California commission votes to protect 2 frogs

The California Fish and Game Commission voted unanimously to designate two species of native frogs inhabiting high-elevation lakes in the Sierra Nevada and Southern California mountain ranges as threatened and endangered species under the state's Endangered Species Act.

Sierra mountain yellow-legged frogs are now protected as threatened species and Southern mountain yellow-legged frogs are designated as endangered.

"With formal state protection, California can start recovering an important part of mountain ecosystems to bring back formerly abundant amphibians," Jeff Miller at the Center for Biological Diversity, which petitioned for state protection in 2010, said in a statement. "Taking out exotic trout and getting rid of pollutants to restore mountain yellow-legged frogs will have ripple effects beyond these species – it'll help to heal some of the damaged high-elevation habitats of the Sierra and Southern California mountains."

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Library offers help with digital devices

The South Lake Tahoe Branch library is hosting free individual training sessions for many popular digital devices, including laptops, tablets, iPads, Kindles and Nooks.

Each sessions is 30 minutes between 10am and 4pm on Feb. 11 and Feb. 25.

Call (530) 573.3185 for more information or to register for an appointment.

The library is located at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd. in South Lake Tahoe.

Rock climber Libecki to talk about world adventures

Join world-renown big wall rock climber Mike Libecki for a journey to some of the most remote corners of the climbing world. Libecki's search for massive, unclimbed rock formations has taken him to Afghanistan, Antarctica, Yemen, Venezuela, China, and Baffin Island.

Libecki will tell climbing tales at Alpenglow Sports' fourth and final installment of the annual Lake Tahoe Winter Film Series on Feb. 16.

The event is free and is designed to motivate, inspire, and educate. It is at Sawtooth Ridge Café in Tahoe City at 7pm.

Call Alpenglow Sports at (530) 583.6917 with questions.

Low caucus turnout has Nevada GOP contemplating primary

By Ray Hagar, Reno Gazette-Journal

The dismal turnout for the Nevada Republican caucus had some GOP leaders and lawmakers on Sunday considering replacing the system with a presidential primary election.The idea was discussed by Washoe County GOP officials Saturday night after just 6,700 Republicans attended the county caucuses, although the party was expecting about 17,000.

Caucus participation was down across Nevada. Although final numbers have not yet been released by the Nevada GOP, the projections are that the final turnout would be about 34,000, or 10,000 below the 2008 caucus mark of 44,000. GOP officials had predicted a turnout that could hit 60,000.

“We were talking about this last night,” said Dave Buell, chairman of the Washoe GOP. “We think the real issue is that Republicans hate the caucus system.

“And I’ll tell you, the people that did come to the caucus, overwhelmingly want a primary in this state and not a caucus,” Buell said.

Buell is not alone in his desire for a primary, a leading political consultant said.

“I think it is an idea whose time has come, especially with the way the count has gone today,” said Reno political consultant Greg Ferraro, referring to the troubles the Nevada GOP has endured in counting caucus ballots. “I think there is growing support among Republicans, even Republican leaders, that maybe a primary, even though it does cost some money, may be the way to go.”

Read the whole story

No charges to be filed after glider lands at Heavenly

By Kathryn Reed

National Transportation Safety Board officials have told El Dorado County sheriff's officials they will not be investigating Sunday's unplanned glider landing at Heavenly Mountain Resort.

"At this time it's just being handled as an accident," Deputy Greg Almos told *Lake Tahoe News*. No charges will be filed because no crime occurred.

The glider, which is owned by Soaring NV in Minden and operates out of the Minden Tahoe Airport, didn't have enough wind to stay on the Nevada side of the ski resort. The pilot ended up landing about 1:30pm Feb. 5 near First Ride – a beginner chairlift – just steps from the California Lodge.

"The winds were not in their favor and forced them to come down on this side of the mountain crest," Almos said.

Almos said the pilot realized he didn't have enough wind to get him to Lake Tahoe Airport, trees were a problem for landing at Bijou Golf Course, and the ski resort then seemed like his best option.

No one at the resort was injured, though skiers and boarders did scramble to get out of the way.

"We're outraged that something like this could happen. We're

glad that everyone came out of this OK, but there's no excuse for this kind of irresponsible behavior," Russ Pecoraro, Heavenly spokesman, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We'll do everything in our power to make sure this doesn't happen again. We're extremely lucky no one was hurt (Sunday)."

Dan Schuler with Soaring NV told *Lake Tahoe News*, "We had one of our instructors with an experienced pilot on a flight review who got on the wrong side of the mountain and had to land."

Names of the pilots have not been released.

The glider was damaged slightly.

Wine n' Ice

As part of the 2012 Snowfest, Truckee River Winery is teaming up with High Fives to bring you the inaugural ice carving contest – Wine n' Ice on March 7 from 1-5pm.

For those interested in competing, entry packets are available at the tasting room. The $100 registration fee covers the cost of a block of ice. The top three contestants will receive an assortment of wine and other gifts, plus win back their entry fee. Entry forms are due back to Truckee River Winery by Feb. 17.

Spectators are welcome. Cover is $20, which includes soup, chili, appetizers and dessert as well as one glass of TRW wine, and a souvenir wine glass. Part of proceeds raised will go to High Fives Foundation.

In addition to the competition, there will be barrel roll races, live music and other outdoor games and entertainment. Guests are encouraged to sport their favorite, most colorful spandex, with prizes awarded to Best Dressed Male, Female, Tandem and Group. All ages welcome..

