Upper Truckee Marsh to be off-limits to dogs in 2011

By Kathryn Reed

Unleashed dogs in the Upper Truckee Marsh are wreaking so much havoc on wildlife habitat that the California Tahoe Conservancy has decided that beginning in 2011 dogs will be banned from this swath of public land in South Lake Tahoe.

“The purpose is to preserve habitat value,” Ray Lacey, CTC deputy director, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Canines will not be permitted in the area starting in May during the breeding season. The cut-off date has not been determined, but it could extend into the fall to encompass the migratory season for birds.



Beginning in 2011 dogs will be banned in the summer from the Upper Truckee Marsh. Photo/Kathryn Reed

This is expected to be an annual closure.

The 300-plus acres were acquired for the purpose of preserving

habitat, not for recreation. For about a decade the Conservancy has been trying to educate dog owners about what happens when their animals walk in sensitive marsh areas. It impacts the terrain as well as scares off wildlife.

“They are traipsing in the meadow. There is a lack of complete understanding by people who want to get to this isolated beach,” CTC board member Kathay Lovell said at Thursday’s meeting.

El Dorado County Animal Control and the South Lake Tahoe Police Department will help regulate the closure. People violating the law will be cited and fined.

The goal this year is to educate the public about why the closure will be implemented.

Tina Carlsen, who has a doctorate in ecology and is an environmental program manager with the CTC, was tasked with analyzing the impact dogs have on wildlife and habitat in the marsh that is on the east side of the Truckee River adjacent to the Al Tahoe neighborhood and leads to Lake Tahoe.

She said birds are leaving the area because of dogs. Dogs are also affecting feeding and nesting areas of several species of birds.

Sean Butler, urban land management supervisor, said he won’t be surprised if people are angry about the closure, but said this has been a long time in coming because people continually disregard the current rules.

He said he expects the closure to be easier to enforce because it is not subject to confusion – like can a dog be off-leash to swim in the lake.

The CTC pointed out that no changes are planned for Cove East, on the other side of the Truckee River. Al Tahoe residents have the option of the dog park at Regan Beach for lake access

for dogs.

Placer County assessor temporarily loses Tahoe location

The North Lake Tahoe office of the Placer County Assessor will close temporarily on July 16. A new office on the North Shore will open later this year.

The office is moving temporarily because its current lease has expired and new office space is not ready for occupancy.

In the interim, assessor staff will be available by telephone. Those needing documents or other services typically provided over the counter can be conducted either by mail or at the counter at the Auburn office.

The Tahoe Assessor’s Office may be reached at (530) 889. 4300. The Auburn office location is 2980 Richardson Drive. The assessor may also be reached by email at assessor@placer.ca.gov.

Jordan, Romo create popular

pair to start ACC tourney

Basketball legend Michael Jordan and Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo will be paired together Friday during the opening round of the American Century Championship at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course, forming the most recognizable pairing in the tournament's 21-year history. Adding to the threesome's celebrity firepower is Boston Celtics star Ray Allen.

The Jordan, Romo, Allen group will tee off at 10:10am Frida just before Charles Barkley and after the marquee threesome of Troy Aikman, John Elway and Aaron Rogers. The American Century Championship's nationally televised first round starts with an 8:1 am tee time for former champions and NFL quarterbacks Chris Chandler, Billy Joe Tollive, along with perennial contender Trent Dilfer.

"The Michael Jordan, Tony Romo, Ray Allen pairing should be our biggest and most popular pairing in the history of the American Century Championship," tournament director Mike Milthorpe said in a statement. "Michael Jordan has traditionally drawn the largest galleries through the years, but Tony Romo has attracted huge crowds the past three years."



Tony Romo and Michael Jordan

The 54-hole, $600,000 tournament features 82 sports and entertainment stars.

Romo has built a fanatic following during his four years at the event – among both celebrity seekers and serious golf fans. Romo finished third in 2008 and is currently a 5:2 choice at Harrah's Race and Sports Book.

Romo has been named the recipient of the 2010 Brodie Award, recognizing an individual's accomplishments in both a chosen profession and in the sport of golf.

The award is named for former National Football League Most Valuable Player (1970) John Brodie, the one-time San Francisco 49ers quarterback and Senior PGA Tour player. It is given each year by organizers of the American Century Championship. Previous winners include Mario Lemieux, Rick Rhoden, John Elway and last year's winner, Trent Dilfer.

The Friday telecast will be carried on ESPN3 from noon-3pm and will re-air on ESPN2 at 8pm. The Saturday and Sunday rounds will be carried on NBC Sports from noon-3pm.

