Fat Tire Bike Fest coming to North Shore

The inaugural Tahoe Fat Tire Festival will be Sept. 20-23 for a weekend of all things mountain bike at Squaw Valley.

It will feature cross country, short track and gravity racing, rides, trail work, demos and vendor expo, and nightly antics with a beer garden, movie screenings and local bands.



Interesting bikes to ride at the 2009 Fat Tire Festival in San Francisco. Photo/Susan Wood

TAMBA and the Truckee Trails Foundation are teaming up on this event. The goal is it will be a primary fundraiser for both organizations.

More information will be on *Lake Tahoe News* as details are solidified.

Firefighters ready in case someone falls through ice

It’s one thing to take a life-saving class in a pool in a rather controlled environment. It’s another to train in the middle of winter, in icy water – outdoors.

Dressed in odd looking wetsuits, South Lake Tahoe firefighters plunged into Lake Tahoe on Friday morning. It was all in the name of ice rescue training.



South Lake Tahoe fire Capt. Fred Vermillion paddles Jan. 27 to a "victim" in the Tahoe Keys Marina. Photo/SLTFD

Each year firefighters take to the waters as the ice is melting from the lake or canals in the Tahoe Keys.

Instead of being on a surfboard, they use a Homatro rescue board to paddle to the victim. That’s because the board is designed for a victim to be placed on, with a rope attached for the firefighters to pull the person to shore.

While ice rescues are not common, they are a reality. A vehicle could skid off the road, landing in the lake, Emerald Bay or American River. Or an ice skater could fall through the thin ice.

– Lake Tahoe News report

Nachtspektakel at Squaw

On Feb. 4 at 6pm Squaw Valley, Dynafit, and Alpenglow Sports will host California's first Nachtspektakel ski touring event.

A Nachtspektakel (say-knocked-shpeck-tockle) is a traditional European-style ski event that bonds people through the sport of ski touring. A cultural norm in Europe, Nachtspektakel are new ways to combine skiing, beer and food that are sure to catch on in the States.

Ski tourers are invited on an ascent to Squaw Valley's High Camp, followed by food and drink.

Tickets are $40 per person, cash only, and can be picked up at Alpenglow Sports in Tahoe City.

Come appropriately dressed with uphill gear, skis, skins, boots, poles and a headlamp. Bring warm clothes, and perhaps a change of clothes for drinks/dinner.

Beacons shovels probes not required but recommended. Alpenglow Sports will offer free rentals for the evening. Rentals must be picked up the afternoon before the event.

For more information, call (530) 583.6917.

CalFire needs managers, but firefighters prefer overtime pay

By Jon Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

Some of California's rank-and-file firefighters earn so much money in overtime that the state has revived pay bonuses worth thousands of dollars to lure them into management.

The problem at the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection has grown over the last decade, as the state negotiated firefighter contracts that boosted overtime pay without consistently raising supervisors' wages.

Along with the department's graying ranks and early-retirement incentives, the developments have depleted CalFire's leadership ranks.

Persuading line firefighters to take those management positions and give up the overtime money has proved difficult.

"Basically, when you're an assistant chief, you make less money, have more responsibility and work longer hours," said Dale Hutchinson, who as southern region chief hires CalFire managers for half the state. "It's been a standing issue for years."

The state is again upping pay for some managers as a result.

Most of new "recruitment and retention differential" money will go to 34 assistant chiefs in the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. It adds $1,851 per month, about $22,000 per year, to their base pay.

Read the whole story

State upholds decision to reclassify Washoe Meadows park, alter river-golf course

By Kathryn Reed

BRENTWOOD – It was almost like the California State Park and Recreation commissioners had split personalities at the Jan. 27 meeting. The morning was jovial and jocular when it came to approving the general plan and EIR for a new state park in the Bay Area, as well as the naming of it. The afternoon was rushed and seemed like commissioners would rather go to lunch than hear what people had to say about Washoe Meadows State Park.



