Eldorado Forest getting into Christmas tree business

For the first time in several decades, the Eldorado National Forest will sell Christmas tree cutting permits.

Permits for pine, fir or cedar trees up to 6 inches in diameter at the base will be available beginning Nov. 14.

Christmas tree permits will be issued with tree tags for $10 each, with a limit of two per family or address. These permits must be purchased in person, are not transferable and are sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

Fourth-graders who present a valid Every Kid in a Park voucher or pass are entitled to one free Christmas tree permit.

For more information, go **online**.

Wolf sightings confirmed in N. California



California officials are tracking two wolves in

Lassen County. Photo/CDFW

Two gray wolves are living in western Lassen County.

Gray wolves were eliminated from California more than 100 years ago, until the return of OR7 in 2011.

This summer, photographs, tracks and eyewitness sightings suggested the presence of two canids frequently traveling together.

After a wolf-like canid was photographed by trail cameras in Lassen County in fall 2015 and spring 2016, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife began operating additional trail cameras in the area and regularly searching for wolf scat and tracks.

Genetic analysis from scat samples confirmed the presence of a male and a female gray wolf.

Analysis of scat indicates that the male wolf was born into the Rogue Pack in 2014, and most likely dispersed to Lassen County in late 2015 or 2016. The founder of the Rogue Pack is the well-known gray wolf OR7 (collared in Oregon by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife) who dispersed from northeast Oregon and traveled around Northern California in 2011 and 2012 before eventually finding a mate and establishing a territory in southern Oregon in 2013.

The DNA of the female wolf does not match that of any known individual wolves from Oregon, and initial analyses indicates she is not a close relative of current Oregon wolves.

Gray wolves are listed as endangered federally and in California.

Dollar Creek Trail bid higher than expected

Additional funding for the next 2.2 mile-phase of the Dollar Creek Trail was approved by the Placer County Board of Supervisors.

The county now has $297,000 committed to the $3 million project. The bulk of the funding is coming from the state and feds.

The additional money was needed because the bids came in higher than expected.

When it’s built, the will connect Kings Beach and Tahoe City with a continuous shared-use path.

How to hit the slopes strong, avoid injuries

By Paul McHugh, Sacramento Bee

Had your skis or board freshly tuned? Good. Layered clothes, helmet and sunscreen all packed? Check. Car ready with new wipers, antifreeze fluid, tire chains in the trunk? Great. But let’s consider the most important piece of gear. Is your body truly in shape for winter recreation?

As they used to say on the streets, “Betta’ check yourself,

before you wreck yourself.”

The absolute best time to begin preparing for a new ski season is at the close of your last ski season. That’s due to a simple truth: It’s much smarter – as well as much easier – to keep fit than it is to become fit.

This maxim is particularly apt for heart-lung fitness, your “VO2 max,” or aerobic capacity. Generally, this measure of athletic health falls by about 1 percent per year after age 25. The only thing that slows the decline to any significant degree is maintaining a regular aerobic regimen.

Read the whole story

Poll: Nearly half in U.S. support legalized sports betting

By Wayne Parry, AP

ATLANTIC CITY – A poll finds nearly half of Americans approve of legalized sports betting, reasoning that so many people are already doing it.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University PublicMind poll released last week finds 48 percent support changing federal law to make sports betting legal throughout the country; 39 percent are opposed.

“Betting on sports does not have an access issue for anyone in the United States,” said Donald Hoover, senior lecturer at the university’s International School of Hospitality and Tourism

Management. “Most of the sports betting in the U.S. is fairly easy to do, but happens in the shadows and in violation of federal law.”

The poll comes as New Jersey opens another front in its eight-year war on a federal law restricting sports betting to those states that met a 1991 deadline to legalize it: Nevada, Oregon, Montana and Delaware.

New Jersey lawmakers have come up with another potential way around the ban involving a complex repeal of sports betting regulations in the state, followed by a limited reinstitution of restrictions. And the state’s horse racing industry is asking the U.S. Supreme Court to decide the matter once and for all.

The telephone poll using cellphones and landlines to reach 1,019 adults nationwide has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.8 percentage points.

Among those in favor, the two biggest reasons given are that many people are already doing it (45 percent) and that legalized sports betting would result in increased revenue for the state (39 percent).

Among opponents, top concerns are fostering gambling addiction (55 percent); the potential involvement of organized crime (22 percent) and concerns about the perceived integrity of the games (16 percent).

“The public is divided on this issue, and it looks like the reasons behind the division stem from the age-old difficulty of reconciling the competing pulls of money and morality,” said Krista Jenkins, a professor of political science and the poll’s director. “People are clearly worried about the effects of gambling on individuals and their families, but also aware of the benefits that come from more money for the state from something that people are already doing.”

The poll also found that although people are more supportive of legalized sports betting, they don’t necessarily want more casinos: 68 percent say the U.S. currently has enough casinos, compared to 16 percent who want fewer casinos and 11 percent who want more.

Control burns expected to start Sunday in basin

Weather and conditions permitting, the Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District and the U.S. Forest Service may continue prescribed fire operations beginning Nov. 6.

Operation locations include areas off Logan Creek Drive and on Kingsbury Grade, and on urban lots near Heavenly Mountain Resort and off North Upper Truckee Road on the South Shore. Operations will continue as conditions allow.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size and environmental conditions.

Before prescribed fire operations are conducted, agencies post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, send email notifications and update the local fire information line at 530.543.2816.

Future of Tahoe's shore zone being debated

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – What if motorized boats were no longer allowed on Lake Tahoe? That's what one table at a workshop proposed.

