Feds abandon Nevada mustang roundup for now

By Scott Sonner, AP

RENO — The federal government has abandoned plans — at least for now — to round up more than 300 wild horses in Northern Nevada after a U.S. judge temporarily blocked the effort last month for fear of harm to the mustangs.

The agency won't move forward with the roundup in the Pine Nut Range southeast of Carson City until it completes another review of potential environmental effects, lawyers for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management said in papers filed in federal court in Reno.

Judge Larry Hicks had granted a restraining order sought by horse advocates preventing the roundup until he could hear further arguments from both sides on the merits of the case.

Opponents say the Bureau of Land Management was relying on a nearly 5-year-old environmental analysis that ignores the latest scientific evidence about the dangers posed by injecting female horses with a fertility drug that keeps them from reproducing for two years.

Lawyers for Friends of Animals and Protect Mustangs said there's been significant new research about the potential harms of PZP since the federal agency reviewed the effects in 2010. New studies confirm earlier concerns that the interference with the wild herds prompts mares unable to become pregnant to leave in search of stallions in other bands of mustangs, they said.

Hicks said in his Feb. 11 ruling that the agency appeared to have violated federal law, including the National Environmental Policy Act requiring a more stringent

examination of the effects than the one Bureau of Land Management scientists conducted.

Leon Thomas, the federal agency's field manager for the Sierra Front based in Carson City, said in an affidavit filed in the government's voluntary dismissal of the case late Tuesday that the agency won't implement the record of decision it issued last year to permanently remove 200 horses and return about 130 back to the range, about half of those mares that would have been injected with PZP.

The Bureau of Land Management will prepare a new document "analyzing the environmental impacts associated with gathering, treating and removing excess wild horses form the Pine Nut (management area), and a new decision will be issued before implementing any such gather," he said.

Agency spokeswoman Lisa Ross said Wednesday that the soonest the new review could be completed and clear requirements for public comment would be sometime in the fall, "depending on available funding and holding space."

Horse advocates said the move marked an important victory in their ongoing battle with the federal agency and ranchers over forage on public rangeland – much of it in the throes of drought – in 10 states stretching from Montana to Arizona.

"This case highlights some of the deficiencies with BLM's current management of wild horses, and I hope that in the future BLM considers its obligations to involve the public on decisions that affect our public lands," said Jennifer Barnes, staff attorney for Friends of Animals.

The Bureau of Land Management maintains there are nearly twice as many horse in the Pine Nut Range as the high desert habitat can support without causing ecological damage, some of which could hurt the imperiled sage grouse.

Ross said the agency has no intention of discontinuing use of

PZP to help to suppress growth of the herds that naturally double about every five years if left unchecked.

“The BLM did not appeal the February 11 injunction due to the concern for the welfare of the horses,” she said in an email to the Associated Press. “The time required to file an appeal would have resulted in a gather during foaling season, which generally starts March 1. Gathering during foaling season presents an increased risk to new foals and pregnant mares. ”

No gardening space – no problem

By Melinda Myers

Brighten up your patio, deck or front entrance with containers. They’re an excellent way to add color, fragrance and beauty where plantable space is limited or non-existent.

Set a few containers on the front or back steps, in the corner of your deck or other location where they can be enjoyed. Try stacking and planting several containers to create a display with greater vertical interest. Check the views when looking from inside the house out as well as when enjoying the space outdoors. Strategically place containers for the greatest viewing pleasure.

Save even more space by using railing planters. You can dress up the porch or deck by filling these planters with colorful flowers and edibles. Make sure they are sturdy and easy to install. Reduce time spent installing and maintaining with

easy-to-install self-watering rail planters.



Railing planters filled with colorful combinations can add sparkle to balconies, decks and porches. Photo/Gardener’s Supply Company

Don’t limit yourself to flowers. Mix in a few edibles and bring some homegrown flavor to your outdoor entertaining. You and your guests will enjoy plucking a few mint leaves to flavor beverages, basil to top a slice of pizza or sprig of dill to top grilled fish.

Herbs not only add flavor to your meals, but texture and fragrance to container gardens. And the many new dwarf vegetable varieties are suited to containers. Their small size makes them easy to include and many have colorful fruit that is not only pretty, but delicious.

Add a few edible flowers like nasturtium and pansies. Dress up a plate of greens with edible flowers for a gourmet touch. Or freeze a few pansy flowers in ice cubes and add them to a glass of lemonade or sparkling water.

Include flowers like globe amaranth (Gomphrena), Lisianthus, and daisies that are great for cutting. You’ll enjoy your garden inside and out throughout the season.

And don’t forget to plant some flowers for the butterflies to enjoy. Zinnias, cosmos, and marigolds are just a few that are sure to brighten any space, while attracting butterflies to your landscape. Salvia, penstemon and flowering tobacco will help bring hummingbirds in close, so you’ll have a better view.

So make this the year you select a container or two that best fits your space and gardening style. Fill it with a well-drained potting mix and combination of beautiful ornamental and edible plants to enjoy all season long. The additions are sure to enhance your landscape and keep your guests coming back for more.

Gardening expert, TV/radio host, author and columnist Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and has written more than 20 gardening books.

USFS looking for input on wild and scenic rivers

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is evaluating rivers that may be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River system and will host a webinar March 31 from 4-5pm to explain the process.

The webinar will include a brief presentation of the overall evaluation process, the procedure used to inventory the rivers in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and the “outstanding remarkable values” that would be used to determine eligibility. A question and answer period will follow the presentation.

To access the webinar, Microsoft Office Live Meeting must be

installed on your computer.

To access the webinar, go online. Use 888.844.9904 to connect to the audio portion of the webinar. When prompted, type in the participant code: 8683968.

The draft Wild and Scenic Rivers Study is available online. Comments are due April 10; submitted via email to comments-pacificsouthwest-ltbmu@fs.fed.us, using the subject: Wild and Scenic. For more information on the study and how to comment, contact Mike LeFevre at 530.543.2840 or email mlefevre@fs.fed.us.