Norma Santiago addresses the State Parks commission Jan. 27 as staff listens. Photo/Kathryn Reed

In fact, the Lake Tahoe state park's name wasn't even listed on the agenda.

The board, after seven people spoke, voted 5-0 to maintain the decision made Oct. 20 to accept the final EIR for the Upper Truckee River restoration project, and to swap land between the park and Lake Valley Recreation Area to allow Lake Tahoe Golf Course be reconfigured.

Kathryn Tobias, legal counsel for State Parks, before comments and the vote were taken said the matter before the commission was procedural. State Parks employees had earlier said the rehearing was necessary to make sure everything was in order now that the project is tied up in a lawsuit.

It would be hard to know what the commissioners truly thought beyond their body language because they voted without discussion. Commission Chairwoman Caryl Hart cut people off and only gave people representing an organization three minutes to speak instead of the customary five minutes. She also said the commission had heard everything they needed to hear.

El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago was the first of the seven to speak. All believed the commission should either overturn its original vote or delay Friday's vote. Santiago asked for three months to prove the information she provided is correct.

"Page 5 of your Draft Resolution 3-2012 states: 'Resolved: That the legal, social, economic, technological and other benefits of the Project described herein outweigh the unavoidable short-term environmental risks, as described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations adopted by the director of State Parks at the time of project approval, and so the unavoidable significant environmental impacts are overridden by these factors and are, therefore, acceptable'," Santiago read to the commission.

“I submit to you that there is significant scientific documentation that does not support this statement. Andrew Simon, who did most of the analysis on stream channel erosion for the [Lake] Tahoe Basin TMDL, clearly documents that 90 percent of the problem resultant from this type of erosion can be resolved by addressing 14percent of the toe slope issues. Additionally, in this case, the channeling of parts of this river that currently show no evidence of erosion now and in the future will take 10 to15 years to recover. At the time of recovery, the benefit generated from this channeling is incremental at best. In the meantime, the return on the economic, social, technological, legal and environmental investment are disastrous.”

Besides being the elected official for the area of the South Shore where the project is located, Santiago is also chairwoman of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. The TRPA must still approve the project.

Brian Judge, a principal planner with TRPA, was at the meeting, but did not speak on the record. After the meeting he told *Lake Tahoe News* how important it is to fix this reach of the river and that it’s a critical piece of the environmental improvement program.

Bob Anderson with the Sierra Club’s Lake Tahoe chapter was one of the speakers. After the meeting he told *Lake Tahoe News* he believes the issue will be “dead in the water” when it reaches the TRPA Governing Board.

The Sierra Club wants the river to be restored, but believes the alternative chosen to do so is not achievable and therefore the status quo will remain, Anderson told the commission.

“Financially, it does not pencil out,” Anderson said.

Restoring the river is not the issue that has people up in arms. It’s how it will be done and the impacts to Washoe

Meadows State Park that concerns people. It's biased tours of the area that don't show pristine locations that will be disturbed, it's a precedent-setting ruling that allows a state park to be reclassified to a lower status, it's putting golf before other recreation, it's putting money before the environment that have people upset.

And as was stated at the meeting at the Brentwood Community Center in the East Bay, they are tired of the condescending reference to being a neighborhood group when members of the Friends of Washoe Meadow reach well beyond the perimeter of the park and basin.

"It was hard to listen to the meeting, especially at the end when so many false statements were made. But the meeting process doesn't allow us to make any more comments. The word of parks staff is accepted," Lynne Paulson told *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting. "For example, it was completely incorrect that the findings were available at the last commission meeting. Our attorney was there, as was I and others. We picked up all information available in the back of the room and our attorney specifically asked about the findings, but was told they were not available. "

Paulson is part of the group that is suing to stop the project. The suit in large part is based on perceived inadequacies with the California Environmental Quality Act.

