

Rough start to summer at SLT's Beach Retreat

By Kathryn Reed

Call it what you want – Connolly Beach, Timber Cove Beach, Beach Retreat – just don't call it Party Beach.

The latter is essentially what owners of Tahoe Beach Retreat and Lodge would have preferred based on the slew of events they had planned for this summer.

The problem, though, is no permits were ever obtained for the activities. And on top of that the private beach has a public easement on it. This means anyone can use the sand – to walk, sunbathe, picnic or swim – from June 1-Sept. 30, dawn to dusk.

The public component came about from a court case that started in the 1970s. It says access will not be thwarted.

Putting up temporary structures whether it's for a wedding, a volleyball tournament or outdoor bar are considered impediments.

In the three years that Urbana has owned the South Lake Tahoe hotel there has been an ongoing battle with city officials as well as residents.

At Tuesday's City Council meeting the electeds on a 4-1 vote decided to mostly enforce its rules. Councilman Tom Davis was the dissenter, saying he wanted to cut them "slack". The others didn't support favoritism.

City code says certain temporary activities require a permit and that there can only be four a year. The city wants to ensure fire safety, parking, amplified music and temporary structures are regulated.

A wedding would be considered one event. The Beach Retreat, which is getting out of the business of weddings on the beach, has three planned for this summer. They will be allowed to go on and not count toward the four activities.

City and hotel staff will work together to figure out which activities require a permit and which don't. A hula-hoop contest might be fine, while a luau would likely need a permit.

Until it is resolved the Beach Retreat is not allowed to have events. If they do, citations start at \$250 and go up to \$1,000.

The city has already had to go after property owners for putting up art at the beach without a permit.

The hotel has applied for a license with ABC to serve liquor on the beach. The city has filed a protest letter.

Police Chief Brian Uhler said without a controlled area for where adult beverages can be consumed, it would create an enforcement nightmare for officers.

While Brandon Reed, who manages the property, started his testimony with a bitter tone, and essentially said how the owners \$24 million investment in the property should be worth some favors, ended his speech in a more conciliatory manner. Still, he never apologized for his actions.

He and others said the public is welcome to most of the events, and that without them the property would not remain viable.

Councilman Austin Sass said, "Putting art up without a permit – you should have known that would piss people off. You can't keep doing the stuff you are doing and expect people to discuss (issues)."

Drought sparks larger wildfires throughout Calif.

By Veronica Rocha, Los Angeles Times

Firefighters are tackling larger and more aggressive wildfires as drought conditions continue for a fifth year in California, drying out swaths of forest land.

Raging wildfires in Northern and Southern California kept firefighters busy over the weekend, pushing the number of acres burned so far this year to well over 20,000.

“Now already this year, crews have responded to 1,562 wildfires that have burned nearly 28,000 acres,” said Daniel Berlant, spokesman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

That’s twice as many acres burned for the first six months this year than in 2015, he said. According to CalFire, 11,353 acres burned for the same period in 2015.

Read the whole story

NDOW kills bear at Sand Harbor

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada Department of Wildlife officials killed a 2-year-old bear after it made repeated forays into the Sand Harbor area.

According to department spokesman Chris Healy, the bear displayed troubling behavior that prompted officials to capture and euthanize it.

"It is a tough situation," Healy said. "Outwardly it looked healthy but the behavior was troubling."

Read the whole story

Judge Brooks wins; EDC growth measures split

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County voters put Judge Nelson Brooks back on the bench, but were divided over what to do with growth initiatives.

Brooks was first appointed to the bench by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2009, and was elected a year later to a six-year term with more than 75 percent of the vote. This go-round he came in with 58.53 percent, or 25,568 votes, while his opponent Roland Thiemann had 41.16 percent, 17,982 votes.

Their race was bitter, contentious and turned heads throughout judicial circles in the state. This is because it is almost unheard of for a sitting judge's colleagues to support a challenger.

El Dorado County Superior Court is split, though most are in Brooks' corner, which is led by presiding Judge Suzanne

Kingsbury. On the opposite side is Judge Steve Bailey who wants Kingsbury's title. He put Thiemann up against Brooks.

"It's really too bad that happened," Brooks told *Lake Tahoe News* of the divisiveness. "I will do anything I can to heal any rifts there might be and getting people to work together instead of at cross purposes."



It was a slow, steady stream of voters on June 7 at Lake Tahoe Airport. Photo/LTN

Measure E and G pertain to growth initiatives for the county. A yes vote limits growth, a no doesn't. The no position was heavily funded, with Parker Development writing most of the checks. Some expect the "no" side to have spent \$1 million to defeat the measures. The television ad buys in the final weeks leading up to the June 7 primary were impressive.

"They are two different measures. The more important one is E," Sue Taylor, community activist, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "That is what we have had since 1998 to keep it a slow growth county. It will be harder for developers because of the gridlock on the freeways that need to get mitigated."

