Snippets about Lake Tahoe

· Tahoe kids doing what they love – mountain biking. Video is courtesy of First Tracks Productions.

· Animal Coalition of Tahoe's photos with Santa event is Dec. 7-8 from 3:30-5:30pm each day at Pet Station, 2205 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. Photographer Jenny Scales will take photos of you, your pet, and your kids with Santa for a $10 donation to support ACT's spay-neuter program.

· Truckee High School's Project Grad – Safe and Sober Graduation Night is looking for volunteers. For more info, contact Kim Parisi at k.parisi@sbcglobal.net or call or 530.448.1662.

· SnowFest returns to the North Shore from March 1-11. More info is **online**.

· Sugar Bowl Resort will open Dec. 6, offering top-to-bottom skiing and riding. The resort will also host an opening celebration party on Saturday with free lift tickets for the first 100 people.

Study: Arctic ice loss could spell more drought for Calif.

By Kurtis Alexander, San Francisco Chronicle

Californians may have another reason to keep an eye on melting sea ice in the Arctic – at least if they're concerned about the state's propensity for plunging into damaging droughts.

Alongside the obvious perils for polar bears and other wildlife, as well as the problem of rising ocean levels, the massive ice thaw thousands of miles away is triggering changes in the atmosphere that are likely to shrink rainfall close to home, according to research by scientists at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

Their study outlines a chain of meteorological events that leads to formation of storm-blocking air masses in the North Pacific. The masses are similar to the so-called Ridiculously Resilient Ridge that kept rain from making landfall during California's five-year drought, forcing widespread water rationing in homes, prompting farmers to fallow fields and causing the Central Valley to sink due to heavy pumping of groundwater.

Read the whole story

WIC program helping women, young kids

Finding healthy foods on a limited budget can sometimes be challenging. The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program is a federally funded nutrition program for women and young children.

WIC provides nutrition education and health information, breastfeeding support, checks for healthy foods (like fruits and vegetables), and referrals to medical providers and community services. There is no charge to receive WIC services.

Individuals or families may qualify for WIC services if they:

- Are pregnant, breastfeeding a baby up to 1 year old, or had a baby in the past six months
- Are the primary caretakers of a child under the age of 5
- Have a low to medium income and/or receive Medi-Cal, CalWORKs (TANF) or CalFresh (Food Stamps) benefits
- Live in California.

To determine eligibility, go **online**.

Staff at the WIC Program in El Dorado County may be reached at 530.573.3491 or 530.621.6176.

Post office sets deadlines for holiday mail

Deadlines are approaching for people who are planning to send mail overseas for Christmas.

To reach the destination by Dec. 25 the parcels should be sent by:

Dec. 11 – Military priority mail and first-class mail

Dec. 14 – USPS retail ground

Dec. 19 – First-class cards and letters

Dec. 20 – Priority mail.

The busiest day of the year for mailing is expected to be Dec. 18.

The U.S. Postal Service offers an **online** shipping option.

Tahoe firefighters sent to raging SoCal blaze

More than 15 engines, making up three strike teams, have been deployed from the Lake Tahoe Basin area to the Thomas Fire near Ventura County.

The Thomas Fire started on Dec. 4 at approximately 6:28pm and has burned 45,000 acres and destroyed more than 150 structures.

Engines assigned to the numerous strike teams deployed include: Tahoe Douglas Fire, East Fork Fire, Truckee Fire, North Tahoe Fire, Lake Valley Fire, Truckee Meadows Fire, Sparks Fire, Amador Fire, Mule Creek Fire, North Lake Tahoe Fire, Carson City Fire, South Lake Tahoe Fire, Central Lyon County Fire, and Fallen Leaf Fire.

A fourth strike team has recently been ordered to assist with an additional wildfire burning in Southern California. Resources assigned to the fourth strike team are in the process of being assigned to the incident.

Russia banned from 2018 Winter Olympics

By Rebecca R. Ruiz and Tariq Panja, New York Times

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — Russia's Olympic team has been barred

from the 2018 Winter Games in PyeongChang, South Korea. The country’s government officials are forbidden to attend, its flag will not be displayed at the opening ceremony and its anthem will not sound. Any athletes from Russia who receive special dispensation to compete will do so as individuals wearing a neutral uniform, and the official record books will forever show that Russia won zero medals.

That was the punishment issued Tuesday to the proud sports juggernaut that has long used the Olympics as a show of global force but was exposed for systematic doping in previously unfathomable ways.