"Also, when they said that they had already considered everything public speakers said, it wasn't true. For example, we were proposing that they use several different methods of river restoration, not just one type," Paulson said.

Cyndie Walck, hydrologist with State Parks, told *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting she is confident the commissioners made the correct decision and that it will benefit the South Shore environmentally and economically.

"It will open up a public park to the public," she said. More

than a mile along the Upper Truckee River that is now only accessible by golfers will be developed into a hiking trail.

Keeping the golf course 18-holes by moving up to nine holes into what today is the state park, but when the project is done will be recreation area, is more economically viable, according to Walck.

The TCW economic analysis that was done after the October decision challenges the state's assertions. However, the commissioners made no comment on this fact despite being presented with information Friday.

For now, the project is tied up in court, with the next hearing date set for March.

Walck is waiting to be told she can move forward.

"I have the funding to go to the design level of the river restoration," Walck said.

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The new state park that was OK'd is near the town of Brentwood, where the meeting was. The name will be Marsh Creek State Park and will be operated as a historic park.

Dinner benefits CASA El

Dorado

CASAblanca at the lake is a fundraiser for CASA El Dorado County honoring South Lake Tahoe juvenile panel attorneys Julie BAchman, John CAstellanos, William Cherry, Kimberly Hunt, Lori London, Rick Meyer and Paul Palant.

The event is Feb. 3 at 6pm at Edgewood Tahoe in Stateline. RSVP to (530) 622.9882 or friends@casaeldorado.org. Tickets are $125 each or $1,100 for a table of 10.

Cocktail attire is requested.

LTCC offering 4 workshops devoted to healthy eating

The Community Education department at Lake Tahoe Community College is having a Get Fresh and Healthy workshop series in February. Take one, all four or any combination.

Cooking with Spices is Feb. 2 from 6-9pm.

Winter Soup is Feb. 10 from 6-9pm.

Food the Kids will Love too is Feb. 16 from 6-9pm.

Gluten Free Cooking is Feb. 28 from 6-9pm.

Register online.

Nevada missing an opportunity with exports

By Steve Green, Las Vegas Sun

For many Nevadans, “international trade” might mean heading to Walmart in their import cars to buy Chinese-made computers as well as imported desks and chairs to outfit their offices.

But trade is a two-way street, and economic development officials say Nevada companies sell billions of dollars of goods and services each year to customers in foreign nations.

Nevada exports of goods are dominated by gold sales, which in 2010 amounted to $2.4 billion – 40 percent of the value of all state exports. Other big export categories for Nevada are copper (12 percent) and video game consoles, parts and accessories, including casino equipment (7.3 percent).

Through the first 11 months of 2011, total sales of the state’s exports of goods were about $7 billion.

That’s a big number, no doubt, but there’s plenty of room for improvement. Utah, whose population of about 2.7 million people is comparable to Nevada’s, posted $17.3 billion in sales in the same period.

Utah’s manufacturing base is far larger than Nevada’s, but insiders say Utah also has benefited from larger and more focused economic development efforts, including measures to boost overseas sales.

Utah’s commitment to promoting exports includes having not only just a state export director, but also global regional directors. Nevada, for its part, has just two international

trade officials.

Read the whole story

CASAblanca

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Eating out helps South Shore spay-neuter program

Every Wednesday in February people can enjoy an Italian meal while saving animals. Order any item off Passaretti’s regular menu and ask the server for a Spay-ghetti and No Balls coupon. Fill it out, hand it back, and Passaretti’s will donate $5 to the Lake Tahoe Humane Society community low cost spay-neuter program at no cost to you.

February is the 25th annual Prevent-A-Litter campaign month to help local people afford spay-neuter for local pets and avoid

surplus spring litters of puppies and kittens.

Passaretti’s Italian Restaurant is at 1181 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe. Call (530) 541.3433 for reservations for the promotion on Feb. 1, Feb. 9, Feb.15, Feb. 22 ad Feb. 29.