

Climate change warning issued at Tahoe conference

By AP

Author Bill McKibben has opened a Sierra Nevada conservation conference with a call for a “coordinated, global” effort to deal with climate change.

McKibben, in a keynote address at the Sierra Nevada Alliance’s annual conference in South Lake Tahoe, said change being made on the local level to deal with climate change will do little good unless it’s accompanied by change on a global level.

“Scientists are quite clear that we will raise the temperature 4 to 5 degrees in the course of this century on our current trajectory,” he said. “If that happens, then we can’t have civilization in the places and ways we’ve had them.”



Bill McKibben

The three-day conference, which began with McKibben’s speech Friday, also features a session on the impact of climate change on Western wildfires as well as workshops and field trips.

The alliance consists of over 85 member conservation groups that work to protect the Sierra.

“This year marks the Sierra Nevada Alliance’s 20th anniversary, and we are celebrating all our great work

protecting and restoring the Sierra at this year's conference," said Joan Clayburgh, executive director of the alliance.

McKibben is founder of 350.org, an international movement aimed at solving the climate crisis with representatives in some 190 countries. He also is author of "The End of Nature" and other books and articles on climate change.

The activist said his group plans to stage 145 events in 25 states across the country on Sept. 21 to "draw the line" against the Keystone XL oil pipeline, which would carry oil derived from tar sands in western Canada to refineries along the Texas Gulf Coast.

Opponents are demanding that President Obama reject the pipeline, saying it would carry "dirty oil" that contributes to global warming.

Many business and labor groups support the 1,700-mile pipeline as a source of jobs and a step toward North American energy independence.

"At this point, 70 to 75 percent of Americans understand that global warming is very real, and the need to do something about it," McKibben said. "The trick at this point is not to convert the other 25 percent. The fight is to get those who do know what's going on as active and engaged as possible."