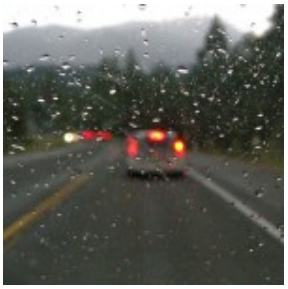
Tahoe’s spastic weather not uncommon, officials say

By Kathryn Reed

Even though the National Weather Service says nothing much out of the ordinary is happening with the weather in the greater Lake Tahoe area, it is providing plenty fodder for locals and tourists.

Today might require a jacket with highs in the basin barely touching 70. Sunday produced hail that looked like golf balls. Less than a month ago South Tahoe was recording a record high and back in May posted a record low. Reno just came off tying a record for number of days of 90-degree temps or higher.



It was a soggy drive over Echo Summit into South Tahoe on Aug. 8. Photos/Kathryn Reed

“It’s not different (this summer),” according to Jessica Kielhorn, meteorologist technician with the National Weather Service in Reno.

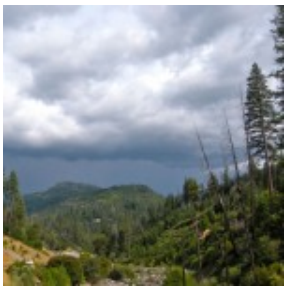
Today should be the coldest day of the week in the basin and

stretching to the Carson Valley and up to Reno. It will be cooler and drier, with no thunderstorms in sight.

Lake Tahoe isn't the only place with cooler than normal temps. The Bay Area has been chilly compared to most summers. In the Central Valley cool weather is affecting the tomato harvest.

While Tahoe has been mild when it comes to mercury readings, on Aug. 8 Reno tied a record at 35 days of temperatures at 90 degrees or higher. It had the exact same 35-day run in 2008 (July 5-Aug. 8), and did the 35 days in 2005, too.

"We're looking to warm back up over the weekend," Kielhorn said of the Tahoe-Reno area. "We have a ridge of high pressure moving in after this trough."

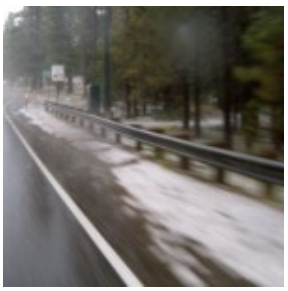


Dark clouds sit over the basin on Aug. 8.

South Lake Tahoe and Tahoe City should hit the mid-70s by the end of the week. Both ends of the lake should be in the mid-80s Sunday and Monday. Reno will be close to triple digits at that time.

While afternoon thunderstorms are not uncommon in the basin in July and August, the hail has surprised some locals. For those from the Midwest, summer hailstorms are no big deal.

Hail is tiny pieces of ice that bounce through freezing thunderclouds.



Hail piles up near the Y in South Tahoe on Aug. 8.

And bounce they did near the Y on Aug. 8. A weather spotter for the NWS reported the ice formation as 1-inch in diameter in some cases. Driving by Lake Tahoe Airport it looked like snow on the ground.

Puddles from the storm still sat on some city streets two days later.

With the relatively fast moving storms, and definitely isolated showers, it is not affecting the lake level much. On Aug. 10 it was 1.3 feet above its natural rim.

The declining water level has caused some boat launches to close for the season. Coon Street Boat Launch in Kings Beach closed earlier this month and Tahoe Vista Recreation Area launch closed Aug. 9.

Even though a nip is in the air and some people are using that four-letter word – fall – to describe what it feels like outside, the forecast is for normal temps for at least the next week or so.

This is welcome news considering it seems like winter just ended.

It was back on July 17 that South Lake Tahoe hit a record high of 90 degrees, beating the old record by 1 degree. It was May 23 that the low of 19 degrees set a record, beating the old

one by 6 degrees.

Project proposals sought for National Forest System

The second round of project proposals for the Nevada and Placer County Resource Advisory Committee are due Sept. 1. The RAC is looking for potential projects to benefit National Forest System land in both counties. These projects need to meet the legislative requirements of Public Law 110-343 including:

• Improve the maintenance of existing infrastructure;

• Implement stewardship objectives that enhance forest ecosystems; and

• Restore and improve land health and water quality.

