

July 4 South Tahoe fireworks debris washing ashore

By Maria Medina, CBS-13

Residents say they're being forced to clean up the mess more than a week after a fireworks show at Lake Tahoe.

For more than a week, Joan Truxler's filled bag after bag with fireworks debris left over from south Lake Tahoe's Fourth of July show.

The first people to alert her about the trash washing up onshore were her grandsons.

"We were clearing out the area around us, and we were shocked and appalled," she said. "So I continued to walk down the beach and found huge pieces of debris with wires attached to it, and the company's name."

The company that puts on the show, Pyro Spectacular, tells CBS13 they cleaned as much of the debris from the water soon after the show and the next morning, just like they do every year.

Truxler says she's found debris from those South Shore fireworks along a quarter-mile stretch of this beach. But the company says this is the first time they've gotten this complaint after more than 30 years putting on the show.

"We spend about \$3,000 to \$5,000 on cleanup," said Mike Frye with the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority.

The group oversees the fireworks show, and Frye says they also hire the cleanup crew, including divers.

"It's just something that's never happened before."

He says they're working with Pyro and other agencies to figure out what happened this year, especially since the next fireworks show is less than two months away on Labor Day.

"We love the lake and want to take care of it."

He says half of the debris they found was from Pyro, the other half from illegal fireworks.

But Joan says most of what's washed up on shore is from the show.

"I was actually able to find their name on some of the debris," she said. "I would challenge Mike Frye to come look at my debris. None of the agencies here have offered to come and extend a hand."

The Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority wonders if strong winds that day are to blame, or if a net broke free.

They're looking into fishing nets for the Labor Day fireworks show.

Meanwhile, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is investigating what went wrong.

Bison Fire cost nearly \$8 mil. to extinguish

With the Bison Fire being 100 percent contained, crews are being sent to other fires.

Firefighters will be finishing rehabbing and watching for any hot spots that might still be out there.

Since the fire started July 4 by lightning, four firefighters have been injured – two sustained twisted knees, one twisted an ankle and another had breathing issues.

An old mining structure was lost, but no homes.

It has cost \$7.72 million to date to fight fire in the Pine Nut mountains of Douglas County.

“Nevada is seeing the worst drought in 60 years combined with record temperatures that increases the possibility of wildland fires,” fire officials said in a statement. “Those who live in and around the public lands need be extra careful and lessen the possibility of losing your home by clearing 30 feet around your residences.”

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Online gaming moving forward in Nevada

By Ed Komenda, Las Vegas Sun

Ultimate Gaming has completed its 30-day field trial for Ultimate Poker, the first ever fully legal online gambling site in the United States.

The Nevada Gaming Control Board has recommended approval for the company to offer real money gambling at UltimateGaming.com.

Ultimate Gaming, majority owned by Station Casinos, in April became the first company in history to offer fully legal online poker in the United States.

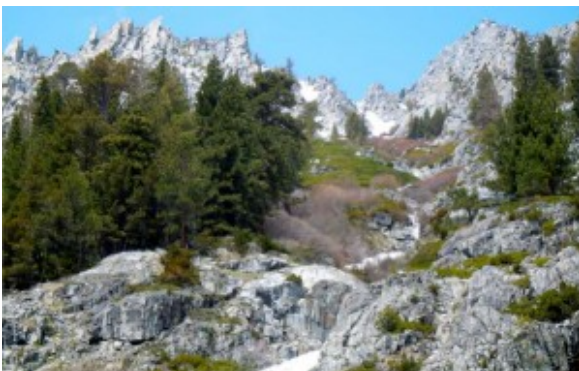
Study slams USFS for lack of trail maintenance

By Jeff Barnard, AP

GRANTS PASS, Ore. – Shane Krogen has no trouble finding retirees willing to spend a week in the wilderness grubbing out rocks and swinging a pick or shovel to bring a hiking trail back up to national standards.

The hard part is getting the U.S. Forest Service to come up with a few thousand dollars to buy the volunteers a T-shirt and feed them well, which is all it takes to keep them coming back for more.

“The Forest Service will fund us when they can, if they’ve got the dollars,” said Krogen, executive director of the High Sierra Volunteer Trail Crew in Clovis. “It’s just a matter of their budgets being cut drastically.”



Eagle Falls in Desolation Wilderness. Photo/LTN file

A government watchdog agency has found that hiking trails on national forests suffer from a \$314 million backlog in maintenance, with only a quarter of the 158,000 miles of trails meeting national quality standards.

"The Forest Service has more miles of trail than it has been able to maintain, resulting in a persistent maintenance backlog with a range of negative effects," said the report from the Government Accountability Office.

Annual funding has lagged far behind the need. In 2012, for example, trails needed \$523.7 million for maintenance, operations and capital improvements, according to the report, yet received only \$81.9 million. The gap in 2006 was similar, with \$509.1 million of need, but only \$74.2 million in funding.

