

Tahoe Keys Marina violating state permit



Tahoe Keys Marina is accused of not maintaining its best management practices for erosion. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

One week after Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board found 12 violations at Tahoe Keys Marina the infractions have not been corrected.

“That is significant,” Eric Taxer, water resource control engineer, told *Lake Tahoe News* of the ongoing problems.

Failing to maintain a pump so boaters can get rid of their sewage was one of the more serious violations. These pumps are required at all marinas so sewage does not wind up in Lake Tahoe.

“I was there (Monday) and it still was not working. And he assured me it would be by (Tuesday),” Taxer said. It wasn’t.

The “he” Taxer is referencing is Rob Spinnato, general manager of the marina. Spinnato was not available for comment.

Taxer said Spinnato told him the pump had been out for about a month before the inspection. He reportedly told Taxer getting parts could be a problem.

Another of the more serious violations was not having adequate supplies on hand in case there is a spill.

“They did have some oil absorbent booms on site, but an inadequate supply. There should have been more, especially for a marina that size,” Taxer said.

Inspectors found an oil rag wrapped around one of the fuel nozzles to catch drips.

“However, the rag appeared to be completely saturated and of no use,” the report stated.

Spinnato claimed more pads were on order. The order date, though, says July 22 – the same day as the inspection.

Other violations included:

- Failure to clean up anti-freeze and silicon spills in areas close to marina waters.
- Failure to maintain copies on site of all monitoring results.
- Failure to maintain copies on site of the inspection logs.
- Failure to maintain copies on site of the weekly printouts of the National Weather Station prediction reports.
- Failure to maintain copies on site of the daily recordkeeping of the rain gauge readings.
- Failure to maintain a copy of the permit on site.
- Failure to maintain stormwater runoff erosion control measures.
- Failure to perform all maintenance activities under cover, in bermed areas.

- Failure to properly dispose of soiled absorbent pads.



On July 22, Tahoe Keys Marina was told Styrofoam needed to be cleaned up; on July 29 it was still floating by rental boats and near the fuel docks.

“This one had the most amount of violations; some of which were significant,” Taxer said in comparing the Keys inspection to other marinas. “We will look at our enforcement options and consider what is most appropriate for the site.”

The ultimate goal of staff is for the marina to fix the problems. If the marina fails to do so, the Lahontan board could get involved with additional enforcement actions that could include a cleanup and abatement order that imposes specific deadlines and/or fines.

“Pulling a permit to operate does not stop the discharges nor does it assist us in getting reports or achieving compliance. They can continue operating,” Lauri Kemper, Lahontan’s assistant executive officer, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Leaving the permit in place allows us to impose penalties on the ongoing violations of the permit. Many of our fines are based on a per day violation of a permit requirement.”

This summer Taxer has conducted inspections at seven marinas in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The Keys in South Lake Tahoe has the

most egregious violations. These inspections are routine and are done every few years on a rotating basis throughout the basin. Every marina on the California side operates under a permit issued by Lahontan. They are updated every five years. The current one expires April 12, 2016.

There could be regulations from the state or Environmental Protection Agency that could change, or new technology introduced. New in the 2011 permit is marinas needing to ensure vessels have been inspected for aquatic invasive species.

The other marinas inspected by Lahontan this summer include:

- Sunnyside: No violations.
 - Lakeside: Failed to maintain records on site and didn't have working rain gauge. Those infractions have been corrected.
 - Ski Run: Needed updated version of the permit.
 - Camp Richardson: There was an area where materials encroached on a stream environmental zone. The metal has since been removed.
 - Meeks Bay: Some areas did not have appropriate erosion protections. Follow up still needed.
 - Timber Cove: Oil containers were being stored in a box under the docks. This was corrected while inspectors were on site.
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S. Tahoe Denny's dealing with electrical issue

Updated July 30 7:24am:

Late dinners were interrupted at Denny's in South Lake Tahoe on Tuesday night.

An electrical problem caused the restaurant to shut its doors and evacuate diners just after 9pm July 29. The power was turned off.

"An electrical short occurred last night in a breaker panel. The fire department shut it down. A private electrician must now repair it, so Denny's is closed without power until that occurs," Fire Chief Jeff Meston told Lake Tahoe News on Wednesday.

No one at Denny's was answering the phone Tuesday night.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Lightning ignites 2 small fires near Truckee

A half-acre fire started from lightning this Tuesday afternoon in Coldstream Canyon near the Sierra Crest.

Smoke jumpers are currently on scene of the fire. More firefighting resources are responding. Currently there is no threat to the Truckee area.

