

Sierra, Northstar part of 15 ski resort sale

By Lake Tahoe News

Florida-based CNL Lifestyle Properties is selling Northstar and Sierra-at-Tahoe ski resorts to EPR Properties of Kansas City, Mo.

“CNL has had the profile for sale for a while, Booth Creek Resort Properties owns the management contract with them. I work for Booth Creek and nothing will change for Sierra when and if the REIT sells. Northstar is owned by CNL as well, and Vail holds the management contract,” John Rice, general manager of Sierra, told *Lake Tahoe News* last year when a sale was pending. “Each ski property in their profile has continued to operate under their management contracts as they did prior to CNL purchasing the ownership. It is correct nothing will change with resorts like Sierra who are under long-term management contracts.”

The 15 ski resorts in the deal are selling for \$374 million, while other entertainment properties have a \$456 million price tag.

The other ski resorts are: Brighton Ski Resort, Utah; Crested Butte Mountain Resort, Colo.; Cypress Mountain, British Columbia; Gatlinburg Sky Lift, Tenn.; Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort, Mass.; Loon Mountain Resort, N.H.; Mount Sunapee Mountain Resort, N.H.; Mountain High Resort, Calif.; Okemo Mountain Resort, Vt.; Stevens Pass, Wash.; Sugarloaf Mountain Resort, Maine; Summit-at-Snoqualmie Resort, Wash.; and Sunday River Resort, Maine.

No operational changes are expected at any of the resorts.

The deal is expected to close in the second quarter of 2017.

“We are extremely pleased to announce this transaction, which is the culmination of a two-year process of disciplined underwriting, due diligence and negotiations,” EPR President-CEO Gregory Silvers said in a statement. “This portfolio of high quality ski and attractions assets builds on our expertise in the Recreation segment, where we have a track record of delivering consistent and reliable cash flows. The transaction is not only expected to be immediately accretive, but it will also diversify our portfolio with proven, durable assets that are aligned with the positive trends we are seeing in the experience economy.”

Paragon to be majority owner of Hard Rock Lake Tahoe

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The Las Vegas company that manages the casino at the Westgate Las Vegas Resort has received preliminary approval to acquire a majority interest of the Hard Rock Hotel at Lake Tahoe.

The state Gaming Control Board on Wednesday unanimously recommended approval of a series of management and ownership licenses for Paragon Gaming for the 539-room Hard Rock in Stateline.

Final approval of the licenses is expected by the Nevada Gaming Commission on Nov. 17.

[Read the whole story](#)

More Tahoe visitors = more unwanted trash



The annual dump day is sponsored by Clean Tahoe and South Tahoe Refuse as a way to give people a cheap option to get rid of junk. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

One big negative to more visitors in the area is that they leave behind garbage for Clean Tahoe crews to pick up.

"We have definitely noticed a correlation between the busiest times of year and higher amounts of litter collected," Catherine Cecchi, who heads up the nonprofit, told *Lake Tahoe*

News.

Clean Tahoe works on the California side of the South Shore cleaning up litter. Sometimes it's junk people leave on the curb, some of it is dumped illegally, other times critters have turned over cans or gotten into dumpsters.

The organization is necessary because people are not being responsible for their own garbage. Without Clean Tahoe, Tahoe would not be clean.

For the fiscal year that just needed, Clean Tahoe picked up 560 cubic yards of litter. The previous year 490 cubic yards were collected. This compares to 608 cubic yards in 2013-14 and 583.5 in 2012-13.

"I was honestly a little bit surprised at seeing an increase in illegal dump incidents, even though it wasn't a huge jump – 191 in 2015-16 compared to 156 in 2014-15," Cecchi said. "I'm not sure why that would have happened, but it is helpful for us to know so that we can consider possibly doing some outreach and education on the issue. We'd like to let people know that it is a punishable offense and also that Clean Tahoe has a program where we can haul items to the transfer station for residents."

Animal-in-Trash Cleanups 2015-16			
	El Dorado County	City of SLT	Monthly Totals
October	2	61	63
November	7	33	40
December	3	35	38
January	1	35	36
February	0	21	21
March	2	46	48
April	5	34	39
May	11	21	32
June	4	16	20
July	13	15	28
August	7	39	46
September	4	21	25
Total	59	377	436

Source: *Clean Tahoe*

People still have to pay the dump fee, and Clean Tahoe adds a service fee. Seniors and disable residents can get a break on those fees.

Miscellaneous furniture, mattresses, and TVs continue to be the top three items that are abandoned.

A bright spot in the annual report is that the number of times crews responded to trash involving an animal decreased. In the city, the numbers dropped by 20 percent. There were 377 incidents in South Lake Tahoe and 59 in El Dorado County.

“It’s still higher than we’d like, but I think it’s decreasing in part because the city has been making it more of a priority for their Code Enforcement Division and because of the

county's ordinance requiring a bear bin after repeat offenses," Cecchi said.

Two offenses in two years triggers the bear box mandate in the county.

Cecchi is hoping when the **bear box loan program** is implemented that the animal-trash incidents will become even less of a problem.