Haase earns a new deal with significant raise

By Roy S. Johnson, Al.com

UAB basketball coach Jerod Haase, who guided the Blazers to the C-USA tournament championship and into the third round of the NCAA tournament, has been granted a contract extension by the university, sources confirm.

The new deal is for six years and Haase, 40, will earn $1 million annually.

Haase, who graduated from South Tahoe High School, last received an extension in January, which paid him $525,000 annually, plus incentives.

Read the whole story

USFS to talk about OHV trails in Tahoe

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will host an open house to discuss off-highway vehicle use on designated routes within the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The meeting is April 2 from 4-7pm at the forest supervisor’s office at 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

The open house will provides an opportunity for the public to meet Forest Service OHV, engineering, trails and recreation staff and ask questions regarding the LTBMU Motor Vehicle Use Map and the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreational Grant application. Local OHV club members will be on hand to discuss membership and volunteer opportunities sponsored by the Forest Service.

For more information, contact Tim Merten at 530.543.2863 or tmerten@fs.fed.us.

Haase family celebrates NCAA tournament run



UAB Coach Jerod Haase cuts down the net after his team won the conference title. Photo/Carol Haase

By Kathryn Reed

UAB won't make it to the final dance, but that's OK. The men's basketball team wasn't ever expected to win its conference to advance to the NCAA tournament, let alone win a game at that tournament.

It was so unexpected that the coach's mom had to keep changing her flight – and not just once – and rent a car for a long drive to Louisville.

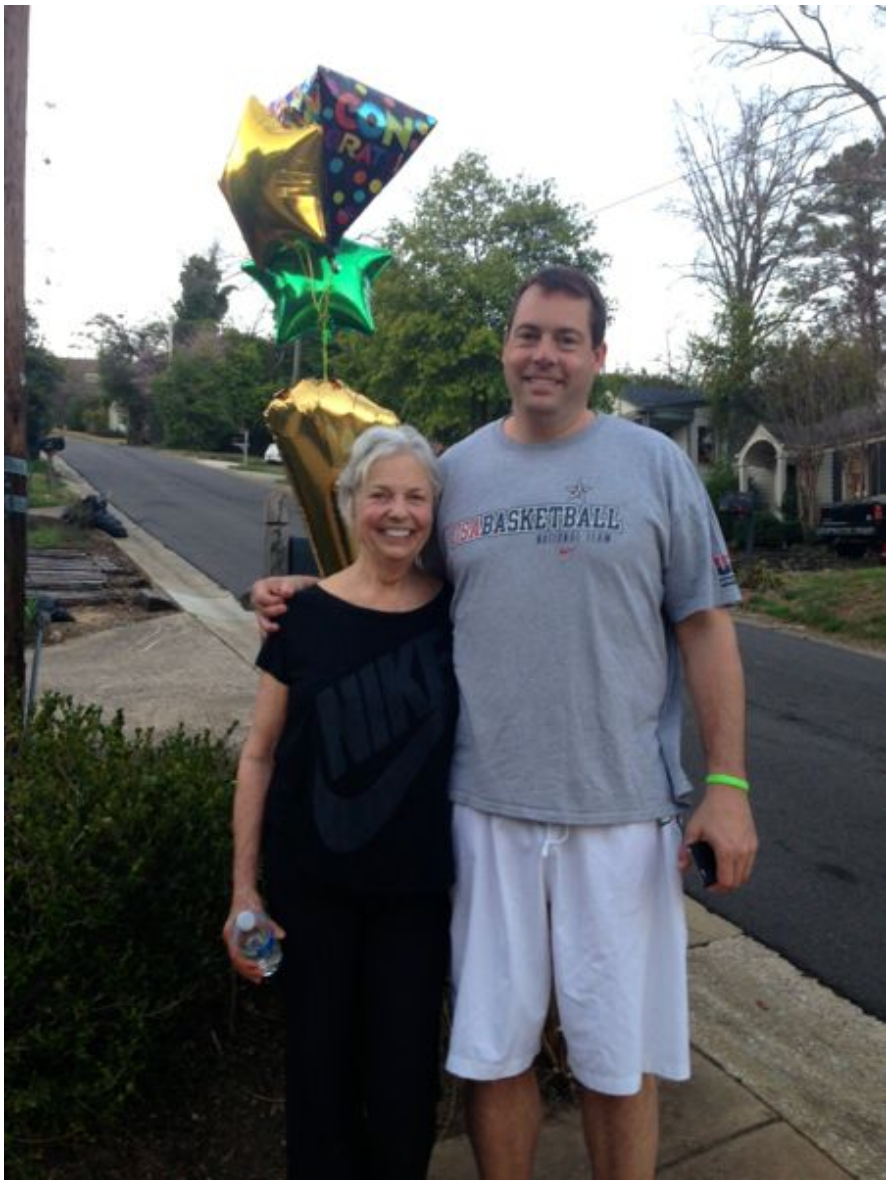
Carol Haase and her husband El Hug flew out to see Jerod Haase coach UAB in the C-USA tournament. The South Lake Tahoe couple kept extending their trip.

Haase grew up in South Lake Tahoe and as a senior was on South Tahoe High School's state championship team. He played his first year of college for Cal. The team made it to the NCAA Sweet 16. For a variety of reasons – including his father's death – Haase transferred to Kansas.

His dream was to always play in the NBA. Multiple fractured wrists prevented that from happening. The boy who first learned to dribble in third grade didn’t have a strong enough wrist to muscle through the pros.

Instead, Haase turned to coaching. Under the guidance of Kansas coach Roy Williams, Haase learned the intricacies of what it takes to be a winning college coach. He was an assistant at Kansas and North Carolina before taking over the head coaching position at UAB three years ago.

This was UAB’s first C-USA tournament title. The Blazers had not been to the NCAA tournament in a decade. They lost March 21 in the third round to UCLA, 92-75.



