

Poll: Drought is no reason to ease environmental protections

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times

After four parched years, most California voters seem to be taking the drought in stride, saying it has had little to no effect on their daily lives. They oppose sacrificing environmental protections to expand water supplies and generally approve of how Gov. Jerry Brown has handled the crisis, according to a new statewide USC Dornsife/Los Angeles Times poll.

While a majority of respondents opposed easing environmental restrictions, voters strongly favored other approaches to boosting supplies, such as water recycling, capturing storm runoff and increasing groundwater storage.

The poll results suggest that California has proved remarkably resilient during one of the worst droughts on record – one that prompted Brown to impose the state's first-ever mandatory restrictions on urban water use.

[Read the whole story](#)

Feds upgrade El Nino to strong

By Associated Press

Federal forecasters upgraded this year's El Nino to an unusual strong status, but said it's probably not a record breaker or drought buster.

Mike Halpert, deputy director of the federal Climate Prediction Center, said the current worldwide weather shifting event doesn't match the monster El Nino of 1997-1998, nor is it likely to.

With even warmer waters in the central Pacific in August, the hottest in more than 17 years, the prediction center moved the El Nino up from moderate status. So far the El Nino is the third strongest on record, behind 1997-98 and a weird one in 1987-88 that peaked early.

Meteorologists said strong El Ninos usually dump heavy rains on southern California, but its four-year water deficit is too big to be erased in one wet winter.

Destruction from Amador County fire grows

Updated 8:20pm

A mandatory evacuation notice has been issued for the town of San Andreas because of the Butte Fire.

"Emergency officials are asking the public to adhere to this order and evacuate the area immediately due to rapid and explosive fire conditions," CalFire officials said in a statement Friday afternoon.

The 64,728-acre fire is burning east of Jackson in Amador and Calaveras counties. Containment has decreased to 5 percent.

“Fire behavior remained extreme throughout the day with rapid, uncontrolled fire growth to the south and east. Unfavorable weather coupled with fuel moistures at critical levels have resulted in explosive fire conditions. Mandatory evacuations continue to expand as the fire continues to grow. Residents are urged to stay vigilant due to current and expected fire conditions,” authorities said.

Six houses and two out buildings have burned in the fire that started the afternoon of Sept. 9. However, 6,400 buildings remain threatened. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Many neighborhoods in the area have been evacuated. Evacuation centers have been set up at the Jackson Rancheria Hotel, San Andreas Hall and Calaveras County Fairgrounds.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Man accused of abusing girlfriend, arson

A South Lake Tahoe man was arrested this week on domestic violence, arson and other charges in a case in which the victim told officers her boyfriend had said “we are going to die today.”



Brandon
Rothermel

Officers received a 911 call Sept. 9 at 2pm from a woman saying her boyfriend had physically assaulted her at his apartment in the 600 block of James Avenue. She also said Brandon Rothermel, 33, was pouring gasoline inside the apartment. While 911 operators were still speaking with the victim, she reported the apartment was on fire.

An officer attempted to detain Rothermel, but Rothermel grabbed the officer's handcuffs and refused to let them go. Rothermel also reportedly used his lighter on the officer, resulting in a minor burn to the officer's skin.

The fire damaged property inside the apartment.

Detectives served a search warrant and recovered several containers of gasoline and a lighter in the living room. They also recovered a firearm that was not registered to Rothermel.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Calif. lawmakers reach deal on medical pot

By Christopher Cadelago and Alexei Koseff, Sacramento Bee

California lawmakers said late Thursday that they have reached a deal on legislation to regulate and license medical marijuana.

The regulatory framework to corral the billion-dollar medical cannabis industry will be contained in three bills that have received the blessings of the two chambers and Gov. Jerry Brown, said Assemblyman Rob Bonta, D-Oakland, one of the authors of the measures.

Bonta said his measure, which along with the others will be released today, would require state and local licenses for medical marijuana businesses. It would create a new Bureau of Medical Marijuana Regulation to oversee the licensing and regulatory effort and involve the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the Department of Public Health.