That idea was one of many discussed Thursday night when the public got together to work on the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's shore zone plan.

Piers and buoys have long been controversial at Lake Tahoe. When the bi-state regulatory agency adopted the shore zone plan in 2008 the League to Save Lake Tahoe and the Sierra Club that same month filed a lawsuit challenging it. Two years later TRPA challenged the court's ruling which had sided with the conservation groups. Then in **2012 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals** partially ruled in favor of each side.

That in part is why the TRPA is conducting more outreach and is in the process of updating this segment of the Regional Plan



Shore zone issues are discussed Nov. 3 in Stateline. Photo/LTN

Sitting at tables, the more than 30 people on Nov. 3 discussed piers, low lake adaptation, access, boating and marinas. Their comments along with those from the more than 70 people who attended a similar meeting on the North Shore in September will be considered as the bi-state regulatory agency moves forward.

Many of the issues are interrelated. Several of the 14 marinas (12 are in California, two in Nevada) are struggling to provide access to boaters because of the low lake level. Piers can't be extended per current rules, but floating docks could be the answer.

Marinas are dealing with slips that no longer fit boats as they keep increasing in length. Piers-docks are inaccessible because the lake is so low.

While being able to be on the lake itself is an economic driver for the entire basin, protecting this national treasure from an environmental standpoint is also a concern. Part of the shore zone plan components will be to balance those two issues which at times can be conflicting.

Suggestions that came out of the discussion Thursday night included:

· Needing to allow marinas to expand;

· Enforcing the 600-foot TRPA mandated no wake zone, and the 200-foot California zone;

· Storage for watercraft on and off the water;

· Signs talking about rules of the water and pointing to where access is;

· Multi-use piers, including ones that can accommodate water taxis;

· Paying attention to public health and safety;

· Reviving the bus that went around the lake so people can get to the water without driving themselves;

· Figure out how low the water level must get before people stop trying to adapt to it;

· Making sure non-motorized boats have access;

· Education;

· Streamline permitting process;

· Speed limit on the lake;

· Working more cooperatively with various agencies and landowners.

Wildlife decline since 1970s reaches nearly 60%

By Jane Onyanga-Omara, USA Today

Wildlife populations around the world have declined nearly 60 percent since the 1970s, with elephants, wolves and salamanders among the creatures affected, a new environmental report warns.

The numbers of mammals, birds, and fish fell by 58 percent between 1970 and 2012 while freshwater species declined by 81 percent during the same time, the World Wildlife Federation (WWF) and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) said in their The Living Planet report.

Read the whole story

Plans under way to remove milfoil in Tahoe Vista

This winter the Tahoe Resource Conservation District plans to tackle a new infestation of Eurasian milfoil at the Tahoe Vista boat launch.

This year TRCD treated 4.5 acres at Lakeside Marina and Beach, Crystal Shores marinas, Fleur du Lac's outer harbor and in the Truckee River.

Treatment of Eurasian watermilfoil is important for water quality because the invasive plant raises pH, decreases oxygen, and increases water temperature, all of which alter the ecosystem and negatively impact recreation and public safety.

In 2010, TRCD, in collaboration with the Lake Tahoe Aquatic Invasive Species Program, began treatment of approximately 6 acres of aquatic invasive plants in the near shore by Vikingsholm. The control methods included bottom barriers, which kill plants by eliminating light, and diver-assisted suction removal, which physically removes plants and roots. After four years of comprehensive treatment, Emerald Bay remains free of aquatic invasive plants.

"While bottom barriers and diver-assisted suction removal have proven to be successful, there is a need to identify other techniques that could help us get ahead of the battle, particularly with persistent plant species such as curlyleaf pondweed," TRCD District Manager Kim Boyd said in a press release.

Ultra-violet light is a potential solution, especially in low water years and in tight spaces within marinas. TRCD will continue to work with partners this winter to finalize environmental documentation and permitting so UV light can be tested in Lake Tahoe in 2017.

Funding for these projects has been provided by Truckee River Fund, Tahoe Fund, Rotary Club of Tahoe City, California Tahoe Conservancy, and Nevada Division of State Lands.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

USFS to begin Christmas Tree permit program

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will begin selling Christmas tree permits Nov. 7.

Permits cost $10 each (cash or check preferred on South Shore, cash or check only on North Shore and in Tahoe City), with a limit of two permits per family. Permits must be purchased in person, are not transferable and are sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Permit holders may choose from a variety of pine, fir or cedar in designated cutting areas in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Permits will be sold at:

· Forest Supervisor’s office, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe. This office is open Monday through Friday from 8am-4:30pm.

· Incline Village Forest Service office, 855 Alder Ave., Incline Village beginning Nov. 9. This office is open Wednesday through Friday from 8am-4:30pm.

· North Lake Tahoe Visitor Center, 100 North Lake Blvd., Tahoe City. This office is open from 9am-5pm daily.

Designated cutting area maps are provided at the time of permit purchase. Permit holders should follow permit guidelines for responsible collection, including not trespassing on private property when entering or leaving National Forest cutting areas. Observe seasonal road closures and be prepared to hike to the cutting area to find a tree. No off-road travel is allowed. Park in legal areas and do not block gates.

In support of the Every Kid in a Park program, the LTBMU will offer one free Christmas tree permit to fourth-grade students who present a valid paper voucher or durable Every Kid in a Park pass. To obtain the free Christmas tree permit, fourth-grade students must obtain the paper voucher online, present the printed voucher in person along with their parent or guardian to a participating Forest Service office and participate in the cutting of the Christmas tree. To obtain the paper voucher and to learn more about the Every Kid in a Park program, go **online**.