Carol and Jerod Haase outside the coach's house where neighbors had placed celebratory balloons. Photo/Provided

Carol Haase didn't get to see much of her son, but she did tag along on a few interviews.

"The fun thing I got to do with Jerod was go to Fox News and CBS and watch the live interview with the cameras and green room. That was great," Haase told *Lake Tahoe News*.

"Jerod was very calm. We didn't get to see him much. He was more subdued than anything. I could see his mind was going, going, going. We just kind of gave him space."

It also allowed Haase and Hug to spend more time with their daughter-in-law and three grandchildren.

During the conference tournament family watched the game from behind the bench. For the NCAA tournament they were across the court, but still almost courtside.

Haase said the energy was electrifying. Only one college is at a hotel. Everyone is dressed in their respective college's clothing. A police escort is the norm. With the band traveling with the team, it added an extra flair. A small red carpet was rolled out wherever the team went.

What Coach Haase's future holds remains to be seen. He says he wants to return to UAB, but the C-USA Conference may not welcome the school because it has cut other athletic programs. With UAB's performance at the NCAA tournament, Haase's stock is even higher, so it's possible another college is looking for a coach of his caliber.

Rollover days on ski pass come with restrictions

By UnofficialNetworks

n an attempt to sell more season passes to the skiers in drought-stricken California, Lake Tahoe's Squaw Valley/Alpine Meadows resort is offering up a new deal. They will give you credits of unused days that can be put towards the following season. They are calling it the "worry-free guarantee".

To get this rollover credit you need to buy your pass by May 7. You may have also noticed the deal only applies to gold and sliver passes and if you ski more than 5 days you get nothing. If you don't ski at all next season you will get a little more than half your money back. KSL has put up a calculator you can use to see what kind of credit you will get based on how many days you ski.

The the top shelf adult Gold Tahoe Super Pass gets skiers unlimited access to Squaw Valley/Alpine Meadows, plus four additional days at both Sierra-at-Tahoe and Sugar Bowl, as well as 50-percent off lift tickets at the eight resorts that are part of the Mountain Collective, including Jackson Hole, Alta-Snowbird, and Sun Valley. that pass will set you back $789.

Read the whole story

Low lake level changing life

at Lake Tahoe



No water is flowing from Lake Tahoe to the Truckee River. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News spent March 22 driving around the lake looking at and documenting more than 20 locations to show what the drought looks like throughout the basin all on the same day.***

By Kathryn Reed

It's not unusual for Lake Tahoe to drop below its rim. What is unusual is when the spring runoff doesn't bring it back up and above that 6,223-foot mark.

"This year the way things look it would take some pretty big precipitation to get back above its natural rim this year," Scott McGuire, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Reno, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The projection is for Lake Tahoe to be significantly below its rim by fall 2015."

ANALYSIS

When it fell below the rim in October 2014, this was the first time in five years. Some of the other times it was below the rim were 1977-78, 1961-62 and 1930-36.

On March 22, Lake Tahoe was at 6222.83 feet.

The record low of 6220.25 feet was set in 1992. (Records have been kept since 1900.)

In 2014, the snowmelt added 3 inches to Lake Tahoe. With substantially less snow falling this winter, it is near impossible the lake will rise by that much this spring.

Seasonal businesses were hurting last summer as documented by *Lake Tahoe News*. For many of those same businesses it will only be worse this year.

Business owners may need to rethink how and when they do business because the model used even three to five years ago isn't going to work today.

Instead of trying to get a jumpstart on Mother Nature with opening ski resorts pre-Thanksgiving, it might be time to have an intense, stellar shorter ski season. Then crank up the public relations to woo out-of-towners here for spring – a season often ignored.

If the weather patterns of the last few years are the new normal, it will mean learning to adapt to less snow and more summer-like days. In some ways this could be good for the Lake Tahoe Basin because summer has always been the busiest season. It may mean that season is now longer.

And if it's hotter in the Central Valley and Bay Area sooner and longer, people may drive to Tahoe to cool off and recreate. This might solve the shoulder season blues.

Driving around the lake on Sunday was at times reminiscent of a summer weekend. Parking lots were full of people enjoying the outdoors. Restaurants were busy – at least the ones that were open.



Jumping off piers and docks at Lake Tahoe is not advised.