Developers will have to address the road concerns before they can build.

Measure E passed with 51.81 percent; 1,701 votes separate the yes votes from the no.

Measure G was defeated by 1,168 votes. No – 51.24 percent, yes – 48.76 percent.

A new supervisor is going to occupy District 1 because Ron Mikulaco decided to vacate his seat. He instead ran for state Assembly because incumbent Beth Gaines is being termed out. She in turn was running for his supervisor seat.

Mikulaco, a Republican, came in second in El Dorado County in this race, but didn't fare as well with voters throughout the 6th District. Democrat Brian Caples and Republican Andy Pugno will be on the November ballot.

Gaines was the top vote getter with 25.58 percent, and John Hidahl a close second with 23.17 percent. More than 200 votes separate them.

Brian Veerkamp will retain his seat for District 3, and Shiva Frentzen for District 2.

Placer County voters kept its incumbents, with Supervisors Jennifer Montgomery, Kirk Uhler and Jim Holmes decisively winning re-election.

Statewide seats have the top two vote getters squaring off in November, no matter the party affiliation.

State Sen. Ted Gaines handily took top honors in the 1st Senate District.

"While it is early, I am pleased by (Tuesday's) election results. It proves that my positive message of stopping tax increases and limiting government spending resonated with voters across the North State. I look forward to continuing

this work on behalf of the people of El Dorado and Placer counties,” Gaines told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The Republican will face Democrat Rob Rowen in five months.

While some areas of the state experienced reporting glitches, El Dorado County had no problems, according to elections officials.

“With everything going on out in the media, we expect the turnout in the 60 percent area. That is still to be seen,” Linda Webster, EDC elections worker, told *Lake Tahoe News*. She said previous presidential primaries had turnouts between 40 and 60 percent.

Winners in other El Dorado County races:

- 5th Assembly District – Republican Frank Bigelow, incumbent.
- 4th Congressional District – Republican Tom McClintock, incumbent.

Placer County winners:

- 1st Congressional District – Incumbent Doug La Malfa (R) and Jim Reed (D) will meet in November.
 - 4th Congressional District – McClintock.
 - 1st Assembly District – Brian Dahle, had no challenger.
 - 5th Assembly District – Bigelow.
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Cyclist hurt during ride around the lake

A cyclist participating in America's Most Beautiful Bike Ride was airlifted to Renown Medical Center on Sunday with non-life threatening injuries.

"(The) bicyclist took a tumble onto the roadway. He was then hit by car," Bernadette Smith with Douglas County Sheriff's Office told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The accident occurred near Zephyr Cove about 2:05pm June 5.

Curtis Fong, who puts on the annual event, told *LTN*, "I know that when friends picked up his bike from my (registration) tent that he was texting them that he may be released from the hospital after an MRI that evening."

No further details were available about the cyclist, including age and home town.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Plague warning at Fallen Leaf Lake Campground

A flea from a Yellow pine chipmunk in the Lake Tahoe area has tested positive for plague.

The flea was sampled from one of three rodents trapped in the Fallen Leaf Lake Campground area during routine plague surveillance May 18.

Warning signs are posted in the affected area and individuals are advised to report dead or sick rodents. All campers checking in are provided with educational materials about plague. Health officials are not aware of any human contact with infected rodents in the Fallen Leaf area.

Plague is naturally present in many parts of California, including higher elevation areas of El Dorado County. Additional plague testing will be performed this week in the Fallen Leaf Lake Campground area.

Plague is an infectious bacterial disease spread by squirrels, chipmunks and other wild rodents and their fleas. People can get plague when they are bitten by an infected flea or through close contact with an infected rodent or pet. Plague can be prevented by avoiding contact with wild rodents, and by keeping pets away from rodent burrows.

Symptoms of plague usually show up within two weeks of exposure to an infected animal or flea and include fever, nausea, weakness and swollen lymph nodes. Plague can be effectively treated with antibiotics if detected early.

SLT council revises VHR rules —again

By Kathryn Reed

The South Lake Tahoe City Council did a 180 Tuesday regarding regulating multifamily properties as vacation rentals, while at the same time mandating those renting a room on a short-term basis have a permit to do so.

For now, at least, these nearly 60 multifamily parcels may still use their parcels as tourist accommodation units. This was the recommendation of Councilmembers Wendy David and Austin Sass, who comprise the vacation home rental subcommittee.

David said the reason for the change is having gathered more input from people who would be affected and realizing it would not solve the greater housing issue for locals.

Following the council's decision in May, many of the multifamily owners who are using at least some of their units as a VHR formed a coalition to protect their rights and interests. Now other VHR owners are part of the group. Their goal is to be a buffer between homeowners and the council-staff.

After the first two people spoke June 7, Councilman Hal Cole decided to recuse himself because he owns duplexes. And while they are not now used as VHRs, the option is open to him and therefore he could be financially impacted by the decision. Councilman Tom Davis already recused himself because of being in the VHR business.

