LTCC launches scholarship in Carl Young’s name

Lake Tahoe Community College has started a scholarship in honor of a former instructor who passed away in late May. The Carl Young Memorial Earth Science Scholarship is being established to honor the meteorology teacher, who died when he and two colleagues were chasing tornadoes just outside Oklahoma City.

This Earth Science scholarship will be the first of its kind at LTCC.

In addition to being a popular and respected teacher, Young also received the Distinguished Alumni Award from LTCC in 2010 for his accomplishments in his field and his impact on the Tahoe region. He was also a former program manager at the League to Save Lake Tahoe/

For more information about the Carl Young Memorial Earth Science Scholarship and how to donate to it, contact Peter Bostic at (530) 541-4660, ext. 245 or Bostic@ltcc.edu.

Sullenberger to be at Truckee air show

Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger will talk July 6 during the opening ceremonies of the Truckee Tahoe Air Fair & Family Festival.

Sullenberger is the US Airways pilot who landed in the Hudson River.

The Truckee event is at 11am, Truckee Tahoe Airport, 10356 Airport Road.

Sullenberger will be signing copies of his book.

Firefighters test gel to suppress flames

By KOLO-TV

Is it the next breakthrough in firefighting? Makers of a polymer gel say so.

Thursday firefighters from Carson City and Lake Tahoe were intentionally setting fires to test out FireIce.

FireIce is a powder that becomes a gel when water is added, and the makers say it can help stop fires, and coat buildings to protect them.

“It’s basically like a sponge so what happens when you wet a sponge it absorbs water,” Rob Rosovich of FireIce said.

Firefighters did a test that showed FireIce performed similarly to foam being used now. However, the product’s makers say it’s much better for the environment and is non-toxic.

While grants could help pay for the substance, Carson City Fire Chief Stacey Giomi says equipment would need to be

modified to use it.

El Dorado County sheriff wants USFS to stand down

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Complaints about the conduct of U.S. Forest Service law enforcement officers have led El Dorado County Sheriff John D'Agostini to suspend their authority to enforce state laws in the county effective next month.



John
D'Agostini

Sheriff's spokesman Lt. Tim Becker said he could not elaborate on the specific complaints, saying that the sheriff was handling them as he would a personnel matter.

He said the sheriff had received multiple complaints from citizens regarding the actions of U.S. Forest Service law enforcement officers in El Dorado County.

Click here to read the whole story

Court: Gay marriages can resume in California

By Maura Dolan, New York Times

The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday cleared the way for gay marriages to resume in California.

The court lifted its stay on an injunction which ordered state officials to stop enforcing Proposition 8. With the court's action, counties can now begin issuing same-sex marriage licenses.

A spokesman for the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals had originally said it would takes the court at least 25 days to act after a Supreme Court ruling. Immediately afterward, Gov. Jerry Brown ordered his public health agency to advise the state's counties to "begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples in California as soon as the 9th Circuit confirms the stay is lifted."

Opponents of same-sex marriage have argued that Chief U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker's 2010 decision overturning Proposition 8 applied only to the two same-sex couples who challenged the ballot measure. But their enthusiasm for going to court to try to narrow the effect of the decision appeared to wane in the hours after the decision.

With Brown and Attorney General Kamala Harris pledging to block Proposition 8 across California, the momentum for gay marriage was likely to hinder any further challenges.

California voters passed Proposition 8 in 2008, six months after the California Supreme Court ruled that gays had the

right to wed. The state high court later ruled that the initiative was a valid state constitutional amendment but upheld the validity of an estimated 18,000 same-sex marriages that occurred before the election.

The Supreme Court ruled that ProtectMarriage, the sponsors of Proposition 8, lacked legal authority or standing to appeal Walker's ruling blocking the ballot initiative. The high court said Proposition 8's sponsors were not directly affected by Walker's ruling. Only state officials had the right to appeal, and they refused. That procedural decision wiped out the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals' 2-1 ruling against Proposition 8, leaving only Walker's decision in place and affecting only California.

County clerks who preside over marriages said they were ready for same-sex weddings. Marriage licenses already are gender-neutral, and clerks began receiving calls Wednesday from gay couples wanting to schedule appointments.

Harris called on the 9th Circuit on Wednesday to lift its hold on Walker's ruling immediately. The attorney general said she believed that the appeals court had the authority to act quickly.

LT Boys & Girls Club helps students attend LTCC

The Lake Tahoe Boys & Girls Club recently awarded $1,000 scholarships to Chris Gerrard and Nic Francis to attend Lake Tahoe Community College in the fall.

The idea for the BE GREAT Graduate Scholarship fund started

with Jeff Tillman, Boys & Girls Club board president

Gerrard and Francis volunteered at the club while in high school.