Read the whole story

DUI enforcement snares 65 drivers in EDC

From 12:01am Aug. 21 through midnight Sept. 7 officers representing six El Dorado County law enforcement agencies have arrested 65 individuals for allegedly driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. There were **three deaths** which are being investigated as potential DUIs in the area.

The enforcement was part of the national Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign to save lives and make our roads safer.

“DUI enforcement resulted in far too many drunk driving arrests and citations countywide over the past 18 days,” officials said in a press release. “If everyone would drive

sober, thousands of lives could be saved each year. In 2013 alone, there were 10,076 people killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes in the United States. California's DUI deaths stood at 867 that year. That's almost a third of all the traffic crash fatalities for the year according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration."

Law enforcement officials will be conducting more anti-DUI efforts throughout the county and region again during Halloween before planning for the December Winter DUI Mobilization.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Barton's new CEO to focus on prevention over 'sick care', along with challenges of ACA

By Kathryn Reed

One of the biggest differences between the incoming CEO at Barton Health and the outgoing leader is actual medical experience.

Clint Purvance, who takes over the top job Nov. 1, is a doctor by training. John Williams, who will depart after the first of the year, is a businessman. Williams, 70, has had the job since November 2006.



Clint Purvance

"As a CEO with a physician background, I understand the importance of the doctor-patient relationship and the value of being a partner in my patient's journey to better health," Purvance told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I will continue to focus on the doctor-patient relationship with the goal that all our providers not only offer high-quality medical care but thoughtful and compassionate care as well. I envision my role to lead our outstanding team of staff and physicians in partnership with the community to improve our population's overall health and wellness."

Purvance, 45, has spent his entire career at Barton, having started in 1999. He attended the University of Nevada School of Medicine in Reno and completed his emergency medicine residency training at University of Michigan. For the past eight years he has been chief medical officer for Barton Health.

"The chief executive officer's primary role is to provide thoughtful oversight and guidance for the entire organization. As the chief medical officer, I focused on the delivery and quality of patient care. This ranged from expanding medical services to meet our community's needs to improving quality and safety standards," Purvance said. "In my new role as the CEO, I will have the greater responsibility of considering and interacting with all facets of the organization. I will work closely with the board, staff, and physicians as we strive to deliver safe, high quality care to our patients. I will also work in partnership with the community to improve overall health and wellness."

His goal is to put a greater emphasis on wellness and injury prevention in order to improve the health of the community as a whole.

“The Affordable Care Act continues to bring changes to our health care system and other systems across the nation. In particular, we are seeing increases in regulatory demands and reductions in reimbursements, which continue to be reduced each year, and still need to provide high quality and compassionate care,” Purvance said. “The desire to decrease costs, provide timely and appropriate care, and give a high quality experience for our patients is a balancing act. Our nation’s ‘sick care’ model where we treat patients at the time of illness or injury is fading as we shift our focus to wellness and prevention and making sure our patients receive the appropriate level of expertise with the appropriate level of care they need. This new model continues to evolve, which can be challenging and unpredictable.”

He was instrumental in getting the hospital to be a level three trauma center. He said the designation has allowed for expanded emergency care locally, which was lacking in such a remote location.

Purvance will be in charge of 900 full- and part-time employees, as well as being tasked with working closely with approximately 160 medical and allied providers.

The patient count at the hospital has been declining through the years. In 2005, the count was 86, in 2006 it was 60 and now it is 20. Officials said at times it reaches 40 patients per day. Net revenues for Barton Health are about \$150 million.

Barton Health would not release Purvance’s salary and benefits package. Barton’s 2013 tax return, the last available, shows him making \$391,481 a year and Williams earning \$465,121. Those figures do not include benefits.

The goal is to fill the chief medical officer position by the end of the year. Purvance said he would be looking for someone with a “background in clinical excellence and a passion for providing exceptional care to our diverse patient population.”

