

Camp near Kyburz evacuated; fire at 160 acres



Smoke rises from a wildfire near Kyburz on Highway 50 on July 8. Photo/Ty Robben

Updated 11:05pm

Fire officials have revised the earlier estimate of number of acres burned in the Kyburz Fire. It is 160 acres.

A music camp in the area has been evacuated. The nearly 100 people left on their own and not to a shelter.

Updated 9pm:

The Kyburz Fire has consumed 600 acres as it moves north into timberland. There is zero containment.

This is the same area of the Fred's Fire that burned 4,302 acres in 2004, and the much more devastating Cleveland Fire of 1992 that destroyed 41 homes and several outbuildings, and charred 22,485 acres.

The Kyburz Fire has destroyed one outbuilding. No other structures are threatened.

Laura Hierholzer, spokeswoman for the U.S. Forest Service, said because of those previous fires what is burning now is

much smaller trees in the Eldorado National Forest.

Updated 8:25pm

The fire has grown to 50 acres.

Highway 50 is open to controlled traffic in various sections through the American River canyon.

Six air tankers, five helicopters, 13 engines, six hand crews and five water tenders were helping fight the blaze.

A plume of smoke from the Kyburz Fire could be seen from as far away as Cave Rock Monday night.

--

Highway 50 near Kyburz is closed in both directions because of a wildland fire.

It is believed that a trailer lost a wheel and sparked the blaze that was first reported at 12:41pm July 8.

The fire is on the south side of the highway. It has consumed at least 5 acres.

Traffic is being held in Meyers on the east and at Sly Park Road on the west side. There is no estimate on when the highway will be open.

"The fire started in a rural section of the highway between White Hall and Kyburz. It is spreading east," Caltrans officials said in a press release.

No evacuations have been ordered, but a nearby music camp has been notified of the blaze.

Wind is fanning the flames.

The U.S. Forest Service is the lead agency.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Pedestrian dies from injuries sustained July 4

A Sparks man has died from the injuries he sustained while walking to see the fireworks at Donner Lake on July 4.

Leonard Richard Whitlow, 46, was reportedly hit by bicycle rider Petra Bakker-Borhani, 24, of Truckee on Donner Pass Road along Donner Lake.

Whitlow died at Renown Medical Center in Reno, Truckee police announced July 8.

Bakker-Borhani was initially arrested on charges of driving under the influence. More charges are likely.

Anyone with information about the collision is asked to call (530) 550.2335 or email rwomack@townoftruckee.com.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

RV, USFS truck collide in Meyers



An RV was in an accident July 8 in Meyers with a USFS truck. Photo/Brad Perry

Updated 8:41pm:

An 87-year-old Pleasant Hill man told officials he didn't hear the lights and sirens.

A U.S. Forest Service captain was making a left on Highway 50 from Pioneer Trail in Meyers on a red light to get to the fire in Kyburz, but the RV didn't yield and the two vehicles collided when they reached the intersection at the same time.

No names have been released.

CHP officers are still investigating the accident.

--

A U.S. Forest Service truck on its way to the fire in Kyburz was involved in a collision with an RV Monday afternoon.

The accident occurred at 1:44pm July 8 at the intersection of Highway 50 and Pioneer Trail in Meyers.

According to Jeff Gartner with the California Highway Patrol, one person was taken to Barton Memorial Hospital for evaluation.

A witness said he saw firefighters help a woman, who appeared to be OK, out of the front window of the RV.

The Forest Service truck, according to the witness, had lights and sirens on when it entered the intersection on the red light. The RV was towing a vehicle and swerved into a ditch.

The CHP said details would be forthcoming.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

State of emergency declared in Douglas County



A huge plume of smoke rises
July 7 from the Bison Fire.
Photo/Sharon Resnikoff

Updated 8:42pm:

The Bison Fire is at 21,337 acres and 25 percent containment.

Authorities say the threat to the 20 buildings is diminishing.

Douglas County commissioners declared a state of emergency. This allows the county to request additional state resources and assistance, as well as federal assistance, should the governor deem a state of emergency.

Updated 2:35pm:

Crews are gearing up for another wind event this afternoon and fire activity similar to yesterday.

The Bison Fire has grown to 17,000 acres.

No injuries have been reported, but the fire ran through the Slater Mine area destroying several old structures.