Signs of drought

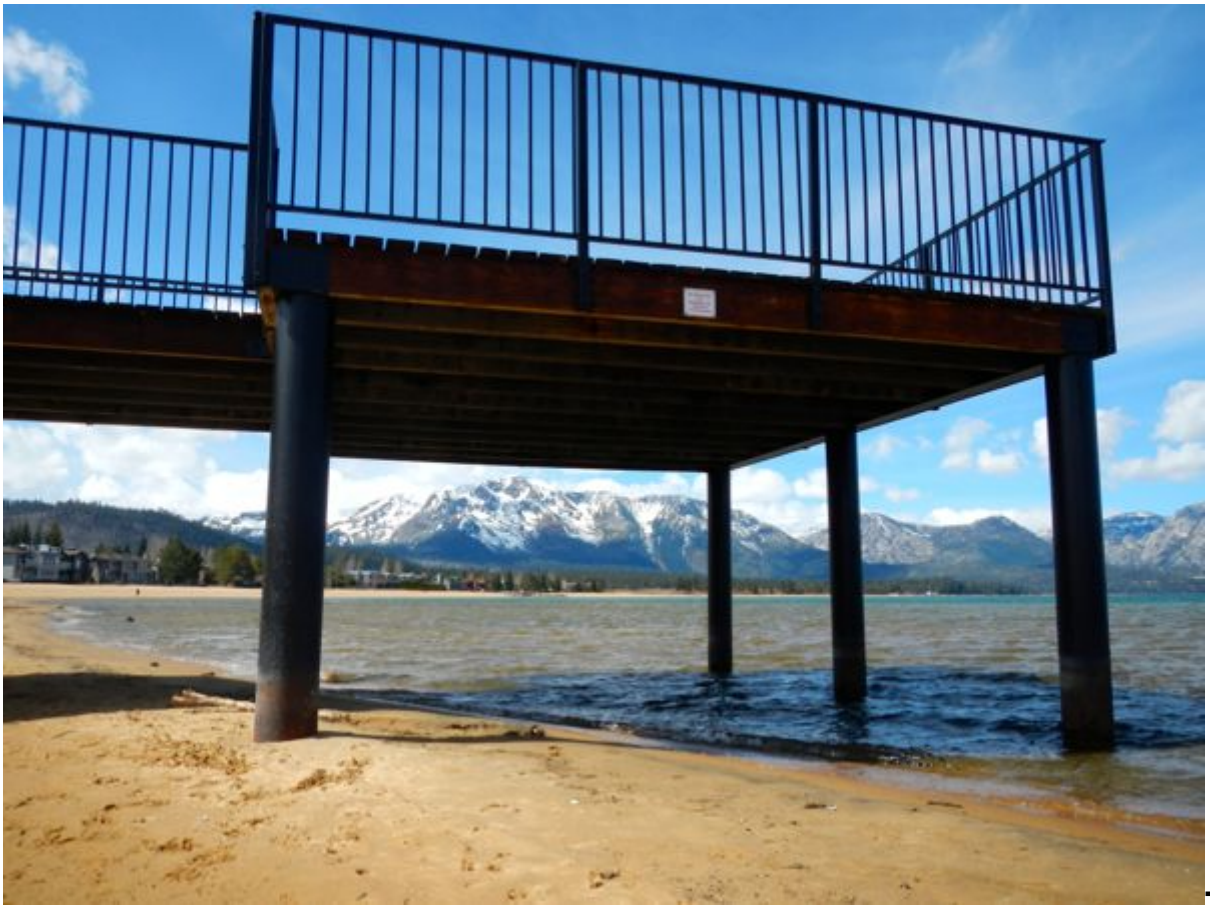
For those in California, there will be much more beach access this year. (Nevada has different rules when it comes to public access on private beaches.) Sand and rocks are exposed in places that have not seen the light of day in years.

So many piers have little or no water under them. Signs saying “no diving, no jumping” are posted in some locales. It’s advice that will need to be adhered to at all piers and docks this year to avoid injury or worse.

Floating docks will have an easier time accommodating people. Many marinas have a combo of fixed and floating structures. This means the ramp between the two keeps getting steeper. Some are clearly not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. It would be tricky to walk down them

carrying a cooler or small child.

Water marks on bulkheads and boulders are visible symbols of just how far the lake level has fallen.

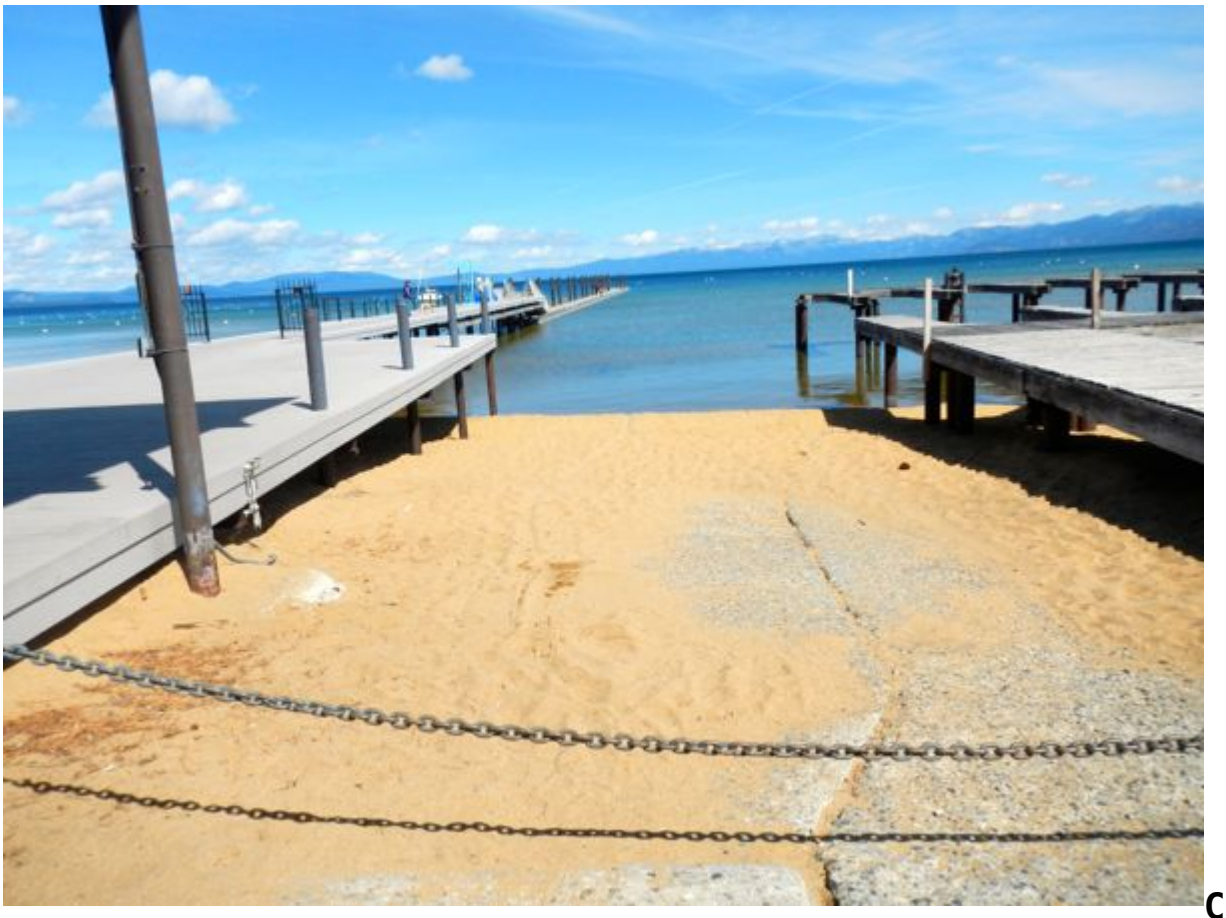


Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association Pier

Four of the six pilings making the extended seating area at the pier are in water – 6 inches at the deepest.