Many of the 17 who spoke at the council meeting said they use the residence as income and/or for retirement. Some also live onsite, especially those in duplexes. Most said they are not rich land barons, but instead have worked hard to acquire income property and need to keep it to pay their bills.

One reason the council originally wanted to limit multifamily VHRs was to provide more long-term housing for permanent residents.

It was pointed out how there is a larger affordable housing problem in town. Most agreed it would not be solved by banning VHRs at multifamily units.

Sass pointed out how in most ski towns employees live

elsewhere and commute to their jobs.

Councilwoman JoAnn Conner said if housing is not available for the average worker, then they will be living off the hill, taking their disposable income with them as well as their kids out of local schools.

While multifamily units are still allowed to be rented to tourists today, the council did not promise that this is a long-term decision. Instead, David-Sass-Conner said they want to revisit the issue again – and soon – as well as have a larger discussion about housing for residents.

As of May 5, there were 1,862 VHR permits in South Lake Tahoe. Total permits as of: January 2015 – 1,549; October 2015 – 1,906; and January 2016 – 1,874. Since Oct. 1, 2015, there have been 106 new VHR permits approved by the zoning administrator.

The ordinance takes effect in 30 days. Also at that time anyone using any part of his or her residence as a vacation rental must collect transient occupancy tax.

At the June 21 meeting the council will review the submitted bids for an economic study about vacation rentals.

TDPUD scales back watering restrictions

The Truckee Donner Public Utility District board this month rescinded mandatory restrictions on outdoor irrigation with potable water effective immediately.

This change was in response to new California emergency drought regulations that allow local water agencies to self-certify adequacy of water supply and to base restrictions on projected water supply shortages.

Truckee Donner PUD said it has not experienced a water supply shortage during the drought and no longer needs mandatory restrictions to comply with state law. Even so, California emergency drought regulations remain in effect through January 2017. This includes the prohibition against wasting water by washing driveways and irrigating 48 hours after measurable precipitation.

The board still wants customers to strive for a voluntary 10 percent reduction in water use. and reminds the community that the C.

To help with enforcement of drought regulations through January 2017, the Truckee Donner PUD will continue the formal procedure to receive complaints regarding observations of noncompliant incidents. Staff will investigate complaints and take action where appropriate. Complaints may be filed **online**.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Benefit of LTN subscription? – Free Giants tickets

One of the benefits to being a subscriber to *Lake Tahoe News* is the occasional freebie. The latest giveaway was two tickets to the July 4 San Francisco Giants game.

The winner had to name the former Giant who will be pitching today against the Reno Aces and then say why she subscribes to *Lake Tahoe News*.

While Joyce Youngs was the first to answer correctly – Tim Lincecum, she passed on the tickets because of other plans.

She said, “I subscribe to the *LTN* because it is the best news source here in Lake Tahoe and I have learned a lot of neat things about other places too!”

Another response, this from Michael B. Clark: “I’m betting that you are talking about Timmy. We’ll be in Scotland on the 4th, but we love the *LTN* because it is the best local news source online available. Keep up the good work Kae.”

Then there was this from Linda Fine Conaboy, “Why do I subscribe to *Lake Tahoe News*? Because it’s up to date – it’s the only place to get timely news about what’s going on at South Lake Tahoe and environs. And besides that, the publisher is honorable and always excited about the product she produces.”

And the winner – Wendy David – said, “I subscribe because *LTN* gives me news often as it is happening. *LTN* also publishes some of the most interesting and thought provoking opinion pieces from many other sources. I have been a subscriber for years.”

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Calif. beats water conservation targets in April

By Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO – Californians once again beat the state's drought-time order for water savings in April – one of the last months before officials transition from a statewide conservation order to more localized targets, a state agency said Monday.

The average Californian used 77 gallons of water a day in April, down 26.1 percent from 104 gallons in April 2013, the state Water Resources Control Board said.

The agency has been the top conservation monitor and enforcer during California's five years of drought.

California in April marked its 11th month of mandatory water conservation of up to 25 percent for cities and towns.

El Nino storms this winter brought near-normal rain and snow to Northern California but not the southern part of the state.

Starting this month, California will switch to a system that will let local water agencies lift conservation requirements if they can prove they have enough water to get through three more years of possible drought.

State water board chairwoman Felicia Marcus called the localized conservation orders the "show-me-the-water model."

"I do want to be clear if this approach doesn't work we are prepared to call folks on it," Marcus told reporters.

Under the new system, water districts unable to show they have enough water for three more years' of drought must conserve by a corresponding amount.

Water agencies that are 20 percent short on water, for example, would be told to keep their water use 20 percent below pre-drought levels.

After 11 months of conservation, Californians have saved enough water to supply 18 percent of the state's nearly 40 million people for a year.