The International Olympic Committee, after completing its own prolonged investigations that reiterated what had been known for more than a year, handed Russia penalties for doping so severe they were without precedent in Olympics history.

Read the whole story

Man sleeping near fireplace severely burned

A man staying at the Ridge Tahoe sustained severe burns to almost 50 percent of his body.

According to Tahoe Douglas fire officials, the victim fell asleep by a radiant fireplace in his room and awoke to find himself on fire.

Just after midnight Dec. 5 he was flown by CalStar from the resort at the top of Kingsbury Grade to the UC Davis Burn Center.

Firefighters were able to keep the fire to his clothing and the carpet.

The name of the man and his hometown have not been released.

Heating incidents are one of the leading causes of deaths in homes. The fire department suggests people read this safety brochure.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

League putting on holiday open house

The League to Save Lake Tahoe is hosting a Winter Wonderland: A Holiday Open House on Dec. 14.

There will be an opportunity to make a free Lake Tahoe keepsake using reclaimed, lake-shaped wooden pieces.

The fire will be going. There will be light appetizers, drinks, and music from violinist Ellen Flanagan. Shop discounted prices on Keep Tahoe Blue holiday gifts.

The event is from 5:30-8:30pm at 2608 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

RSVP **online**.

Fundraiser to benefit Bijou Bike Park

Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association is having a fundraiser Dec. 13 with the goal being to raise enough money to fund the 2018 Bijou Bike Park maintenance and improvements in one night.

Here are ways to contribute:

- Buy a raffle ticket that night to win outdoor gear.
- Donations to the bike park that evening will be matched.
- Spend money at South Lake Brewing Company that night because the brewery is donating a portion of sales to the bike park.
- Outdoor Gear Lab is donating 100 percent of sales from its discounted used gear from now until the event. Go **online** to check that out.

The fundraiser starts at 6pm at the South Lake Tahoe brewery.

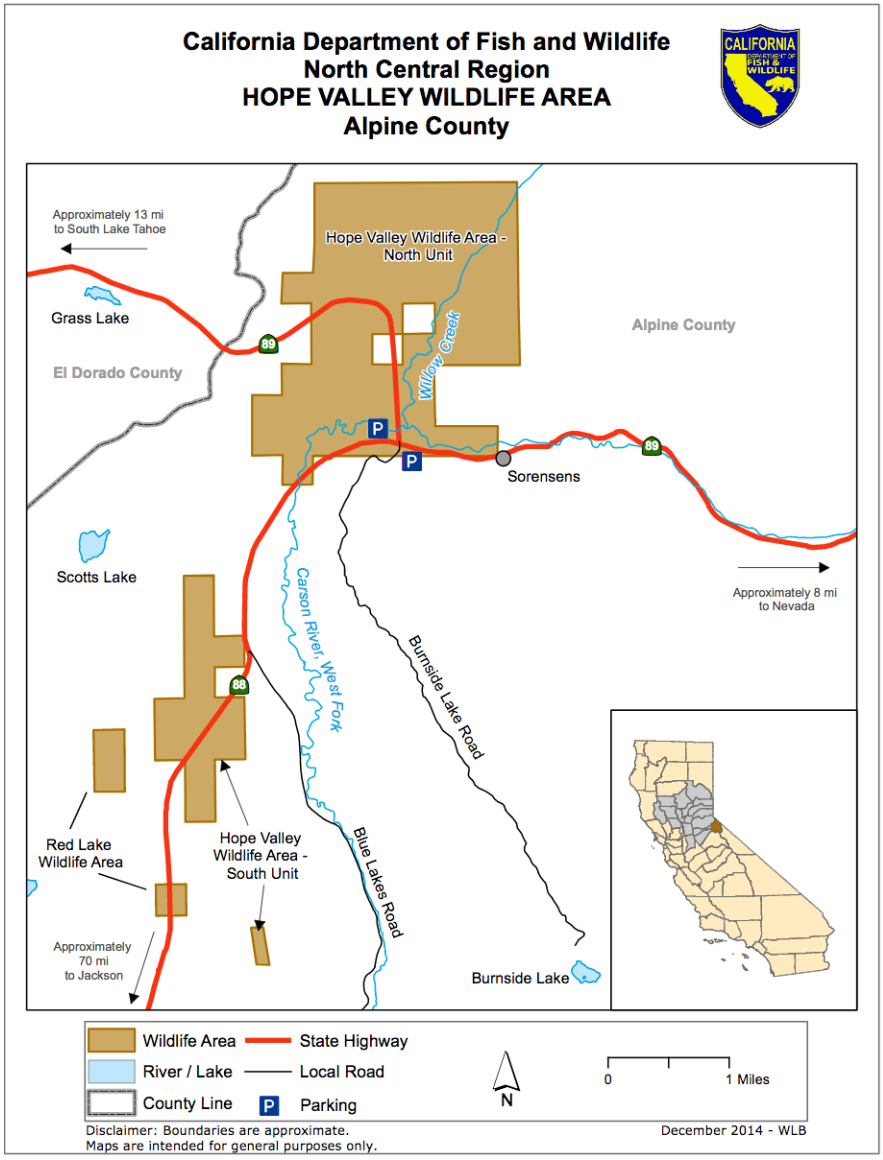
User fee to take effect in Hope Valley on Jan. 1