TRPA wins court challenge over Regional Plan

Updated Nov.2 3pm:

By Kathryn Reed

A court decision today upheld the validity of Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's 2012 Regional Plan update.

The Sierra Club and Friends of the West Shore, represented by Earthjustice, filed a lawsuit saying the environmental impact statement for the RPU failed to analyze how the document will have negative impacts on soil conservation, water quality and air quality. Their contention is the plan promotes more growth, including in areas not already developed.

The environmental groups lost the initial case in April 2014 and then appealed the U.S. District Court's ruling.

"We find it hard to believe, and extremely paradoxical, that problems caused by the overurbanization of Lake Tahoe can be solved with more urbanization," Laurel Ames, conservation chair of the Tahoe Area Sierra Club, said in a statement. "The

Regional Plan Update means more buildings, more asphalt, and more traffic – the very things that have caused Tahoe’s degradation. The public will have to be even more vigilant about conserving our beautiful natural areas. We are disappointed but we continue to believe that Tahoe can be protected.”

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco’s Nov. 2 ruling said, “The panel held that TRPA’s environmental impact statement and Regional Plan update adequately addressed the localized effects of the runoff created by the amount of development permitted under the update.”

The 29-page decision was unanimous.

“Today’s ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals is yet another strong affirmation of the widely supported 2012 Regional Plan,” Joanne Marchetta, executive director of TRPA, said in a statement. “The plan is based on sound science, planning, and analysis and represents the best path forward for TRPA and its many partners to restore Lake Tahoe’s treasured environment and revitalize our communities.”

The Regional Plan had not been updated since 1997. There was much consternation to get the 2012 document passed, with threats from both states to pull out of the bi-state Compact. Ultimately consensus was found and the document was approved.

A change to the 2012 plan compared to the previous one is that there are constant updates – known as adaptive planning – so it reflects evolving times, new science and other issues.

Today’s decision further states, “The draft EIS drew criticisms that necessitated substantial revisions, but the final EIS for the RPU adequately addressed localized impacts on soil conservation and water quality. Notably, while California had strenuously objected to certain aspects of the draft EIS, particularly with respect to the localized impacts of runoff, both California and Nevada now urge approval of the

plan, as evaluated in the final EIS. We also hold that TRPA reasonably concluded that, in light of anticipated improvements in BMP maintenance, the development permitted in the RPU would have less than a significant effect on water quality.”

Santiago, Briggs lose case against El Dorado County

By Kathryn Reed

Two former El Dorado County supervisors do not have the right to back pay, according to a tentative ruling that came out last week.



Norma Santiago

Norma Santiago and Ron Briggs filed their original petition for writ of mandate on Sept. 25, 2015, in El Dorado County Superior Court. Because all the local judges recused themselves, the matter was moved to Placer County.

The former elected officials contend they are owed back pay to the tune of about \$90,000. Each was termed out in January 2015. At no time during their tenure did they say they should be paid more money.

The judge said they aren't owed anything. The state Constitution says the supervisors' salaries are set by ordinance, which the court pointed out.

The county had to hire outside counsel to defend the case. As of August, this case had cost taxpayers \$62,000, with bills still outstanding.

The decision will be final 10 days after the Oct. 27 ruling.

Santiago is gearing up to run for supervisor again in 2018, even if it means challenging current supervisor, Sue Novasel.

Keys pressing forward with weed removal

By Kathryn Reed

Twenty years ago it was recommended that herbicides be used in the Tahoe Keys to rid the canals of invasive weeds. That reality is inching closer, but is still two years off at the earliest.

No longer is it just Eurasian milfoil choking the waterways of this South Lake Tahoe neighborhood. Curlyleaf pondweed is becoming just as prolific. Both are spreading into Lake Tahoe.

It's an environmental issue affecting the ecosystem, as well as a recreation-economic issue.

The Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association has been fighting the weeds for years, with a more concerted effort starting in 2011. Research and field tests have been taking place since then. In the 2017-19 time period non-herbicide demonstrations

are scheduled, with the goal of herbicide demos in 2018-20.

In 2020, TKPOA would like to be embarking on a large scale, long-term implementation plan to bring the invasives under control.

“We want to take the level back to 1980 to have the weed mass be less than 10 percent,” John Larson, TKPOA board member, said. “We believe once we get to that point level, we can manage it without herbicides.”

Larson was speaking Nov. 1 at a meeting attended by about 40 people. They were there to get an update on the weed removal situation and learn what the plans are for the future.



In the 1960s the Tahoe Keys was built on the most sensitive marsh in the Tahoe basin. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Today, invasive weeds cover 90 percent of the canals.

To pay for future treatments the homeowners association is going to ask its members to impose a special assessment that could cost each of the 1,529 housing units \$1,600.

Other property owners are also involved. The Tahoe Keys Beach and Harbor Association is on the same page as the TKPOA. The

California Tahoe Conservancy is a partner, but has its own agenda with the Truckee Marsh restoration project. The problem entity is the Tahoe Keys Marina.