A small sandbar has been created near the shore, which has allowed pooling to occur between the beach and lake. The area nearest the water is muddy and uninviting.

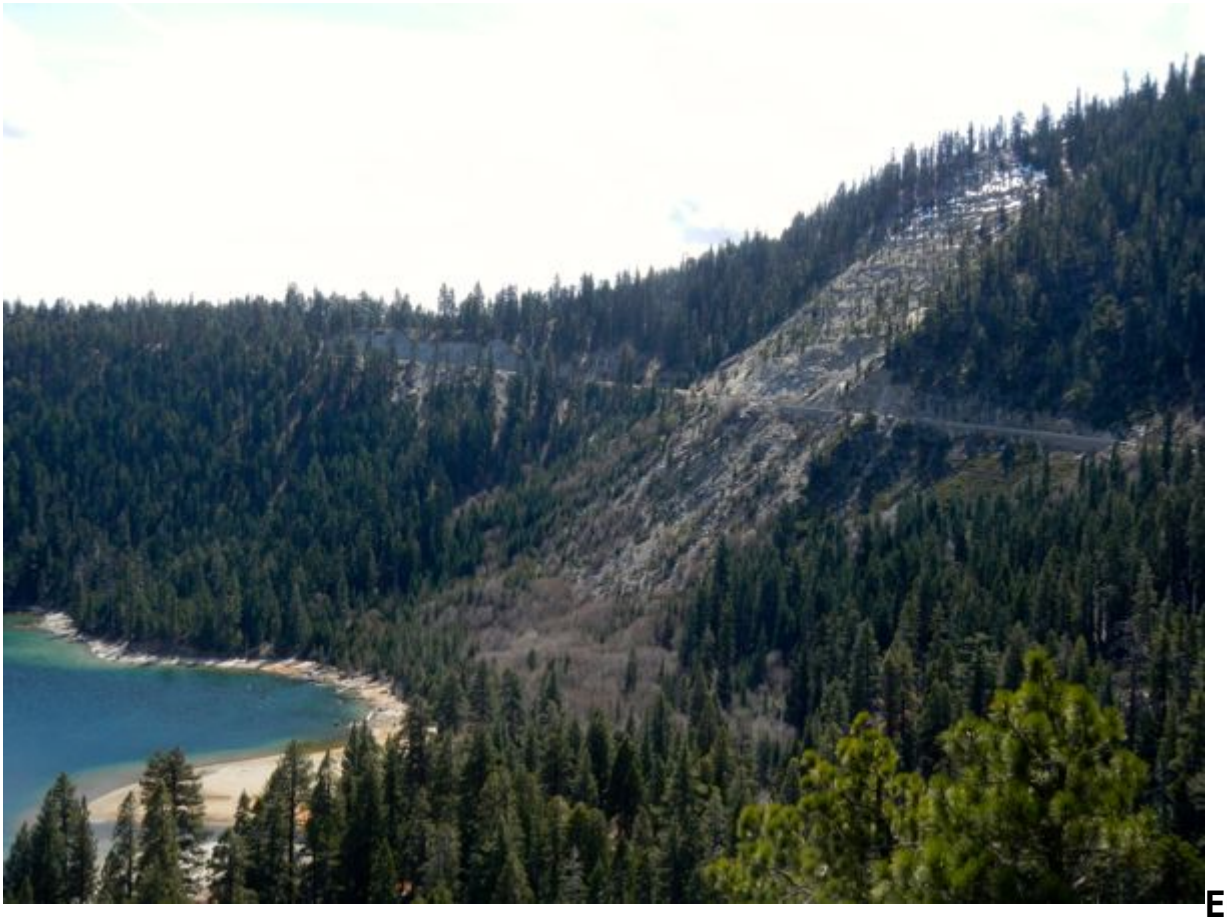
Across the channel is Cove East, which extends even farther into the lake. But it, too, has a large swath that is more swampish than beach-like.



Camp Richardson

Much of the boat ramp is sand. The water level by the gas pumps looks as though not many boats would have clearance to get to them. They are on the fixed dock, so they seem even higher as the lake gets lower.

Looking down Jameson Beach, most of the private docks are covering only sand.



Emerald Bay

Navigating the entrance to the bay was tricky last boating season. It’s only going to be worse this year, with some boats not able to get in.

It’s as though most of the bay is rimmed by sand. At the end by Vikingsholm and below the swath of mountain that decades ago sustained a landslide is debris from that slide that had been under water.



Meeks Bay Resort

The sand, even near the water, is silky white. The water is incredibly clear, at times reflecting various hues of blue. It’s Caribbean-like.

The end of the walkway is now far from the water.

While the channel inside the bulkhead leading to the docks and boat launch is deep, the lake level outside this area is not going to permit all boats to come and go.



Sugar Pine Point State Park

With all the rocks and pine cones on the beach, it won’t beckon sunbathers like the beach down the road does. Many more rocks are visible than last fall.

