

Study: Trees, other foliage growing despite drought

By Matt Stevens, Los Angeles Times

Over the past year, scientists have studied California's trees from the air, the ground and even using X-ray technology.

Each time, they have arrived at some version of a similar dreary conclusion: The state's ongoing drought is wreaking havoc on forests, killing millions more trees at each check.

But a study published recently online in the Open Journal of Forestry offered a refreshing and counterintuitive piece of good news. A NASA research scientist found the drought did not stop trees, shrubs and other foliage from regenerating in areas ravaged by wildfires.

[Read the whole story](#)

3 Jet Skiers pulled from Lake Tahoe

Three people were pulled from Lake Tahoe on Monday afternoon near Nevada Beach after their personal watercraft became disabled.

"All three persons were nearly hypothermic, and the 13 year old complained of neck pain from the Jet Ski crash," Douglas County sheriff's deputies said in a press release. All three were taken to Barton Memorial Hospital.

Boat patrol officers came upon the Jet Ski about 1:30pm nearly one-eighth mile off the beach.

The names and hometowns of the three males are not being released. Ages range from 13 to 31.

They told deputies they crashed the watercraft and then lost the key. They had been in the water for about 25 minutes. All were wearing life jackets.

“It was a single vessel mishap/accident. They did not run into an object. I do not know if it was a rental,” Deputy Bernadette Smith told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

AT&T wants to pull plug on land-line service

By Riley McDermid, San Francisco Business Times

AT&T is pushing a bill in the California legislature that would allow it to phase out landlines starting in 2020 if there is an alternative, like cell phones, available to customers.

Bill sponsor and San Jose Assemblyman Evan Low told local CBS affiliate KPIX that the bill will help the company cut costs by ending maintenance on expensive copper wires and routing stations, while making sure customers are still connected.

AT&T estimates about 4.5 million users in California still have landlines, though.

Read the whole story

Reno man accused of robbing SLT Kmart

A Reno man who was arrested Monday night faces charges in Douglas County and South Lake Tahoe.



Micah Flaherty

Micah Flaherty, 33, allegedly robbed the Kmart in South Lake Tahoe about 5:10pm May 30.

Deputies from Douglas County saw him driving in the Stateline area. The Volkswagen turned into Zephyr Cove Campground, where deputies apprehended him.

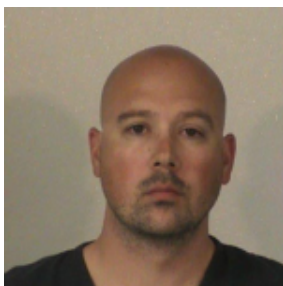
The items reportedly stolen from Kmart were located inside the vehicle, and the weapon found was an Air Soft gun. Sixteen items of drug paraphernalia were located inside the vehicle as well, according to deputies.

Flaherty was booked on charges of possession of drug paraphernalia, and possession of stolen property. Charges from South Lake Tahoe are pending.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Stateline road rage incident leads to 1 arrest

A road rage incident Monday night sent a Stateline man to jail.



Jared Kaiser

Both drivers involved called May 30 just before 11pm to complain about the aggressive and possibly intoxicated driving of the other. The drivers were coming down Kingsbury Grade when one allegedly pointed a gun at the other.

Douglas County deputies located both vehicles. The investigation uncovered a weapon belonging to Jared Kaiser, 31, of Stateline.

Kaiser was arrested on charges of assault with a deadly weapon, driving under the influence, possession of a firearm while intoxicated, and reckless driving.

Deputies said Kaiser claimed he was a former police in Southern California, and possesses a valid permit for the weapon. Both weapon and permit were confiscated.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

No more birdshot behind bars at Nev. prisons

By Ricardo Torres, Las Vegas Sun

Nevada prison guards will no longer use birdshot rounds and instead opt for less-lethal options when fights erupt, the agency said Tuesday.

The removal of all birdshot was ordered by new Department of Corrections Director James Dzurenda, with the full support of Gov. Brian Sandoval. It became effective Tuesday.

The agency has moved to implement less-lethal tools, such as rubber bullets, as well as update policies with new compliance measures and “more effective” defensive practices, the agency said in a news release.

[Read the whole story](#)

Calif. pension fund CEO sentenced for bribery

By Associated Press

A federal judge Tuesday sentenced the former head of the nation’s largest public pension fund to four and 1/2 years in prison in a case in which the pension fund CEO acknowledged accepting more than \$200,000 in bribes and trying to steer

investments to help an associate.

Senior U.S. District Court Judge Charles Breyer called the case against Federico Buenrostro, the former chief executive of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, "seriously troubling" and said it reflected a "spectacular breach of trust for the most venal of purposes, which is self-enrichment."

