Pony Express to pass through Genoa

Each year, the National Pony Express Association re-creates the Pony Express of 1860-1861 by riding from St. Joseph, Mo., to Sacramento. Mormon Station State Historic Park is hosting this event in Genoa on Aug. 26 at 8am.

The national, 10-day, 24 hour-a-day event includes more than 600 riders stationed at intervals to relay a mochila (mailbag) filled with Pony Express Mail for the 1,966 mile ride.

The Pony Express rider will ride into Mormon Station's stockade, exchange the mochila and see the next rider ride out to the next stop. Sen. Dean Heller, R-Nev., is scheduled to be the rider leaving Mormon Station.

Although the rider is scheduled to arrive at Mormon Station around 8:30am, because of the distance traveled, it's difficult to predict exactly when they arrive.

New Jeeps put to the test on Tahoe's Rubicon

By Allyson Harwood, Motor Trend

You can't tell by looking at it, but the Jeep Wrangler has undergone a transformation. The iconic shape remains – seven-slot grille, round headlights, short wheelbase, soft or hard top – but Jeep has made huge improvements to the off-roader for 2012. Jeep invited us to drive the 2012 Wrangler on the Rubicon, one of the hardest 4×4 trails around, used almost

exclusively by modified vehicles. We also got to drive on the two-lane asphalt roads that wind around Lake Tahoe.



Consider this the second part of a major overhaul to the Wrangler and four-door Wrangler Unlimited. Part one happened for the 2011 model year, when the JK (the current generation's code name) received a new interior, plus, on the Sahara, a body-color hard top and fender flares. The hard top is of the same composite material as it was before, but what sounds like a minor change actually has a major effect on the Wrangler's appearance. In addition, the rear windows are larger as of 2011, improving visibility. For 2012, the body-color hard top and fender flares are optional on the Rubicon, too.

Read the whole story

Whittell High football players need to stay healthy to contend

By Brain Nordli, Reno Gazette-Journal

Whittell's season might come down to staying healthy.

Like many 2A schools, Whittell struggles with depth, but this season it only has 18 players and many that are playing football for the first time. In coach Jeff Jones' first season as coach in 2010, the team struggled with injuries and mistakes finishing 2-7. Jones said the team has a few more returners this year that could make them more competitive.

"If we stay healthy and don't have mental mistakes that we had

last year, I think we can be 4-4 at least," Jones said.

The Warriors have three returning offensive linemen, including fourth-year player Hunter Morgan. Morgan tore his anterior cruciate ligament last season causing him to miss four games. Instead an inexperienced safety stepped into his role, which he said could have been the difference between winning three more games. Jones said the lack of players has also forced him to start freshman or other inexperienced players.

"We have a good 10-11 football players, and after that, we're hurting a little bit," Jones said.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Boat inspections are an inconvenience, but a must for water quality

By Ron Penrose

Protecting our drinking water source is vital to our entire community. Truckee Meadows Water Authority has helped fund many different programs and projects designed to protect Lake Tahoe and the Truckee River. The Truckee River Fund, which was established in 2004 by TMWA's board of directors, was created for the purpose of protecting and enhancing water quality of the Truckee River and its watershed. Through matching grants, the TRF has been able to fund projects that achieve this mission.

Mandatory boat inspections, managed by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and partially funded by the TRF, is one

program that is aimed at protecting our drinking water by preventing the introduction of quagga mussels into our water source. If you are a boater and have been enjoying Lake Tahoe this summer, you have no doubt noticed that boat inspections are mandatory, but you may not know why.



Ron Penrose

Lake Tahoe is known for its beauty, clarity and clean water. We are fortunate to have such a pristine source for this community's primary drinking water supply. Boat and watercraft inspections are our first line of defense against quagga mussels entering Lake Tahoe. Quagga mussels can wreak havoc on bodies of water. They are very harmful to a native ecosystem since they disrupt the natural food chain and once established, they are nearly impossible to eradicate.

The quagga mussel will clog water supply pipelines and can cause extensive damage to water system infrastructure that can cost millions to repair. They can leave formerly pristine beaches littered with dead shells. They could also disrupt our hydroelectric plants' intakes causing higher energy and maintenance costs. Because quagga mussels are extremely efficient breeders, they take hold in a water source very quickly and thrive in very deep bodies of water creating "dead zones" in lakes they occupy.