The funds may be used for projects that enjoy broad based support and have objectives that may include:

• road, trail, and infrastructure maintenance or obliteration;

• soil productivity improvement;

• improvements in forest ecosystem health;

• watershed restoration and maintenance;

• the restoration, maintenance, and improvement of wildlife and fish habitat;

• the control of noxious and exotic weeds; and

• the re-establishment of native species.

Project proposal forms are available from RAC members, the Forest Service and on line at www.fs.fed.us/r5/tahoe along with a cover letter explaining more about the project application process. Project proponents need to ensure that the form is filled out correctly. Letters of support for the project are strongly recommended. Project proponents must contact the District Ranger on the district where their project is located and obtain a letter of support, confirming that the project will benefit the National Forest.

“The RAC will have the following amount to allocate this first year: Nevada County – $108,957 and Placer County – $378,324. The amount of funding available is based on the amount of acres of National Forest land in the county, recommendations by the Boards of Supervisors, and past receipts from the sale of National Forest goods and services. Additional funding will be available in the future through 2011,” Joanne Roubique, designated federal official, said in a statement.

Submitting Project Proposals: Project proposals need to be mailed to Joanne Roubique, DFO, Truckee Ranger Station, 10811 Stockrest Springs, Truckee, CA 96161 as well as emailed to jroubique@fs.fed.us. It is important projects are mailed both in hard copy form and electronic form.

For more information, call Joanne Roubique at (530) 587.3558, Jennifer Montgomery (530) 889.4010, or Ann Westling at (530) 478.6205.

Disc golf tournament in Zephyr Cove

Tahoe Hemp Company Pro-Am Disc Golf Tournament, a PDGA sanctioned C-Tier event, is Sept. 11-12 at Zephyr Cove Disc Golf Course.



Player check-in and preregistration is Sept. 10 from 4-6 pm at Tahoe Hemp Company at 3564 Lake Tahoe Blvd., unit B in South Lake Tahoe.

Contact Dan Thrift at (530) 559. 4519 or danthrift@etahoe.com for information.

Registration forms are available at Tahoe Hemp Company, Bijou and Zephyr Cove Disc Golf Courses or online.

A dry Colorado River has some people sweating

By Jonathan Waterman, National Geographic

During a recent discussion of water at the Aspen Institute's Environment Forum In Colorado, former Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt told a packed house: "The American Southwest is not one of those regions where there is water scarcity. It's hard to believe, given all the hyping in the national and local and regional press."

The audience and his copanelists – Sandra Postel, director of the Global Water Policy Project and freshwater fellow for the National Geographic Society, and Pat Mulroy, general manager of Southern Nevada Water Authority (overseeing Las Vegas water) – were taken aback by these statements.

Throughout the Southwest, and particularly in a region that I know, the Colorado River Basin, the so called "water buffalos" (those who line their pockets with virtual water) commonly talk about this river as though it has not run dry. If only because the water continues to irrigate 2,000,000 acres of agriculture, run 336 miles into Phoenix and Tucson, 224 miles to Los Angeles, or under the Rockies toward Denver through no less than 12 tunnels. So water-related business certainly isn't scarce. That includes Kentucky Blue Grass lawns, water-consumptive cotton, and a mega dairyshed of cows eating Colorado River grown hay to produce countless gallons of milk.

Read the whole story

Truckee embraces Cruiser Madness

Gear up and get ready for Downtown Truckee Thursdays' rendition of Cruiser Madness on Aug. 12 at 5pm when the popular weekly summer event pays homage to biking enthusiasts.

Put together a whacky costume, decorate your ride and pedal on down for the rebirth of the infamous Cruiser Madness event that launched at Squaw Valley years ago.

Those who show up dressed in costume will vie for a chance to win cool prizes and be crowned King and Queen of the cruiser

parade.