There is also another fire north of Truckee in the Sierraville

area that is putting up a smoke column. Firefighting resources are at scene and responding to this incident too.

Both incidents are being managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Ousted Yolo County counsel hired by El Dorado

By Kathryn Reed

Beginning Sept. 2, El Dorado County will have a new county counsel.

Ed Knapp is retiring effective Aug. 29. Taking his place is Robyn Drivon.



Robyn Drivon

Per state law, county counsels serve four-year terms.

“There was about a year and a half left in Lou (Green’s) term when he retired, so the board appointed me as county counsel to fill out the last year and a half of Lou’s term. That term ended May 5, 2014. I advised the board that I didn’t want to put my name in for the next four-year term since I’m 65 years

old and didn't particularly relish the prospect of working until I was 69," Knapp told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Knapp started with the county as assistant counsel in the early 1990s.

Drivon's term in Yolo County ended April 5. However, this is from the Feb. 19 *Davis Enterprise*, "The Board of Supervisors emerged from closed session last week with a two-sentence statement announcing that recruitment would be getting under way for a replacement for current County Counsel Robyn Drivon, but no additional information or explanation was provided. Evaluation of the county counsel, however, was one of the items on the closed session agenda."

Drivon was hired by Yolo County in 2006 as chief counsel, having spent a year as assistant. She also was interim chief administrative officer in 2009.

She has been hired by El Dorado County at step 5, which has a salary range between \$12,833.60 and \$15,600 per month.

Stephanie McCorkle, public information officer for El Dorado, said finalizing the contract would occur before Drivon starts.

The July 14 El Dorado County supes' meeting minutes say, "She is hired at step 5 of the salary range plus contingent upon board approval on an open agenda item the 5 percent salary increase already scheduled to commence in January 2015 will be accelerated to her start date plus she will be given credit for 80 hours of vacation and 80 hours of sick leave on her start date."

Parents sue company after son's avalanche death

By AP

ANCHORAGE – The parents of a 26-year-old Truckee snowboarder who died after an Alaska avalanche have filed a federal lawsuit against a heli-skiing company, alleging it failed to assess the danger in the area.

Nickolay Dobov died after the March 2012 Haines-area avalanche hit a group of skiers. Dodov was flown to Seattle for treatment and died there the following day.

The Takhin Ridge avalanche also killed 35-year-old Rob Liberman of Telluride, Colo., who was guiding the group for tour provider Alaska Heliskiing, based in Haines. Liberman was found dead after the snowslide.

Natalia and Alex Dodov allege Alaska Heliskiing also failed to provide more than one guide and adequate radios, among other complaints, the *Alaska Dispatch News* reported. The couple also alleges the company used misleading marketing that implied reduced risks.

A voicemail message left at a telephone number listed for the company was not immediately returned Friday.

Alaska state troopers said 6 to 8 feet of snow buried Nickolay Dobov and Liberman. Everyone in the group was wearing avalanche beacons, and a second nearby group of skiers rushed to help uncover those hit by the snow.

The wrongful-death lawsuit was filed July 16 in U.S. District Court. It seeks an unspecified amount of money, including

money for funeral and burial expenses, and to promote backcountry snow safety.

An earlier lawsuit was filed in state court in February, and the venue has since been moved to federal District Court.

Alaska Heliskiing is expected to respond to the lawsuit by Aug. 20.

After their son's death, the Dodovs created a nonprofit foundation promoting snow sports safety and awareness, and have sought sanctions against the company. They allege Alaska Heliskiing "sought profit above safety," according to court records.

The couple also wrote to five U.S. senators last year, urging Congress to investigate.

Nevadans saddled with large amount of debt

By Jeanne Sahadi, CNN Money

NEW YORK – Americans have a debt problem.

An estimated 1 in 3 adults with a credit history – or 77 million people – are so far behind on some of their debt payments that their account has been put "in collections."

That's a key finding from an Urban Institute study.

It examined non-mortgage debt, including credit card bills, car loans, medical bills, child support payments and even parking tickets.

The debt in collections ranged from as little as \$25 to a whopping \$125,000. But the average amount owed was \$5,200.

Geographically, no area of the country is untouched.

Among the states, Nevada had the highest percentage of residents with debt in collections – 47 percent – as well as the highest average amount owed – \$7,198. That was helped in part by the Las Vegas metro area, where 49 percent of residents had debt in collections.