Tesla to show its stuff in Incline on July 17

Tesla Motors, maker of the pure electric high performance sports car, will be bringing the pure electric roadster to Incline Village this Saturday.

The zero-emission Roadster accelerates from zero-60 in 3.7 seconds without a drop of gasoline, making it faster than many sports cars yet and twice as energy-efficient as a hybrid.

The hand-built carbon fiber roadster takes no gas and produces no fumes.

As part of Tesla's Summer Electric Roadster Tour, it will be in Incline Village to show that electric cars are a reality and don't need to compromise in design, performance and engineering.

The Tesla will be at the Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort, 111 Country Club Drive, Incline Village, on Saturday from 10am–5pm.

Romo ready to challenge Rhoden at ACC

By Maggie Thach, Reno Gazette-Journal

STATELINE – Rick Rhoden can hear Tony Romo's footsteps coming up behind him.

Last summer at the American Century Championship, the Dallas Cowboys quarterback finished second to Rhoden, an eight-time winner at the South Lake Tahoe tournament. In 2008, Romo finished third.

This could be the year Romo, who has dabbled in PGA Tour qualification events, takes the top spot.



Tony Romo

“A lot of these guys don’t play as much competitive golf but Tony is a great player,” Rhoden said. “If he can manage his game a little more, he’ll start winning this thing.”

Read the whole story

Money fuels discussion about fire issues in basin

By Susan Wood

It’s been said time and time again: Leave it to a disaster to pull people together. Now the hope is the money will follow the people.

That was the overriding message conveyed Wednesday night at the South Lake Tahoe City Council Chambers by a high-profile panel speaking about the work of the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission formed by Govs. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jim Gibbons as a result of the Angora Fire. Three years ago, the blaze ripped through 3,100 acres of the Upper Truckee neighborhoods and destroyed 254 homes and the confidence of many who call Tahoe home.



Assemblyman Ted Gaines, center, speaks

with
constituents
July 14 about
fire issues.
Photo/Susan
Wood

“We’re not the same as we were before the Angora Fire,” South Lake Tahoe Mayor and panelist Kathay Lovell told a group of about 30 citizens who came out for the forum moderated by California Assemblyman Ted Gaines, R-Roseville.

Each person on the seven-member panel provided an update of where the region stands on what’s been done and what needs to be done to get the wildland urban interface area, aka – those zones that link the cities with the rural landscape – back to an acceptable level of forest health.

Terri Marceron, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit forest supervisor, announced her hot-off-the-press report of the U.S. Forest Service’s findings of no significant impacts received on the Angora Fire Restoration Project. The study encompasses the Angora burn area, which stretches up Lake Tahoe Boulevard, into the North Upper Truckee neighborhood and alongside Gardner Mountain.

The 1,416-acre plan calls for planting trees, removing dead ones, rechanneling Angora Creek, removing invasive weeds, restoring the Gardner Mountain meadow and rehabilitating Seneca Pond – located near the point of origin of the blaze caused by an illegal campfire. The remaining 1,300 acres of National Forest will be untreated. The public has 45 days to challenge the plan.

Marceron billed the findings as a significant leap in plowing ahead with the overall rehabilitation plan. Up to this point, the first phase involved the mop-up and the second included erosion control measures. This third, long-term stage is

scheduled to begin in the fall.

The timeline hasn't moved fast enough for John Adamski, who provided a heartfelt and frustrated plea to the federal government to move faster on its South Shore Project, a 10,000-acre fuel reduction and forest health plan that is in the works. He alluded to his 200 neighbors wondering: "Why should I treat my defensible space if the Forest Service is not doing their work?"

Marceron assured the citizenry LTBMU "has the findings and the funding" – including $3.5 million from recent federal stimulus funds – to move ahead with its plans.

Now it's up to the reauthorization of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act to keep the momentum going. It's up to Congress to make that happen. This was a point of interest panelist and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency chief Joanne Marchetta keyed into.

Marchetta told attendees she's proud of the accomplishments made by the organizations the panelists represent and the changing nature of the TRPA.

She mentioned expanding the size of a tree deemed OK for removal without a permit as one example. It was 6 inches. After the fire, the regulatory agency, once viewed by some as obstructionist, increased the size to 14 inches. The bi-state fire commission submitted 55 recommendations for TRPA, and it upheld them – including a multi-faceted cooperation with fire agencies and residents that allows for a record 68,000 acres treated for fuel reduction and 772 homes completing defensible space measures.

