Tahoe’s declining clarity along shoreline being studied

KTVN Channel 2 – Reno Tahoe News Weather, Video –
By Erin Breen, KTVN-TV

It is a beautiful day at Lake Tahoe and Angela Stevens and Brian Fitzgerald are just offshore. They are cruising the shoreline at eight miles an hour. And they are hard at work. They are working on a new project that the Desert Research Institute has launched to study clarity … at the urban interface.

“This is important because this is where a lot of the processes occur,” says Stevens. “There’s storm water runoff and there’s erosion into Lake Tahoe and that reduces the clarity that you can see in the middle of the lake.”



Asian milfoil is one of the items making the near shore of Lake Tahoe murky. Photo/LTN file

Most of the studies on Lake Tahoe’s clarity have been done in the middle of the lake.

Now, there is concern about collecting thresholds on what can enter the lake at the shoreline, whether it be storm rain,

dust from construction or roadway runoff. So these scientists are studying turbidity, and chlorophyll. And they are doing it by continuously sampling the near shore water and running it through technical sensors and collecting the data.

Water quality is a passion for Angela Stevens. She is a grad student from UNR working at the DRI and she is the first to be awarded the Caesars Foundation Fellowship that will fund the project for the next two years. You see, Caesars has an interest in keeping the lake as beautiful and clean as possible too. They depend on the tourists it draws to Tahoe. And that makes for a great public, private partnership to promote stewardship of the lake for all.

Special district seats open in November election

The local items on the Nov. 5 ballot for El Dorado County will be limited.

Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District will be looking for one director. The term goes through Dec. 1, 2017.

Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District has one term that will expire Dec. 4, 2015, and two terms that will go to Dec. 1, 2017.

Meeks Bay Fire Protection District needs two directors to serve until Dec. 1, 2017.

Lake Tahoe Community College, Lake Tahoe Unified School District and South Tahoe Public Utility District opted to move their elections to even years. This means the terms that were

to expire this year and in 2015 have been extended a year to 2014 and 2016, respectively.

Information about the open seats may be obtained at 3368 Lake Tahoe Blvd., Ste. 108, South Lake Tahoe or 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville.

Overnight road work in S. Tahoe next week

Caltrans will have overnight lane closures on sections of Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe next week.

Grinding and paving will occur on eastbound lanes from 6pm-6am Tuesday through Thursday from the Y to Trout Creek. The repaving work is in addition to several Caltrans water-quality improvement projects in various stages of development along Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe.

Both directions of travel on Highway 50 from Trout Creek to Ski Run Boulevard can expect alternating No. 2 lane and shoulder closures from midnight to 11am Monday through Friday.

Westbound motorists on 50 from Fairway Avenue to Wildwood Avenue can expect alternating lane and shoulder closures from 11:30pm Sunday to 10am Monday, 10pm-10am Monday through Thursday and 10pm Thursday to 9am Friday.

Work from Y to Lake Tahoe Airport next week will be from 8pm to 11am Monday through Thursday and 8pm Thursday to 10am Friday.

There is no weekend work scheduled for any of these projects.

Workshop about agritourism

The Western Nevada College Specialty Crop Institute is offering a workshop titled “Agritourism Opportunities in Northern Nevada” on Aug. 13.

It will be from 11am-4pm at the Jeanne Dini Cultural Center, 120 N. California St., Yerington. Cost is $20 if registered by Aug. 7, $25 afterward. Lunch is included. Seating is limited, and registration is required.

Featured speakers Jane Eckert and Chuck Nozicka will show how farms across North America are reaping the benefits of agritourism. They will offer insight on how farms and local businesses can collaborate to make Northern Nevada farms a destination.

For more info or to register, contact Ann Louhela at (775) 423.7565, ext. 2260 or ann.louhela@wnc.edu.

Bike ride is mostly about the Truckee River

By Kathryn Reed

TAHOE CITY – It was a bit like being on sensory overload.

Endorphins are going with each rotation of the pedal. Sounds of the river rippling and people playing on it are inviting. The aroma of pines and other foliage make breathing deep desirable. The scenery – well, it's breathtaking and challenges one to take pictures and ride at the same time.

Cycling the 8.03 miles from Tahoe City to Squaw Valley's village is pretty easy – even for people who don't often pedal. The most challenging part is avoiding all of the other people.

The four of us set out early to bypass the brunt of the heat on the last Saturday in June as well as the people. But this is a popular trail, so it's impossible in the summer to have to the trail all to ourselves.

Besides the cyclists, some of whom were pulling children in trailers, people are jogging, walking (some with dogs), and others are on inline skates.



Much of the trail between Tahoe City and Squaw Valley is along the Truckee River. Photos/Kathryn Reed

There are definite spots on the trail that are jarring, especially on a road bike with those skinny tires. And it's obvious this is an old trail not built to current ASHTO standards that call for the trail to be 10-feet-wide with 2-foot shoulders. This one doesn't seem much wider than 6-feet,

if that. This plays into the congestion problem at times.

But most people are courteous and recognize this is a shared use trail.