The report adds that the Forest Service relies heavily on volunteers to maintain trails, but does not take full advantage of them. While the Forest Service manual sets a goal of using volunteers, the agency has not established that as an expectation of trails managers, and training on working with volunteers is limited.

In 2012, the equivalent of 667 volunteers working full time did \$26 million worth of work, the report said. The volunteer effort was equivalent to the 667 full-time Forest Service employees working on trails.

The national system of recreational fees does little to fill the funding gap. The Forest Service told Congress last month it collects \$66 million a year, mostly from campgrounds, cabins and picnic areas. The law authorizing the fee expires in December 2014.

Jim Furnish is a retired Forest Service deputy chief for the forest system. He says the problem goes back decades, and results from the Forest Service and Congress making recreation a low priority, with a low level of risk when the work doesn't

get done.

“Part of the issue is the consequences of neglect are not seen as severe,” he added. “People can usually get where they’re going, just with difficulty.”

Forest Service Chief Thomas L. Tidwell said in his formal response to the report that the agency agrees with the GAO’s conclusions, and pledged to look for ways to close the funding gap and improve training. He said the growing need to fight wildfires and budget cuts both contribute to the problem.

Krogan said spending \$600 for T-shirts and \$2,000 for food will keep a crew of 50 volunteers working in the wilderness for five days. A paid crew would cost 20 times that.

Why would someone work so hard for so little?

“Most of us sit at a desk all week and at the end of the week have no tangible outcome for our effort,” said Krogen. “Whether they are cutting out a tree or building rock steps, they have a sense of pride and ownership. ‘Look what I was able to do, and I’ve never done this before. Now I’ll be able to come through here and remember this day for the rest of my life.’”

Mammoth, LA water districts resolve decades-old dispute

By Louis Sahagun, Los Angeles Times

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and the Mammoth Lakes Community Water District announced Thursday that they have reached a compromise settlement over use of the High

Sierra ski town's water supply, ending a dispute whose roots reach back a century.

Under the terms, Mammoth Lakes will pay the DWP \$3.4 million now and \$2.4 million, adjusted higher for inflation, in half a century.

In return, the DWP will allow Mammoth Lakes to continue to draw its water supply from Mammoth Creek, which tumbles through town. The DWP also will drop a pair of lawsuits it filed nearly two years ago, and both sides agreed never to challenge each other's water rights.

The DWP lawsuits argued that the department has owned the water from Mammoth Creek since 1905. DWP officials said the Mammoth Lakes diversion wasn't a big concern when that community was small. But after decades of growth, which included condos and golf courses, its water diversions grew to equal 1 percent of the flows in the century-old aqueduct that carries water from the Eastern Sierra to Los Angeles.

Mammoth Lakes insisted it was entitled to as much as 2,760 acre-feet of water annually under licenses and a permit granted by the state dating to 1949. The district also argued that the DWP should not be allowed to claim the water after allowing the community to become dependent upon it for decades by relying on those licenses and permit.

The settlement gives Mammoth Lakes the right to continue to divert up to 2,760 acre-feet of water annually from the creek, an amount both sides agree can be increased as the community grows.

The DWP will use the money contributed by Mammoth Lakes to pay for water-saving improvements designed to increase flows in the Los Angeles Aqueduct system by 1,779 acre-feet of water annually.

"The Mammoth Lakes community is assured of the water it needs

to flourish,” DWP General Manager Ron Nichols said in a statement, adding that the water conservation efforts the community pays for would in effect replace water used by the district.

Tom Smith, president of the Mammoth Community Water District board, said in a statement that the board appreciates “the rational approach that L.A. DWP took in resolving these matters. Even though this is a minimal amount of water for L.A., it is critical to our community’s future.”

The district serves 7,700 year-round residents who are largely working-class employees catering to vacationers from Los Angeles, which is about 300 miles south.

Tahoe’s declining clarity along shoreline being studied

KTVN Channel 2 – Reno Tahoe News Weather, Video –
By Erin Breen, KTVN-TV

It is a beautiful day at Lake Tahoe and Angela Stevens and Brian Fitzgerald are just offshore. They are cruising the shoreline at eight miles an hour. And they are hard at work. They are working on a new project that the Desert Research Institute has launched to study clarity ... at the urban interface.

“This is important because this is where a lot of the processes occur,” says Stevens. “There’s storm water runoff and there’s erosion into Lake Tahoe and that reduces the clarity that you can see in the middle of the lake.”



Asian milfoil is one of the items making the near shore of Lake Tahoe murky. Photo/LTN file

Most of the studies on Lake Tahoe's clarity have been done in the middle of the lake.

Now, there is concern about collecting thresholds on what can enter the lake at the shoreline, whether it be storm rain, dust from construction or roadway runoff. So these scientists are studying turbidity, and chlorophyll. And they are doing it by continuously sampling the near shore water and running it through technical sensors and collecting the data.

Water quality is a passion for Angela Stevens. She is a grad student from UNR working at the DRI and she is the first to be awarded the Caesars Foundation Fellowship that will fund the project for the next two years. You see, Caesars has an interest in keeping the lake as beautiful and clean as possible too. They depend on the tourists it draws to Tahoe. And that makes for a great public, private partnership to promote stewardship of the lake for all.

