Envirnomentally not all ski slopes are the same

By Sindya N. Bhanoo, New York Times

Ski resorts are not as fun for the environment as they are for skiers. The damage to forested hills caused by the construction of ski slopes is obvious. Trees are cut down, ground is cleared, and the resulting slopes are maintained as the foundation for a yearly carpet of snow.

Some ski slopes, however, are more environmentally friendly than others, according to a new study. Cleared ski runs, where trees and other tall, woody plants are cut down to open skiing pathways, cause less damage to the natural ecosystem than graded ski runs, which are bulldozed, leaving little or no vegetation or shrubs.

Read the whole story

Reno rodeo impacting Truckee River

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Every June, up to 1,000 horses and cattle crowd onto the grounds of Renoâ€™s Livestock Events Center as the popular Reno Rodeo spurs into action.

Also every June, operators of a water treatment plant just downstream on the Truckee River notice a sudden spike of pollutants believed to be associated with animal waste.

Several agencies are joining to make changes that will allow the rodeo to occur without dirtying a river everyone is trying to keep pristine.

Read the whole story

Winter Film Series returns to Tahoe City

Alpenglow Sports and Alex Honnold's third free show of their annual Winter Film Series is Jan. 21 in Tahoe City

Honnold makes his debut public presentation that will highlight some of his favorite climbs from Borneo to England's Gritstone and especially his favorite place: the soaring granite walls of Yosemite Valley.

Who: Alex Honnold

What: Alpenglow Winter Slideshow Series to benefit ARC

When: Jan. 21 at 7pm

Where: Sawtooth Ridge Cafe, 877 N. Lake Blvd., Tahoe City

Why: To provide a quality community event combined with a focus on community service and charity

There is no charge for the shows and everyone is welcome. The bar and restaurant will be open for drinks and food. The cafe will offer an early bird dinner special starting at 5:30pm. Reservations are recommended.

People are encouraged to arrive early for good seating. Call Alpenglow Sports (530) 583.6917 with any questions.

South Tahoe receives F from Lung Association

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

Davis got the best grade in the region from the American Lung Association for controlling smoking.

Davis got a grade of B and Sacramento got a C but most cities got a failing grade in the annual State of Tobacco Control Report.

The communities were graded on their ordinances covering smokefree outdoor environments, smoke-free housing and tobacco sales reductions.

Read the whole story

Forest Service plans to cut discounts to seniors, disabled

By Barbara Barte Osborn, Modesto Bee

A proposed policy change by the U.S. Forest Service would reduce some long-standing benefits for senior citizens and permanently disabled people but at the same time expand benefits for holders of other national passes.

The changes to the agency’s national pass discount policy could affect many of the facilities in the national forests closest to the Sacramento region.

The Forest Service has not publicly explained the reasons it is changing its policy on pass-related discounts, but is accepting comment on the proposal through Feb. 1.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe chamber breakfast

This monthâ€™s Breakfast with Fran speaker is Jean Rahman, founder and CEO of the Institute of Financial Freedom & Investment Solutions.

When: Jan. 21, 7:15 – 8:30am

Where: South Tahoe Chamber Office, 2572 Lake Tahoe Blvd., Ste. 3

Reserve your space by calling (530) 544.7412 or email joannconner@prepaidlegal.com.

Holland 15th in snowboardercross

By Lindsey Sine, USSA

VEYSONNAZ, Switzerland – The race to make the snowboardcross

roster for the 2010 Olympics just got a lot tighter as Nick Baumgartner threw it on the line Friday to notch a third-place finish during a SBX World Cup in Switzerland.

In addition to marking himself a contender for the Olympics, the shining light in Baumgartner's day were his starts.

"The course was great and my starts were awesome," Baumgartner said. "In the first heat where I kind of just missed stepping up the main feature in the straightaway in one heat, but other than that I won every holeshot so that was really good."

However, despite the podium finish, Baumgartner was left wanting to have gone further.

"Under different circumstances I'd be more stoked. I was in the lead for the top half and even second would have been alright, but I blew it right at the end," Baumgartner said. "I just knuckled something and got passed in the finish stretch. But, third is better than fourth."