By Kathryn Reed

Starting Jan. 1 it is going to cost money to recreate in parts of Hope Valley.

The land affected is owned by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. In Alpine County the areas are known as Hope Valley Wildlife Area-North Unit, Hope Valley Wildlife

Area-South Unit, and Red Lake Wildlife Area. Most of the nearly 3,000 acres are at Picketts Junction and then north on both sides of Highway 89 up Luther Pass.



A user fee for the brown areas labeled Hope Valley Wildlife Area starts Jan. 1
Source: *CDFW*

The Land Pass Program dates back to 1988, but is only now taking full effect. At that time six properties had a fee, others were added this fall, with the remainder coming on board in 2018.

“Since 2006 the Legislature has been after the department to generate more income from user fees,” Julie Horenstein,

ecological reserve coordinator with CDFW, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “In 2012 a statute was passed explicitly directing the (California Fish and Game) Commission to require a lands pass where it was practical and cost effective to do so.”

Statewide, 42 properties come under the land use fee program. The state agency does not have lands in El Dorado or Placer counties that will be subjected to the user fee.

In all, CDFW manages 247 wildlife areas and ecological reserves up and down that state, which encompasses about 1 million acres.

Hunters and anglers have had to pay to use these lands for years. Mostly the money came from licenses, duck stamps, and taxes on equipment they use for their sport. They have been vocal in wanting hikers, birders and wildflower enthusiasts to pay their share. Those with a hunting or fishing license do not have to pay the additional user fee.

Horenstein said a state blue ribbon committee in 2012 mandated the department to “develop more equitable funding sources.” This user fee is the source.

The money collected from the new user fee will go into the Native Species Conservation and Enhancement Account. It can only be used for managing the operating CDFW lands. If the agency can identify where the user was going to recreate, then 35 percent of the fee will be reinvested at that location.



A large swath of Hope Valley will no longer be free to access starting Jan. 1. Photo/LTN file

Day and annual passes will be available. They will be like sno-park passes, in that they are available online or at select outlets, and that they are not available at the parking location.

The agency expects to generate a little more than $150,000 a year statewide. Expenses the first year could reach nearly $100,000, with metal signs being the most expensive item. Education material is another expense. So the net is about $50,000 a year to start with. The money could be leveraged to secure federal grants so more work is done on state lands.

Those caught without a pass will face a fine of between $50 and $250. Leniency is expected for the first six months or so for the public to become educated about the fee.

While this state department said it sent out notices to all counties and adjacent public land owners and likely interested agencies, Alpine County officials said they never received the information. That is in part why Horenstein will be speaking at today's Alpine's Board of Supervisors meeting.

Supervisor Don Jardine, who has been in office for 30 years, is very familiar with this land. He was on the board when it became public property.

“The county at the time didn’t want to see major development in Hope Valley,” Jardine told *Lake Tahoe News.*

The Trust for Public Land and Friends of Hope Valley partnered to protect 25,000 acres in the area that had been privately held. This started in the late 1980s and took more than 10 years to finalize. The CDFW and U.S. Forest Service bought the land.

Jardine said Alpine was not notified of the fee structure, that’s why he wants a CDFW official to speak to the board.

He is most worried about:

· Access for low income people. – *The state said lower income people mayaccess the land for less money.*

· Nonprofits that use the area. – *The state says schools and organized youth groups are exempt from the fee.*

· People wanting to get to USFS land having to pay. – *They will have to pay.*

Jardine said he isn’t necessarily opposed to the fee, but he and his colleagues want a better understanding of what the state is about to do and they want to make sure the original agreement when the lands became public is adhered to.

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Notes:

· Passes may be purchased **online** and where hunting/fishing licenses are sold.

· Day passes are $4.32; 2017 annual pass is $24.33; 2018 annual pass is $25.10. Passes are good for a calendar year.