The following road closures for non-residents are in place for:

- Pine Nut Road at the intersection of Out-R-Way
- East Valley at Grandview
- Sunrise Pass at Coyote Rocks
- Brunswick Canyon
- Mexican Dam
- Sunrise Pass at Artesia Road.

Other voluntary evacuation notice remain in effect for about 20 structures in the area.

—

Projected containment of the Bison Fire has been pushed back to July 14 because winds have hampered firefighting efforts.

Crews report progress was made overnight. However, Sunday's winds dropped the containment of the Douglas County blaze to 15 percent.

The fire was extremely active on the northeast side on the afternoon of July 7 and into the evening. It is burning in the Pine Nut mountains.

The fire started from a lightning strike on July 4.

No injuries have been reported, but the fire ran through the Slate Mine area destroying several old structures. The number of structures destroyed is not known at this time.

Pine Nut Road remains closed to non-residents at the intersection of Out-R-Way. A voluntary evacuation notice remains in effect for about 20 structures in the area.

Officials are asking people to stay out of the area.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Slew of citations during WCSO enforcement campaign

Of those stopped by the Washoe County Sheriff's Office during the June "Joining Forces" event, two drivers were arrested on DUI charge, four on felony drug charges, and four on fugitive charges.

Other citations issued by deputies included:

99 speeding citations

38 cell phone/other distracted driving citations

21 citations for driver's license related violations

26 motor vehicle registration citations

29 vehicle equipment citations

10 seat belt citations

4 child seat citations

28 citations for failure to show proof of insurance

32 citations for drivers failing to yield the right of way

30 citations for running a red light.

Additional citations and written warnings totaled 96. The sheriff's office joined the Nevada Highway Patrol, Reno Police Department and Sparks Police Department for this event aimed at increasing intersection safety.

Smoke from Bison Fire fills Carson Valley



A plume of black smoke rises
July 7 from the Bison Fire.
Photos/Sharon Resnikoff



Bison Fire from
Kingsbury Grade.



Bison Fire's smoke covers
the sky.

Sharon Resnikoff sent these photos to *Lake Tahoe News* of the Bison Fire that is burning in the Pine Nut area of Douglas County. Some were taken from Highway 395 and others along Kingsbury Grade.

The fire started July 4 after lightning struck the area.

Non-residential buildings have been consumed in the inferno. More than 9,000 acres are charred.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Calif. female prisoners sterilized without permission

By Corey G. Johnson, Center for Investigative Reporting

Doctors under contract with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation sterilized nearly 150 female inmates from 2006 to 2010 without required state approvals, the Center for Investigative Reporting has found.

The women received tubal ligations in violation of prison rules during those five years – and there are perhaps 100 more dating back to the late 1990s, according to state documents and interviews.

From 1997 to 2010, the state paid doctors \$147,460 to perform the procedure, according to a database of contracted medical services for state prisoners.

The women were signed up for the surgery while they were pregnant and housed at the California Institution for Women in Corona or Valley State Prison for Women in Chowchilla, which is now a men's prison.



Crystal Nguyen, with son Neiko, 6, says Valley State Prison infirmary staff offered sterilizations.

Photo/Noah Berger/CIR

Former inmates and prisoner advocates say that prison medical staff coerced the women, targeting those deemed likely to return to prison in the future.

Crystal Nguyen, a former Valley State Prison inmate who worked in the prison's infirmary during 2007, said she often overheard medical staff asking inmates who had served multiple prison terms to agree to be sterilized.

"I was like, 'Oh my God, that's not right,'" Nguyen, 28, said. "Do they think they're animals, and they don't want them to breed anymore?"

One former Valley State inmate who gave birth to a son in October 2006 said the institution's OB/GYN, Dr. James Heinrich, repeatedly pressured her to agree to a tubal ligation.

"As soon as he found out that I had five kids, he suggested that I look into getting it done. The closer I got to my due date, the more he talked about it," said Christina Cordero, 34, who spent two years in prison for auto theft. "He made me feel like a bad mother if I didn't do it."

Cordero, who was released in 2008 and lives in Upland San Bernardino County, agreed. But she added: "Today, I wish I would have never had it done."

The allegations echo those made nearly a half-century ago, when forced sterilizations of prisoners, the mentally ill and the poor were commonplace in California. State lawmakers officially banned such practices in 1979.

During an interview with CIR, Heinrich said he provided an important service to low-income women who faced health risks in future pregnancies because of past cesarean sections.