Purvance will be responsible for both jobs starting Nov. 1. Williams is staying on board a few months to help with the transition.

The Barton board conducted a nationwide search for the CEO job. The recruiting team included staff, physicians and board members. Six people were interviewed. Purvance and another finalist met with a broader panel of staff, physicians and the board of directors.

Wildfires reveal artifacts; officials try to stop looters

By Associated Press

The four-year drought that has ravaged California and the wildfires charring through the state’s dry forests have exposed prehistoric Native American sites as water levels drop and thick brush and poison oak are burned away.

That has helped artifact looters searching for obsidian spear points and other artifacts.

“Drought brings the water down. Much of the lake (normally) hides cultural sites and villages,” said Bill Salta, the state parks superintendent in Lake County.

The looters know this, flocking to the water’s newly exposed edge. Or they traverse the scorched earth looking for signs of

Native American sites, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported Sunday.

Taking the artifacts is illegal, in some cases a felony. Still, it's typically an under-the-radar crime, but in Lake County and some other places, there's a new effort by officials to attack the problem before it gets worse.

In mid-August, several members of the Lake County Sheriff's Office attended training on illegal looting of artifacts, and learned that many times looters are looking for quick cash to buy drugs.

Two days after the training ended, a Lake County deputy ran across an artifacts looter while checking on a report of a man trying to approach an underage girl. The deputy saw the suspect, Brian Gene Smith, had a satchel full of spear points, serrated hand tools and obsidian flakes. Some were attached to index cards noting where and when the items were found, sheriff's officials said. They said Smith – his hands unable to remain still – said he was writing a book and was going to return the items to the tribes.

Everything from the artifact training was playing out in front of the deputy, officials said: the drugs. The documentation. Photos of finds on a digital camera.

Smith was jailed on suspicion of crimes including possession of Native American artifacts and removing objects of archaeological or historical interest.

The arrest was a milestone in efforts to get law enforcement to recognize such crimes, said Dino Beltran, treasurer of the Tribal Council for the Koi Nation, one of the Pomo tribes in the region.

"The whole Native American community up here in Northern California is absolutely elated, rejoicing that there is a feeling of respect," Beltran said.

Human artifacts in the region date back more than 14,000 years, when humans settled around what is believed to be the oldest lake in North America. Anderson Marsh State Historic Park, comprising 1,700 acres south of Clear Lake, was created in 1985 to preserve archaeological interests

Public officials in Lake County and elsewhere are urging people to report looting and to leave artifacts where they are.

To some people, such relics represent a curiosity or a quick buck. But to Native Americans “that’s one more taking of their heritage,” said Beverly Ortiz, cultural services coordinator for the East Bay Regional Park.

Calif. tests present sobering picture of student achievement

By Howard Blume, Los Angeles Times

Echoing a nationwide downward trend, most California students are falling short of state learning targets and are not on track to succeed in college, according to the results of new, more rigorous standardized tests released Wednesday.

Across California, 44 percent of students achieved targets for their grade in English, while 34 percent did so in math.

Questions based on the new Common Core standards, which have been adopted in 42 states, are more difficult than those on California's previous test. And students for the first time took the exam on computers.

Read the whole story

Gas leak puts Tahoe City school on lockdown



A backhoe struck a gas line in Tahoe City on Sept. 10.
Photo/Provided

A gas leak Thursday morning forced Tahoe Lake School in Tahoe City to be on lockdown with a shelter in place.

The leak was stopped about 11:30am Sept. 10. It was at a residence on Red Cedar Street; it was first reported at 9:48am.

A backhoe struck a 2-inch gas main, which Zaski called "a big one."

Two streets had to be evacuated. Firefighters went to nearby

houses to make sure no gas had entered them.

“There was no fire or any other problems and no one was hurt. The school is back to normal operation and the streets are no longer evacuated,” Dave Zaski with North Tahoe Fire told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*