Buenrostro, 66, pleaded guilty to fraud and bribery charges two years ago, saying he started taking bribes around 2005 to try to get CalPERS staff members to make investment decisions that helped Alfred Villalobos, an investment manager and former board member of the pension fund.

Buenrostro said he accepted cash, a trip around the world and allowed Villalobos to pay for his wedding in Lake Tahoe. Villalobos killed himself last year, weeks before he was set to go on trial. He had pleaded not guilty to fraud charges.

"I take full responsibility and accept the consequences of the actions I took," Buenrostro, in a blue jail outfit and leg irons, told the judge before he was sentenced. "I'm humiliated, embarrassed and deeply ashamed of my actions."

Buenrostro's guilty plea came out of a yearslong investigation into the role of money-management firm middlemen, called placement agents, in helping clients win investment business from the pension fund. The fund manages health and retirement benefits for state employees and has about \$290 billion in assets.

Rob Feckner, CalPERS board president, said in a statement after the sentencing that the agency has taken "meaningful steps" to improve accountability and transparency.

"This saga has now come to an end," he said. "We are stewards of a sacred trust, and it must never be compromised for personal gain."

As part of his plea deal, Buenrostro acknowledged giving Villalobos access to confidential investment information and forging letters that allowed firms connected with Villalobos to collect a \$14 million commission on \$3 billion worth of pension fund investments.

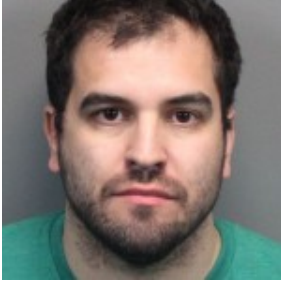
The former executive faced up to five years in prison, but the U.S. Attorney's Office asked for a four-year term, citing Buenrostro's cooperation in the case against Villalobos. He also has agreed to pay back \$250,000 to the state, prosecutors said.

Tim Lucey, representing the U.S. Attorney's Office, said Buenrostro had helped prosecutors understand the extent of his conspiracy with Villalobos and investigate other cases. He did not provide details about the other cases.

"This was one of the most startling and serious cases of public corruption in the history of the state of California...," he said. "That being said, Mr. Buenrostro did come forward and admit to what he had done."

Prosecutors sought the shorter sentence despite Buenrostro getting sent to jail when he violated the terms of his probation on a misdemeanor domestic violence charge by making contact with the victim, authorities say. He pleaded no contest in that case in March.

Former Lake Tahoe Brewing owner surrenders



Michael
Candelario

By Marcella Corona and Mike Higdon, Reno Gazette-Journal

The former owner of Lake Tahoe Brewing Co., Michael Candelario, turned himself in to Carson City Sheriff's deputies on Tuesday after he was linked to an ongoing theft investigation.

Candelario, 33, was wanted for two outstanding arrest warrants issued by the Carson City Justice Court. He was wanted on warrants for a felony contempt of court for missing a court date and a misdemeanor violation of pretrial supervision, Carson City Detective Sam Hatley said Wednesday.

Candelario was initially arrested in late February on a felony charge of theft in connection with a civil law suit. He was released on bail the next day.

Read the whole story

DA levels corruption charges

against Stateline sewer district

By Evan Maxwell, Reno Gazette-Journal

Long-simmering political tension between Lake Tahoe casinos and the government of Douglas County broke out into open warfare last week.

In an extraordinary three-hour presentation before the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners last Monday, District Attorney Mark Jackson leveled charges of corruption, illegal collusion and political malfeasance against the leadership of a sewer district that treats millions of gallons of Stateline casino and resort sewage.

Severin Carlson, a Reno attorney who is representing board members and employees of Douglas County Sewer Improvement District 1, challenged Jackson's right to offer his presentation to the board Monday, saying it amounted to "a public flogging" that was "not a valid use" of a public meeting.

The district attorney called for dissolution of the sewer district, a public agency that he said has not held elections in more than 30 years. He said the district's board of directors has colluded in the last year to manipulate Douglas County politics in promotion of a plan to dump Lake Tahoe sewage in the Carson Valley.

Read the whole story

Nev. could be impacted if GOP overhauls primaries

By Jeremy W. Peters, New York Times

WASHINGTON — Leaders of the Republican Party have begun internal deliberations over what would be fundamental changes to the way its presidential nominees are chosen, a recognition that the chaotic process that played out this year is seriously flawed and helped exacerbate tensions within the party.

In a significant shift, Republican officials said it now seemed unlikely that the four states to vote first would all retain their cherished place on the electoral calendar, with Nevada as the most probable casualty.

Party leaders are even going so far as to consider diluting the traditional status of Iowa and New Hampshire as gatekeepers to the presidency, by pairing them in one proposal with other states holding nominating contests on the same day as a way to give more voters a meaningful role much sooner.

Read the whole story