Hints of fall popping up on foliage in Tahoe



Shades of fall on Aug. 16 hiking to Raymond Lake in Alpine County. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

While the calendar says fall is still about a month away, the foliage throughout California is saying it's on its way. Signs of autumn started appearing in earnest last week.

Trees in the Lake Tahoe Basin are starting to turn yellow, with the change even more prominent at higher elevations.

But it's not just Tahoe – trees in San Francisco are turning, leaves on Napa grapevines are not all green and the corn husks in Lake County along Highway 20 have already dried out and turned golden.

Early September is the normal time to be seeing signs of fall color.

“Temperatures and lack of water play into it,” Michelle Breckner, senior climatologist with the Western Regional Climate Center in Reno, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The quick burst of hot temperatures this year just dried everything out and it was drier this year.”

She said the ongoing drought in California and Nevada is making things drier each year.

“It is climate change and the Earth is hotter,” Breckner said. “The water is directed to other areas of the world.”

June and July were unusually warm in the Tahoe-Reno area, with August starting off cooler than normal.

“What you want for good fall color is warm daytime temperatures and chilly overnight,” explained Scott McGuire, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Reno.

For the first half of August the daytime temps have been slightly below normal and the night temps just above normal. Still, the color is here.

“It seems like it’s been 15 years or so since we have had a cool August. August has generally been above average for the last decade and a half around Lake Tahoe. This one is starting out on the cool side,” Kelly Redmond, deputy director and regional climatologist with the Western Regional Climate Center in Reno, said.

It’s possible the colors may not be as vibrant as some years because of the lack of moisture. It’s been relatively dry since January.

“The best fall colors occur following a growing season with plenty of moisture or at least a good snowpack the previous spring and then a dry clear fall with cool nights but not

freezing temperatures. Frost will cause the leaves to brown and drop quickly," Blake Engelhardt, botanist with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Local temperature and moisture characteristics as well as small genetic differences between individual (plants) will affect when and how the color change progresses. Even with the dry conditions, we could still see some really nice fall colors."

This is how Engelhardt explained the leaf color transformation process: "During the summer growing season, the leaves are constantly producing chlorophyll which gives them their green color. In the fall, longer nights trigger the formation of the abscission layer. This is essentially a thickened layer of cells at the base of the leaf where it attaches to the stem that blocks the transport of water and sugar into the leaf. Thin deciduous leaves won't survive the freezing temperatures of winter, so there's no reason to keep feeding them. Once chlorophyll synthesis stops, the green quickly disappears and other more persistent pigments become visible yellows, reds, purples. If the growing season is particularly dry, the abscission layer can form sooner and the leaves may turn color earlier or drop before a very brilliant display."

But just because the leaves are turning sooner does not mean winter will arrive sooner.

However, pay attention to what the squirrels do because their behavior can be an indicator of the winter ahead.

"We find if they drop a whole lot of pine cones, we will have a heavy winter," Cheryl Millham, executive director of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care, told *Lake Tahoe News*. Heavy winter means lots of snow or super cold.

Millham said she has started to notice some cones falling, but she isn't ready to make any predictions just yet based on squirrel activity.

Triathlon could impact traffic in Tahoe, Carson, Reno

There will be more athletes on Tahoe and regional roads Sunday because of the second annual Expedition Man Endurance Ultra Triathlon.

Competitors will complete a 2.4-mile swim at Zephyr Cove and transition to a 112-mile bike ride, finishing with a 26.2 mile run in Reno.

The Washoe County Sheriff’s Office says to expect traffic delays Aug. 24 from 6am to 11pm occurring from northbound Old U.S. 395N from Carson City to the north end of Eastlake Boulevard. Additionally, some cyclists will make two laps around Washoe Lake by riding southbound on Eastlake to northbound Old U.S. 395 and back around to Eastlake. All cyclists will proceed on Alternate U.S. 395 through Pleasant Valley to the Mt. Rose junction.

For more information on the Expedition Man Endurance Ultra Triathlon, go online.

