

Air quality may improve this weekend in Tahoe

While the fire near Yosemite continues to ravage the forest and threaten structures, firefighters believe they can have it fully contained by Sept. 20.

Smoke continues to be an issue for much of the Lake Tahoe Basin, though the West Shore at least on Wednesday was less impacted than other areas. Reno, Carson City, Carson Valley and parts of Alpine County are inundated more than the basin.

Schools throughout the region are continuing to monitor air quality in their specific locations to determine if and when it is appropriate for children to be outdoors for recess and if sports teams should practice or compete.



Emerald Bay on Aug. 28 at 7:50pm. Photo/LTN

A dense smoke advisory is in effect for all of the above locations until 5 this afternoon. But that does not mean the smoke will be gone as of Friday.

The National Weather Service in Reno said, "Smoky conditions could also improve this weekend due to a changing weather pattern especially for areas north of I-80. However, south of I-80 there is a 60 percent chance impacts from the fire will

continue through Labor Day.”

The Rim Fire has burned 192,737 acres and is 30 percent contained.

According to fire officials, “The California National Guard is operating a remotely piloted aircraft to help efforts to contain the fire. It will identify where fire activity is located, how it is moving, including locating and identifying spot fires. It will improve the ability to protect life property and natural resources.”

The American Fire near Foresthill is still producing smoke, but is expected to be fully contained today. It has charred 26,194 acres. Parts of the Tahoe National Forest will remain closed until the fire is out, which is much different than contained, and crews repair any areas from firefighting activity that needs it.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Yellowjackets coming out in large numbers

By Kathryn Reed

Depending on where you are in the Lake Tahoe Basin, more yellowjackets may be buzzing around compared to years past.

“The vector techs are seeing more yellowjackets this season because the winter was more mild, which allows more queens to survive through the winter. Each queen trapped in the spring represents one less nest of up to 5,000 worker yellowjackets in the summer and fall,” Karen Bender with El Dorado County

Department of Environmental Health told *Lake Tahoe News*.

She said it's not just Tahoe that is affected, but all parts of the county are seeing an influx of the bees.



A honeybee nest found in May by El Dorado County vector control. Photo/Provided

On Monday her department had 16 service calls related to yellowjackets and have been averaging about 10 a day for the past week. Specialists apply a pesticide that comes in a white powder. It's a product that is not available to the public.

"One reason we want vector control to go out is because we don't want to kill honeybees," Bender explained.

Honeybees are the "good" bees that are needed to keep everything pollinated; after all they are responsible for 80 percent of the insect pollination.

Yellowjackets are part of the wasp family.

County residents pay \$6 a year via property taxes for vector control, so a home visit is part of taxes already paid. What workers won't do is go inside a residence; they only deal with outside bee and wasp issues.

Yellowjackets can make nests in the ground, under decks, in walls, under eaves and other places. Because they can be on the ground it's important to pay attention to each step to

avoid being swarmed by the yellowjackets.

In the forest the bees don't seem to be as much of a problem as in more populated areas.

Holly Holwager, a harvest inspector with Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, said, "We are seeing the same amount of bees in the field, however they seem less aggressive than last field season."

Bees and wasps are attracted to water, go after food and like to sting people, too. Last weekend a woman was stung while playing tennis at Zephyr Cove park.

Bee and wasp stings can be lethal for people who are allergic to them.

Warren Withers, director of Barton Memorial Hospital's emergency department, said he has noticed more people coming in with stings this year compared to last year.

"When we do see the stings they can cause a variety of reactions – from minor irritation to more serious allergic reactions," Withers told *Lake Tahoe News*. "They do tend to be more numerous and more aggressive in September-October, especially as the weather cools, until the first hard freeze."

Barton Urgent Care and Family Practice has also had an uptick in sting cases recently, but so far their numbers have not surpassed 2012 figures.

The medical advice is that minor stings should be treated with Benadryl and a cold compress. If the sting is infected, get medical help because antibiotics may be needed. Call 911 if after a sting there is tightness of the throat, nausea and vomiting, difficulty breathing, cramping or abdominal pain, or fainting.

Having an epi pen is also advisable for those with known allergies.

El Dorado County vector control is at (530) 573.3197.

Study: Growing number of kids 'too hungry to learn'

By Rebecca Klein, *Huffington Post*

The vast majority of teachers and principals routinely see students that are "too hungry to learn," according to a report released Tuesday by the No Kid Hungry organization.

