

Bay Area seashore exudes national treasure

Publisher's note: *This is one in a series of stories about the National Park Service, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2016. All articles may be found via the Home Page, select Special Projects, then National Park Service 100th.*



Northern elephant seals sun themselves on the beach near Chimney Rock. Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

By Jessie Marchesseau

POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE – As a native Montanan, I grew up nowhere near a seashore. I was a teenager before ever even laying eyes on the ocean. Though I have since visited it

numerous times, I don't think it will ever cease to be a wonder to me: how so much beauty, life, power and even destruction can be combined into this one body, living, yet not living.

This summer, in observance of the 100th anniversary of our National Parks System, my husband and I decided to seize the opportunity of a recent three-day weekend to explore one of our nearby, and perhaps lesser-known, national treasures.

Just a few hours' drive from Lake Tahoe we took in the sandy beaches, beautiful yet violent ocean waves, rolling coastal prairies and diverse wildlife of Point Reyes National Seashore.

One of just 10 national seashores within the National Parks System, Point Reyes is the only national seashore in California. In fact, it's the only one on the West Coast, the other nine lying along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.



The dairy building on the Historic Pierce Point Ranch was

once the center of a thriving dairy business. It remains preserved within the Tule Elk Reserve at Point Reyes National Seashore. Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

These seaside preserves comprise a relatively small portion of the more than 400 sites which make up the National Parks System. And at just 70,000 acres, Point Reyes may seem almost tiny next to a 750,000 acre park like Yosemite. But the 80 miles of undeveloped coastline encompassed by Point Reyes National Seashore offers visitors an experience every bit as intriguing, delightful and awe-inspiring as one would expect from a national park.

Whitewater waves more than 6-feet high crashed onto the shores at Point Reyes Beach while we enjoyed a picnic lunch on the sand, onshore winds ruffling our hair. A washed up log was a makeshift picnic table as our niece and nephew crawled in and out of a driftwood "fort," our three dogs digging holes in the sand and hunting for crab carcasses at our feet.

As dog owners, we always enjoy our adventures a little bit more with furry family members at our sides, and Point Reyes proved to be pleasantly dog-friendly, at least as far as national parks are concerned. It offers three dog-friendly beaches accessible by car or foot, even more if you choose to boat in. Printable maps clearly depicting dog-friendly locations are available online, and the park ranger I chatted with at the Bear Mountain Visitor Center was more than happy to highlight the locations on my free park map where I could explore with my four-legged friends. They do ask you to keep dogs on leashes, clean up after them and stick to the designated areas. But with miles of seashore designated dog-friendly, we had plenty of room.



Point Reyes Beach is just one of the beaches in Point Reyes National Seashore which allows dogs. Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

Most of the beaches at Point Reyes are not swimming beaches. Dangerous, often pounding surf and rip currents deem much of the water unsafe for venturing in. Moderate temperatures and steady winds typical of Northern California beaches don't exactly beckon for bikinis and board shorts anyhow. But the sand is soft, and the views outstanding.

Piling back in the car, our next stop was Elephant Seal Outlook. The northern elephant seal is perhaps the most iconic of the 80 species of mammals known to reside within the boundaries of the national seashore, which also includes the water and land a quarter mile off shore. From the outlook, we peered down on two dozen elephant seals sunning themselves on the beach below and even a few pups frolicking in the water. The cooler temperatures and gusty winds were clearly not affecting their afternoon.

The following day we ventured to the north end of the park in search of the only animal which may rival the seal in its

iconic status within Point Reyes: the tule elk. Once nearly extinct, tule elk at Point Reyes now number more than 400. At the far northern end of Point Reyes National Seashore, spanning a small peninsula called Tomales Point, is the Tule Elk Reserve.

