Restoration projects help thwart climate change



Work in the Martis Valley is one of the Truckee River Watershed Council projects. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

TRUCKEE – The environment and economy are being altered as the climate changes.

As rain replaces snow and the months when precipitation falls are more in the spring than winter, the Tahoe-Truckee area is going to have to adapt.

People are going to recreate in different ways, which will impact the economy. Different types of businesses may evolve, while others go by the wayside.

Mother Nature will adapt, but she also needs some help.

That was part of the message delivered this month by Joanne Roubique, district ranger of the U.S. Forest Service and Lisa

Wallace, executive director of the Truckee River Watershed Council. They were the featured speakers at the Truckee Chamber of Commerce breakfast.

“It’s clear water has a role in buffering climate change near forests,” Wallace said.

Her group has what it calls 50 large scale projects that are slated for completion in the next decade. They are working on waterways, meadows and near the forest.

A main focus is the Truckee River and the neighboring creeks and streams. From Tahoe to Pyramid Lake the Truckee River has been labeled “impaired and polluted.”

“We are seeing the cumulative effect. There is already excessive sediment in the river,” Wallace said. “With more rain, there will be more sediment. This impacts species, the economy and recreation.”

If the river can become healthy, this will help the surrounding forest.

Now in its fifth year, the drought is impacting the health of the environment. Bark beetle is killing trees. Dying trees then become a wildfire waiting to happen. Depending on the fire, it could be catastrophic to people, the built environment and to the natural surroundings.

Roubique said the big issue is what to do with the timber that needs to be removed. The good news, she said, is that the various agencies are working together instead of in silos to address issues.

When it comes to dealing with fire prevention, thinning in the wildland urban interface has been common of late. Now the problem is that the trees upslope need to be dealt with to create a healthy forest.

Climate change becoming increasingly visible campaign issue in Nevada

By Ben Botkin, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Environmental groups have pumped more than $3 million into Nevada elections, investing money in ads and a ground game that will get canvassers and volunteers out knocking on doors statewide.

It’s a reflection in part of how climate change has become an increasingly visible issue, whether it’s drought-stricken farmland in California, increased wildfires, or rising sea levels, environmental advocates say.

The spending, from groups that include NextGen Climate and the League of Conservation Voters, is supporting Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton and Catherine Cortez Masto, the Democratic candidate for Nevada’s open U.S. Senate seat.

Read the whole story

Hot in Tahoe for now; cold

temps in near future

Keep the shorts out and have the fleece nearby; it’s going to be one of those wacky weather weeks in Tahoe.

While the National Weather Service in Reno does not expect the basin or Truckee areas to hit a record high this week, it is going to be unseasonably warm. South Lake Tahoe is expected to reach 79 degrees today and Tuesday, and 77 on Wednesday.

“Then we have a cold front coming late in week with increased winds and choppy waters, and much cooler temperatures on the weekend,” Wendell Hohmann, meteorologist in Reno, told *Lake Tahoe News.* “We are looking at 50s by some point in the weekend. It could even be cooler depending on how the front organizes.”

This means the overnight temps will also be dropping. Expect them to be in the 20s next weekend.

For now the fire danger is not elevated, but that could change as the weekend approaches.

Hohmann said the likelihood of any precipitation in the next week is not good. However, he is confident wind and cooler temps are headed for the area by the end of the week.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report

Edgewood to use lake water to

cool hotel rooms



Edgewood Lodge will be open for summer 2017, with views of the lake and golf course. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Guests at Edgewood Lodge will be able to feel the cool water of Lake Tahoe without ever having to dip a toe into the lake.

This is because developers are extending the in-take line used by Edgewood Water Company, routing that water through the hotel and then to the pumping station before it becomes potable. That water will actually be the air conditioning for the hotel.

“Instead of spending money on a chiller and cooling tower we spent money on the inline to the lake,” Patrick Rhamey, executive vice president of Edgewood Companies, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “That way we will use less energy, less greenhouse gases, and it will go toward LEED certification for the hotel. It is a simple, but elegant way to conserve energy and provide air conditioning.”

The current line is 600-feet long, in a depth of 25- to 35-feet of water. The new line will be 3,000 feet, at a depth of 600 feet. That will allow the water coming into the building to be about a constant 46 degrees.

The water for the cooling system is never touched while it's in the lodge. The pumping system is the same one in place for the water company.



Edgewood Water Company is extending the in-take line 3,000 feet into Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN

Ratepayers of the Stateline water company will not be affected; the nearly $1 million price tag for the new pipe is being charged to the lodge project.

The existing pipe will remain as a backup.

Edgewood is going after LEED silver certification; this is a federal designation in regards to how green, or environmentally efficient the structure is.

