

Expect traffic impacts during president's visit

By Kathryn Reed

President Obama will be using Marine One to fly into Lake Tahoe Airport on Wednesday for the 20th annual Lake Tahoe Environmental Summit.

He is the keynote speaker at the confab at Harveys in Stateline that starts at 1:30pm Aug. 31.

The summits started in 1997 with then President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore coming at the invitation of Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev. With Reid leaving office in a matter of months, this is the last summit he will be hosting. While Clinton and Gore went out on the lake when they were here, Reid's office told *Lake Tahoe News* there are no plans for Obama to tour the area.

Usually the summits are a bipartisan affair, but the scheduled speakers are all Democrats – Obama, Reid, Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer of California, and Gov. Jerry Brown are on the docket.

This will be Obama's first visit to Lake Tahoe.



President Obama will arrive in Tahoe on Aug. 31 via helicopter. Photo/South Lake Tahoe

He can't come in Air Force One because the runway at Lake Tahoe Airport is not long enough, coupled with the density of the mountain air. Test flights were done this weekend to ensure all would go smoothly when the president is actually here.

There will be a 3-mile no-fly zone around the president. This includes CalStar, so ground transport will have to be used in all medical emergencies during this time.

With the airport doubling as offices for South Lake Tahoe, the entire building will be shut down for the better part of the day Wednesday for security reasons.

When Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump was in town last week law enforcement was scattered throughout Pioneer Trail to allow his motorcade to zip from the airport to Stateline. While the president's route has not been disclosed, expect delays on area roads on Wednesday.

"There are a variety of contingency routes. For security they plan on a variety," South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. "While we are involved, the Secret Service is understandably in charge. I think it is safe to say

that traffic could be affected anytime between noon and 4pm on the day he is here.”

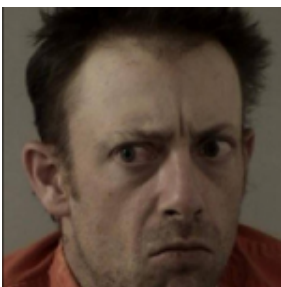
Various protests – for or against people and causes – could also tie up traffic.

PETA is planning a protest at Highway 50 and Heavenly Village Way from 9-10:30am regarding how much water it takes to raise animals for food consumption.

Even Heavenly Mountain Resort’s gondola will be closed between 12:30-2:30pm.

El Dorado County inmate dies in custody

A 39-year-old El Dorado County man died in his cell at the El Dorado County Jail in Placerville.



Dennis Rank

Dennis Renk was found unresponsive on Aug. 27 at 12:24am.

He had been in custody for nearly 10 months on a murder charge. Renk was accused of killing 56-year-old Langley Pratt of Camino. The two had been in a fight last November that ended in Pratt’s death, according to El Dorado County

sheriff's deputies.

Renk was taken to Marshall Hospital in Placerville where he was pronounced dead four hours later.

The cause of death is under investigation by a multi-agency team.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

NASA scientist keeps eye on Calif. drought

By Frani Halperin, High Country News

Sitting in a place they call the “mall” in the center of NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory campus in Pasadena it’s shady and relaxing. Scientists confab at tables with umbrellas, sipping coffee, laptops open to graphs and charts.

Jay Framiglietti, senior water scientist, is talking about NASA’s latest missions. The space agency isn’t just sending rockets to explore our galaxy—they’re launching satellites to look back at Earth.

Missions with names like “GRACE” are “amazing”—not just for their bird’s-eye view of our home planet but for what that perspective is telling us about our challenging water future.

“Sadly the picture that our work is painting is one that is very compelling and points to a very complicated water future where the availability of water will become more contentious and groundwater in many parts of the world is disappearing,” Framiglietti said.

Read the whole story

STHS teachers extinguish fire on campus



South Tahoe High instructors Whitney Pomeroy and Melissa Berry on Aug. 29 prove they can do more than teach when they put out a fire on campus. Photo/Provided

Three South Tahoe High School teachers are being credited with putting the kibosh on a fire on campus this afternoon.

The first day of school is often full of surprises, but this took it to a new level.

“By the time we got there the active flame was suppressed. They did a pretty good job,” Battalion Chief Tim Spencer told

Lake Tahoe News.

Teachers Lori Buchan, Whitney Pomeroy and Melissa Berry saw smoke, called 911, tried kicking dirt on the flames, and then grabbed fire extinguishers from inside the school to put out the fire.

About a 15 by 40 foot swath of land burned to the south of the front of the school on Aug. 29. The nearest structure was about 30 yards away. Underbrush and pine needles were charred.