For questions about registration or information about the event, call (530) 587.4626 or email info@truckeeriverwinery.com.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Hillary is a 6-year-old Labrador mix who has very nice manners.



As an adult, she is house trained, calm and sweet.

Hillary likes other dogs and cats. She enjoys car rides and would be a great hiking and camping companion.

She was found as a stray in Carson City and came to the South Lake Tahoe shelter to find her new home.

Hillary is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Barton Memorial Hospital Auxiliary's blood drives for the year are Feb. 6, April 2, June 11, Aug. 6, Oct. 1 and Dec. 3 from noon-6pm at Embassy Suites, 4130 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. For more information, contact Dan Kerr at (775) 588.2376 or (775) 781.5345.

• Truckee-based Crux Events launched a new website showcasing the company's event production, event design and party rental services.

• Mark Ghilarducci of El Dorado Hills has been appointed secretary of the California Emergency Management Agency. This position requires Senate confirmation and the compensation is $175,000.

• Mountain Bounty Farm in Nevada City is offering winter CSAs on the South Shore. For more info, call (530) 292.3776 or email info@mountainbountyfarm.com.

• Health advocates from the South Lake Tahoe and Gardnerville offices of Tahoe Youth & Family Services are headed to Washington, D.C., Feb. 6-9 to join nearly 3,000 substance abuse prevention and treatment specialists and advocates from throughout the country for Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of

America’s 22nd annual National Leadership Forum.

Opinion: Plan will make California’s forests healthy

By Tom Vilsack

America’s forests are one of our nation’s great treasures. Not only are they wonderful places to be outside with friends and family, they provide us with much of the water we drink, clean the air we breathe, provide habitat for wildlife, and support jobs and growth in rural communities.

Healthy forests are critical to President Obama’s vision for an economy that’s built to last. More than 173 million visitors come to national forests and grasslands every year to hike, bike, view wildlife, go hunting, fishing and rafting and enjoy being in the great outdoors. This generates billions of dollars and supports hundreds of thousands of middle-class jobs for local communities. Forests and grasslands also support good jobs related to timber and forest products, energy and other multiple uses of our public lands.



Tom Vilsack

The water provided by our public lands – including clean drinking water used by about 20 million Californians – is key to healthy communities and a strong economy. In California, USDA-managed national forests alone provide half of the state's water, used by countless farmers and ranchers while providing habitat for wildlife. The water from national forests also contributes to the president's vision for an American energy economy, supporting clean hydroelectric plants that power 2.3 million California homes each year.

That's why management of the 193 million acres of forests and grasslands overseen by USDA's U.S. Forest Service is so important. Last month, I announced the department's intended course of action in finalizing a new "Forest Planning Rule," which will guide management on the National Forest System – including how the 18 national forests in California develop management plans.

A revised planning rule is long overdue. The 1982 rule does not reflect the past 30 years of new science and changing public values. It is also cumbersome and expensive, with plans taking five to seven years on average to complete. As a result, more than half of our land management plans are more than 15 years old and are past due for revision. Revisions under a new rule would take less time and cost less money while producing better results for people and the environment.

To develop our preferred option for a final rule, we listened to input from the public: holding the most collaborative rule-making process in the agency's history and carefully considering more than 300,000 comments. The public asked for a rule that is grounded in science, restores our forests to improve forest health, reduces wildfires, and protects water and wildlife. Our proposal does all these things while ensuring that our national forests contribute to the economic vitality of local communities by providing for recreation, forest products, energy and other multiple uses.

Forest management in California has often been characterized by conflict among environmentalists and forest industry. But today we are seeing an increasing number of efforts in California and across the country where diverse stakeholders are working together to restore forests in ways that protect water resources, reduce wildfire and provide jobs for local communities.

Our goal is to encourage just these types of collaborative efforts, requiring opportunities for public participation throughout the planning process. Once the rule is finalized, Californians will have the opportunity to lead the way in promoting this collaboration. Indeed, the Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra national forests in California will be among the first in the nation to begin revising their plans under the new rule.

Our public lands belong to us all, whether you can look out your window to the forest, visit for a hike a few times each year, or live in a city and drink water from our forests each day. As we work toward an economy that is built to last, we share a responsibility to also rebuild our natural resources.

The proposal we announced will do just that, ensuring that we build a strong green infrastructure with restored watersheds, resilient ecosystems, habitat for wildlife, opportunities for healthy outdoor recreation and support for job opportunities. In the months to come, we look forward to finalizing and implementing a final rule to build a framework to invest in our national forests so that they are ecologically strong and support healthy and prosperous communities for the long term.

Tom Vilsack is secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Prescribed fires to be scattered throughout Tahoe basin

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will resume prescribed fire operations in several locations around the Lake Tahoe Basin on Feb. 6.

Operations may take place north of Emerald Bay, Kingsbury Grade near North Benjamin, the Logan Creek area, the Kings Beach area and the Elizabeth Road area of McKinney Bay near Homewood. Locations and size of the operations will depend on conditions at each site. Operations may continue through the week and possibly through the weekend, weather permitting.

Residents and visitors can expect to see smoke from these prescribed fire project areas. The Forest Service strives to minimize the impacts of smoke on local communities. Smoke-sensitive residents should consider staying indoors and keeping doors, windows and outside vents closed.

To directly receive prescribed fire updates, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Forest Service staff will post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, and update the local fire information line at (530) 543.2600, No. 6.