Caesars separating online, brick and mortar gaming

By AP

LAS VEGAS – Caesars Entertainment is taking steps to spin off its online gambling venture into a separate company.

The casino operator, which owns Harveys and Harrah's Lake Tahoe in Stateline, said in a Securities and Exchange Commission filing Wednesday that it plans to raise \$1.2 billion by selling stock in the company.

The new company also would include the Planet Hollywood Hotel & Casino and a Baltimore casino under development.

Caesars plans to launch an online gambling site in Nevada in the coming months, and it already operates sites abroad.

The company said in its regulatory filing that it is "actively participating in the U.S. lobbying effort" to expand legalized online gambling beyond the three states where it is currently permitted: Nevada, New Jersey and Delaware.

Once the world's largest gambling operator, Caesars has struggled with debt recently.

It's the only major U.S. casino company without a presence in the Chinese gambling enclave of Macau.

The company posted a smaller loss last quarter but still missed expectations.

Rivals Wynn and Las Vegas Sands posted big quarterly gains, helped by their lucrative Macau resorts.

Caesars operates 10 Las Vegas Strip casinos and controls several dozen casinos throughout the country.

S. Lake Tahoe man going to prison for DUI in SoCal

By Jim Holt, Santa Clarita Signal

A South Lake Tahoe man responsible for sending two young Valencia women to the hospital with serious injuries in a May DUI-related collision was taken to state prison Thursday to begin serving a two-year sentence, law enforcement officials said.

Michael Guevara, 32, was picked up at the Pitchess North Facility jail by officers with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and taken to a state prison, a spokesman at the facility said Thursday.

Guevara entered a plea of no contest June 6 when he appeared in San Fernando Superior Court to the charge of driving under the influence of alcohol causing injury, said a spokeswoman of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office.

"He was sentenced on June 6 to two years in state prison," District Attorney's Office spokeswoman Jane Robison said Thursday.

Justice was served quickly in this felony case compared to other felony charges filed in Santa Clarita Valley and still being addressed month to month in San Fernando Superior Court, officials said.

"He took responsibility for his actions," said Detective Travis Kelly of the Santa Clarita Valley Sheriff's Station, who arrested Guevara shortly after the crash.

On May 25, Guevara's Chevy Suburban hit two other "small

sedans" at the intersection of Newhall Ranch Road and Copper Hill Drive in Valencia.

"He ran a red light and hit two cars making a left-hand turn from the other direction," Kelly said. "As a result of the crash, there were two patients."

One young woman suffered internal injuries and broken bones. The second, an occupant of the same car, was also seriously hurt, having suffered injuries more serious than first believed, Kelly said.

"They're doing OK and recovering, but slowly," he said Thursday.

The driver of the other "small sedan" was not seriously injured, Kelly said.

Gunman kills himself at South Tahoe ski resort

Part of Heavenly Mountain Resort was shut off to hikers for the better part of Friday because a gunman was on the mountain.

A 25-year-old Fremont man eventually shot himself July 12. *Lake Tahoe News* is not publishing the man's name.



El Dorado County sheriff's
deputies get suited up July
12. Photo/Provided

The man had posted a video on Facebook with a message to his family and the GPS coordinates of where he could be found. Friends alerted law enforcement that the Iraq war veteran was suicidal and left his residence with a .308-caliber rifle, .45-caliber handgun and military backpack.

Because El Dorado County sheriff's deputies knew the type of weapons he had on him and that he was an ex-Marine, they approached the incident as though it could have been a possible ambush.

A resident in the area told *Lake Tahoe News* just before 4pm a helicopter was circling the California Lodge at least seven times. The California Highway Patrol helicopter spotted the man in a wooded area off Sherman Way in South Lake Tahoe.

By 5pm there was no visible evidence law enforcement had been in the area and people were boarding the Heavenly tram for a wedding – perhaps unaware of the events that unfolded earlier in the day. Heavenly deferred all comment to the sheriff's department.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Shooting suspect behind bars



Gary Wilson

Update 6:35pm:

Shooting suspect Gary Wilson turned himself in to law enforcement about 3:45 this afternoon..

He faces attempted murder with use of a deadly weapon and other charges.

But was expected to be set this evening at between \$100,000 and \$500,000.

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Douglas County officials are looking for a man who they say is armed and dangerous that they believe was involved in a shooting July 11.

The shooting occurred about 2:15pm Thursday in the Topaz Ranch Estates area.

The suspect has been identified as Gary Wilson. Wilson is described as a white male adult, 44, approximately 5-feet-10 and 180 pounds. He has brown hair and blue eyes. He was last seen wearing blue jeans and no shirt.

The victim sustained a non-life threatening gunshot wound in the shoulder.

Anyone with information regarding the whereabouts of Wilson is asked to call (775) 782.5126. Or call Secret Witness at (775) 782.7463. A reward is being offered for his capture.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*