“Keep in mind we don’t know the actual cause. If it was a discarded smoking material, and that is possible – we aren’t ruling anything out, a word of caution that it is extremely, extremely dry out,” Spencer said. “We are still in fire season, with high temperatures, low humidity and we are very susceptible to a wildfire right now.”

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Concerns over Nev. water-restriction proposals

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – A legislative subcommittee Friday declined to request a bill draft to mandate meters on all domestic wells in Nevada but agreed to seek authorization for the state engineer to restrict domestic well use when groundwater curtailments are ordered.

State Engineer Jason King stressed that curtailment has never been used in Nevada and the changes he is seeking are intended to protect well owners.

Nevada water law is grounded on the doctrine of “first in line, first in right,” meaning senior water right owners get their allotments first before junior right holders. Domestic well owners do not have a permitted water right. Instead, they have a right to “use” 2 acre-feet per year and are essentially last in line.

Read the whole story

Entrepreneur wants Tahoe to be a mini Silicon Valley

By Ben Margiott, KRNV-TV

Lake Tahoe is known for its unbelievably blue water, first-class recreation and, if a local entrepreneur has his way, will one day be known for its tech startup scene.

That’s one of the goals of Elevate Blue, a startup incubator in Incline Village launched in October 2015 by Jameson Stafford.

Since its October 2015 launch, Elevate Blue has helped start companies like PetSurf, Likemoji and KickParty. Elevate Blue shares its prime location with Samba TV, a company based in San Francisco that opted to open up a Tahoe office.

Read the whole story

Caesars' shares slide after court ruling

By Steven Church, Bloomberg

Caesars Entertainment Corp. tumbled the most in more than a year after a judge ruled that the casino company must face bondholder lawsuits that could force it into bankruptcy alongside its main operating unit.

The shares fell 15 percent to \$6.37 this morning in New York, and dropped as much as 28 percent earlier, the biggest intraday drop since July 2015. They had been down 11 percent in the past year through Friday.

The ruling by U.S. Bankruptcy Judge A. Benjamin Goldgar in Chicago on Friday means Caesars could lose court cases by mid-September in New York and Delaware worth \$11.4 billion. Judges in those states have scheduled court hearings to decide whether to rule immediately against the Las Vegas-based company, dismiss key parts of the suits, or send the cases to trial.

Caesars is the parent company of Harrah's Lake Tahoe and Harveys.

Read the whole story

Partnerships help form legacy

of Tahoe summit

By Tom Lotshaw

Restoring Lake Tahoe's environment is no small feat.

Tahoe is one of the world's deepest, largest, and clearest mountain lakes, holding about 39 trillion gallons of famously blue water any given day—water that takes hundreds of years to flow through the lake and out the Truckee River.

And long before any environmental restoration started, Tahoe's 500-square-mile watershed suffered decades of reckless logging, cattle grazing, and urban development in marshes, wetlands, and stream zones.

As the first Lake Tahoe Summit approached in July 1997, agencies were not satisfied with the pace of the lake's restoration.

Realizing no one agency could succeed alone, agencies were working to create a coordinated program for the entire watershed, one with the size and scope needed to correct past environmental harms that continue to impact the health of the lake and its landscape.



Environmental Improvement Program stats

- 729 miles of

roads upgraded to reduce erosion and stormwater pollution • 65,380 acres of treatments to clear forests of hazardous fuels • 16,343 acres of wildlife habitat restored • 2,770 feet of shoreline made public • 152 miles of bike and pedestrian routes constructed • 46,853 watercraft inspected for invasive species • 23,502 watercraft decontaminated • 41 acres of treatments for invasive weeds or clams

Source/Photo: *Tahoe Regional Planning Agency*

Former President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore arrived at the Tahoe summit with that same goal in mind. “We have a shared responsibility to build on our commitment at all levels to be sure the lake and its environs are protected,” Clinton said.

At the summit, Clinton signed an executive order creating the Lake Tahoe Federal Interagency Partnership. The order helped unite federal, state, and local agencies and TRPA, as well as a wide range of their programs, into a new Lake Tahoe environmental improvement program.

Clinton pledged tens of millions of dollars in federal funding for the new effort, money matched by the states of California and Nevada, local governments, nonprofits, and the private sector.

So was the official launch of the EIP, a collaborative, basinwide program involving more than 50 partners working

together to not only restore Lake Tahoe's famed water clarity, but also improve its air quality, forest health, fish and wildlife habitat, and public recreation.

Several years of work went into forming the EIP before Clinton's visit. Jim Baetge, then director of TRPA, and Carl Hasty, then a program manager at TRPA, laid the groundwork by spelling out preliminary cost shares and priorities for the local, state, and federal partnership, as well as a \$900 million project list for the first 10 years.