Costumed bicyclists are asked to check in at the SnowBomb event information tent adjacent to the Truckee train depot at 5pm to be judged before the parade. Parade embarks promptly at 5:30pm.

Adding to the festivities will be the band Crazy performing a musical tribute to Patsy Cline at the Beer Garden.

Downtown Truckee Thursdays 2010 continues through Aug. 19 from 5-9pm.

The 10-week series was launched three years ago by the Truckee Downtown Merchants Association in an effort to highlight and revitalize the town and underscore a Think Local attitude. In addition to children's activities, Truckee Thursdays also offers live music, art, the Foothills Farmers Market, a beer garden, various catering and "foodie" trucks and vendors of all kinds. Additionally, many of the local merchants showcase special wares on the sidewalk outside of their stores.

For more information, contact Downtown Truckee Thursdays at (530) 584.1222.

Lake level splendor

Wild. Beautiful. Colorful. Abundant. Mesmerizing.

The Upper Truckee Meadow is awash with wildflowers.



Wildflowers fill Upper Truckee Meadow. Photos/Gloria Harootunian

This South Lake Tahoe oasis still has water – evidence of a long, late spring. Mother Nature's reward – a bouquet of wildflowers that Gloria Harootunian has shared with *Lake Tahoe News* readers.

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30th annual Squaw Valley Mountain Run on Aug. 7

Hundreds of runners and hikers will make an annual pilgrimage to the top of Squaw Valley on Aug. 7 to enjoy a great workout with stunning views of Lake Tahoe and the High Sierra. This year marks the 30th year of the Squaw Valley Mountain Run, and organizers expect more than 500 entries.

Starting at the base of Squaw Valley, the course climbs the 3.6 mile Mountain Run trail up to High Camp where awards, a raffle, music, refreshments and beer will be provided for participants.

Many parents choose to push a stroller or carry infants as an added challenge. The fastest time on record is 29 minutes, set by Shiloh Mielke from Weaverville, N.C., in 2008. Delbert Wichelman, age 85, is the oldest competitor and a regular at the race.

Participants can choose to run or hike up to High Camp, or they can participate in the guided Flower Walk at High Camp on easy rolling terrain.

All participants in the run/hike and flower hike will get a souvenir beer mug, beer (or lemonade for kids), snacks, a free Cable Car ride back down, and will be entered in the Mountain Run raffle. Awards for the uphill competitors will be given for top three places in five age categories.

Cost of entry:

(Pre Registration) Adult – $35; 18 & Under – $20

(Day of Event) Adult – $45; 18 & Under – $30

About the event:

The event is part of La Sportiva Mountain series and attracts top runners from across the country, as well as recreational runners and hikers. The organization of the race was taken over by The Auburn Ski Club Junior Nordic Team four years ago as a fundraiser. The club has continued the tradition of the event being a way for many people to celebrate life following personal struggles with cancer or in memory of a loved one who may have been less fortunate. Every year 20 percent of event proceeds go to The Tahoe Forest Cancer Center to help cancer patients receive the treatment they need.

More information and downloadable entry forms (to mail in) are available at www.squawmountainrun.com. Participants can sign up online at www.active.com.

Crime ruining fun for state park users

By Matt Weiser and Marjie Lundstrom, Sacramento Bee

Holiday visitors seeking a quiet day off beside the water at Folsom State Recreation Area on July 5 instead had front-row seats to a pursuit, as park rangers chased an assault suspect on foot through throngs of picnickers.

It was like a scene from a big-city television crime drama. But this was a state park.



Mountain bikers in Washoe Meadow State Park in Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Crime is on the rise in California's state parks, up nearly threefold in the last decade, according to Department of Parks and Recreation data analyzed by The Sacramento Bee.

Last year, 62,575 crimes were reported in the parks – or about 170 a day, compared with 65 a day in 1999 – even as crime in

the rest of the state declined. Taking park use into account, crime last year reached record per-capita levels.

Read the whole story

Fall mountain bike conference in Stateline

IMBA and the U.S. Forest Service will host the Tahoe Trails Conference at MontBleu casino in Stateline in October.