Read the whole story

Drone disrupts CalFire air space at Sand Fire

By Dan Whitcomb, Reuters

A private drone trying to film a wildfire that has charred nearly six square miles in Northern California briefly disrupted firefighting efforts, although workers had gained the upper hand against the blaze, officials said on Monday.

Fire officials spotted the drone over the Sand Fire on Sunday and immediately called police to find the drone's owner and have the toy grounded to avoid a possible mid-air collision, a California fire official said.

"That drone was flying within our air space and was a hazard for our aircraft," said CalFire spokesman Kevin Lucero. "It essentially inhibited some of our operations going on."

The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office told the *Sacramento Bee* it was investigating the incident. It said the drone's owner

was a hobbyist trying to film the blaze.

Read the whole story

Residents returning home; Sand Fire 75% contained

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

Firefighters gained the upper hand Monday on a nearly 4,000-acre wildfire in El Dorado and Amador counties, allowing a procession of displaced homeowners to return as most evacuation orders were lifted on the fire's fourth day.

People returning to the communities of Fair Play, Mount Aukum and Somerset in southern El Dorado County hauled horse trailers back on country roads. They passed signs reading, "Thank you, firefighters, for valiant efforts saving homes," and "We love our firefighters."

In the blaze that destroyed 51 structures, including 13 residences, most people could celebrate over returning to the same homes and lives they left behind.

On Monday, fire officials said the risk had diminished considerably from the Sand fire. The blaze, declared 75 percent contained as of Monday evening, wasn't spreading. But fire crews, reaching nearly 2,000 personnel, were still attacking hot spots. And the blaze may not be completely extinguished until Aug. 1, officials said.

"The fire is not getting any bigger," said Ventura County Fire Capt. Ron Oatman, serving as a spokesman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. "But it's still

not fully contained. Even though we don't have active flames, we have to secure the entire perimeter."

Authorities have blamed the fire, still under investigation, on a vehicle driving into brush near Sand Ridge Road and Highway 49. The brush was believed to have caught fire, engulfing the vehicle in flames as the blaze spread. No injury was reported.

Read the whole story

CTC funds restoration of old campground



This cement filled culvert will be removed as part of the restoration efforts at the old Tahoe Pines Campground. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

For the first time in more than 80 years, an 8-acre parcel in

Meyers is about to look a lot more like it did before white people took over the Lake Tahoe Basin.

At the California Tahoe Conservancy board meeting this month, \$650,000 was allocated to the restoration of the former Tahoe Pines Campground. (Board members Norma Santiago, Karen Finn and John Hopper were absent.)

In 1932 Alma Mater started the campground. From 1983 until when the CTC bought the land for \$4.19 million in 2007 the Poulen family ran it. When the Conservancy board was given a tour of the area in 2008, Greg Poulen told many stories about the flood of 1996. A loud clang would echo through the campground. Another barbecue pit from one of the 59 campsites had been dislodged and was banging along the rocks in the raging river.

"The ground is smashed from years of automobiles. We will try to get rid of the soft coverage and grow some vegetation," Peter Eichar, lead planner for the site, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It's heavily armored. There are culverts filled with concrete. We will get rid of the debris."

Work will take place over the course of next summer.

While the public is allowed to access the area today, in a year it should be even a more pleasant place to visit.

"Passive recreation improvements, such as picnic tables, benches, a new bridge, and walking trails will complement the restoration objectives," the staff report says.

But no one expects it to be a destination spot. No trailheads are being built. And the terrain does not link up with any other trails.

It could be a parking area for cyclists, though. Conservancy officials have noticed people using the area to park and then ride South Upper Truckee Road. Caltrans is putting in a Class

2 bike lane along Highway 50 that will be directly in front of the old campground. This, then, will link to the Pat Lowe bike trail.

The current pavement will be removed and a new parking area with 12 slots will be installed.

The major improvements to the site are environmental. The streambed will become more natural like it was before the campground. This means removing the culverts, some of the boulders, and planting vegetation to stabilize the banks of the Upper Truckee River.

Man drowns swimming at Lake Tahoe

A 42-year-old man from Southern California drowned today in Incline Village.

The name of the man from Carson has not been released pending notification of family.

He was about 50 yards from shore when he started struggling to stay afloat, Washoe County sheriff's Sgt. John Hamilton said.

"Someone from the beach swam out and got him off the bottom," Hamilton told *Lake Tahoe News*

He was put on a raft and brought to shore. An off-duty nurse started CPR, but the man died at the beach July 28 just before 5pm.

Hamilton estimates the depth of Lake Tahoe at this area near Diver's Cove is 10- to 15-feet deep.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*