Our community is working diligently to keep mussels from entering Lake Tahoe and other upstream reservoirs. Let's keep it that way.

As a boater, you can help prevent quagga mussel infestation by

abiding by the boat inspection regulations that are designed to protect the lake you are enjoying. We know that this invasive species hitches rides on watercraft and then spread to other bodies of water. The irreversible quagga and zebra mussel infestations of Lake Mead and the Great Lakes are thought to have been caused by this mechanism.

Some might find these mandatory boat inspections to be inconvenient, delaying their enjoyment of Lake Tahoe. However, to TMWA staff, who are dedicated to delivering to you great quality drinking water, this small delay helps preserve the pristine nature of Lake Tahoe which is so vitally important to our drinking water supply, recreational enjoyment and tourism based economy.

I hope you enjoy Lake Tahoe this summer.

Ron Penrose is project manager for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

Mandatory boat inspections to expand to Truckee area

By Katherine E. Hill

TRUCKEE – Truckee-area waterways will implement a regional mandatory boat inspection program in summer 2012, with public meetings being conducted to gather input before the program is crafted by the Tahoe Resource Conservation District.

The next meeting will be Aug. 25 at the Truckee Donner Public Utility District office at 5:30pm. The final meeting will be on Sept. 29.

The first meeting on July 28 drew only about a dozen people, and the majority were local officials already invested in the boat inspection program. Tahoe RCD, which also manages the inspection program on Lake Tahoe and Echo and Fallen Leaf lakes for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, is developing the Truckee regional program. The Truckee program will include Donner Lake, and Prosser Creek, Boca and Stampede reservoirs. The Tahoe RCD is conducting voluntary inspections at these waterways, but mandatory inspections are needed to keep invasive species, like the destructive quagga and zebra mussels, out of local lakes and reservoirs, officials say.



Quagga mussels like these on a boat prop leaving Lake Mead are what officials want to keep out of uncontaminated lakes. Photo/TRPA

“The zebra and quagga mussels are the scariest of the invasive species,” said Kimberly Boyd, Tahoe RCD invasive species program manager, at the July 28 forum.

Zebra and quagga mussels would be the priority for the boat inspection program, but the program also would address other aquatic invasive species such as New Zealand mudsnails, Asian clams and Eurasian milfoil. While mussels have not been

detected in local waterways, Eurasian milfoil is in Lake Tahoe, Martis Creek Reservoir and the Truckee River, and Asian clams have been found in Lake Tahoe and Donner Lake, said Dave Roberts, Tahoe RCD district manager.

Tahoe RCD officials said during the forum that the need to keep aquatic invasive species out of local waterways is broad reaching. AIS affect the food supply of native species and the health of local waterways, including Lake Tahoe's famed clarity. For the Truckee region, AIS in local waterways also will affect the water supply for the Reno-Sparks area, which gets 80 percent of its drinking water from the Truckee River. While the river originates in Lake Tahoe, Donner, Boca, Prosser Creek, Stampede, Martis Creek and Independence Lake are all part of the river's watershed. Any AIS in local waterways will mean infected drinking water supplies.

Locals will be the most affected by the mandatory program, as about 55 percent of boaters using the waters within the Truckee River watershed also live within it, according to a survey conducted by UNR, for the Tahoe RCD. Of those boaters, about 61 percent are anglers and 17 percent are water skiers and wake boarders.

No fees were discussed at the meeting. Fees will depend on how the program is crafted and any outside funding sources that could be used to offset the cost to boaters, Boyd said.



Mandatory boat inspections are coming to

Donner Lake in 2012. Photo/Katherine E. Hill

Boaters can now found inspectors at the Donner Lake boat launch, as well as roving the east side of Boca and Stampede Reservoirs educating boaters about AIS and conducting voluntary inspections through Sept. 30. Free decontaminations also are offered.

The challenge, once a mandatory inspection program is in place, will be where to have them. Unlike Donner Lake, which has only one public boat launch, boaters using local reservoirs can launch from the shore. Officials will be looking at where to conduct the inspections next summer to catch all boaters, with the Hirshdale exit off Interstate 80 cited as one possible location.

“The Truckee area has enormous shoreline launching with uncontrolled launch sites,” Boyd said.

