South Tahoe park begins with pomp and circumstance

By Kathryn Reed

Eighteen-month-old Morrison Scott didn't care who all those people talking were, why they had funny hats on or that there were super shiny shovels standing in fresh dirt.

Nope. What this little South Lake Tahoe resident cares about is having a place to run around in. She lives about a block and a half away from what will be the Bonanza Park. Right now the closest place for her to go play at is Tahoe Valley Elementary School – and at her age, that's quite a hike. Plus, during school, she's not allowed.



Brandon Hill of Edgewood Companies talks about the future Bonanza Park. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Her dad, Creighton, brought Morrison to Monday night's ground breaking of the park that they are both looking forward to being built.

"It will be somewhere to go to keep her busy," the elder Scott

said.

Of the approximately 60 people at the April 30 event, about half were from the local neighborhood. The rest were people who praised each other for making the park a reality.

With May 1 being the initial day of building per Tahoe Regional Planning Agency rules, it means the heavy lifting can begin.

Long gone is the old C&M Lodge, though an old sign rests against a tree not far from a heavy piece of construction equipment.

Edgewood Companies had bought the property so it would have ownership of the tourist accommodations units. The city allowed for those to be transferred to Stateline for the Edgewood Lodge project if the company would build the park. Once it is finished this summer the city will take over ownership.

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Armed man taken into custody in Truckee

Truckee schools were on lockdown briefly Monday after an armed man holed up in his vehicle on Richard’s Boulevard northwest of Donner Pass Road.

Robert Maklia eventually surrendered to police officers. He faces charges of reckless discharge of a firearm and branding

a weapon at law enforcement. Before being jailed he was taken to Tahoe Forest Hospital to be evaluated.

Police officers were notified about noon April 30 by Nevada County sheriff's deputies of a subject reported to be distraught and possibly armed with a firearm.

Police located Maklia sitting in his parked vehicle on Richard's Boulevard.

Maklia exited his vehicle holding a handgun, according to officers. He allegedly refused to drop the handgun and hid behind his vehicle.

"Maklia discharged a round from his gun in an unknown direction while hiding behind his vehicle. He later put down his handgun and approached police," according to a press release. "Maklia was not compliant with police commands to surrender and was taken into custody without incident after being struck with a less lethal bean bag round."

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Sage grouse endangered listing moving forward

By Jim Sanford, Reno Gazette-Journal

An Endangered Species Act listing for the sage grouse "would make the spotted owl listing pale in comparison."

There is a chance Nevada, through a habitat recovery program

and other efforts, can prevent Endangered Species Act listings for the state's two distinct sage grouse population segments.

But should those efforts prove unsuccessful, all Nevadans – including Clark County residents–will be paying for that listing for a long time.

Those were all comments offered last week by Nevada Department of Wildlife Director Ken Mayer in addressing what is becoming a huge concern for Nevada.

Commenting on the pending U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service September 2013 ESA determination date for the Bi-State sage grouse listing and the September 2015 potential listing for the more-prevalent Range wide Greater Sage Grouse species, Mayer said this week, "The listing may affect central and northern Nevada more, but Clark County residents will be paying right along with everybody else."

"There is a chance we can succeed (in preventing the listing)," Mayer added. "I am convinced there is ample time to address the 2015 Greater sage grouse decision because a hell of a lot of things are being done. With the Bi-State, I think we do have time as well. It is more questionable whether we will make it with the Bi-State or not."

Read the whole story

The killing agency: Wildlife Services' brutal methods

leave a trail of animal death

By Tom Knudson, Sacramento Bee

The day began with a drive across the desert, checking the snares he had placed in the sagebrush to catch coyotes.

Gary Strader, an employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, stepped out of his truck near a ravine in Nevada and found something he hadn't intended to kill.

There, strangled in a neck snare, was one of the most majestic birds in America, a federally protected golden eagle.

"I called my supervisor and said, 'I just caught a golden eagle and it's dead,' " said Strader. "He said, 'Did anybody see it?' I said, 'Geez, I don't think so.'

"He said, 'If you think nobody saw it, go get a shovel and bury it and don't say nothing to anybody.' "

"That bothered me," said Strader, whose job was terminated in 2009. "It wasn't right."

Strader's employer, a branch of the federal Department of Agriculture called Wildlife Services, has long specialized in killing animals that are deemed a threat to agriculture, the public and – more recently – the environment.

Since 2000, its employees have killed nearly a million coyotes, mostly in the West. They have destroyed millions of birds, from nonnative starlings to migratory shorebirds, along with a colorful menagerie of more than 300 other species, including black bears, beavers, porcupines, river otters, mountain lions and wolves.

And in most cases, they have officially revealed little or no detail about where the creatures were killed, or why. But a Bee investigation has found the agency's practices to be

indiscriminate, at odds with science, inhumane and sometimes illegal.

Read the whole story

World of concussions impacting potential pro athletes

By Jim Trotter, Sports Illustrated

Stanford wideout/returner Chris Owusu has a sprinter's speed and a bodybuilder's physique. He also has a medical report that makes NFL teams wince.

The 6-foot, 196-pound senior had his final season cut short last November, when he sustained his second concussion in three weeks and third in 13 months. He was asymptomatic within days of each concussion, but the Cardinal did not clear him to play in the Fiesta Bowl or the Senior Bowl. Since then he has been medically cleared by two doctors, including at the annual Scouting Combine in February. But that has not allayed concerns among some NFL personnel men.