"When you think about how we fix Lake Tahoe, it's really a retrofit issue," Baetge said. "We've got regulations to control new development, and that's important. But we also need to have funding to correct the mistakes of the past."

Baetge, Hasty, and others rallied support for the EIP framework and raced to prepare plans for the new program in time for Clinton's visit.

"Everywhere I could at that summit I made a point of waving that document around," Baetge said about early plans for the EIP. "I wanted everyone to recognize that there is a solution. To say, here it is, here is what it will do, and here is what it costs."

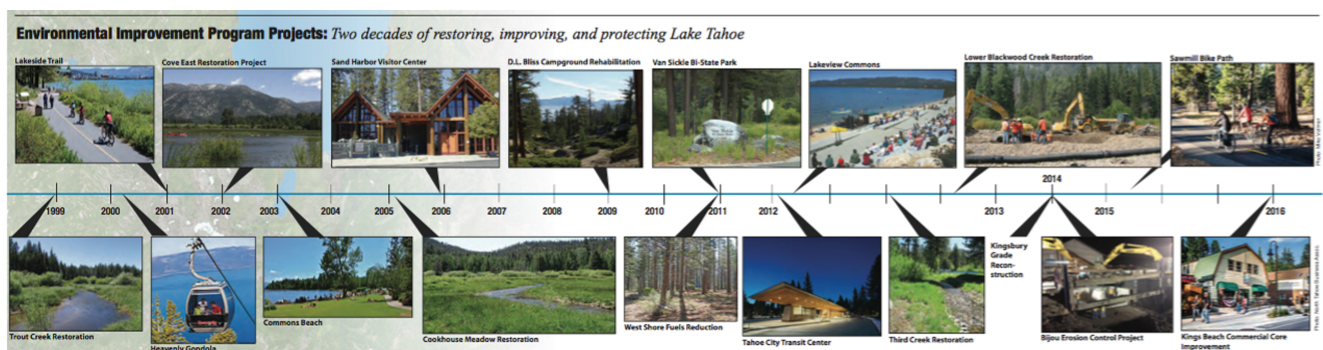
The EIP has proven more successful than even Baetge or Hasty imagined. Twenty years later, federal, state, and local agencies and nonprofit and private sector partners have invested more than \$1.9 billion and completed nearly 500 projects.

"This program is a model of how you can do environmental restoration throughout the country," Baetge said.

By taking a broad, landscape-level approach to Tahoe's restoration, often with multiple partners working together on multiple benefit projects across their normal jurisdictional boundaries, more has been accomplished than via a traditional

silo approach.

Thousands of feet of stream channels have been restored around the basin, such as projects in the Ward Creek, Blackwood Creek, Third Creek, Incline Creek, and Upper Truckee River watersheds. These projects have fixed past damage from logging, cattle grazing, and urban development to improve fish and wildlife habitat and reduce erosion and the amount of clarity-robbing fine sediment washing into Tahoe.



Thousands of acres of marshes and wetlands have also been restored through the EIP. Tahoe's natural water filters, these areas are critical in restoring and protecting the lake's water quality and clarity. They also improve fish and wildlife habitat and, through projects like the Lower West Side Project, which includes the well-used Cove East area near the Tahoe Keys on the South Shore, provide popular recreation areas.

In the Lower West Side Project, the California Tahoe Conservancy restored part of the Upper Truckee Marsh that was filled in decades ago for planned but never built condominiums and a hotel. The agency is now working to expand on the project, looking for funding to restore another 500 acres of the Upper Truckee Marsh, once one of the largest marshes in the entire Sierra Nevada, and tie it in with other restoration work upstream.

Working as the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, local fire districts and land management agencies like the U.S. Forest Service, Nevada Division of Forestry, and California State Parks have

cleared hazardous fuels from tens of thousands of acres of forest, improving forest health and habitat and reducing wildfire risk for Tahoe communities. The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team has reduced hazardous fuels on more than half of the wildland urban interface around Tahoe neighborhoods, and is working to complete the rest over the next five to 10 years and expand projects into more remote forests around the basin.

Caltrans, Nevada Department of Transportation, and county transportation departments have upgraded hundreds of miles of roadways in the Tahoe Basin to reduce soil erosion and capture and treat polluted stormwater runoff before it washes into the lake.