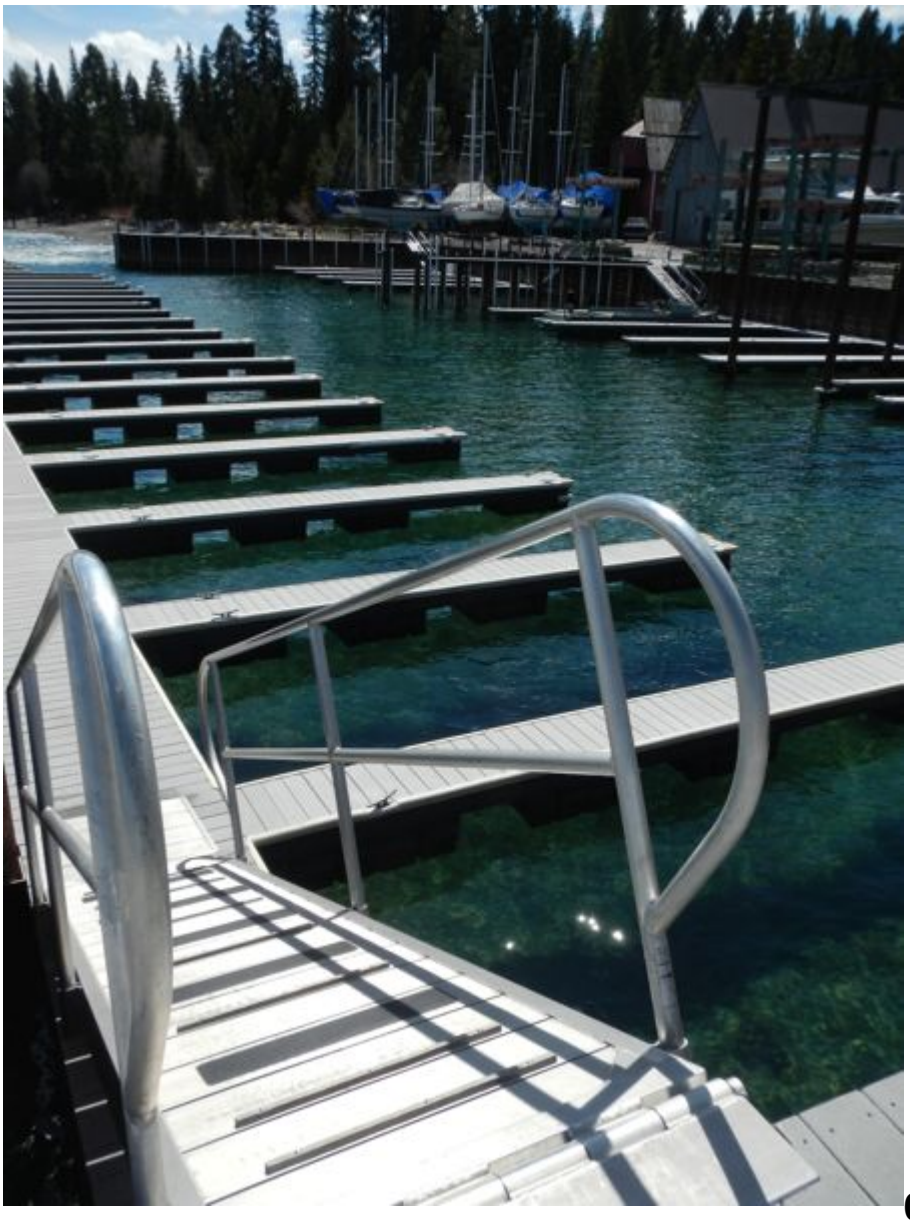
The last rung on the swim ladder at the end of the pier is no longer in the water.



Between Tahoma and Homewood

White moorings bob in the lake, only time will tell if they will be filled with boats. Not all marinas will be accessible for launching, and then some of the moorings will be in too shallow of water for deep-hulled vessels.

So many private docks along this stretch of the West Shore as well as ones closer to Tahoe City are covering rocks instead of water.



Obexer’s

Water is no longer touching the concrete on the boat launch. Trailers will be backing onto rocks.

The ramps here have some of the more extreme angles going from the fixed pier to the floating docks.



Tahoe City Dam

It’s possible to walk near the base of the dam because of the lack of water on the Lake Tahoe side of the dam. Buoys that say “Danger Dam” seem silly and sad without water.

On the other side of the dam there is water, but looking farther down the Truckee River it is more rocks than water.

This means the rafting season on the Truckee River is likely a no-go.



Commons Beach/Tahoe City Marina

Walking along the Lakeside Trail the lake is a little farther away. People don’t seem to mind as they wander along the rocks.



Tahoe Vista Recreation Area

No boats will be launched here anytime soon.



Kings Beach

The pier covers more sand than water.