This is the first year of the BE GREAT Graduate Scholarship program.

USFS diverts money from fire prevention to suppression

By Jack Healy, New York Times

WOODLAND PARK, Colo. — A light breeze riffled the tops of ponderosa pines and old Douglas firs on the mountains above this tourist town. It was a serene summer day, but as Jonathan Bruno wandered through the trees, he wondered how long before it all went up in flames.

Jonathan Bruno, who works for a local environmental group, is worried about cuts to programs that help prevent fires.

“It’s just a matter of time,” said Bruno, who works on forest restoration projects for a local environmental group. “I’ve been losing sleep. There’s just not enough money.”



2007 was the worst fire season in Lake Tahoe when 254 South Shore houses were destroyed. Photo/Lake Valley Fire

As another destructive wildfire season chars the West, the federal government is sharply reducing financing for programs aimed at preventing catastrophic fires. Federal money to thin out trees and clear away millions of acres of deadfall and brittle brush has dropped by more than 25 percent in the budgets for the past two years, a casualty of spending cuts and the rising cost of battling active wildfires.

The government has cut back on programs to reduce fire risks in areas where homes and the wilderness collide. The U.S. Forest Service treated 1.87 million acres of those lands in 2012, but expects to treat only 685,000 acres next year. Conservation advocates say that is likely to mean fewer people working to prevent runaway fires, fewer controlled burns and fewer trucks hauling away dry brush and tinder.

Trimming trees and clearing brush can make blazes less destructive, and the Forest Service said it had treated more than 26 million acres since 2000. But as the government spends an increasing amount to battle wildfires, critics say it makes little sense to cut back on prevention.

“There is a growing consensus in the West that dollar for dollar, these kinds of prevention efforts are paying off,” said Sen. Ron Wyden, Democrat of Oregon. “And when the big fires break out, the bureaucracy steals money from the prevention fund and the problem gets worse. The Forest Service has become the fire service.”

Twenty years ago, the Forest Service spent 13 percent of its budget on fighting fires. These days, 40 percent of its money goes to firefighting, and that is still not enough to cover

the bills. Forest officials went $400 million over budget fighting last year's fires, and they expect to run over again this year.

Automatic spending cuts approved by Congress have pinched in other places. This year, forest officials hired 10,000 seasonal firefighters – a decrease of 500 from a year ago – and say that despite updates to their aging fleet of air tankers, they are also fighting fires with fewer fire engines.

"Obviously, there isn't enough to go around," said Tom Harbour, the Forest Service's director of fire and aviation management. "If you can get the forest in the right condition, we know that homes are going to be safer, forests are going to be safer. But we took a hit there."

In 2012, the Forest Service and the Interior Department – which also manages huge swaths of public lands – spent about $500 million combined to clear out what they call "hazardous fuels" in fire-prone areas. In budgets for next year, the agencies are on track to receive less than $300 million, according to numbers compiled by Chris Topik, the director of Restoring America's Forests, a Nature Conservancy program.

Harbour said forestry crews were focusing their prevention work on high-risk areas closest to homes, highways and businesses.

Conservationists and Western politicians say the cuts could not come at a worse moment.

Last year, more than nine million acres went up in flames during one of the worst fire seasons on record. Years of drought and beetle epidemics have turned entire mountainsides into matchboxes, and fire experts say rising temperatures and changing climates are making wildfires hotter, longer and more destructive.

"We're heading in the wrong direction," said Sen. Jon Tester,

Democrat of Montana, where 150 homes burned in last year's fires.

This month, Colorado's most destructive wildfire erupted 25 miles from Woodland Park, in a pine-shaded suburb north of Colorado Springs. It killed two people and burned 511 homes. In southwestern Colorado, fire crews were still struggling on Thursday to contain a blaze that is burning through 83,000 acres, feeding on thousands of beetle-killed spruce trees in the San Juan National Forest.

A walk through the woods or a drive into the mountains shows how vulnerable parts of the West are to fire. Dry soil crunches and crumbles underfoot, and huge patches of dead evergreen trees dot the mountainsides. Across the country, officials say 65 million acres of national forest are at a high risk for fires – an area bigger than Oregon.

Towns like Woodland Park, population 7,200, are tucked into the mountains across the West, islands of development in an ocean of trees. Houses on roads like Forest Edge Road or Ponderosa Way brush up against national forest land, enjoying all the beauty and risk that comes with the location.

As operations director of the Coalition for the Upper South Platte, Bruno spends his days here convincing homeowners to trim low-hanging branches and identifying thick hillsides that could be the next to set off an inferno.

Studies have shown that thinning out forests – whether on one homeowner's land, or a huge national landscape – can help keep fires in check, burning along the ground rather than racing from treetop to treetop. In the Southwest, treating land helped to control wildfires 87 percent of the time in 2011, and in 75 percent of cases last year, according to Forest Service data.