The 69-year-old Bay Area physician denied pressuring anyone. Referring to the \$147,460 total, he said, "Over a 10-year

period, that isn't a huge amount of money, compared to what you save in welfare paying for these unwanted children."

The top medical manager at Valley State Prison from 2005 to 2008 characterized the surgeries as providing inmates with the same options as women on the outside.

Daun Martin, a licensed psychologist, also contended that some pregnant women, particularly those who were on drugs or homeless, would commit crimes so they could return to prison for better health care.

The California Institution for Women in Corona was one of two state prisons where female inmates were sterilized without required state approvals. At least 148 women received tubal ligations in violation of prison rules from 2006 to 2010.

"Do I criticize those women for manipulating the system because they're pregnant? Absolutely not," Martin, 73, said. "But I don't think it should happen. And I'd like to find ways to decrease that."

Martin denied approving the surgeries, but at least 60 tubal ligations were done at Valley State while she was in charge, according to the state contracts database.

Federal and state laws ban inmate sterilizations if federal funds are used, reflecting concerns that prisoners might feel pressured to comply. California used state funds instead, but since 1994, the procedure has required approval from top medical officials in Sacramento on a case-by-case basis.

But no request for tubal ligations has come before the health care committee responsible for approving such restricted surgeries, said Dr. Ricki Barnett, who tracks medical services and costs for the California Prison Health Care Receivership Corp.

The receiver has overseen medical care in all 33 of the

state's prisons since 2006, when U.S. District Judge Thelton Henderson in San Francisco ruled that the system's health care violated the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment.

The receiver's office was aware that sterilizations were happening, records show.

In September 2008, the prisoner rights group Justice Now received a written response to questions about the treatment of pregnant inmates from Tim Rougeux, then the receiver's chief operating officer. The letter acknowledged that the two prisons offered sterilization surgery to women.

But nothing changed until 2010, after the Oakland organization filed a public records request and complained to the office of state Sen. Carol Liu, D-La Cañada Flintridge. Liu was the chairwoman of the Select Committee on Women and Children in the Criminal Justice System.

Prompted by a phone call from Liu's staff, Barnett said the receiver's top medical officer asked her to research the matter. After analyzing medical and cost records, Barnett met in 2010 with officials at both women's prisons and contract health professionals affiliated with nearby hospitals.

The 16-year-old restriction on tubal ligations seemed to be news to them, Barnett recalled. And, she said, none of the doctors thought they needed permission to perform the surgery on inmates.

"Everybody was operating on the fact that this was a perfectly reasonable thing to do," she said.

Martin, the Valley State Prison medical manager, said she and her staff had discovered the procedure was restricted five years earlier. Someone had complained about the sterilization of an inmate, Martin recalled. That prompted Martin to research the prison's medical rules.

Martin said she and Heinrich began to look for ways around the restrictions. Both believed the rules were unfair to women, she said.

"I'm sure that on a couple of occasions, (Heinrich) brought an issue to me saying, 'Mary Smith is having a medical emergency' kind of thing, 'and we ought to have a tubal ligation. She's got six kids. Can we do it?' " Martin said. "And I said, 'Well, if you document it as a medical emergency, perhaps.'"

Heinrich said he offered tubal ligations only to pregnant inmates with a history of at least three C-sections. Additional pregnancies would be dangerous for these women, Heinrich said, because scar tissue inside the uterus could tear.

Former inmates tell a different story.

Michelle Anderson, who gave birth in December 2006 while at Valley State, said she'd had one prior C-section. Anderson, 44, repeatedly was asked to agree to be sterilized, she said, and was not told what risk factors led to the requests. She refused.

Nikki Montano also had had one C-section before she landed at Valley State in 2008, pregnant and battling drug addiction.

Montano, 42, was serving time after pleading guilty to burglary, forgery and receiving stolen property. The mother of seven children, she said neither Heinrich nor the medical staff told her why she needed a tubal ligation.

"I figured that's just what happens in prison – that that's the best kind of doctor you're going get," Montano said. "He never told me nothing about nothing."

But Montano eagerly agreed to the surgery and said she thinks it had a positive effect on her life.

Dr. Carolyn Sufrin, an OB/GYN at San Francisco General

Hospital who teaches at UCSF, said it is not common practice to offer tubal ligations to women who've had one C-section. She confirmed that having multiple C-sections increases the risk of complications.