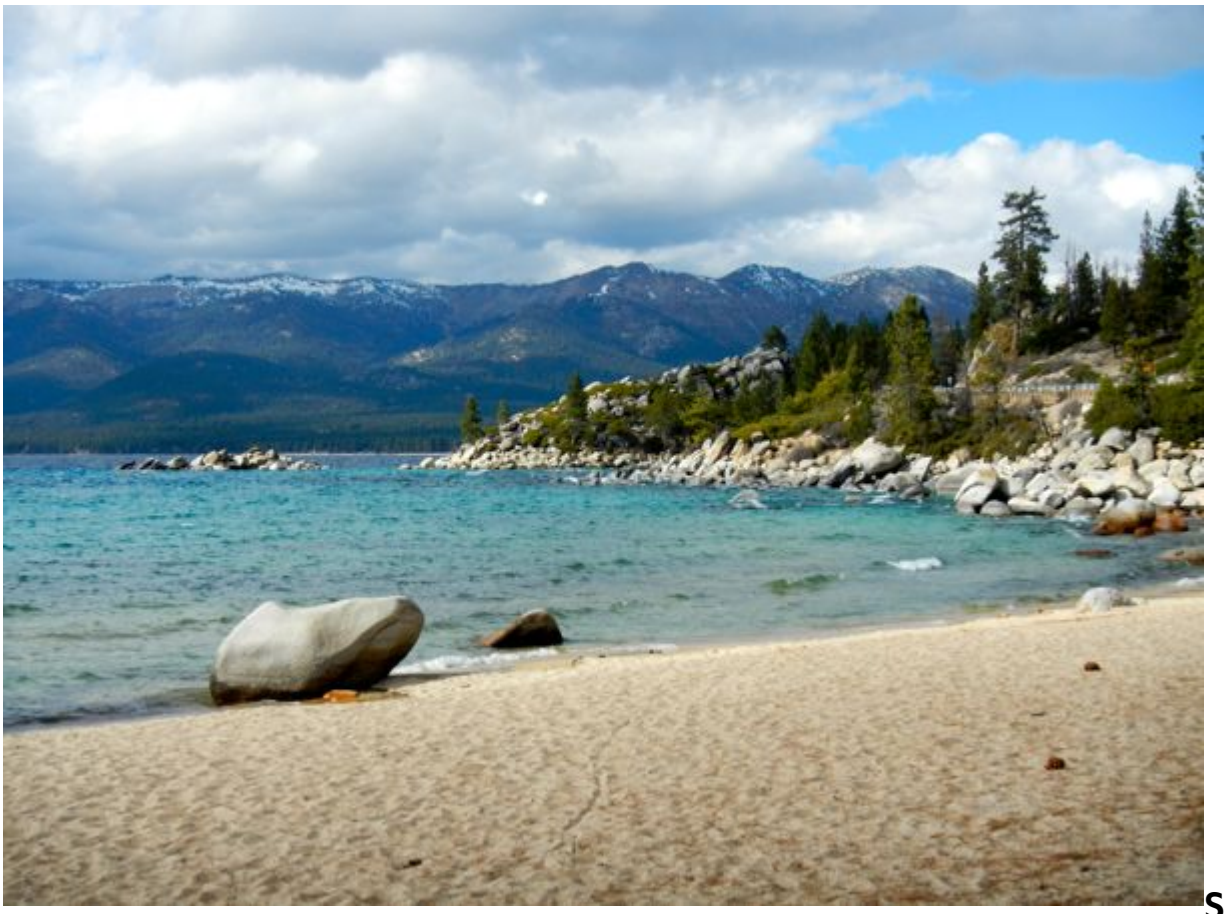
California Tahoe Conservancy and California Department of Parks and Recreation are hosting a workshop April 1 from

6:30-8pm seeking input on the feasibility and design for a reconstructed public pier.



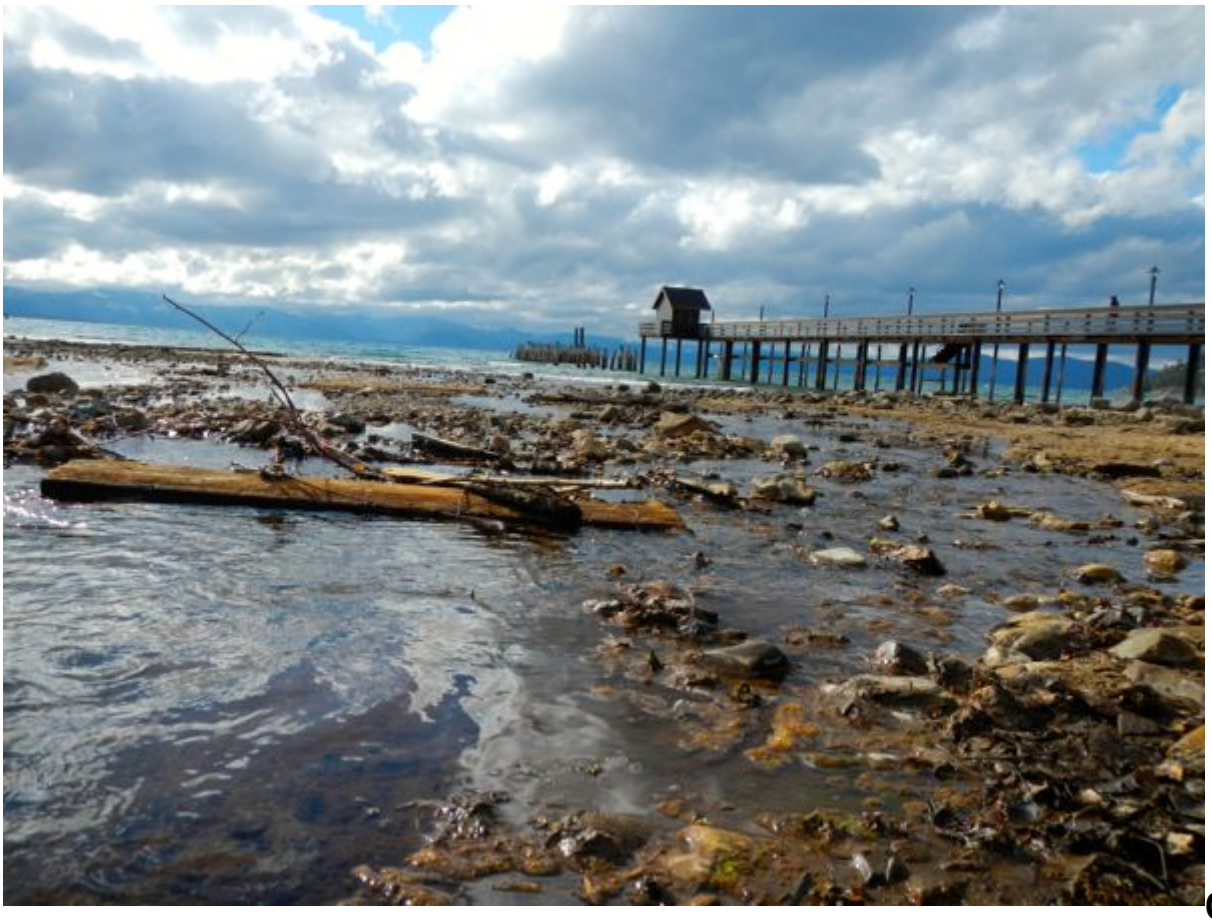
Lone Eagle Pier

The gate on the dock preventing people from walking to the end is over sand so it’s useless right now.



Sand Harbor

While this area is always rocky, now large boulders are exposed. Plenty of sand exists. The canvas Mother Nature is working with keeps getting more beautiful.



