ellis Road and Highway 88.

Forest officials say that this is the time of the year when wind becomes the fire problem in the forest. Campfires should not be built when the wind is blowing.

Chimney fire damages Tahoe Vista house



A fire in Tahoe Vista was damaged by fire Sept. 25. Photo/Provided

A chimney fire caused substantial damage to a house in Tahoe Vista on Wednesday morning.

The blaze on Winona Avenue moved into the attic. It took about 40 minutes for firefighters from multiple agencies to extinguish the blaze.

In the afternoon crews were overhauling the structure and salvaging contents.

North Tahoe Fire Prevention Bureau is conducting the investigation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Rim Fire effects to last for decades

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times

TUOLUMNE – Tourists stopped at the Rim of the World overlook

on California 120 earlier this month to take photos of the panoramic view – just as they always have.

But they stared in silence at the ashen hues of a landscape swept by the largest wildfire to burn in the Sierra Nevada in more than a century of recordkeeping. Steep canyon walls and mountain slopes that had been robed in chaparral and oak were now draped in black, spreading to the horizon in a funereal scene.

To the north, miles and miles of forest were still and lifeless, the earth scoured by flame. Millions of charred trees stood naked, their needles incinerated.

The huge Rim fire, ignited Aug. 17 by a hunter's illegal campfire, is likely to have transformed large swaths of the Stanislaus National Forest for decades to come.

Remote sensing satellite images indicate that virtually all of the vegetation is dead on nearly 40 percent of the area of the 401-square-mile blaze, which burned from the national forest into the western portion of Yosemite National Park, where it continues to smolder.

Burned chaparral and oak will quickly resprout. But where large patches of trees were killed, ecologists say it could take 30 to 50 years for the forest to reestablish itself in the shrub fields that are the first to grow. If there are more fires in the meantime, the land could permanently convert to chaparral.

Read the whole story

Online poker companies know where players are

By Ed Komenda, Las Vegas Sun

People call him the “sheriff of online gambling,” but Rip Gerber says he’s more like border patrol.

As CEO of Locaid, a San Francisco technology company, Gerber makes sure gamblers are where they say they are. Locaid verifies the location of online gamblers for Ultimate Poker, William Hill and the newest entrant into Nevada’s online poker industry, the World Series of Poker.

On what Locaid does …

We are the world’s largest location company. We created what’s known as “location as a service.” We provide location information to all industries, from financial services to health care to hospitality and gaming.

What the regulators are saying about mobile and Internet gaming is, “I’m OK with it as long as you can verify that that person placing the bet on that device is in my state.” What we do is locate those devices.

On how his company locates devices …

We can locate more than 5 billion devices anywhere on the planet through multiple location sources.

Read the whole story

Bear activity increasing; fruit trees an issue

Bear activity has taken a sharp increase in recent days as hungry black bears expand their search for food, according to the Nevada Department of Wildlife.

Areas near Yerington in Lyon County, the Topaz Ranch Estates and the Minden-Gardnerville area of Douglas County and the foothills of Reno have all seen bears Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

“We have four traps and they are all out and set,” said warden Lt. Mike McCusker of NDoW. “The goal is to trap these bears, perform aversive conditioning and release the bears, unharmed but chastened, back into the wild.”

The bears are targeting garbage, but ripened fruit from area trees is also a strong attractant this time of the year. Fruit on the ground should be picked up as soon as possible.

‘Made in America’ becoming vogue again

By Virginia Harrison, CNN Money

The “Made in America” revival is gaining momentum with a majority of manufacturing executives now ready to consider pulling some production back from China.

A new survey published Tuesday showed a big jump in recent months in the number of companies considering “re-shoring”

production from China, once favored for its low costs.

Boston Consulting Group said its survey found most large U.S. companies now plan to move some production to America from China, or are “actively considering” the move.

The number of firms that have shifted manufacturing to the U.S. from China, or will do so in the next two years, has nearly doubled over the past 18 months.

The survey found the three main drivers of the trend are labor costs, product quality and a desire to be closer to customers.

Read the whole story

K’s Kitchen: Turning tomatoes into soup

By Kathryn Reed

Sue scored us a huge bag of homegrown tomatoes. The weather forecast was for overnight lows in the 30s. I knew those tomatoes would soon be soup.

In March 2008 we took a soup class taught by Steve Fernald at Lake Tahoe Community College. The following recipe is my favorite one from the class.



I correctly remembered it was a bit involved to make. Where were my classmates when I needed them? I soon realized why I had never made it in all these years.

But then I tasted it … and again two days later. It really is a delicious soup. It's just a bit labor intensive.

I'm so glad I made extra because it's going to be part of my dinner when we go on our girls' camping trip.