Off to the side are interpretative signs that had we not been on bikes we probably would have stopped to read. There are also permanent maps that point out the various recreation amenities on this side of Lake Tahoe.

A few rafters are floating down the river on our way to Squaw. Coming back they seem to be everywhere. Some are part of a company that guides people and provides larger rafts, some brought their own for a group, while others are in individual blow-up devices. And some have floating coolers. One guy is on a stand up paddleboard going upstream.

Considering we are doing this ride on a weekend that has the temps well above normal, it’s great having so much shade.

We get to the junction of Highway 89 and Squaw Valley Road where a light has us crossing to go to the village. There’s something about staring at those Olympic rings, that flame – I never get tired of it.

The road up is wide, but the shade is gone. Beyond the Resort at Squaw Creek the bike trail is on the left.

That meadow with Squaw Creek and the Resort at Squaw Creek’s golf course just beyond are so lush. And Squaw – the mountain – in some ways I feel like I am back riding in Switzerland. While the Alps and Sierra are so different, Squaw is the one place in the Tahoe area that even comes close.

Stay on the “wrong” side of the road for a short jaunt and then follow the parallel blue lines that lead cyclists into the village. At that hour of day we all opted to get smoothies as a refresher, lounging in chairs in the village. Bike racks seem to be outside most of the businesses.

Then it was time to get back on the saddle to head out. We retrace our steps out of Squaw and along the river.

We cross our starting bridge and ride through the two roundabouts that are just for bikes or pedestrians, and wind up at the Bridgetender restaurant in Tahoe City. It’s a perfect spot next to the Truckee River to refuel for the rest of day’s activities.

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Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, go north on Highway 89. Just before the Fanny Bridge in Tahoe City is the transit center parking area on the left. Pull in and park.

The bike trail is on the north side. Cross the bridge, go left and keep pedaling.

The trail comes out at a light to cross Highway 89 to be able to ride up to the village at Squaw.

The transit center is also an area from which the Tahoe Rim Trail may be accessed as well as the Truckee River. Plus, it’s a place to park – for free – that provides walking access to Tahoe City.

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Simplifying the Health Care Reform Act

By Mandy Kendall

I recently decided to immerse myself into finding out more about the Health Care Reform that comes into effect next year. Working on the premise that there is “no such thing as too much information” I decided to pass on the facts and recommendations that I discovered.

Here are some of the key points:

• Health insurance rates can no longer be based on risk, and can only be based on age, residency, and tobacco use.

• You cannot be denied coverage, have coverage excluded for a specific condition, or be charged higher premiums due to health history.

• Insurance companies will no longer be allowed to set lifetime limits on an individual’s medical bills so people will no longer get into debt when the coverage runs out.



Mandy Kendall

As of Jan. 1, 2014, all individual and small business health plans must offer a comprehensive package of benefits that includes: emergency services, hospitalizations, laboratory services, maternity care, mental health and substance abuse treatment, outpatient care, pediatric care, prescription drugs, preventative care vision and dental care for children.

Some statistics:

• Nearly 50 percent of the 850,000 of U.S. physicians are over the age of 50.

• There are 51.8 percent fewer medical students going into primary care since 1997.

• There will be approximately $718 billion in cuts in reimbursement for Medicare.

• The Association of American Medical Colleges predicts a shortage of nearly 40,000 primary care physicians by 2020.

• 32 million Americans expected to be newly insured over the next decade.

• Medicare enrollment is growing at a rate of 10,000 per day.

• Result – Fewer Doctors + more patients = longer wait times.

Considerations – Thinking of canceling your insurance? Be aware that there will be penalties for not having insurance. "If someone can afford it, but doesn't have health insurance coverage in 2014, they may have to pay a fee. They must also pay for all of their care." (Healthcare.gov)

Recommendations – If you have a grandfathered plan, keep it. All plans purchased after March 23, 2010, are non-grandfathered plans and must change.

Agencies are advising people to act now to avoid reform related premium increases for as long as possible.

Lock in a new premium based upon current rates and members ages to keep through 2014

Subsidies will be available and you can determine if you are eligible online at the Kaiser Family Foundation (www.kff.org).

There are ways to offset increased costs through a Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA).

Contact a licensed insurance agent as soon as possible who can help navigate you through these very complicated new rules and regulations.

Look into telemedicine or concierge medical services to reduce wait times and increase your chance of getting an appointment with your doctor when you need it.

More information can be found online. This site provides useful information about insurance options available to you and changes created by health-care reform.

Kaiser Family Foundation has info online.

This site has in-depth information on key health policy issues, plus interactive tools to determine how health-care reform will impact you. It also provides information about the exchange in your state.

Consumer Reports offers a range of resources from understanding health insurance and reform to help navigating Medicaid and Medicare to advice on maximizing your insurance options.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-being topic, drop her an email at connect@healthconnective.com or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.

Letter: Thanking Camp Sunrise volunteers, sponsors

To the community,

Barton Foundation would like to thank the many volunteers and sponsors that helped to make the 7th annual Camp Sunrise in June, once-again, a huge success.