Users of Western States Trail in conflict

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

As it turned out, it wasn’t just horseback riders and hikers who had something against the Tahoe Sierra 100 endurance mountain bike race: Mother Nature, in the form of a wildfire, also had something to say.

The race, using portions of the rugged Western States Trail over the Sierra, had been scheduled for Saturday.

The trail, once used by miners, is now the province of hikers, horsemen, runners, bikers and motorcycle riders. Connecting Squaw Valley to Auburn, it’s home to the Tevis Cup horse race and Western States 100 run. In both races, participants cover 100 miles in a single day.

Jim Northey, organizer of the bike race, envisioned the Tahoe Sierra 100 growing to the same stature as the horse and foot races and making Auburn the nation’s endurance race capital.

But in the face of opposition from a recently formed group called the Western States Safe Trails Alliance and without a permit to hold the race in hand, Northey canceled the event in early August.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe rink to be home to junior hockey

Junior hockey is coming to South Lake Tahoe.

Tahoe Hockey Partners LLC gave a presentation to the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Tuesday about its plans. The city owns the ice rink, though it is operated by a private company.

Lake Tahoe Blue will play their inaugural Junior A hockey season at the South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena as part of the Pacific Division of the Western Conference of the Western States Hockey League. The first preseason game is Sept. 20, with the league staring Oct. 4.

Tahoe Hockey Partners was formed by Greg Jamison and Van Oleson. The Lake Tahoe Blue team general manager is Chris Collins. Jamison is the former president and CEO of the San Jose Sharks.

“Hockey is our passion and we look forward to building a strong team and a strong fan base,” Jamison said in a statement. “We believe South Lake Tahoe will be a great hockey town for Lake Tahoe Blue and we are committed to making our team an important and fun part of this community.”

Oleson is one of the founders of Tahoe Sports Entertainment, the private corporation that operates the South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena. Oleson also has a background in business development for Fortune 100 companies.

Collins is a recognized international leader in the broadcast, digital streaming, content rights and sports business industries and has been very involved in youth, junior and professional hockey organizations.

Anderson wins slopestyle season opener

By USSA

CARDRONA, New Zealand – X Games champion Jamie Anderson of South Lake Tahoe persevered through fog and a nine-hour comp day Aug. 19 to pick up a season opening slopestyle victory at the FIS Snowboard World Cup in Cardrona, part of the New Zealand Audi Quattro Games.

Anderson, who also won the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix World Cup at Copper Mountain last January, scored a huge 94.75 on her first of two runs and was able to take a victory lap for the win.

Anderson was the only American in the finals on Sunday. Continual postponements of women's qualifying heats and finals pushed the event until late afternoon Monday.

Her win was vital in the United State's quest to maximize quota spots for the Olympic debut of slopestyle snowboarding in Sochi.

Weather forced cancellation of the men's competition after U.S. Snowboarding's Eric Willett of Breckenridge, Colo., won his heat with the second highest score. Slopestyle snowboarding will make its Olympic debut in Sochi.

Action resumes next weekend with the opening halfpipe event of the FIS Snowboard World Cup.

STHS grad to start for Jets

By Darryl Slater, Star-Ledger

South Lake Tahoe is a charming place. But it loses a great deal of appeal when you spend days pouring concrete, as Garrett McIntyre did six years ago.

McIntyre was still seeking his big break in professional football in 2007, after he finished his first season with the Arena Football League's San Jose SaberCats. He went undrafted in 2006, signed with Seattle, bounced in the preseason to Arizona, then Tennessee, and landed in the AFL, one of the sport's last stops before a player accepts a 9-to-5 life.



Garrett McIntyre should see plenty of playing time with the Jets this season. Photo/William Perlman/Star-Ledger

McIntyre majored in construction management at Fresno State, and as he began to ponder his real world options, he decided to pour foundations back home. He hated it.

"It made me not want to get a real job," he said. "Working

with concrete is not fun, man. It is not.”

The Jets gave McIntyre a chance in 2011, signing him to a three-year, $1.41 million contract, with a $15,000 signing bonus. He made the team and has stuck, with three starts in 2011 and four in 2012, when he made 3½ sacks.

