

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- The Native Species Festival is June 12 from 10am-4pm at Taylor Creek Visitor Center on the South Shore.
 - The El Dorado County Fair will have a free shuttle running Placerville. Click the flyer for more info.
 - Staff from the California Board of Equalization's Statewide Compliance & Outreach Program will soon visit non-residential retail businesses in Kirkwood and Markleeville to educate business operators about their tax and fee obligations, and identify those who sell or lease tangible personal property without a seller's permit.
 - Erica Hartnick will be offering community donation based yoga classes at Kiva Beach on Wednesdays at 8:30am starting June 8.
 - June 7 at noon is the free Tahoe Talks Brown Bag Lunch: Protecting Our Shoreline from Trash at the Fairway Community Center, Fireside Room, 330 Fairway Drive, Tahoe City.
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Cyclists may impact vehicle travel on Sunday

Caltrans is advising motorists that thousands of bicyclists will be sharing the highways all around Lake Tahoe during Sunday's annual America's Most Beautiful Bike Ride, a 72-mile ride around the lake.

The northbound lane of Highway 89 in Emerald Bay from Spring Creek Road to Vikingsholm Vista Point will be closed to

through traffic from 6:30-8:30am. The southbound lane will remain open.

There are no other planned highway closures for the ride, but motorists should be prepared to share the road with bicyclists on all the California and Nevada highways around the lake.

The start and finish is at Hard Rock in Stateline.

More than 3,300 riders are expected for what is the 25th annual event.

Casino tests program to prevent gambling addiction

By Phillip Marcelo, AP

BOSTON — Massachusetts is set to launch this week a first-in-the-nation system allowing slot players to limit their bets, following months of planning and some pushback from the gambling industry.

The goal is to prevent casual players from going down the destructive path of addiction, said Marlene Warner, executive director of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling, which is helping administer the new feature along with the state Gaming Commission. It isn't necessarily meant to address those with serious gambling problems, she said.

"It's truly a prevention tool," Warner said. "We want people to keep gambling in a way that's healthy and safe for them, so that it doesn't rise to that problematic level."

The “Play My Way” system is being piloted at Plainridge Park, the slots parlor and harness racing track in Plainville and the only operating casino in Massachusetts so far.

If successful, the system may be imposed by the gambling commission at two other state-regulated casinos still in development: Wynn’s Boston-area resort and MGM’s Springfield one.

The federally recognized Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, which is building a resort casino on sovereign land in Taunton, says it’s also reviewing “Play My Way,” but declined to say last week whether it would commit to implementing anything similar when its First Light casino opens in part in 2017.

Massachusetts casino operators and the Washington-based American Gaming Association initially voiced reservations about the planned system, arguing such bet limiting or “play management” programs have not proven effective in Australia, Canada, Norway, Sweden and other countries where they’ve been tried.

But American Gaming Association spokesman Christopher Moyer said “productive conversations” with the state gambling commission has allayed most of the association’s concerns.

“Any responsible gaming tool should be targeted to assist the small minority of players that may confront irresponsible play without harming the entertainment experience for nearly all players who enjoy our entertainment experience responsibly,” he said. “We’re optimistic this tool will help to achieve this goal.”

Bet limiting systems are distinct from so-called “self-exclusion” policies in place at Plainridge Park and most U.S. casinos that bar enrolled gamblers from betting at casinos outright.

Warner said the Massachusetts system, which is similar to one

also in development in the Canadian province of British Columbia, also is not as draconian as those imposed elsewhere.

“Play My Way” is voluntary and is only being offered initially to players signed up with the casino’s reward card program.

Gamblers would never be cut off from betting. By enrolling, they simply receive regular, onscreen notifications as they approach or reach their limit. They also can change their betting ceiling or unenroll at any time.

“It’s just a tool to make that person aware of what’s happening and the decisions they’re making.” Warner said.

Author to give talk about NorCal history

South Lake Tahoe Friends of the Library in partnership with Lake Tahoe Historical Society is bringing award-winning author Cheryl Anne Stapp to town.

Stapp’s newest book is “The Stagecoach in Northern California: Rough Rides, Gold Camps, and Daring Drivers”.

She lives with her husband in Sacramento and volunteers as a docent at Sutter’s Fort State Historic Park. Stapp has written about the history that surrounds her in “Disaster & Triumph: Sacramento Women, Gold Rush Through the Civil War” and “Sacramento Chronicles: A Golden Past”.

She will be reading from her books and giving a talk on July 23 at 3pm. The free event is at the library on Rufus Allen Boulevard. Books will be available for sale and signing.

Movie matinees for adults at Douglas library

Douglas County Public Library will be showing five movies geared toward adults (rated PG to PG-13) on selected Wednesdays throughout the summer.

All showings begin at 3pm, with free popcorn and beverages provided.

Scheduled showings include:

- June 15: "Hail, Caesar!" – starring George Clooney and Scarlett Johansson (PG-13)
- June 29: "The Monuments Men" – starring Matt Damon and George Clooney (PG-13)
- July 20: "The Hundred-Foot Journey" – starring Helen Mirren (PG)
- Aug. 3: "Captain Phillips" – starring Tom Hanks (PG-13)
- Aug. 17: "The Intern" – starring Robert De Niro and Anne Hathaway (PG-13).

