

El Dorado County seats 2013-14 grand jury

El Dorado County is going to have a grand jury for 2013-14.

This is the time of year when the annual grand jury report is usually released. But there won't be one because the grand jury fell apart earlier this year.

This coming grand jury will be under the leadership of El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Doug Phimister. They operate from July 1-June 30.

The grand jury members are:

Neil Cunningham (foreman), Kathleen Amaru, Robert Dailey, Mark Doyle, Wendy Hagel, David Hall, James Kern, Ann Lee, Linda Lim, Chuck MacLean, Rebecca Martinez, Robert Noyes, Lawrence Oreskes, Thom Orth, Susan Rayburn, Laura Rosio, Janet Saitman, Al Wooden, and Colleen Young.

The alternates are:

Catherine Close, Billy Garrett, Michael Gross, Michael Johnson, Susan Johnson, Paul Kramer Jr., Jeannie Ott, Thomas Simpson and Ken Steers.

Letter: Chamber says thanks for fun mixer

To the community,

TahoeChamber would like to thank Lake Tahoe Cruises & Zephyr

Cove Resort for a spectacular Business After Hours Mixer.

The crowd assembled in the special events tent, which was beautifully decorated with floral arrangements and specialty linens. The food prepared by Executive Chef Jeremy Acuna was decadent, the staff were very friendly, and live music by the Tahoe Moonshine Muggers made the evening complete. The Tahoe Paradise offered great views of the shore and featured a delicious arrangement of cheese, as well as a Signature Cadillac Margarita.

Thank you to the community, chamber members, volunteers, and staff at Zephyr Cove for another successful BAHM.

Jessica Cunningham, Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce

Art workshop just for kids

Wilbur D. May Museum is hosting an art workshop just for kids during Reno's Artown.

Volunteers from the Sierra Watercolor Society will help kids create watercolor masterpieces. Each child will complete two paintings – one of which will be matted and ready to frame.

This free class is open to ages 6-12, but it is limited to 50 children. Reservations are required.

The Art Angels Workshop is July 11 from 1:30–3:30pm at the museum in Rancho San Rafael Regional Park, 1595 N. Sierra Street, Reno.

To reserve a spot, call (775) 322.1538.

Hwy. 50 roadwork in S. Tahoe to increase

It will be even more difficult to drive along Highway 50 through South Lake Tahoe next week.

Caltrans will be alternating overnight lane closures because of grinding and paving work from 4pm to 2am Monday 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.

Eastbound and westbound motorists can expect alternating No. 2 lane and shoulder closures from Trout Creek to Ski Run Boulevard from 5am-8pm Monday through Thursday and from 5-11am on Friday for lane striping.

Eastbound and westbound motorists can expect alternating lane and shoulder closures from Fairway Avenue to Wildwood Avenue from 6am-4pm Monday through Thursday and from midnight to noon Friday for drainage work.

In addition, work is set to start on a \$12.1 million project from the Y to the Lake Tahoe Airport next week.

Next week's construction schedule on that project is midnight to 11am Tuesday through Thursday and midnight to 10am Friday.

There will be no weekend work on any of these projects and no work around the Fourth of July holiday.

Pot growers fouling up the environment

By Felicity Barringer, New York Times

ARCATA — It took the death of a small, rare member of the weasel family to focus the attention of Northern California's marijuana growers on the impact that their huge and expanding activities were having on the environment.

The animal, a Pacific fisher, had been poisoned by an anticoagulant in rat poisons like d-Con. Since then, six other poisoned fishers have been found. Two endangered spotted owls tested positive. Mourad W. Gabriel, a scientist at UC Davis, concluded that the contamination began when marijuana growers in deep forests spread d-Con to protect their plants from wood rats.

That news has helped growers acknowledge, reluctantly, what their antagonists in law enforcement have long maintained: like industrial logging before it, the booming business of marijuana is a threat to forests whose looming dark redwoods preside over vibrant ecosystems.