The public forum, which lasted about 1½ hours, focused on educating the audience about AIS, the voluntary inspection program and boating in the Truckee region. What it did not do is outline a mandatory boat inspection program. Instead, officials want the public to tell them what a boat program should include and then the Tahoe RCD will craft a program around those needs.

The Tahoe RCD wants public input on the use of a banding and/or sticker program like the one being used at Lake Tahoe, where boaters receive a sticker after passing an inspection before launching and the boats are banded to the trailer when it comes out of the lake. The seal is required to remain intact before the next launch, or an inspection must be performed again.

Other topics open for discussion include possible locations for inspection stations, fines for non-compliance, restricting access to local waterways, decontamination of infected boats, inspections of fishing equipment, education and outreach, and fees.

Once the forums are finished, Boyd said the Tahoe RCD would form a plan and then seek funding to operate the mandatory inspection program. The district also would have to get approval from myriad public agencies that control the different waterways, like the Nevada County Board of Supervisors, Town of Truckee, California State Parks, U.S. Forest Service and others. This process could take months, she said, noting that it would be next summer before a mandatory program could be implemented.

The Truckee River Fund has been funding the voluntary boat inspection program, as well as efforts to establish a mandatory program. The fund was established by the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, which oversees the drinking water for the Reno-Sparks area.

A look at AIS

Quagga and zebra mussels are at the center of Lake Tahoe's inspection program.

These mussels, which are hitching rides on boats and trailers and in ballast tanks, bladders and live wells, are spreading across the West. Quagga and zebra mussels will spread rapidly once they are introduced to a lake and will gorge on the food supply, kill fish and pollute the clarity of the lake. They will clog cooling system water intakes, causing motors to overheat. As well, they have been found in pipes in municipal water systems.

The mussels can also be found on kayaks, water toys, wetsuits and any equipment exposed to infected waters.

Young quagga mussels will feel like sandpaper to the touch, while adults usually have dark concentric rings on the shell. The mussels can grow up to 1.6 inches, making the young mussels hard to spot. Full grown mussels are usually smaller than a quarter.

Eurasian milfoil, a fast-growing invasive plant, is believed to have been intentionally introduced in the



Milfoil is throughout the Tahoe Keys. Photo/TRPA

South Lake Tahoe area, where it has proliferated. The milfoil is commonly found in aquariums and researchers believe that someone dumped out a fish tank into Lake Tahoe, thereby setting off an environmental nightmare. Simply breaking off a plant fragment will cause it to spread and reproduce, and it is choking parts of Lake Tahoe, including the Tahoe Keys, where the milfoil has to be regularly removed to keep the waterway clear. The plants latch onto motor boats, causing it to spread across the lake, where it degrades water quality, decreases oxygen levels in the water, destroys native habitat and creates habitat for non-native species. Researchers are working on methods to eradicate the milfoil in Lake Tahoe.

Asian clams grow to only about 1½ inches, but rapidly reproduce and compete with native species for food. The clams also affect the clarity of Lake Tahoe. The clams likely arrived in Lake Tahoe on boat that came from infected

waterways and from aquariums being dumped into Lake Tahoe. Researchers are working on methods to eradicate the clams in Lake Tahoe.

New Zealand mudsnails are about the size of a pencil lead when fully grown and are hard to spot. The mudsnails have been infesting rivers and streams across the Western United States, often found latching onto the gear and boots of fishermen; they can be hard to distinguish from boot laces. The mudsnails reduce the food supply for trout and have no natural predators in the United States.

Next meeting

Tahoe RCD will conduct the Aug. 25 public forum at the Truckee Donner Public Utility District office, 11570 Donner Pass Road, Truckee. For more information, go online or call (530) 587.4911.

Prescribed burns to resume on West Shore

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews are scheduled to resume prescribed fire operations in the Rubicon Bay area Aug. 23.

Operations are taking place near Scenic Drive, on small urban lots and are expected to continue through the end of the week. All prescribed fire operations are dependent on weather and available staffing.

Residents and visitors can expect to see smoke from these prescribed fire project areas and smoke may be visible on Highway 89. Smoke management is part of every prescribed fire burn plan, and efforts are taken to reduce actual or potential smoke impacts on community areas.

This and other prescribed fire projects are designed to reduce wildfire risks to communities and critical resources.