But I was concerned about the cream, so I emailed Fernald and asked him about freezing the soup.

"There isn't any reason it couldn't be. If I remember, there is a little cream or dairy that is added toward the end. Even if you substituted almond milk or something similar – dairy and milk-substitutes don't freeze well so better to not add those things before freezing. They can be added at service," Fernald said.

The recipe is from Anna Thomas' "New Vegetarian Epicure."

Wild Mushroom and Charred Tomato Soup

2 ounces dried porcini

1 T plus 1 tsp olive oil

2 T butter

3 large onions (1½ pounds) quartered and sliced

4 cloves garlic, chopped

1 bay leaf

Salt and pepper to taste

½ tsp dried whole thyme, or 1-2 tsp fresh

3 pounds ripe tomatoes

4 ounces fresh shiitake, or other wild mushrooms

1 C dry red wine

3 C vegetable broth

½ C cream

Cover the dried porcini with boiling water, set them aside to soak for at least 30 minutes or longer, until soft.

Heat half the olive oil and half the butter in a large nonstick sauté pan, and add the sliced onions, three-quarters of the garlic, bay leaf, some salt, and the thyme. Regulate the heat and cook slowly, stirring occasionally, until the onions are gold brown – an hour if needed.

Meanwhile, scald and peel the tomatoes, cut them in halves or quarters, and mix them in a large bowl with remaining olive oil, sprinkle with salt, and the remaining chopped garlic. Spread them on a baking sheet with edges, and roast in a hot oven (425-450 degrees), turning once or twice, until charred spots are appearing around their edges.

Check the tomatoes every 10 minutes or so, then more frequently when they begin to color – you want them subtly charred, not burnt. When they are ready, allow them to cool a little on the pan, and then scrape them into a blender and process for a few seconds. They should be roughly chopped.

When the porcini feel soft and flexible, drain them, reserving the liquid. Rinse them carefully to get rid of all the sand and chop any large pieces. Add water if needed to make 3 cups. Wash the shiitakes, cut off stems and slice.

Melt remaining tablespoon of butter in nonstick pan, sauté all the mushrooms until shiitakes begin to color. Deglaze pan with wine, then combine mushrooms and wine with the caramelized onions in a soup pot.

Add the soaking liquid from the porcini, the vegetable broth and the tomatoes and simmer everything for about 10 minutes to marry the flavors. Taste, and correct the seasoning with salt

or pepper if desired. Stir in the cream.

Makes 8-10 servings.

Law mandates vehicles give cyclists more room

By David Siders, Sacramento Bee

Gov. Jerry Brown has signed legislation requiring motorists to give bicyclists at least 3 feet of space when passing on a California roadway, after vetoing similar legislation during the last two years.

Assembly Bill 1371, by Assemblyman Steven Bradford, D-Gardena, requires motorists to slow down if they can’t give room and makes failing to comply an infraction punishable by a base fine of $35.

The new bill will take effect in September 2014.

Read the whole story

Cocoa bean shortage has chocolate prices soaring

By Leslie Josephs and Neena Rai

Consumers from California to Switzerland are developing a

taste for dark chocolate, taking a bite out of global cocoa supplies and driving up candy prices in both high-end boutiques and mass-market drugstores.

The cost of one kilogram of chocolate in the U.S. is expected to hit a record $12.25 this year, a 45 percent increase from 2007, according to market-research firm Euromonitor International.

Prices are on the rise due to a shortage of cocoa beans, which are roasted and ground to make chocolate. Market experts estimate that supplies will fall short of demand this year for the first time since 2010 and dry weather is expected to hurt the next harvest in West Africa, where 70 percent of cocoa beans are produced.

The supply shortfall is emerging just as Americans and Europeans are buying more chocolate, particularly the darker varieties, for both health and economic reasons. Dark chocolate often requires more cocoa beans per ounce than milk chocolate, which means that even small shifts in buying trends can have a big impact on the $5.4 billion cocoa-futures market, traders and investors say.

Cocoa prices are up 21 percent so far in the third quarter, outperforming broad commodity indexes. Hedge funds and other money managers are making bullish bets on cocoa futures in unprecedented numbers, wagering that steady economic growth in the world’s developed economies will continue to fuel the rally. Big consumption gains in emerging markets such as Brazil also are lending support to prices.

Read the whole story

4 days of music at county fairgrounds

Railroad Earth’s 3rd annual Hangtown Halloween Ball will run Oct. 24-27 at El Dorado County Fairgrounds in Placerville.

The festival’s theme is Roaring ’20s World’s Fair.

There will be a campsite contest for the site that’s best decorated to the festival theme.

The daily schedule of over 40 sets of music from 28 artists can be found here.

The ticket helpline is (510) 547.1992.