"Our priority is the partnership. TRPA is changing. I had to evacuate my home. The safety of this community is paramount, it's our primary concern," Marchetta said.

The balance between erosion control and fuel reduction is a

tricky one for fire departments and water quality agencies. It takes time, staff and money – big money to the tune of approximately $5 million a year to maintain a healthy forest that won't erupt into a firestorm like what was experienced on the South Shore on June 24, 2007.

Fire commission member John Pickett, who serves on behalf of the Tahoe Basin Fire Safe Council, provided the ominous dollar figure when South Lake Tahoe resident Carl Ribaudo inquired about "the magic number" the multi-agency task force would need to avert such a disaster.

"I think the taxpayer wants to see continual improvement," Ribaudo said.

With that, Lake Valley Fire Chief Jeff Michael reminded the group that money should be "an ongoing issue" for fuels treatment.

Cindy Gustafson, general manager of the Tahoe City Public Utility District, would like to see the state kick in funds for fire suppression for her 26 individual water systems.

Gaines took note of what he and his colleagues in the Legislature could ensure is the still non-existent state budget.

The other panelists were Bill Holmes of CalFire and Lauri Kemper with Lahontan Water Board.

Wyland Galleries hosting 2

painters this week

Wyland Galleries in South Lake Tahoe is hosting two painters – James Coleman and Walfrido – July 16 from 4-8pm, and July 17-18 from 2-6pm.

Coleman is a romantic impressionist known for his sense of color and ability to translate emotion into image. He molded his professional career as a fine artist at Walt Disney Studios as a background animation specialist for 22 years. Winnie the Pooh, The Little Mermaid, and Beauty and the Beast came to life with James Coleman's background images gracing the screen.

Walfrido is a third generation artist. He is know for his seascapes. Reflecting light through the water is his signature. His use of a delicate layering technique results in a 3-D effect. Walfrido believes "Truly great art stimulates not only the heart, but the mind". Walfrido will be unveiling Tahoe pieces not generally found in other galleries.

The gallery is at 4000 Lake Tahoe Blvd. in the Village Center.

Free flights for kids during August air show

Kids fly free Aug. 28 during the annual air show at Lake Tahoe Airport.

Those ages 8-17 are eligible.

The times are 7-9am, noon-1 and after 4pm. This could change based on weather conditions and pilot availability.

Register at Mountain West Aviation, 1841 Airport Road, Lake Tahoe Airport, in advance of the flight time.

Finding fault with Placer County Grand Jury report

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the June 30, 2010, Auburn Journal.***

If there's one thing residents have been vocal about during the recession, it's that state, county and local governments must rein in pay for public employees – especially top executives.

You wouldn't know that from reading the just-released final report from the Placer County Grand Jury.

In an investigation titled "The Delicate Art of Setting Salaries," the grand jury focused on the salaries and compensation for city and town managers. But rather than offer a set of recommendations to build better pay models, the probe simply reports facts and figures.

Report findings state the obvious. Or worse, state what's been painfully obvious to taxpayers – top execs in some cities are paid well above the national average – without offering strong medicine for a change.

Ask anyone on Main Street whether the Rocklin City Council should be commended for paying retiring manager Carlos Urrutia $139,000 to work part time while collecting $170,000 in pension pay, and you're likely to get an earful.

Read the whole story

Law enforcement academy for seniors in Douglas County

Douglas County Sheriff's Department in partnership with Douglas County TRIAD is about to launch the 14th annual Senior Citizen's Law Enforcement Academy.

The goal of the free academy is to provide crime fighting educational programs and information to senior citizens of Douglas County. Attendees will become more aware and comfortable with law enforcement services, and law enforcement officers in return will develop a better understanding of the needs of senior citizen's within our county.

The Senior Citizen's Law Enforcement Academy runs Aug. 23-27. Classes will start at 1pm and end at 5pm. Class location is the Judicial and Law Enforcement Center, located at 1625 8th St. in Minden. This academy is open to seniors who reside anywhere in Douglas County.

The academy will include training and instruction on a variety of law enforcement topics, including: uniformed patrol procedures, jail/custody procedures, criminal investigations, crime scene processing, narcotic and gang investigations, criminal justice system, criminal prosecution, court procedure, dispatch operations, identity theft and fraud prevention, law enforcement volunteer programs, fire prevention, youth services and emergency medical information.

All academy instructors are selected from the county, state and local agencies.

The class size is limited to 50 students. Students must be at least 50 years of age and reside in Douglas County. Applicants

must be willing to submit to a background check, and may not ever have been convicted of a felony crime.

To sign up, call (775) 782.9900.