Hilltops have been leveled to make room for the crop. Bulldozers start landslides on erosion-prone mountainsides. Road and dam construction clogs some streams with dislodged soil. Others are bled dry by diversions. Little water is left for salmon whose populations have been decimated by logging.

And local and state jurisdictions' ability to deal with the problem has been hobbled by, among other things, the drug's murky legal status. It is approved by the state for medical uses but still illegal under federal law, leading to a

patchwork of growers. Some operate within state rules, while others operate totally outside the law.

The environmental damage may not be as extensive as that caused by the 19th-century diking of the Humboldt estuary here, or 20th-century clear-cut logging, but the romantic outlaw drug has become a destructive juggernaut, experts agree.

"In my career I've never seen anything like this," said Stormer Feiler, a scientist with California's North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. "Since 2007 the amount of unregulated activities has exploded." He added, "They are grading the mountaintops now, so it affects the whole watershed below."

Scott Bauer, of the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, said, "I went out on a site yesterday where there was an active water diversion providing water to 15 different groups of people or individuals," many of them growers. "The stream is going to dry up this year."

While it is hard to find data on such an industry, Anthony Silvaggio, a sociology lecturer at Humboldt State University, pointed to anecdotal evidence in a Google Earth virtual "flyover" he made of the industrial farm plots and the damage they cause. The video was later enhanced and distributed by Mother Jones magazine.

Brad Job's territory as a federal Bureau of Land Management officer includes public lands favored, he said, by Mexican drug cartels whose environmental practices are the most destructive. "The watershed was already lying on the ground bleeding," Job said. "The people who divert water in the summer are kicking it in the stomach."

That water is crucial to restoring local runs of imperiled Coho salmon, Chinook salmon and steelhead, which swam up Eel River tributaries by the tens of thousands before the logging

era. Scott Greacen, executive director of Friends of the Eel River, said, "It's not weed that drove the Coho to the brink of extinction, but it may kick it over the edge." By various estimates, each plant needs at least one gallon and as much as 6 gallons of water during a season.

The idea that the counterculture's crop of choice is bad for the environment has gone down hard here. Marijuana is an economic staple, particularly in Humboldt County's rural southern end, called SoHum. Jennifer Budwig, the vice president of a local bank, estimated last year that marijuana infused more than \$415 million into the county's annual economic activity, one-quarter of the total.

For the professed hippies who moved here decades ago, marijuana farming combines defiance of society's strictures, shared communal values and a steady income. "Marijuana has had a framework that started in the 1930s with jazz musicians," said Gregg Gold, a psychology professor at Humboldt State University. "It's a cultural icon of resistance to authority."

"In 2013," he added, "you're asking that we reframe it in people's minds as just another agribusiness. That's a huge shift."

It is a thriving agribusiness. Derek Roy, a special agent enforcing endangered species protections for the National Marine Fisheries Service, said, "These grow sites continue to get larger and larger." Things took off after 1996, when California decriminalized the use of medical marijuana, Roy said.

The older farmers say that as the fierce antidrug campaigns waned and the medical marijuana market developed, newcomers arrived eager to cash in, particularly in the past decade, according to two growers who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

"There is a gold rush," Greacen said. "And it's a race to the

bottom in terms of environmental impacts.”

Now that Colorado and Washington voters have approved the recreational use of the drug, there is a widespread belief that the days of high prices for marijuana are nearly over.

As Mikal Jakubal, a resident of SoHum who is directing a documentary film about Humboldt County’s marijuana business, puts it, “Everyone thinks, ‘This might be the last good year.’” That helps fuel the willy-nilly expansion of cultivation, the tearing up of hillsides and the diversions that dry out creeks.

The worst damage is on public lands. There, extensive plantings are surrounded by d-Con-laced tuna and sardine cans placed around perimeters by the dozens, Gabriel said. Job of the land management bureau said these illegal operations have 70,000 to 100,000 plants; they are believed to be the work of Mexican drug cartels.