In a competition where France's Pierre Vaultier took the win, Baumgartner said that be could have been more aggressive with the victor, but didn't want to risk them both losing it all.

Joining Baumgartner in the top 10 were teammates Graham Watanabe (Sun Valley, ID) who was ninth, and last week's World Cup winner Nate Holland (Squaw Valley, CA) who was 10th.

With the strong men's field, even U.S. Snowboarding Head Coach Peter Foley is uncertain who will assume the Olympic spots with just one competition left to qualify.

In the battle for up to four Olympic starting spots, Holland – who has now mathematically clinched a spot – leads the selection criteria with his win last weekend in Austria. Reigning Olympic champ Seth Wescott (Sugarloaf, ME) is next with a second place finish in the season opener in Argentina. Three riders now have a third, including Baumgartner, Watanabe

and 2002 Olympic halfpipe champ Ross Powers (Okemo, VT). Baumgartner and Watanabe are tied in the first two tiebreakers (next best result).

In the women's race, Lindsey Jacobellis (Stratton, VT) was running fast when, in the semifinal round, she was landed on coming down off a feature and then run into by Switzerland's Simona Meiler to finish eighth. With just one event remaining, Jacobellis, with a win last weekend, has clinched an Olympic spot.

Helene Olafsen of Norway won, followed by Canadians Dominique Maltais in second and Maelle Ricker in third.

Callan Chythlook-Sifsof (Girdwood, AK) was next for U.S. women, finishing 14th.

The World Cup tour now moves on to Stoneham in Quebec Jan. 21. It will be the final stop before the U.S. Olympic team for snowboarding will be named.

Veysonnaz, Switzerland, Jan. 15, Snowboardcross

Men

1. Pierre Vaultier, France

2. David Speiser, Germany

3. Nick Baumgartner, Iron River, MI

4. Francois Boivin, Canada

5. Alex Pullin, Australia

—

9. Graham Watanabe, Sun Valley, ID

10. Nate Holland, Squaw Valley, CA

15. Shaun Palmer, South Lake Tahoe, CA

16. Pat Holland, Squaw Valley, CA

17. Seth Wescott, Sugarloaf, ME

23. Ross Powers, Okemo, VT

35. Jonathan Cheever, Saugus, MA

43. Mick Dierdorff, Steamboat Springs, CO

45. Jason Smith, Basalt, CO

Women

1. Helene Olafsen, Norway

2. Dominique Maltais, Canada

3. Maelle Ricker, Canada

4. Alexandra Jekova, Bulgaria

5. Tanja Frieden, Switzerland

—

8. Lindsey Jacobellis, Stratton, VT

14. Callan Chythlook-Sifsof, Girdwood, AK

21. Faye Gulini, Salt Lake City

What to do with plastic bags in SLT?



Find out what South Lake Tahoe's Sustainability Commission is up to and what it wants to do with plastic bags. Chairwoman Kirstin Cattell takes to the airwaves Saturday at 10am on KTHO FM-96.1/AM590; or listen at www.kthoradio.com.

TY&FS needs volunteers

Tahoe Youth & Family Services needs volunteers to help in the South Lake Tahoe office, Gardnerville office and both Drop In Centers.

Answering phones, odd office jobs and help with bulk mailings is needed.

Interested? Contact the office you are interested in – Gardnerville (775) 782.4202 or South Lake Tahoe (530) 541.2445.

National Safety Awareness Week on the slopes

National Safety Awareness Week for skiers and boarders is Jan. 16-22.

Several resorts in the Lake Tahoe Basin have special events.

Know the code:

Skiing and snowboarding can be enjoyed in many ways. At ski areas you may see people using alpine, snowboard, telemark, cross country and other specialized ski equipment, such as that used by disabled or other skiers. Regardless of how you decide to enjoy the slopes, always show courtesy to others and be aware that there are elements of risk in skiing that common sense and personal awareness can help reduce. Observe the code listed below and share with other skiers the responsibility for a great skiing experience.

1. Always stay in control.

2. People ahead of you have the right of way.

3. Stop in a safe place for you and others.

4. Whenever starting downhill or merging, look uphill and yield.

5. Use devices to help prevent runaway equipment.

6. Observe signs and warnings, and keep off closed trails.

7. Know how to use the lifts safely.