The organization, which works to end child hunger, surveyed more than 1,000 teachers and principals around the country for the report, according to a press release. The results show that 73 percent of teachers said they regularly instruct hungry students who don't have enough to eat at home, and 87 percent of principals said they consistently see hungry students in school. As a result of such pervasive hunger, teachers spend nearly \$40 a month buying food for kids out of pocket, the survey found.

The results represent an increase since last August, when the organization found that 3 out of 5 teachers had students who regularly came to school hungry. Christy Felling, No Kid Hungry public relations director, told the *Huffington Post* that there are several potential reasons for the uptick in hunger.

"I think what has happened is the so-called economic recovery hasn't really reached low-income people. People are still really having a tough time, and that's what we're seeing,"

Felling said in a phone interview. “We’ve seen it anecdotally with some of our campaigns around the country. People still haven’t gone back to work, or they’ve blown through savings.”

[Read the whole story](#)

Man drowns at Sly Park reservoir

By Kim Minugh, Sacramento Bee

A Novato man drowned at Jenkinson Reservoir on Saturday afternoon, authorities announced Tuesday.

The man, identified as 34-year-old Ramiro Nunez Magana, was swimming with family members near the Pinecone campground about 1:45pm Saturday when he began to struggle. Before anyone could reach him, the man disappeared from sight in the waters of the reservoir, also known as Sly Park Lake, according to a news release from the El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office.

[Read the whole story](#)

Bad air expected all week in Tahoe region



Smoke in Tahoe is providing
for some spectacular sunsets
like the one Aug. 27.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Expect the skies in Tahoe and points east to be smoky through the week. A dense smoke advisory has been issued through 5pm Thursday.

“Outdoor activities are strongly discouraged due to the poor air quality. Visibility is likely to remain below 5 miles in the Reno area and remain below 4 miles in Carson City, South Lake Tahoe, Minden and Markleeville today. While some improvement in air quality and visibility may occur, winds are favorable for smoke to persist into Friday,” the National Weather Service in Reno said.

The annual Labor Day weekend fireworks set to go off Sunday on the South Shore are still planned.

Lake Tahoe Unified and Douglas County school districts are keeping students indoors because of the poor air quality.

South Lake Tahoe reopened the city pool today.

It is the Rim Fire burning near Yosemite National Park that is bringing the smoke to the region. It has consumed 187,466 acres and is now the seventh largest fire in the state’s history and the largest in the Sierra Nevada. It is 23 percent contained.

The fire destroyed Tuolumne Berkeley Family Camp, which included three commercial buildings, and 85 tent cabins and outbuildings. Facilities at the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, San Francisco's water supply, remain threatened.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Probe: Nev. mental hospital regularly released homeless patients

By Phillip Reese and Cynthia Hubert, Sacramento Bee

Some of them heard voices and saw imaginary people. Some talked of killing themselves by jumping off a building or walking in front of a bus. They suffered from afflictions ranging from cocaine addiction to schizoaffective disorder, and most were homeless and without medical insurance.

About 40 percent of the mental patients whose charts were reviewed recently by a federal agency were discharged from Nevada's primary psychiatric facility to homeless shelters in Las Vegas or destinations across the country without evidence of proper planning for their continuing care.

The U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services assessed a sample group of 41 charts for patients at Rawson-Neal Psychiatric Hospital in Las Vegas and found that in 16 cases, patients were discharged without evidence the hospital had made even basic arrangements for their shelter, support or follow-up care.

[Read the whole story](#)

Quest is on for safer drinking water in U.S.

By Peter Andrey Smith, New York Times

UNIONTOWN, Pa. — On a muggy Friday afternoon in a strip mall parking lot, as thunder echoed in the Alleghenies and cottonwood seeds floated on the breeze, Lee Stanish, 32, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Colorado Boulder, and Natalie Hull, 24, a lab manager, stepped out of a white van, its hood plastered with dead insects.

After a brief conversation with a chain store manager, the two women retrieved a large black container from their van and wheeled it into the bathroom. Ms. Hull opened the faucet and let the cold water run. The two snapped on disposable gloves, unpacked their equipment, and began collecting tap water.

Hull checked the water temperature and filled water in a vial of formaldehyde for cell counts. Stanish placed another vial of water in a portable chlorine meter for analysis. “We’re in and out in about 10 minutes,” she said. Hull flipped the faucet off. On to the next tap.

By nightfall, the van would be loaded with close to 30 gallons of water sampled from dozens of locations across the Ohio River Valley. Stanish and Hull planned to set up a mobile laboratory in a hotel room in Morgantown, W.Va., all in an effort to understand a hidden underground ecology where organisms eke out a living in dark, cool pipes loaded with chlorine.