The Oct. 1-3 event, which is open to all members of the mountain bike community, is an opportunity for collaboration between riders, land managers and the bike industry. The goal is to ensure the future of sustainable and enjoyable trails in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and beyond.

Registration for the Tahoe Trails Conference will open on IMBA's home page in upcoming weeks.

Specific conference goals include:

* Create a sense of environmental stewardship and ownership for the trails in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

* Enhance riders' awareness of Lake Tahoe's sensitive environment.

* Develop understanding of design and engineering elements that go into creating enjoyable and sustainable trails.

* Create understanding of what is needed to develop a strong and effective mountain bike community.

* Facilitate networking among land managers and activists in

the mountain bike community.

Conference outcomes:

* The creation of an informed mountain bike community that takes pride and ownership of the trails in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

* Encourage trailbuilders to partner with land managers on the planning, construction and maintenance of trails.

* Promote better understanding of the trail experiences riders desire.

* Foster long-term protection of the environment in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

* Ensure long-term protection and expansion of mountain biking opportunities.

In addition to informational sessions and presentations the conference will feature group rides, networking opportunities and planned social gatherings.

Fields of endless wildflowers beckon hikers to Sierra trails

By Kathryn Reed

HOPE VALLEY – It's like a convention of wildflower enthusiasts along the trail to Winnemucca Lake. Everyone seems to have a camera. People bending over to inhale what scent these wonders of nature are casting off. A certain excitement fills the air.

Maybe the long winter has everyone giddy about spring arriving – even though on this particular Saturday the calendar says July 24. Even the weather and flowers seem to operate on Tahoe time.



Oliver Wong hikes through wildflowers near Winnemucca Lake. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Parking at the Carson ranger station in the Eldorado National Forest on Highway 88 is an indication the trail is going to be crowded. I end up on the street and not paying the $5 fee because no slots are available.

Normally a congested trail is exasperating. But with my nephew in town for the weekend, the day of the hike was predetermined. The abundance of natural beauty is so intoxicating the other trail users can't bother me.

Splashes of rich purple lupine are everywhere, along with the bright yellow mule's ear.

This 1.8-mile trek to Winnemucca Lake in the Mokelumne Wilderness seems to take forever. I can't stop taking pictures.

People are circling Frog's Lake, some lingering long enough to

swim – though it's predominately small children who don't know they can say no to cold water.

"It's a great area to look at stuff," says Janel Johnson, a botanist with the Nevada Native Plant Society, who is leading a wildflower hike that day. She is telling her followers about flowers I've never heard of – like penstemon, potentilla and green gentian.

"The rock outcroppings by Frog's Lake have a whole different set of flowers," Johnson says. She also remarked how the wildflowers are blooming about two weeks later than they did in 2009.

To this non-flower knowing hiker she explains the spindly pink flowers are actually wild onions.

Meandering on this trail that is full of adults, children and leashed dogs, are fields of Indian paintbrush and lupine. Wild irises poke above some of the other lush flowers. It's as though every color of the rainbow is represented in the various fields of flora.

A guy is walking up the trail with a snowboard in search of terrain to ride. A group of Cub Scouts is on a quest for outdoor related badges.

A dad points out miners' lettuce to his son and talks about a time when mule's ear would be boiled and consumed.

Finally at Winnemucca Lake we stop for a bite to eat – what we brought with us, not what we found along the trail.

Patches of snow dot Round Top, the mountain at the base of the lake. A few people are wading into the water. We don't stay long – a thunderhead is almost directly over us.

Luckily, we were out of the wilderness area before the clouds open up and only get pelted by rain and hail a bit in Meyers – such are the hazards of a topless Jeep.

To get to Lake Winnemucca: From South Lake Tahoe go over Luther Pass (Highway 89), in Hope Valley turn right onto Highway 88, go to the top of Carson Pass – parking area on your left. Pay $5 to park. Trail is to the right of the visitor center. It’s an easy 1.8 miles one-way to Lake Winnemucca. You get to Frog’s Lake first. Going farther you will hit Round Top Lake, Fourth of July Lake and Woods Lake. Part of the route is the Pacific Crest Trail.

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