Agencies have built new transit centers, visitor centers, even state parks. They have opened new stretches of lakeshore to the public, put in new beach facilities including Lakeview Commons in South Lake Tahoe and Commons Beach in Tahoe City, and built miles of new bike and pedestrian paths to link neighborhoods with shopping centers, schools, workplaces, and recreation areas. Last year, El Dorado County completed a stretch of bike path linking South Lake Tahoe and Meyers. And this summer, the Tahoe Transportation District broke ground on a path that will link Incline Village and Sand Harbor State Park.

The Heavenly Gondola is a significant example of the EIP's public-private partnership model. The gondola, opened in 2000, provided a way to reach Heavenly Mountain Resort from the redeveloped shops and lodging in Heavenly Village. By eliminating the need to drive from the bed base to other mountain access points, the project helped reduce crosstown traffic by about 20 percent. Redevelopment has continued in the area, reducing impervious coverage and installing better stormwater systems. And the Heavenly Epic Discovery Project approved in 2015 is now expanding the mountain's summer attractions, offering people new ways to access national forest lands and experience Lake Tahoe.

Another example of the EIP's public-private partnership approach can be found in the aquatic invasive species program. A boat inspection program launched in 2008 through the EIP has successfully protected the lake from new aquatic invasive species. And researchers and agencies have pioneered new ways to fight invasive species already in the lake. Over several years in iconic Emerald Bay, barrier mats and divers were used to eradicate acres of invasive plants that were taking over the sandy shores and clear water and keeping people from swimming, boating, and enjoying the lake there.

After 20 years of projects completed by the partners working through the EIP, the long-running decline in Lake Tahoe's water clarity has halted and started to reverse. Tributaries, marshes, and forests are healthier. Rare plants like Tahoe yellow cress are protected. Tahoe's only native trout species, the Lahontan cutthroat trout, has been reintroduced in Fallen Leaf Lake and the headwaters of the Upper Truckee River. Communities and the transportation system are improving.

"We have a great goal to rally around, taking care of this special place," Jeff Marsolais, forest supervisor for the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, said about the EIP. "It's the old adage about the sum being greater than its parts. The EIP is the framework to bring intention and purpose to the work we are doing, and allow all of us to accomplish more together than we ever could alone."

"The EIP provides a common vision for all the public and private partners in the basin," said Patrick Wright, executive director of the California Tahoe Conservancy. "For each major program—from stormwater to forest health to aquatic invasive species—the partners have developed a joint guiding document, a priority list of projects, and a set of performance measures to track progress."



Keeping Tahoe blue is a collaborative effort. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe's environmental problems and solutions have never been limited to any one political jurisdiction. And the EIP reflects the reality that Tahoe's environment can never be restored without multiple agencies working together, coordinating, prioritizing, and investing in the right projects.

"Lake Tahoe is collaborating on a monumental scale," said Kim Caringer, TRPA's environmental improvement division manager. "This level of coordination is driving results on the ground."

Lake Tahoe and its environment are responding positively to the basin-wide restoration approach launched through the EIP. With sound science guiding project investments, the EIP now ranks among the most comprehensive environmental restoration programs in the nation. The biggest challenge now, after 20 years, is to keep progress going. That means finding funding for additional projects and adapting to new challenges such as climate change and drought and the impacts they pose for the jewel of the Sierra—as well as the local economies that depend on its health.

“If we value Lake Tahoe as a national and international icon, we have to continue and protect the investment we have made,” Caringer said.

*Tom Lotshaw is the public information officer for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. This article first appeared in **Tahoe In Depth**.*

Nev. women business owners closing gender gap

By Nicole Raz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Nevada is making gains in closing the gender gap in business ownership as well as in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM jobs.

Thank the economic downturn, too, at least in part.

Nevada is ranked 10th in the country for the highest share of women working in STEM fields, and it is keeping up with the national average of 38 percent in its share of women-owned businesses.

According to the report, the number of women-owned businesses in Nevada increased from 82,000 in 2012 to an estimated 92,000 in 2016. However, revenues did not show a correspondingly wide increase.

Read the whole story

SoCal firm may buy Tahoe water companies

A Los Angeles County-based firm is interested in purchasing two Lake Tahoe water companies.

Mid-Sierra Water Utility in 2013 put Tahoe Cedars Water Company in Tahoma and Madden Creek Water Company in Homewood on the market. Tahoe Cedars has 1,265 customers, and Madden Creek 165. Madden Creek will be responsible for supplying water to the expanded Homewood Mountain Resort, which is expected to break ground next summer.

Tahoe City Public Utility District put in a bid, by a price could not be agreed upon.

San Dimas-based Golden State Water Company, a subsidiary of American State Water Company, has made a more favorable offer. Details, though, have not been released. Even if both parties reach an agreement, the California Public Utility Commission has the ultimate say.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report