

Stringent boat program keeps new AIS from Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – In the decade since Lake Tahoe started aggressively combating aquatic invasive species, the landscape has changed dramatically.

This region has become a leader in what to do to stop invasives. Water bodies far and near have scrambled to catch up as they contend with the detrimental impact of AIS. The boating industry has made advances to make it easier to hook up decontamination apparatuses. The public is more compliant and understanding.

Boating season officially opens today in the Lake Tahoe Basin, at least when it comes to the boat inspections and decontamination stations being operational.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board last week received an update on the AIS program, which includes the boating inspection program.

It's anticipated more boat ramps will be open this year because the lake level is so high. Public and private ramps are required to make sure boats have been inspected.

"Our focus is early detection and rapid response," Dennis Zabaglo, TRPA's aquatic resources manager, told the board.

The Tahoe Resource Conservation District manages the program for the TRPA. Lake Tahoe, Fallen Leaf Lake and Echo Lake are part of its oversight.

In 2016, there were 7,689 boat inspections, 2,689 decontaminations, with 39 boats intercepted. The last figure means a boat that had an AIS. Zabaglo said most boat owners

are unaware of the AIS. Eight of 39 were mussel species.



Boat inspection info:

- Open now 8:30am-5:30pm., 7 days a week

Meyers: at the junction of highways 50 and 89

Spooner Summit: at the junction of highways 50 and 28

Alpine Meadows: Highway 89, off Alpine Meadows Road north of Tahoe City

- Opening May 17:

Truckee-Tahoe: Highway 267, off Truckee Airport Road, 8:3am-5:30pm, 7 days a week

- All motorized watercraft require inspection for aquatic invasive species prior to launching into Lake Tahoe, Fallen Leaf Lake and Echo Lake.

- Knowingly transporting AIS into Lake Tahoe is against the law, and violators may be subject to monetary penalties.

- There is no change in boating inspection fees this

year. The “Tahoe In & Out” inspection ranges from \$35 for personal watercraft and vessels up to 17 feet and \$121 for vessels more than 39 feet. The “Tahoe Only” inspection sticker is \$30. An additional fee of \$35 is charged for any boat requiring decontamination and an additional \$10 fee for the decontamination of ballast tanks or bags.

Between one-third and one-half of the inspections are boaters new to Tahoe.

Clean, drain, dry is the mantra boaters – motorized and paddlers – are asked to embrace. Boats are the largest transporters of AIS.

The goal of the TRPA program is to prevent any new AIS from entering local water bodies. AIS such as quagga mussels and New Zealand mudsnails (neither of which are in Tahoe) multiply quickly by colonizing on underwater surfaces, and can destroy infiltration systems. They obliterate fish habitat, ruin boat engines, and can negatively impact water quality and the local economy by impacting recreation and the ecosystem.

The AIS program also deals with trying to remove, or at least reduce, the species that already exist – animal and plant.

Several board members applauded when TRPA staff made it known the **Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association** voted to pay for the use of herbicides in the South Lake Tahoe canals to attack invasive weeds. A member of the public challenged that reaction, wondering how they could think this was a good thing. Board Chairman Jim Lawrence said what he was really

applauding was the Keys being willing to pay for the treatment, not necessarily the type of treatment. No other board member explained his or her applause.

The Governing Board will be asked to approve a permit for TKPOA to use the herbicide. A request for proposal has been released to find a firm to do the environmental impact statement for the Keys' project.

TRPA/TRCD are also working with Fleur de Lac on a plan to work on AIS this summer. Both entities are working on the **ultraviolet** project at Lakeside. Getting rid of clams at Sand Harbor is another goal for this season.

Julie Regan, external affairs chief for TRPA, said congressional leaders are aware of the danger of AIS spreading. AIS are a threat to hydroelectric systems. Regan is hopeful with the new secretary of the Interior being from Montana that he will be a friend to the West and continue the funding for AIS projects here and elsewhere.

Record year for moisture? Depends on precip v. snow

By Melissa Siig, Moonshine Ink

It seemed like the snow would never stop falling this winter, and Tahoe/Truckee is just now, at the end of April, beginning to see the massive snowpack begin to melt, at least at lower elevations. Up high, that's another story, and in January, February and March, if it wasn't snowing, it was raining. So all this rain and snow in early 2017 begs the question – was this a record setting year?

The answer is yes and no, depending on whether you are looking at precipitation or snowpack.

In terms of precipitation, 2016-17 is shaping up to be the wettest year on record since the Federal Water Master's Office in Reno started keeping track 118 years ago. According to U.S. District Court Water Master Chad Blanchard, while we are behind 1982-83 with regards to total precipitation, there are still five months to go in the water year (Oct. 1 to Sept. 30), and we are currently ahead of where we were in April 1983.

Read the whole story

Sandoval pleads Nev.'s case with federal officials

By Yvonne Gonzalez, Las Vegas Sun

The state is moving forward with its plans to implement recreational marijuana and push back against plans to store nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain, Gov. Brian Sandoval told federal officials in Washington, D.C.

Sandoval spent time this week with Energy Secretary Rick Perry, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt.

Sandoval told reporters Friday that he disagrees with the Trump administration's stance on Yucca Mountain as well as a proposed \$230 million reduction in funding for the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act, which has allowed for the

sale of land to protect other areas. His conversations with federal officials covered these issues as well as marijuana, mining, immigration and infrastructure.

Read the whole story

Sports bar to open soon in S. Lake Tahoe



Pick 6 sports bar this fall will open on Harrison Avenue in South Lake Tahoe.
Photo/LTN

Expect Pick 6 sports bar on Harrison Avenue to be open in time for the upcoming college and pro football seasons.