With rush outside linebacker Quinton Coples now sidelined indefinitely because of a right ankle injury, McIntyre is getting another chance in a career that he refused to let die.

Read the whole story

Pack may be causing knee problems

By Berne Broudy, Outside

If you’re worried about your knees or setting a new personal record, first take a look at your pack. For every pound of weight you cut from your body, you reduce the pressure on your knees by 4 pounds, a 2005 study in the Journal of Arthritis and Rheumatism found.

Lose 10 pounds of weight, and you’ll reduce the load on your body by 48,000 pounds of pressure per mile you walk. Translation: cut weight from your pack and your knees will thank you.

Luckily, weight loss doesn’t have to come from your waistline. Reduce your pack weight and not only will you place less stress on your joints but you’ll cover more ground with the same amount of effort and feel better when you roll into camp.

Read the whole story

Hazardous weather outlook issued by Weather Service

Expect a few days of nasty weather in Lake Tahoe starting today.

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a hazardous weather outlook for the basin and points east.

Afternoon and evening thunderstorms may produce heavy rain and hail in parts of the basin that could lead to flash flooding. Wind gusts could reach 50 mph.

The unstable air is expected to last through Wednesday. Tuesday and Wednesday are expected to pack the heaviest moisture.

The wild weather will affect points east, as well, like Reno, Carson City and Carson Valley.

With the storms is the likelihood of lightning, which has fire officials on heightened alert.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Vegan hiker sets PCT speed record

By Mercy for Animals

On Aug. 8, Josh Garrett – a dedicated vegan and proud Mercy For Animals member – smashed the previous held world record for through-hiking the grueling Pacific Crest Trail, a 2,655-mile trek from Mexico to Canada, with an official time of 59 days, 8 hours, 14 minutes.

But Garrett, a Santa Monica College track coach and exercise physiology instructor, didn't just shatter records; he also broke barriers by raising awareness of farmed animals and funds for Mercy For Animals along his incredible journey.

We caught up with Garrett before he set out on his mission drive adventure to get the scoop on his heroic hike.

MFA: What made you decide to embark on this hike?



Josh Garrett set a speed record this month for the Pacific Crest Trail. Photo/Provided

I hiked the Pacific Crest Trail back in 2009 and it was one of the greatest experiences of my life. About a year ago, I met

John Mackey, the CEO of Whole Foods. He is an avid hiker, who has section hiked the Big Three trails (Appalachian, Continental Divide, and Pacific Crest). When we talked about the Pacific Crest Trail, he was really surprised, I guess impressed, to learn that I had hiked it in 88 days.

We got to talking and he had this idea that with the right support, I could probably break a hiking record. He asked me if I wanted to give the Pacific Crest Trail record a shot. I had mixed feelings. I loved the idea of the challenge, but didn't want to let anybody down if I didn't make it. And I was nervous. Hiking the trail was uncomfortable enough – painful sometimes – even when I wasn't trying to do it within any particular time limit. But, I went vegan about eighteen months ago, and have become more and more concerned about what's happening to the animals.

Suddenly it hit me that I could use this hike as a way to get the word out on their behalf. So I teamed up with Mercy For Animals and now this is so much more than a personal quest.

Read the whole story

Bodybuilding competition on South Shore

Tahoe Show – a National Physique Committee & International Federation of Bodybuilding sanctioned amateur and pro bodybuilding, figure, bikini, physique and fitness championship – is Aug. 24 at MontBleu in Stateline.

A grant from the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority is allowing the Tahoe Show to add IFBB Pro Figure, bringing in pro female

figure athletes from around the world.

Spectators will see the area’s best athletes, live backstage interviews, celebrities and countless professional athletes on and off stage. Plus, spectators will have the chance to sample an array of health and fitness related items from vendors.

Those who cannot make it to the show can watch it on the Internet.

Expected at the show are about 250 competitors.

For tickets, information, registration and a full event schedule go online, email Chris@TahoeShow.com or call (775) 267.7564.