Camp Sunrise is a free bereavement camp offered to children ages 7 through 14 who have experienced the death of a family member. The three-day camp provides grief education and support in a fun, safe and supportive environment.

“Teens and children are often forgotten mourners. And, because they grieve very differently than adults, their needs are often overlooked,” said Rebecca Phillipsen, licensed clinical social worker. “That is why Camp Sunrise is so important. We assist campers in developing healthy coping skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.”

Under the guidance of professional bereavement staff from Barton Home Health and Hospice and volunteers, 28 young campers had the opportunity to meet with other children who have experienced similar loses and engage in activities involving art, music and recreation. The children also attended daily support groups, enabling them to further explore their grief and work through any unresolved issues.

Thank you to all of the volunteers, without you camp would not be possible. Barton Foundation would also like to thank the local groups, businesses and individuals who contributed financially – Randi Arias-Losado, R.N., Charles Dane, Harrah’s and Harveys resorts, Nel’s Tahoe Hardware and the Optimist Club of South Lake Tahoe.

For more information about Camp Sunrise, contact the Foundation by email at foundation@bartonhealth.org.

Sincerely,

Barton Foundation

Caesars separating online, brick and mortar gaming

By AP

LAS VEGAS – Caesars Entertainment is taking steps to spin off its online gambling venture into a separate company.

The casino operator, which owns Harveys and Harrah's Lake Tahoe in Stateline, said in a Securities and Exchange Commission filing Wednesday that it plans to raise $1.2 billion by selling stock in the company.

The new company also would include the Planet Hollywood Hotel & Casino and a Baltimore casino under development.

Caesars plans to launch an online gambling site in Nevada in the coming months, and it already operates sites abroad.

The company said in its regulatory filing that it is "actively participating in the U.S. lobbying effort" to expand legalized online gambling beyond the three states where it is currently permitted: Nevada, New Jersey and Delaware.

Once the world's largest gambling operator, Caesars has struggled with debt recently.

It's the only major U.S. casino company without a presence in the Chinese gambling enclave of Macau.

The company posted a smaller loss last quarter but still missed expectations.

Rivals Wynn and Las Vegas Sands posted big quarterly gains, helped by their lucrative Macau resorts.

Caesars operates 10 Las Vegas Strip casinos and controls several dozen casinos throughout the country.

S. Lake Tahoe man going to prison for DUI in SoCal

By Jim Holt, Santa Clarita Signal

A South Lake Tahoe man responsible for sending two young Valencia women to the hospital with serious injuries in a May DUI-related collision was taken to state prison Thursday to begin serving a two-year sentence, law enforcement officials said.

Michael Guevara, 32, was picked up at the Pitchess North Facility jail by officers with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and taken to a state prison, a spokesman at the facility said Thursday.

Guebara entered a plea of no contest June 6 when he appeared in San Fernando Superior Court to the charge of driving under the influence of alcohol causing injury, said a spokeswoman of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office.

"He was sentenced on June 6 to two years in state prison," District Attorney's Office spokeswoman Jane Robison said Thursday.

Justice was served quickly in this felony case compared to other felony charges filed in Santa Clarita Valley and still being addressed month to month in San Fernando Superior Court, officials said.

"He took responsibility for his actions," said Detective

Travis Kelly of the Santa Clarita Valley Sheriff's Station, who arrested Guevara shortly after the crash.

On May 25, Guevara's Chevy Suburban hit two other "small sedans" at the intersection of Newhall Ranch Road and Copper Hill Drive in Valencia.

"He ran a red light and hit two cars making a left-hand turn from the other direction," Kelly said. "As a result of the crash, there were two patients."

One young woman suffered internal injuries and broken bones. The second, an occupant of the same car, was also seriously hurt, having suffered injuries more serious than first believed, Kelly said.

"They're doing OK and recovering, but slowly," he said Thursday.

The driver of the other "small sedan" was not seriously injured, Kelly said.

Gunman kills himself at South Tahoe ski resort

Part of Heavenly Mountain Resort was shut off to hikers for the better part of Friday because a gunman was on the mountain.

A 25-year-old Fremont man eventually shot himself July 12. *Lake Tahoe News* is not publishing the man's name.



El Dorado County sheriff's deputies get suited up July 12. Photo/Provided

The man had posted a video on Facebook with a message to his family and the GPS coordinates of where he could be found. Friends alerted law enforcement that the Iraq war veteran was suicidal and left his residence with a .308-caliber rifle, .45-caliber handgun and military backpack.

Because El Dorado County sheriff's deputies knew the type of weapons he had on him and that he was an ex-Marine, they approached the incident as though it could have been a possible ambush.

A resident in the area told *Lake Tahoe News* just before 4pm a helicopter was circling the California Lodge at least seven times. The California Highway Patrol helicopter spotted the man in a wooded area off Sherman Way in South Lake Tahoe.

By 5pm there was no visible evidence law enforcement had been in the area and people were boarding the Heavenly tram for a wedding – perhaps unaware of the events that unfolded earlier in the day. Heavenly deferred all comment to the sheriff's department.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report