The two-story, 3,600-square-foot establishment will go where Rude Brothers once was in South Lake Tahoe.

Local property owners Mike McKeen and John Cefalu gutted the building and are essentially creating an entirely new venue. The roof and siding are expected to be completed by the end of

June, with tenant improvements then beginning.

The bar owner, Matt DeLima, is a graduate of Lake Tahoe Community College. He also has a location in Pleasanton with the same name. Pick 6 refers to an interception in football, with the player running the ball back to score a touchdown for six points. A separate, smaller restaurant is also being leased by the same owners. Details about it have not been disclosed.

On the second floor of the sports bar will be a deck on the front. A slice of it will have a view out to the lake.

Expect wall-to-wall televisions to fill the sports bar, with patrons able to see an array of sporting events. Food will be available.

Even though the location only comes with 15 parking spaces, the plan is to have people park in the lot next to Tahoe Mountain Lab because it is rather vacant after 5pm, and then in other nearby lots as well. There is also a group looking at buying the two city-owned lots on Pasadena Avenue and paving them over. Harrison businesses are also looking at instituting a three-hour maximum for parking in the area.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

EPA scrubs climate change data from website



Hundreds march April 29 in South Lake Tahoe for climate change awareness. Photo/Tony Davies

By Michael Collins , USA Today

WASHINGTON – The Environmental Protection Agency is updating its website and, in the process, has removed a page that explained the causes and effects of climate change.

The agency said Friday the website, epa.gov, is undergoing changes to reflect its new direction under President Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.

The overhaul already appears to have impacted at least two of the agency's websites – the EPA's main climate change site and another regarding the Clean Power Plan, a rule put in place under former President Obama to reduce carbon pollution from power plants.

Read the whole story

Nevada gets \$5.6 million to combat opioid abuse

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY — Nevada will receive \$5.6 million from the federal government to help fight opioid addiction, Gov. Brian Sandoval announced Thursday.

The money is part of the 21st Century Cures Act, passed by Congress late last year, which included \$1 billion in grants to help states deal with growing opioid abuse.

Sandoval in a statement Thursday said the federal grant “will provide significant resources aimed at combating the opioid crisis, a sweeping epidemic which is hurting families across Nevada and our nation.”

Read the whole story

Brown signs mega-tax to fix Calif. roads, bridges

By Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Times

California motorists will start paying higher gas and diesel taxes on Nov. 1 under legislation signed Friday by Gov. Jerry Brown to provide \$5.2 billion annually for road and bridge repairs and expanded mass transit in the state.

The plan, which also includes new fees when vehicles are registered, has sparked a significant backlash. Opponents have

launched a recall campaign against one senator and are talking about a possible initiative to roll back and control the taxes and fees. Other lawmakers said they received harassing phone calls about their votes on the bill.

But state officials hope the sight of construction crews on long-neglected highways and roads will compensate for pain in the pocketbook.

Read the whole story

Truckee River flow expected to be high for months



Water from the Truckee River, which is to the left, covers part of the bike path connecting Tahoe City and Squaw Valley. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

TAHOE CITY – The Truckee River just outside Tahoe City is known for its placid pace for casual summer rafters. Today it looks like there might be some class IV rapids – it's running that fast and high.

Rafting companies have had to deal with drought for the past few years, and at times didn't open. Now there is too much water to speculate when to mark an opening date on the calendar.

The patio at the River Ranch restaurant near Alpine Meadows is closed. The water is swirling furiously and nearly reaches the top of the wall.

Water is touching the base of the bridge crossing the river leading to the ski resort.

Sections of the bike path between Tahoe City and Alpine are off limits because the river has overflowed. In some sections it has gone under Highway 89 so there is water on both sides.

This scenario could last well into summer as the water master regulates the level of Lake Tahoe. The lake is about 18 inches below the legal limit that was established in 1917 based on shoreline stability.

The record snowpack is beginning to melt, meaning the lake just keeps getting higher. Water officials say there is enough snow at higher elevations to cause the lake to rise another 3 feet in the next three months.



A raging Truckee River near the River Ranch's patio on April 28. Photo/Kathryn Reed

With the water being so swift in Tahoe City and farther east in Reno, officials are cautioning people to stay away. It's

dangerous to be near it because people and animals could easily be swept away to their death.

Plus, there are a number of snags in the river that make it even more precarious for those in kayaks.

The National Weather Service in Reno said the Truckee River hasn't experienced this high of flows since February 1999. A flood advisory is in effect in the Tahoe-Truckee areas until the afternoon of May 2.

With temperatures expected to be in the mid- to high 60s in Truckee and the Lake Tahoe Basin for much of next week, the snow will just start melting that much faster. That means more water will be released to accommodate all that runoff.

Unless there is a heat wave or rain on snow event, officials expect to handle the situation with only these minor flooding events.

Water coming out of the dam at Tahoe City flows at 2,600 cubic feet per second when the level is at the maximum allowed. Today, the flow is at 2,200 cfs.

Fire consumes house in Truckee area

No one was injured Friday when a fire in the Serene Lakes area was destroyed by fire.

Truckee firefighters said the initial call at about 1:30pm April 28 was a possible gas explosion.

The residence was unoccupied at the time.

The exact cause of the fire is under investigation.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Hydroelectric power poised for comeback in Calif.

By Rob Nikolewski, Los Angeles Times

California's years-long drought put hydroelectric power flat on its back.

But one of the cleanest and cheapest energy sources may be poised for a comeback as the state has been drenched with rain and its mountains blanketed in snow in recent months.

Energy officials studying the numbers are cautiously optimistic the sector's output may roar back to levels seen before drought decimated watersheds, streams and reservoirs.

[Read the whole story](#)