But even then, Sufrin said, it's more appropriate to offer women reversible means of birth control.

Lawsuits, a U.S. Supreme Court ruling and public outrage over eugenics and similar sterilization abuses in Alabama and New York spawned new requirements in the 1970s for doctors to fully inform patients.

Since then, it's been illegal to pressure anyone to be sterilized or ask for consent during labor or childbirth.

Still, Kimberly Jeffrey says she was pressured by a doctor while sedated and strapped to a surgical table for a C-section in 2010 during a stint at Valley State for a parole violation. Jeffrey, 43, was horrified, she said, and resisted.

"He said, 'So we're going to be doing this tubal ligation, right?'" Jeffrey said. "I'm like, 'Tubal ligation? What are you talking about? I don't want any procedure. I just want to have my baby.' I went into a straight panic."

Jeffrey provided copies of her official prison and hospital medical files to CIR. Those records show Jeffrey rejected a tubal ligation offer during a December 2009 prenatal checkup at Heinrich's office. A medical report from Jeffrey's C-section a month later noted that she again refused a tubal ligation request made after she arrived at Madera Community Hospital.

At no time did anyone explain to her any medical justifications for tubal ligation, Jeffrey said.

That experience still haunts Jeffrey, who lives in San Francisco with her 3-year-old son, Noel. She speaks to groups

seeking to improve conditions for female prisoners and has lobbied legislators in Sacramento.

State prison officials “are the real repeat offenders,” Jeffrey added. “They repeatedly offended me by denying me my right to dignity and humanity.”

Corey G. Johnson is a reporter for the independent, nonprofit Center for Investigative Reporting, the nation’s largest investigative reporting team.

Wind fans flames of Bison Fire, structures lost

Late afternoon winds on Sunday are playing havoc with efforts to fight the Bison Fire.

The fire is making a run to the northeast and is burning through the Slater Mine Area. Commercial structures have been lost, but the number of structures is unknown at this time.

Containment of the nearly 9,300-acre fire has dropped from 30 percent to 15 percent.

No injuries have been reported at this time. Firefighters are reporting a large amount of local traffic in the area and are asking people to stay away from the area.

Pine Nut Road remains closed to non-residents at the intersection of Out-R-Way and more road closures may follow. A voluntary evacuation notice remains in effect for about 20 homes in the area.

The blaze started July 4 by lightning.

This is video of the smoke plume shot July 5 by Go West Foto.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Climber airlifted from Lover's Leap



Rescue crews take an injured hiker July 7 to the Calstar helicopter. Photo/Damian Frisby

Updated 5:40pm:

A 26-year-old woman was knocked unconscious when she fell at Lover's Leap on Sunday.

Nour Mardini was on the Lower Buttress area of the rock structure when she dislodged a boulder the size of a picnic table and then fell about 30 feet. When the rope went tight she swung into the granite face. Mardini was rappelling with her husband on belay. According to officials, he did not see the fall.

Lake Valley firefighter Luke Anderson went over the edge to

Mardini who was more than 100 feet from the top and more than 200 feet from the bottom. He was able to lower her to the awaiting ground crews. Calstar transported her to Renown Medical Center in Reno with severe head injuries.

Assisting with the July 7 rescue were El Dorado County search and rescue, U.S. Forest Service, El Dorado County Fire, and CHP with another helicopter.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Hot temps can lead to hot tempers

By Jeff Maher, News 10

Researchers have found that when the weather gets hot, so does one's temper.

On hot days individuals are more likely to encounter road rage, or have someone cut them off. Drivers may also be seen speeding more than usual. So why the link between temperature and one's mood behind the wheel?

According to doctors, an increase in body temperature leads to an increase in physical arousal, and arousal is linked to aggressive behavior. The heart rate goes up and the blood pressure rises as the body tries to cool itself off.

There is also a link between hot temperatures and an increase in crime. Ellen Cohn, a criminologist at Florida International University looked at two years of crime stats in Minneapolis and found that more crimes were reported during summer than other months.

However, it could be argued that there is simply more opportunity for criminals during the warmer months. For example, summertime is when people generally leave their homes for vacation which generally coincides with an increase in burglaries.

A study published in 2012 found that even mild dehydration can alter a person's mood. After losing just 1.5 percent of the body's normal water volume, study participants were fatigued, experienced headaches and were more tense and anxious.