But small farmers have an impact, too. Bauer of the State Fish and Wildlife Department said that when he found the water diversion last week and asked those responsible about it, “these people we met with were pointing a finger all over the watershed, saying: ‘We’re not that big. There are bigger people out there.’”

Federal environmental agents, including Roy and Job, have brought two cases to the U.S. Attorney’s Office in San Francisco. The office declined to prosecute a case last year, they said. A new one is under review. But, they said, manpower for enforcement is limited.

Given federal prohibitions against profiting from marijuana, county officials have a limited toolbox. “We have land-use authority, that’s it,” said Mark Lovelace, a Humboldt County supervisor. He chafes at the county’s inability to establish a system of permits, for fear of running afoul of federal law. His board did just pass a resolution asking local businesses

not to sell d-Con. (A representative of Reckitt Benckiser, which makes the poison, wrote a letter of protest.)

Lovelace and others contend that legalizing marijuana would open the door to regulation and put the brakes on environmental abuses.

In the meantime, the industry has begun to police itself. Some growers have benefited from a program run by a local nonprofit organization, Sanctuary Forest, that subsidizes the installation of tanks that can store water in the winter, when it is plentiful, for use in dry months.

“There may be people who grow pot in our group,” said Tasha McKee, executive director of Sanctuary Forest. “I’m sure there are. We don’t ask that question.”

A local group, the Emerald Growers Association, recently produced a handbook on sustainable practices.

“There is an identity crisis going on right now,” said Gary Graham Hughes, executive director of the Environmental Protection Information Center in Arcata. “The people who are really involved with this industry are trying to understand what their responsibilities are.”

Tahoe Douglas adds wildland engine to fleet



Tahoe Douglas is ready for
the next wildland fire.
Photo/Provided

A wildland fire in Tahoe – it's not a matter of if, but when.

Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District is even more prepared than before.

"This new engine provides our residents with two Type 3 Wildland engines for wild fires. Type 3 engines are a shorter wheelbase and typically four-wheel drive for operating off road in wildland fires," Fire Chief Ben Sharit told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Tahoe Douglas firefighters are all too aware of how dry the terrain is after battling the King Fire last week on the Carson side of Kingsbury Grade. Now they have another machine to help them with the next fire.

"They can carry a crew of four or five firefighters and a lot of forestry tools, chain saws and hose packs. They can also cut fire lines around fires much like a hand crew does," Sharit explained.

The 16-year-old engine this one is replacing will be put on reserve status for about five years.

According to Sharit, it's best for an engine to see regular action for 15 years before moving to reserve status. Tahoe Douglas sells its 20-year-old engines or donates them to

department that will use something that old. Lake Tahoe Community College Fire Academy is leasing one of the department's reserve 1996 Seagrave Type 1 engines for \$1 per year.

"This provides the college fire academy with an engine to train their recruits and assist TDFPD with storing the engine in case we need it back when our front line engines are assigned to large fires or are out of service for repairs," Sharit said.

A Type 1 is also known as a structure engine. They are typically larger than a wildland engine and pump a lot more water. The Type 3 engines pump water at a higher pressure to deal with what is usually a longer hose in the wild compared to what is needed at a structure fire.

To pay for the equipment, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District has a strategic plan that includes a capital asset plan for replacing equipment in a 15- to 30-year span. This rig cost \$280,000, which included all the equipment on like the hoses and saws.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Study: Americans working less, playing more

By Neil Shah, Wall Street Journal

With the economy struggling to find its footing, Americans spent less time at work last year and found more time for leisure activities such as watching television, a government

survey finds.

The average American aged 15 or older spent three hours, 32 minutes a day doing work-related activities last year, according to the American Time Use Survey released by the Labor Department on Thursday. That is down from 2011, when time spent on work jumped from three hours and 30 minutes to three hours and 34 minutes. While such changes may not seem big, average yearly changes in time spent on different activities tend to be small, and even minor changes are significant.