The lodge is slated to open by Memorial Day 2017. It will be possible to make a reservation starting Oct. 24. About 300 more employees will be hired, essentially doubling the staff of Edgewood Tahoe. Edgewood is operating and managing the lodge.

In addition to the hotel rooms (nothing is for sale, these are not condos), there will be a restaurant that caliber-wise will be in between the fine dining restaurant and sports bar that have long been at the site. The lodge restaurant will be bistro-style, serving three meals a day – to guests and the public. It will be the largest of the three dining options, seating 200, along with outdoor tables.

The 8,000-square-foot spa will have multiple treatment rooms. There will also be a salon for people to get their hair and nails done. Edgewood is hoping this will make for a more inclusive option for wedding parties.

A pool will front the lake, as well as a fitness room. These will be exclusively for guests.

The 3,000-square-foot conference center can be divided off into smaller sections. There will also be retail, and for guests an adventure concierge service.

In the future it’s possible 40 residential style units would be built along the fairways of holes 8 and 9. Owners can also add more than 5,000-square-feet of meeting space if there is the demand.

Citizenship applications surge in Nevada

By Megan Messerly, Las Vegas Sun

Citizenship applications in Nevada were up 52 percent in the first six months of the year compared with the same period last year, according to data recently released by the federal government.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services reported that 6,303 permanent residents in Nevada applied to become citizens between January and June, compared with 4,147 in the same period last year.

There are a number of reasons someone might apply for citizenship. However, at a citizenship drive in April, many applicants pointed to the possibility of a Donald Trump presidency as the reason they finally decided to apply for citizenship even though they had been eligible to apply for years.

Read the whole story

Squaw's Ganong going after downhill title

By Megan Harrod, USSA

Growing up minutes from Squaw Valley, Travis Ganong found himself in the Mighty Mites peewee program as a tyke. He devoured the opportunity.

“Cliffs, chutes, pillow-lines, arcin’ turns down the Dog Leg! I couldn’t get enough,” he recalls.

With his sisters showing the way, he got into the race program. He pointed to his sister Megan’s time on the U.S. Ski Team and said he wanted to follow her lead.

The U.S. men’s alpine team has accomplished almost every major feat on the Audi FIS Ski World Cup – Olympic gold, World Championship gold, slalom and giant slalom titles, Hahnenkamm gold.

That is, except for winning the coveted downhill title. Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah), Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) and the rest of the American downhillers hope to change that in 2017.

At the end of the 2016 season, Nyman was ranked sixth, a rank that matched his previous career best from 2015. However, he also did something no other American downhiller had done before – not Tommy Moe, nor AJ Kitt, nor Truckee’s own Daron Rahlves, nor even Bode Miller (Franconia, N.H.).

Nyman grabbed four podiums in four consecutive World Cup races: Jeongseon (third), Chamonix (second), Kvitfjell (third) and St. Moritz (second). Not only does that streak bode well for Nyman at the 2017 World Championships in St. Moritz, but that kind of consistency also suggests good things for his quest to hoist the crystal globe.

“Obviously, to finish the season in the U.S. will be special, but with the way our team is currently performing … I think there’s going to be a lot to celebrate at the end of the year. For me, my big goal is that downhill title,” said Nyman. “I believe I can do it, and if I’m the first American male to ever win the downhill title, that would be a storybook ending in Aspen.”

With the confirmation of World Cup Finals in Aspen, the Americans have the chance to win crystal globes on home turf.

Let’s take this one step further: Nyman and Ganong have the chance – for the first time ever – to win an American Downhiller title.

To do that, though, they’ll have to fend off the dynamic duo of Norwegian skiers Aksel Lund Svindal and Kjetil Jansrud – along with the young Aleksander Aamodt Kilde – ranked second, fourth and 12th, respectively, in the downhill standings in 2016.

Ganong was ranked 11th last season. The Italians – Peter Fill is the reigning downhill champion – and the French will also be in the hunt, along with Nyman’s podium ping-pong comrade, Switzerland’s Beat Feuz.

Steinem’s message resonates for all ages

By Linda Fine Conaboy

RENO – As Gloria Steinem, a diminutive figure clad in black and surprisingly glamorous for a woman of 82, glided onstage at UNR’S Nightingale Hall, the packed house erupted with noise, clapping loudly as they all rose as one body and awarded her a Nevada-style welcome fit for a queen.

To many, Steinem is a queen. Queen of women’s rights, including reproductive freedom, domestic violence, sexual violence and injustice toward people of color, toward members of the LGBTQ community and equal pay for women. Steinem, it would seem, is the champion of the underdog, not only in the United States, but globally.

“I’m an entrepreneur of social change,” she said. “I talk. I write. I tell stories. I want to do justice to the women I meet.”