"He's off our board," says one general manager. "He was from the start. It wouldn't matter if he was RG3, he'd still be off our board. With that kind of history it's not worth the risk of him being seriously injured, especially with all the attention you're going to receive. If you draft him you're going to be under the microscope the whole time. Every time he gets hit it's going to be magnified tenfold."

Owusu's combination of medical risk and athletic talent makes

him the most intriguing prospect in this year's draft. He is entering the league at a time when more than 1,000 former and current players are plaintiffs in 59 lawsuits against the league – including at least 15 class-action suits – that claim the NFL failed to adequately treat and educate players about the possible long-term consequences of brain trauma. Just last week Ray Easterling, a safety with the Falcons in the 1970s, shot himself to death after years of struggling with depression and dementia, his wife said. Fourteen months earlier, former Bears and Giants safety Dave Duerson committed suicide, after which it was learned he was suffering from chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a degenerative brain disease.

It is against that backdrop that Owusu is entering the NFL. One general manager says he has third-round talent, but gave him a seventh-round grade because of the concussions. Most executives view him as a value pick, meaning he has too much talent to pass on altogether but will only use a late-round selection on him.

Read the whole story

Hagar to share specialty rum at reopening of Cabo Wabo

Rock star Sammy Hagar will be at Harveys Lake Tahoe on May 4 to celebrate the eighth anniversary and grand reopening of his Cabo Wabo Cantina.

During his appearance at the Cantina, between the hours of 4 and 7pm, the Red Rocker will also be announcing his latest venture into the “spirit world,” with the launch of his new premium adult beverage, Sammy’s Beach Bar Rum. The premium, small-batch rum made in Maui from Hawaiian sugarcane, is just now becoming available outside of Hawaii.

Hagar and his band Chickenfoot will perform over the weekend across the street at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe the nights of May 4 and 5.

Remodeled at a cost of more than $200,000, a few of the Cabo Wabo Cantina improvements include:

Entertainment stage twice the size of the old one, with an adjacent VIP area.

Raised ceilings, remodeled and enlarged restaurant area and dance floor.

New and redesigned fixtures, furniture and equipment

Three-panel video wall at the entrance.

All new, state-of-the-art sound and lighting systems.

Revamped and expanded restaurant and drink menus.

Placer County expands alcohol

ban during July 4 holiday

The Placer County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to ban alcohol on the banks of the Truckee River from July 1-6 each year.

At the meeting last week in Kings Beach, board members also voted to adopt an ordinance that will include Chambers Landing Beach in the Fourth of July weekend alcohol ban.

Since 2008, Placer County has prohibited the possession of open alcohol containers during the Fourth of July weekend alongside the river from Lake Tahoe to Alpine Meadows. The ban was a response to alcohol-related problems created by the many rafters who descend on the river during the holiday weekend.

The Truckee River ban prohibits possession of open alcoholic containers on both sides of the river from its outfall at Lake Tahoe in Tahoe City to the upstream edge of the Alpine Meadows Bridge during the holiday weekend. The ban extends 3 feet up from the river’s high water mark on each bank, including islands and bridges. The Fanny Bridge in Tahoe City is the only bridge excluded from the ban.

State law bans the possession of alcoholic beverages on the river and any of its islands during the Fourth of July weekend. The state has jurisdiction over the river because it is considered a navigable waterway.

Violations of the ban are punishable by a fine not to exceed $150 for the first violation, $500 for the second violation and $1,000 for the third violation occurring in any calendar year.

Week of wildfire awareness in Lake Tahoe Basin

The third annual Lake Tahoe Basin Wildfire Awareness Week is May 26-June 3. The theme is Wildfire Survival: Your Home, Your Responsibility.

The focus of the week will be to promote homeowner and resident actions that reduce the risk from wildfire to homes and communities.

Fire agencies, fire safe chapters and local organizations are collaborating to provide coordinated outreach to Tahoe basin homeowners and residents on how to reduce wildfire risk to their homes by upgrading vulnerable home components, conducting defensible space activities, and having a plan in place for evacuation.

Fire resistant homes have fire-rated roofs, covered vents to reduce the risk of ember intrusion, fire resistant construction materials and are in good repair. Creating defensible space involves selecting and maintaining vegetation near the home, thereby reducing the risk homes will be ignited and destroyed during a wildfire. Successful evacuations during wildfires require having a plan in place and an evacuation kit assembled.

Local organizations will be hosting neighborhood meetings, community clean up days with free chipping and pine needle pick-ups, evacuation drills, and educational activities including a webinar series on reducing wildfire risk so those living remotely can participate in the week’s events.

For information on activities, how to upgrade homes or create defensible space in basin, go online or contact Susie Kocher at (530) 542.2571 or sdkocher@ucdavis.edu.

S. Tahoe, Reno motorcyclists die on Highway 49

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

Riders of two motorcycles died when one bike went out of control and the other took evasive action to avoid collision in Sierra County on Sunday.

The California Highway Patrol said that a motorcyclist from South Lake Tahoe was heading southbound about 3pm Sunday on Highway 49 just north of the Convict Flat Campground between Camptonville and Downieville when he lost control of his vehicle.

The motorcycle slid on its side into the northbound lane at the same time another motorcyclist from Reno was approaching. The Reno motorcyclist, in an attempt to avoid collision, traveled onto the right shoulder and crashed into a guardrail.

Both motorcyclists died at the scene.

’40s-era musical performance

at LTCC

The Tahoe Choir and Lake Community College Chorus will be “Puttin’ On the Ritz” during the three concerts in May.

The shows at LTCC Duke Theatre are May 4 and May 5 at 7:30pm, and May 6 at 2:30pm.

The box office will open one half hour before each performance. Tickets are $l0 for adults and $8 for seniors and students.