“What we know so far is that it’s usually very clean,” Stanish said. “But it’s a disturbed environment.”

The 53,000 water utilities in the United States deliver some of the safest drinking water in the world – a public health victory of unrivaled success that began in 1908 with chlorination campaigns in Jersey City and Chicago. Still, millions of individual cases of waterborne diseases occur annually and related hospitalization costs approach \$1 billion each year. In 2007 and 2008, the most recent years for which figures are available, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recorded 164 waterborne disease outbreaks, almost entirely from protozoan cysts of the parasite *Cryptosporidium*.

Read the whole story

Bay Area man drowns at Sand Harbor

By Kathryn Reed

A San Mateo man drowned at Sand Harbor after he fell off a borrowed standup paddleboard.

Kenneth Campo, 42, was between 200 and 300 yards from shore to the right of the boat ramp on Aug. 23 about 3:45pm. Witnesses told authorities they heard him yell, fall and never surface.

Someone on shore swam to the area and was able to pull Campo off the bottom of the lake from about 20-feet down. Campo was pronounced dead at an area hospital.

Ed Lyngar with the Nevada Department of Wildlife said the death is under investigation.

“People who visit Tahoe are often unprepared for cold water. Cold water shock is a real thing,” Lyngar told *Lake Tahoe*

News. "Cold water can cause swim failure. That is why we say a life jacket is the most important piece of equipment you can have."

Lyngar was quick to add that it is too soon to know if that is what happened in this case.

Lake Tahoe can feel warm to the touch, especially this time of year, or even a foot down. But farther down and farther offshore it can quickly drop to 60 degrees.

Lyngar said because Campo borrowed the board he missed out on the safety talk from the rental company that would have gone over issues about the water temperature.

A life jacket was secured to the paddleboard with the leash that is supposed to be strapped to a paddler's ankle.

The law in Nevada is standup paddlers must have a life jacket on the paddle. People 12 and younger must wear a jacket.

Big tobacco embracing e-cigarettes

By Kyle Stock, Bloomberg Businessweek

Apparently, the nicotine business never changes—with smoke or without. Big Tobacco fought government overseers for decades, but eventually traditional cigarettes became heavily regulated products. Now the Food and Drug Administration is working on a package of regulations for e-cigarettes devices, which vaporize liquid nicotine with heat, rather than burning it via tobacco leaves. Among other things, the FDA is considering a ban on online sales of e-cigarettes to cut down on sales to

minors, and discussing whether to curtail advertising. A roster of proposed rules is expected in October.

The regulatory chatter comes as the e-cigarette market is finally expected to top \$1 billion this year. Tobacco giant Altria Group is just this month rolling out its e-cigarette, dubbed "MarkTen." Reynolds American is also rushing to ship its VUSE product. Meanwhile, Lorillard booked \$57 million in e-cigarette revenue in the first three months of the year.

Bloomberg Industries estimates that at their current pace, e-cigarette sales will top that of traditional smokes by 2047. The estimate comes with a big caveat: the assumption that politicians won't heap a bunch of new taxes on e-cigarettes—levies that have served as a sort of emphysema to the body of the cigarette business.

Read the whole story

Rim Fire's intensity takes toll on ecosystem

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times

Standing on ridges miles away from the Rim Fire, John Buckley has traced the path of the huge Sierra Nevada blaze by watching fire clouds billowing above the Stanislaus National Forest.

The view has been sobering. As the Rim blaze burns its way into the record books, Buckley thinks it is roasting some of the last remaining old-growth stands in the Stanislaus forest, incinerating thousands of acres of young trees planted at a

cost of millions of dollars after massive 1987 fires and destroying important nesting areas for California spotted owls and goshawks.



The Rim Fire near Yosemite is one of the largest in California's history.
Photo/CBS Sacramento

The extent of ecological damage from the Rim fire won't be known until after it dies out and crews survey the burn area. But given the intensity of the blaze and 200-foot-tall walls of flame shooting up canyons, Buckley and others expect nothing to be left on big patches of mountain chaparral areas and timberland.

"It's making these incredible hot runs where it's literally wiping out the forest," said Buckley, an ex-firefighter for the U.S. Forest Service and head of the Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center, which has worked for more than two decades to protect the region's ecosystem.

For a variety of reasons, the region is one of the most burned in the Sierra.

Read the whole story