Some sections of Pike National Forest here have been thinned, spacing out the trees and removing low-hanging branches. But

thousands more acres are dense tinderboxes, Bruno said.

“If the fire got in,” he said, “this town would not be here.”

Tahoe gardeners set up series of workshops

The Lake Tahoe Master Gardeners are offering a series of Green Thumb Gardening Workshops. Each workshop is from 5:30–6:30pm.

Here is the schedule:

July 8, 9, 10: Right Plant, Right Place – Trees and Shrubs in High Elevation Settings

July 15, 16, 17: Pest Management: What’s Bugging You?

July 22, 23, 24: Composting: From Garbage to Garden

July 29, 30, 31: Get Wild in Your Garden! Native Plants and Beneficial Insects

Aug. 5, 6, 7: Sprinkle or Shower? Efficient Irrigation

Aug. 12, 13, 14: BMPs for Single Family Homes and Landscaping Ideas

Aug. 19, 20: The Dirt on Your Garden Soil

Aug. 21: Maintaining Your BMPs.

Monday sessions are that Lake Tahoe Community College Demonstration Garden in South Lake Tahoe.

The Tuesday meetings are at the TERC Demo Garden, 2400 Lake Forest Road in Tahoe City.

Wednesday gatherings will be at North Lake Tahoe Demo Garden, Sierra Nevada College, 999 Tahoe Blvd., Incline Village.

USFS sets rules for July 4th in Tahoe

Possession of fireworks of any kind, including sparklers, is illegal in the Lake Tahoe Basin and campfires are not permitted on National Forest beaches or in the general forest.

For those planning to barbecue on the beach, the Forest Service requires the use of portable gas stoves.

The annual alcohol ban will be in effect on Nevada Beach and within Zephyr Cove Resort and Zephyr Shoals (the former Dreyfus Estate) from 6am to midnight on July 4. In addition, county and state laws ban the possession or consumption of alcohol on the Truckee River from Tahoe City to Alpine Meadows and Chamber’s Landing Beach on the West Shore, beginning July 1 and continuing through July 6. These areas will be patrolled by law enforcement personnel from the Forest Service, Douglas and Placer counties, Carson City sheriff’s departments, and private security staff.

If parking on the side of the road to access National Forest facilities, make sure to park completely on gravel or dirt, not on vegetation. Parking on vegetation may result in a citation for resource damage, plus there’s a chance the car’s catalytic converter could spark a fire. Consider public transportation if going to the beach that day. The Nifty Fifty Trolley stops at National Forest beaches along the South and West Shores. I

n developed recreation sites, such as Kiva, Tallac and the Taylor Creek Visitor Center, parking is allowed only in designated parking spaces inside the parking lots, not along the roadway. When parking, do not block road access or narrow lanes, which could impede response in an emergency.

Day-use fees for the Fourth of July at Pope, Baldwin, and Nevada beaches will be $20 and at Zephyr Cove Beach $25 to cover increased security and facility maintenance costs of the holiday.

Pets are not allowed at National Forest designated swim beaches, including Nevada, Pope, Baldwin, Meeks and William Kent. If looking for a place to take a leashed pet, try Kiva Picnic Area from Valhalla Boathouse/Pier to Tallac Point in South Lake Tahoe, Echo Lakes on Echo Summit, Zephyr Shoals on the East Shore, Hidden and Chimney beaches on the East Shore, Coon Street Beach (at the boat launch) in Kings Beach, Kaspian and 64 Acres in Tahoe City.

For more information, go online or call (530) 543.2694.

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2 arrested, 1 hospitalized in S. Tahoe fight

A house party Thursday night in South Tahoe ended with a fight a couple miles away that sent one person to the hospital and two people to jail.

Police were called to the house on Juniper Street before midnight June 27 because of loud music. On the second visit a citation was issued. (Police are still trying to identify the owner of the house.) The third visit was because of a report

of a battery, which no one wanted charges filed on.

About 12:30am Friday police responded to a fight on James and 12th streets where a carload of men got out to beat up another group of men, according to police.

Lt. Brian Williams told *Lake Tahoe News* some of the participants of the fight were at the party. But what triggered the fight is still unknown.

Manny Ayala and Valente Uribe, both 18-year-olds from South Lake Tahoe, were arrested on three felonies – assault with a deadly weapon, battery with serious bodily injury and conspiracy to commit a crime.

Two people were injured, though neither of their names is being released. Both are adult males from South Lake Tahoe. One was knocked unconscious and taken by Calstar to Renown Medical Center in Reno. The other was the person who called the cops about the fight; he refused medical treatment.

Williams said so far there is no gang connection. The investigation is ongoing.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report