On this night, her audience consisted of not only women who were on board Steinem’s feminist train in the late ’60s and ’70s, but also young people, in between people and a surprising number of men. Clearly, Steinem has remained a visible and vibrant presence through the years and has kept her audience intact while inducting large numbers of new recruits to her causes.

There are those who remember quite clearly a younger Gloria Steinem and stood in awe of what she was able to accomplish is the name of women’s equality. But of course, there are some from the turbulent era of the Equal Rights Amendment, and even now, who consider her a blowhard.

She came to Reno at the invitation of several organizations including the Holland Project and Sundance Bookstore. Her speaker’s fee was donated to the Holland Project, an all-ages arts and music initiative by and for young people.

What started as a typical lecture-type talk morphed into what Steinem called a chat around a campfire with numerous audience members pitching their causes while extolling the positive effect Steinem has had on them and their mothers.

“We need to say what concerns us,” she said. “Now women deeply understand the basic reason for women’s secondary position. Men have always controlled women’s reproductive bodies.”

She added that it is not possible to be a feminist without being an anti-racist. “Everything is connected,” she said.



Gloria Steinem is continuing to spread her feminist message. Photo/Ms. Foundation for Women/file

Steinem believes we are going through a time of great danger. “There’s a huge identity crises going on,” she said, adding that in a short time there will no longer be a majority of white people in the U.S. This is a good thing, she said.

“We’ll become connected to the rest of the world; we are on the cusp of great change. Now we must be careful to take care of each other. A woman is in most danger when she’s about to be free and now women are in danger because we are about to be freed.”

Heavy words to be sure, but Steinem has spent years honing her message and has pretty much stuck to it throughout the decades. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Smith College in 1956, and over the years became a writer, lecturer, political activist and feminist organizer. In 1972, she founded Ms. Magazine and continues to be a consulting editor for the publication.

Her activities have earned her numerous awards and there have been various documentaries produced about her.

In 2000, at the age of 66, she married David Bale, father of actor Christian Bale. Unfortunately, Bale died after only three years of marriage to Steinem, at the age of 62.

A continuing thread in her talk was connections and their power. “Bias is based on sex and race and is connected. The bias against transsexuals and gays is connected. We are linked not ranked. Each of us is a combination of heredity and environment. There is something unique in each of us, but we all share our humanity. It’s simple,” she said laughing, launching into more thoughts on her favorite subject.

“Women have power, but we must remember to listen instead of talk. Simple daily things will get us where we want to go. You can’t destroy a village to save it; the ends don’t justify the means.”

As the house light went up, many eager people couldn’t wait to have a chance to voice their opinions. Audience members talked freely about politics, sex, gay and lesbian issues, and equality in the workplace.

Sensing that millennials made up a good part of the audience, Steinem voiced her enthusiasm for all young men and women. “I just had to wait for some of my friends to be born,” she says of her millennial friends.

She continued the age topic saying it’s OK to be older. “Feelings about age are tied to reproduction. We women are more valued for our wombs than for our brains, but once the reproductive roll is finished, you are free and can become a feisty girl again.”

Steinem believes the old and the young are connected by their opinions—they are natural allies. “The old and the young understand each other because they are closest to the unknown.”

Dropping a few of her tried and true gems, Steinem said that

women aren’t trying to be better than men, they’re just trying to be equal. “Cooperation beats domination every time.”

On feminism, she said: “There is no definition, but there is a full circle of characteristics.”

She also aired her assessment of the workplace: “Equal pay starts with discussing how much each of us makes in the office. All productive work must be recognized [paid for], from taking care of the elderly to taking care of kids and aids patients,” she said, commenting that simply recognizing the hours spent on these tasks and compensating for them monetarily would be a big boost to the economy.

As everyone rolled out of the auditorium there was lots of chatter about Steinem and what her messages are.

Janice Hoke, a Reno resident, enthusiastically shared her take on the evening’s message with *Lake Tahoe News.* “Gloria was intellectual, genuine and inspiring. Her message is to recognize the connections between people rather than the barriers, do all that you can but realize that you won’t succeed every time. She said feminists must naturally be anti-racism as well since it’s the same patriarchal systems that are against both groups. And she believes the small things we do every day are the most important actions that will make progress in the world.”

Carol Raphel, another Renoite, said, “Her message transcends gender and race. We are humans first.”

Red tape may hamper Chinese visiting Nev.

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

OLYMPIC VALLEY – An estimated 3.5 million Chinese tourists want to travel to the United States next year but may never get here because of regulatory issues, government red tape and airlines and airports that aren't ready for them.