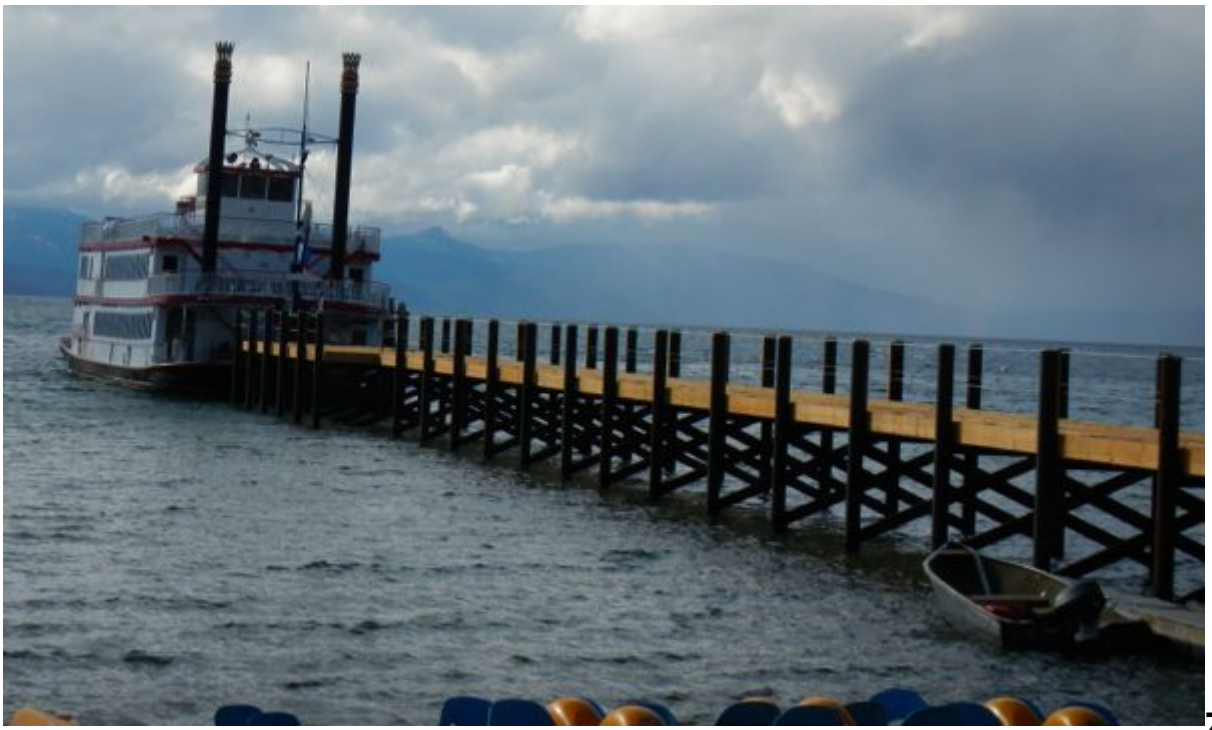
Glenbrook

The creek running into the lake near the pier is rippling across a rocky beach. The pier looks more like something out of bygone Tahoe than a functioning structure today.



Cave Rock

One of the few boat launches in the basin that is useable. Rocks, though, continue to be exposed near the beach area.



Zephyr Cove

The new dock is installed. The M.S. Dixie II wil run again after it is rehabbed.



Ski Run Marina

The Tahoe Queen will be able to run again when the channel is

dredged.



Timber Cove Marina

Access via Bal Bijou Road still isn’t available because of Tahoe Beach Retreat’s lingering construction project. (The hotelier is also still arguing with South Lake Tahoe about signage on the beach.)

It would be hard to get a kayak under most areas of the pier because of the shallow water and sand bars. The gas pump on the dock is completely inaccessible.



El Dorado Beach Boat Launch/Lakeview Commons/Regan Beach

This launch has been off-limits for years. Now there is no chance anyone will drive onto the dirt to get to the water because of the boulders at the end of the launch.

With the amount of beach area, a much larger stage could be erected for Live at Lakeview Commons.

Pilings from piers of eras gone by can be seen from here down Lakeview Avenue past Regan Beach. At Regan Beach the dog beach used to be mostly water – not so anymore.

STHS grad dreaming of Final Four

Update Mach 21, 8pm: UAB lost to UCLA.

By Alec Lewis, News96.5

Wearing Cinderella's slipper on their left foot, the Blazers knocked off 3-seed Iowa State and Fred Hoiberg, and have found their way into the round of 32.

Gene Bartow succeededJohn Wooden 40 years ago at UCLA, and 40 years ago, Jerod Haase was born in South Lake Tahoe.

It's part coincidence, part irony, even somewhat me simply creating a storyline. But UAB, led by Jerod Haase – whose opportunity was established by Bartow – will play UCLA today for a chance to return to the Sweet 16 and that's somewhat remarkable.

On Nov. 15, 2014, UAB opened its season against Louisiana Monroe. To shortcut the details, UAB lost. The Blazers then lost eight of their next 12 basketball games and oh, the football program was demolished.

The third year of the team's existence under Bartow, the UAB legend took them to the Sweet 16. Saturday UAB will have a chance to repeat that feat in Haase's third year. Go figure.

Read the whole story

Ban on coyote hunting contests rejected

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

A proposal to ban coyote hunting contests in Nevada was rejected Friday by state wildlife officials.

After hearing from some 50 people for and against the idea, the Nevada Wildlife Commission voted 7-1 to deny a petition

sought to end a controversial practice that gives cash or other awards to hunters who kill the most coyotes during so-called “coyote call” events.

Petition supporters decried the contests as “killing for kicks” and said they have no real impact in paring down the coyote population. Hunters and representatives of organized sportsmen groups countered that the hunts are a legally protected sport and do have a significant impact in controlling populations of an animal that regularly kills livestock and pets and sometimes threatens people.

Read the whole story