The survey, which has been conducted annually since 2003 and includes employed and unemployed persons, suggests America's sluggish recovery continues to hamper workers. While the U.S. unemployment rate fell last year from 8.3 percent to 7.8 percent – it is now at 7.6 percent – other trends are likely holding down average hours spent at work. The number of part-time workers was higher in 2012 than the year before, for example.

"The recovery has basically been a recovery for a tiny fraction of the population," said Geoffrey Godbey, professor emeritus at Pennsylvania State University and co-author of "Time For Life: The Surprising Ways Americans Use Their Time." "What you're seeing is people who might want more work but aren't getting it," he said.

Meanwhile, the share of the population working or looking for a job dropped to 63.6 percent at the end of last year, compared with 64 percent in December 2011. That number, known as the labor force participation rate, has been falling as a result of a combination of discouraged workers dropping out of the workforce and baby boomers retiring.

The aging of America's population means fewer people are working and more retirees are at home watching TV, Godbey said. At the same time, women have become a larger share of

America's labor force, but tend to work fewer hours than men do. And there's a growing informal economy, he said, that might not be captured by government surveys.

With less time spent at work, Americans boosted the portion of their day going to leisure and sports activities: Time spent on leisure jumped about nine minutes to five hours and 22 minutes. Americans watched TV for two hours and 50 minutes a day, a second-straight increase from two hours and 44 minutes in 2010. Meanwhile, time spent sleeping edged up to eight hours and 44 minutes, from eight hours and 40 minutes in 2010. Time devoted to volunteering and cooking, meanwhile, fell.

Wendy Wang, a sociologist at the Pew Research Center, said the changing nature of fatherhood is also altering the way Americans use their time. In a March report based partly on the government's survey, she found fathers were logging in fewer hours a week on job-related activities, roughly 37 hours on average in 2011, compared with 42 in 1965. Also, more American fathers are working part-time, and spending more time doing chores and with their kids. "Fathers think they need to go home earlier," she said.

Indeed, the latest government survey shows men spent slightly more time doing housework than in 2011, while the reduction in time spent at work was more pronounced for men than women.

Eldorado Forest leadership to change in July

Laurence Crabtree will take over as forest supervisor of the Eldorado National Forest on July 29.

Kathy Hardy's last day was June 14. Jayne Handley is the interim acting forest supervisor.

Crabtree comes from the Plumas National Forest, where he has been the No. 2 position.

Crabtree graduated from the University of Idaho where he studied forestry and entomology. He was born in Susanville.

"I am pleased and humbled to be the Eldorado National Forest supervisor," Crabtree said in a statement. "In my new role I intend to be a part of the community and to ensure that the Eldorado continues to move forward with the challenges and opportunities that come from caring for the land and serving people."

Laurence and his wife Denice have three grown children and four grandchildren.

Talk focuses on changing education standards

The education system is facing rapid, dramatic changes at the state and federal levels. What do the new standards mean for students, teachers, parents, and the nation?

A presentation at Sierra Nevada College will explore the similarities and differences between Common Core Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards, focusing primarily on NGSS.

The presenters are Rick Pomeroy from UC Davis School of Education who teaches science and technology to in-service and pre-service teachers and David T. Crowther, a professor of

science education at UNR.

The talk is July 17 at 6pm, Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village. Donation of \$5 is suggested.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- South Lake Tahoe has changed its special meeting about the tourist core area plan to July 2 at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport.

- Lake Valley fire's Angora Peak crew is in New Mexico dousing flames. It could be a month before they return.
- Go to this website, enter your ZIP code and then you'll know what the fire danger is today for where you live.
- Annika Sörenstam, the greatest female golfer of her generation, will be conducting a pre-tournament clinic for the entire field of registered golfers and 25 participating sports celebrities July 15 at the 5th annual Gene Upshaw Memorial Golf Classic at Gray's Crossing in Truckee.
- The historic V&T Railroad now offers children 12 and under the chance to climb aboard and ride a diesel train for free every Friday throughout the summer.