State and local fire management agencies may also be conducting prescribed fire work during this period.

Opinion: Power boat races have no business on Lake Tahoe

To the community,

For everyone who remembers summer days when being outdoors meant hearing the roar of motorboat races on Lake Tahoe, the bad old days may be on their way back. The Pacific Outdoor Powerboat Racing Association plans to bring powerboat racing back to Lake Tahoe on Sept. 10-11, 2011.

Check out the details online. They say: “Offshore race boats will compete from all over the U.S., ranging from 22 feet to over 50 feet and will hit speeds upwards of 150 MPH in some of the Pro classes. The action starts Saturday, September 10th, with the teams competing in a three and a half (3½) mile sprint to achieve speed and handling domination over the rest

of the teams. Sunday September 11th the Lake Tahoe Fun Run can test the skill and equipment of the most seasoned veteran as well as the novice racer over fifty (50) miles of the most beautiful shoreline anywhere in the world with the 50 mile test of endurance that can trace it’s roots to the very start of Tahoe Powerboat racing 100 years ago.”

This type of event is utterly incompatible with sustainable recreation and the outdoor events scheduled for the 2011 Tahoe Expo that same weekend. It will also impact the outdoor experience of every other user within the entire region, including hikers, bikers, and backyard barbecues.

In the last cigarette boat race held here in the 1980s, the boats could be heard in Meiss Meadows. Apparently this event needs a marine event permit from the U.S. Coast Guard; it is unclear if it has one yet. If you think this event is a bad idea for Lake Tahoe, contact the U.S. Coast Guard, San Francisco Sector, and talk to the Marine Event Permits Coordinator, Joshua Clark, at (415) 399.7440.

Sue Rae Irelan, Homewood

Memorial service set for Norma Schwartz

A memorial and celebration of life or former North Tahoe Public Utility District board member and North Tahoe resident Norma Schwartz will be Sept. 17 at 11am at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach.

All are welcome to come and celebrate the life of Norma Schwartz, who contributed so much of her time to the North

Tahoe community.

Norma passed away peacefully on Feb. 4, 2011, in San Jose, just 12 days short of her 78 birthday.

Norma was appointed to the board on Dec. 22, 1981, after the resignation of newly elected board member Ken Oerlich. Norma was the first female to serve on the board and served for 25 years, the longest serving member.

Upon her decision not to run for re-election in December 2006 she said, “I am proud of the accomplishments of the NTPUD during my time on the board. We helped guide the development of the North Tahoe Regional Park from old sewer ponds to the park that it is now, the effort to bring in money for the construction of the Boys and Girls Club, and the grant money for park improvements that have been brought in over the years.”

In 1973, Norma and her family moved to Agate Bay. Norma and her husband, Al, were the owners of the Old Post Office Restaurant in Carnelian Bay and Al, the manager of Agate Bay Water Company. She was extremely active in North Tahoe politics and was instrumental in the development of the North Tahoe Business Association.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Norma’s memory can be made to one of the following local organizations that she supported: Tahoe Forest Hospice, North Tahoe Fire Fighter’s Association, the Boys and Girls Club of North Lake Tahoe, or the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team. If you need contact information for donations or would like to contribute a dish to share at the memorial, contact Pam Lefrancois at plefrancois@ntpud.org or (530) 546.4212.

Items being collected for military care packages

Goods are being collected as part of military care packages for the 422nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion, Nevada Army National Guard based in Reno.

Soldiers have recently been deployed.

The following items are needed or money can be donated to purchase them:

Beef jerky

Sunflower seeds

Sugar-free chewing gum

Nuts

Coffee

Music CDs or iTune cards

Cookies in individual packages

Pringles chips

Microwave popcorn

Macaroni and cheese

M&Ms

DVDs

Brown T-shirts – preferably Under Armor or Dri-fit

Boot socks

Underwear.

To make a donation or for more information, call (775) 588.5651. Packages will be sent Sept. 30.

BMX racing in South Lake Tahoe

South Lake Tahoe BMX Track final race and barbecue is Aug. 25 at 5pm.

Race fee is $5. Awards will be given to all riders. All ages, abilities and mountain bikes are welcome.

The track is located at 1100 Lyons Ave. in South Lake Tahoe.

For more information, call (530) 542.9337.