The marina had said it was going to use an **ultra violet method** to get the weeds out. While that has been talked about for the entire Keys, John J. Paoluccio, president of Inventive Resources Inc., wants to test his technique in a larger area than the Keys wants to use as a demo site.

Now the Keys marina says it is coming up with its own UV plan.

A 21-page 1991 agreement between the marina, Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association, and Tahoe Keys Beach and Harbor Association dictates how the three organizations work together, who pays what to whom and for what. However, disagreements, disputes and uncooperativeness have been the norm since the Krilichs took over the marina.

It's possible the regional water board could put pressure on the marina to work on the weed problem.

TKPOA is going forward no matter what.

High powered equipment is going to augment the current harvester. This will help with milfoil removal so more of the fragments are pulled from the water.

Herbicide use would have to be OK'd by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. While that state agency has approved the use in concept, each project has to be approved on an individual basis.

Several of the questions from the public on Tuesday night centered on the safety of using herbicides. Joel Trumbo with the state Fish and Wildlife Service said the herbicides target the intended plants, and don't harm animals of any kind. Plus, the native plants also continue to live.

Rick Lind with Sierra Ecosystem Associates said diversion dams

have been looked into, but would be “very costly and complex.” This is because the Keys was built on a marsh – meaning there is water everywhere. Underground water would fill the drained canal, thus requiring that water to be pumped. Even if there were the money to do so, where to put that water would be another regulatory issue.

Greg Hoover, the aquatic invasives supervisor for TKPOA, said once the problem is taken care of in the Keys, the entire lake will be fixed.

Calif. water conservation improves in Sept.

By Matt Stevens, Los Angeles Times

Californians halted a three-month slide in water conservation in September, saving enough to hearten state regulators who had previously expressed alarm about possible drought fatigue.

Residents and businesses cut their water consumption by 18.3 percent in September compared with the same month in 2013. The savings represented a slight uptick from the 17.5 percent reduction urban Californians managed in August.

Conservation backsliding has been a point of concern among officials in recent months.

Read the whole story

\$10,000 in stolen goods recovered by EDSO



El Dorado County deputies recovered thousands of dollars in stolen goods last week. Photo/Provided

Two suspects were arrested last week on the South Shore in connection with burglaries totaling more than \$10,000 in stolen items from people in South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County and Douglas County.

After receiving calls on Oct. 25 of several vehicles in the Camp Richardson area being burglarized, El Dorado County sheriff's deputies were able to track down people they suspected of using credit cards taken from the vehicles.

Billy Green and Tanya Moore as well as the vehicle that they were driving were located in the county on Oct. 26. Green, 31, was still in custody on Monday. His bail for the five charges

was set at \$24,000. Moore, 30, was also still behind bars today. Her bail was \$19,000.

The single largest cache of stolen tools included a generator, and dozens of power and pneumatic tools stolen from a Gardnerville job site, deputies said. Items from several other burglaries were also located during the search of the suspects' home.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Study blames low 2015 snowpack on high temps

By Nicholas K. Geranios, AP

The Western United States set records for low winter snowpack levels in 2015, and a new report blames high temperatures rather than low precipitation levels.

Greenhouse gases appear to be a major contributor to the high temperatures, according to the study published Monday in the journal Geophysical Research Letters.

Scientists looked at snow-measurement sites in California, Oregon, Washington, western Nevada and western Idaho. They found that in 2015, more than 80 percent of those sites experienced record low snowpack levels as a result of much warmer-than-average temperatures.

Most of the previous records were set in 1977, a drought year, said Philip Mote, lead author of the study and director of the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute at Oregon State University.

“The 2015 snowpack season was an extreme year,” Mote said. “But because of the increasing influence of greenhouse gases, years like this may become commonplace over the next few decades.”

Winter snowpack in the mountains is important in the arid West because the melting snow provides precious water in dry months. The snow drought last winter led the governors of California, Oregon and Washington to order reductions in water use.

California has been in a drought since 2011. Oregon and Washington experienced much higher-than-average temperatures during the 2014-15 winter, but they were not as dry overall as California, the report said.

“The story of 2015 was really the exceptional warmth,” said Dennis Lettenmaier of UCLA, co-author of the study.

“Historically, droughts in the West have mostly been associated with dry winters, and only secondarily with warmth,” Lettenmaier said. But in 2015, “the primary driver of the record low snow packs was the warm winter.”

For 111 of the snow-measurement stations in the region, the April 1 reading was zero for the first time ever, essentially indicating that there was no snow left, the study found. The overall snowpack level on April 1 in California and Oregon was 90 percent below average, the report found.

Trip to jail required in

order to vote in Virginia City

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

VIRGINIA CITY – If you want to vote in the upcoming general election in this former mining boomtown you might have to go to jail first.

Early voters in much of Storey County are voting in the former jail of the city's historic county courthouse. It will be in use on Election Day on Nov. 8 as well.

"It's our chance to show off the slammer," said county Clerk-Treasurer Vanessa Stephens. "We thought it was a good chance to showcase this county treasure."

[Read the whole story](#)