The Minden Library is located at 1625 Library Lane. For more information, call 775.782.9841.

Wildfire Safety Expo planned for SLT

South Lake Tahoe Fire Rescue along with multiple local agencies are coming together to host the third annual Wildfire Safety Expo on June 11 from noon to 3pm at the TJ Maxx parking lot at the Y.

The event will include information on creating a home evacuation plan, preparing for fire, creating defensible space and more.

The Wildfire Safety Expo is designed to be fun for the entire family, with a special appearance by Smokey Bear.

Participating agencies include: South Lake Tahoe Fire Department, Lake Valley Fire Protection District, Tahoe Douglas Fire, CalFire, U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, South Lake Tahoe Police Department, California Highway Patrol, El Dorado County Sheriff's Department, Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, South Tahoe Action Teams, California Tahoe Conservancy, Master Gardeners, Tahoe Resource Conservation District, American Red Cross, California Conservation Corps, South Tahoe Public Utility District, California Conservation Corps, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, Liberty Utilities, South Tahoe Refuse and Recycling Services, and TJ Maxx.

Wildflower hikes at Spooner Lake

Park rangers will lead four wildflower hikes around Spooner Lake this month.

Spooner Lake is home to more than 100 species of wildflowers. Participants will be taught plant names, uses, and habitats.

Group size is limited to 12 participants. Sign up by calling 775.749.5980 or email spooner.ranger@gmail.com.

Wear comfortable shoes and bring water. This is a leisurely one-mile hike.

Dates are June 9, 11, 23 and 25 at 10am. Spooner Lake State Park located just north of Highway 50 on Highway 28. The walks are free, but there is a \$10 parking fee; Nevada residents receive a \$2 discount.

Building a bridge over troublesome water



Tahoe Rim Trail volunteers prep the site for a bridge in Van Sickle Bi-State Park. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Five years after **Van Sickle Bi-State Park** opened, the main trail is getting a major upgrade.

A 26-foot long, 6-foot wide fiberglass composite bridge is being erected at the waterfall that is a little more than a mile up the trail from the parking lot.

The goal is provide access to more users of this 725-acre park – including equestrians, mountain bikers, small children, older people and those with some stability issues.

This is no easy undertaking. On Thursday about a dozen volunteers from the Tahoe Rim Trail Association were at the worksite. Horses were bringing in 80-pound sacks of cement. By the end of today more than 30 sacks will have been delivered.



Bonnie Fair and John McKenna work the hoist. Photo/Kathryn Reed

A grip hoist was rigged across the stream, with thick cables secured to trees. The cement bags were brought across the water this way – in the air – instead of carried by people. Mostly this had to do with ensuring it didn't get dropped in the water. That would be an environmental nightmare.

Safety for the people doing the work and for the land is of utmost importance.

Clay Grubb and Chris Strohm are the project leaders. Both are veteran trail builders with long histories tied to the South Shore.



Horses bring the sacks of cement to the worksite.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

In surveying the site on June 2, Strohm described the location as dealing with two imperfect surfaces in a tight spot.

The stream crossing comes at a bend in the trail. As with most mountainous areas, it's not flat or even. And working around any body of water in the basin means needing to adhere to strict guidelines to ensure nothing gets downstream that could negatively impact Lake Tahoe.

Rock being used for the project comes from the side of the hill. By the time everything is done the landscape will look as though the workers were never there.



Chris Binder creates a landing area to store the cement. Photo/Kathryn Reed

"We're building a structure that will last 100 years or longer," John McKenna, who was working the hoist, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

While horses were used for the cement, the men and women hauled the rest of the tools, including the 50-pound generator, up to the waterfall. Wheelbarrows were pushed up the slope with tools.

McKenna, who is 70, brought up 75 pounds of gear his first trip on June 1, 50 pounds the second.

Many of the men and women are in their 60s and 70s.

The youngster of the group was Chris Binder. He was also the only actual employee of the TRTA. He started with the group about a month ago as the director of trail operations, having come from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.



Clay Grubb, a former Marine officer, is a popular and well-regarded TRT leader. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“My involvement is fairly minimal,” Binder told *Lake Tahoe News*. This is because the logistics are done before the work begins. He praised the volunteers, realizing without them, this bridge and work on the 170-mile TRT wouldn’t get done.

The work actually started last fall with prepping the site, ordering the supplies and planning for the construction. Crews were back out in early May. The heavy lifting is this week. The bridge should be ready to be used in 10 days.

(The trail is still open while work is being done.)

Opinion: Calif. housing shortage sets up battle over land-use control

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

Once upon a time, California city officials used two tools to shape how their communities evolved – setting property tax rates and controlling land use.



Dan Walters

The former vanished when voters passed Proposition 13 in 1978, not only cutting property taxes by more than half, but sharply limiting future tax bites.

In response, city officials relied more on land use to keep their municipal engines running – aggressively seeking profitable development, such as sales tax-generating retail complexes, and using, or misusing, “redevelopment” to subsidize favored developers.

Read the whole story

Van Sickle bridge

Volunteers from the Tahoe Rim Trail Association are building a bridge at the waterfall in Van Sickle Bi-State Park on the South Shore so horses and all people can cross the water.