The rush of international visitors is occurring at a time when the aviation industry is in the midst of massive change, Mike Boyd, president and CEO of Evergreen, Colo.-based Boyd Group International, said this week.

About 300 people are attending Boyd's 21st annual International Aviation Forecast Summit at the Resort at Squaw Creek.

Industry leaders are projecting that 20 million Chinese visitors will travel to the U.S. over the next 10 years.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Keys wants to use herbicides in canals



There will be a public workshop on Nov. 1 from 6-8pm at the South Tahoe Public Utility District Building, 1275 Meadow Crest Drive, to learn more about the plan to use herbicides in the Tahoe Keys. Photo/Provided

By Lake Tahoe News

The Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association is going forward with plans to use an herbicide to rid the canals of invasive species, Eurasian milfoil and curly leaf pondweed in particular.

It will be up to the Lahontan Water Quality Control Board to issue the permit.

In December 2011 the water board voted to allow herbicides to be used on a case-by-case basis. If this is permitted, it would be the first time.

TKPOA wants a permit to use aquatic herbicides in 2018 on 13 of its 172 acres. The plan is to apply low levels of the herbicides Endothall, Triclopyr and Penoxsulam on nine

sites. None of the chemicals should reach the lake, according to officials.

The two plants being targeted have taken over more than 90 percent of the Tahoe Keys lagoon system.

“Comprehensive dye studies conducted in 2011 and again in 2016 have shown that water movement will not carry the herbicides out of the back channel lagoons into Lake Tahoe during the test period. Surface-to-bottom curtains and/or other barriers will be placed at select sites as an extra layer of precaution to isolate the herbicide demonstration areas,” TKPOA officials said in a statement. “Secondary barriers will be ready to be deployed as contingency measures in case trace amounts are detected during the test, ensuring no movement of herbicides into Lake Tahoe.”

The plants have been choking the canals and have spread to other parts of the lake. They affect the lake’s ecosystems and clarity.

The warming shallow waters are helping the plants to proliferate.

Herbicides are not the only mechanism being used. TKPOA has made improvements to its harvesting and collection of the fragments. However, this is just like mowing – the plant keeps growing. Bottom barrier mats and dredging are also methods to curtail the weeds.

TKPOA also installed a boat backup station that is designed to reduce the spread of weeds, and purchasing the Lake Tallac lagoon in part to better control the infestations.

Simulator trains crews for rigor of fighting fire

By Kathryn Reed

The hose is full throttle and still the fire jumps along the wall. At one point it dances overhead on the ceiling like it wants to wrap its potentially deadly tentacles around those who want to kill it.

It's as though the fire is alive. Oxygen – it feeds off of it.

The room goes dark. There's smoke. It's a game of hide and seek.

"Everything we do is by touch," South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It's all done at knee level. We are usually on the bottom third of the building because if you stand, you get burned."

It's normal for a fire to spread overhead and temperatures to reach 1,700 degrees.

What made this particular fire different is that with a push of the button the flames went away.



The simulator helps crews train for live fire action. Photo/Provided

South Lake Tahoe firefighters are getting to experience three scenarios – a kitchen, hazardous materials and second floor bedroom fires – during four days of training in a simulator.

Many of the younger guys are lacking real fire experience. This time inside the trailer is about 75 percent realistic. The heat is much less at about 500 degrees. And the level of smoke is nowhere near what it would be in the real world. A lot of this has to do with natural gas being used during training.

Even for the veterans, what they are encountering in buildings compared to last century is different.

“The biggest difference between fires today and 20 years ago is synthetics. Instead of a clean fire, it’s a carbon fire,” Battalion Chief Jim Drennan told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It’s highly toxic.”

Tactics are changing in how to fight these types of fires. The books are being rewritten to take into account the substances firefighters will find in today’s structures.

Building code changes have benefited owners when it comes to snow loads, but some ceiling joints are quick to collapse in a fire. Time is of the essence, though safety is always the priority.

Firefighters have 60 seconds to get dressed from the time a call comes in. In just more than three minutes the hose lines should be laid. In South Lake Tahoe, they expect to be at the fire between 10 and 12 minutes after they get the call.

Two firefighters usually go in at a time. This is for safety as well as muscle. Those hoses are heavy. Turnouts are not light. And with a breathing apparatus on, they are carrying about 65 pounds of extra weight.

South Lake Tahoe had been a bit negligent in upgrading uniforms for the men and women. Turnouts that were to last eight years have been used for 12. That’s now changing, with each firefighter given two sets.

And in Tahoe there’s always the threat of a wildland fire. That requires completely different gear.

Then there is the added element of weather. All that water usually means icicles form on the firefighters during winter. Slipping on the ice they’ve created becomes another concern.

And while training is a daily activity, there is nothing routine about their jobs.