Growing up in the Rocky Mountains, I know elk can be somewhat elusive animals, but upon reaching the reserve, we spotted three bull elk and one cow almost immediately. Continuing on to the designated parking area, we set out on a short hike in search of more. This proved not only a welcome opportunity to stretch our legs, but a chance to stroll through fields of wildflowers, pink, purple, yellow and white, and admire the picturesque coastline below, passing birds, butterflies and caterpillars along the way.

We were soon rewarded with the view of a small herd of elk, stopping to quietly observe as the majestic animals grazed contentedly on a grassy hillside. Returning, we had thought our luck pretty good on the day's elk-viewing excursion. But driving out of the reserve we came upon yet another herd, this time all cows and calves, dozens of them so near to the road I felt I could walk out among them without an elk so much as noticing. I did not, however, and only invaded their privacy with my camera lens.

Our weekend coastal adventure was rounded out with a stop at pet-friendly Kehoe Beach and visits to a few historical locations within the park including the Historic Lifeboat Station, Point Reyes Lighthouse and the Historic Pierce Point Ranch, all glimpses into the colorful past life of Point Reyes.

In the end, I was glad we chose this as our national park trip of the summer. To have a place like Point Reyes National Seashore celebrating and preserving this awe-inspiring aspect of our earth right out our back doors is an amenity well worth taking advantage of. The size and location perfect for a quick

weekend trip, the overall experience both relaxing and invigorating. Perhaps my favorite part though, was being able to enjoy it with family, both two-legged, and four.

Kokanee fingerlings planted in Lake Tahoe

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife recently released 138,099 kokanee salmon fingerlings into Lake Tahoe.

In all, 634,430 kokanee were released into 13 lakes and reservoirs throughout the state.

Kokanee were introduced into California waters to provide diverse recreational angling opportunities for anglers and have become an extremely popular sport fish. They are typically smaller than the landlocked Chinook salmon with the average size about 12 inches.

Due to the continuing drought conditions making it difficult to obtain kokanee eggs within the state, this year's allotment was supplemented with eggs provided by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Instead of migrating to the ocean, adult kokanees inhabit large lakes before returning to their natal streams or gravelly shorelines to spawn. Like all Pacific salmon, kokanee die after spawning, the whole life cycle taking from three to seven years.

The fish were planted in the following waters:

Water

<u>County</u>	<u>Fish Planted</u>
Boca Reservoir Napa	25,042
Bullards Bar Reservoir Yuba	70,140
Donner Lake 25,042	Nevada
Hell Hole Reservoir 25,042	Placer
Little Grass Valley Reservoir 15,052	Plumas
Stampede Reservoir 60,027	Sierra
Union Valley Reservoir Dorado	49,995 El
Lake Berryessa 50,111	Napa
Bass Lake 50,064	Madera
Don Pedro Reservoir 19,980	Tuolumne
New Melones 55,524	Tuolumne
Shaver Lake 50,312.	Fresno

Rare Sierra sighting could be same wolverine spotted in 2008

By Associated Press

Once believed to have gone extinct in the Sierra Nevada, scientists believe a wolverine spotted this winter north of Lake Tahoe is the same one that in 2008 became the first documented in the area since the 1920s.

California wildlife biologist Chris Stermer set up remote cameras in the Tahoe National Forest after researchers sent him photos of unusual tracks in the snow in January.

One video clip captured Feb. 27 shows the wolverine scale a tree and tug at a baited sock near Truckee. The video is posted on the agency's Facebook account.

Stermer is awaiting DNA test results. But he said he's almost certain it's the same wolverine that he suspects migrated to California eight years ago from the Sawtooth Range in Idaho.

Mulder wins second straight celeb golf tourney



Mark Mulder had plenty to smile about throughout this year's American Century Championship. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Putting was the talk of the three-day American Century Championship, so it comes as no surprise it was Mark Mulder's short game that helped propel him to a second straight title.

The former Major League pitcher topped the leader board with a total of 74 points. Mardy Fish, who retired from tennis nearly one year ago, was second with 69 points and actor-singer Jack Wagner came in third with 67 points.

The 27-year-old celebrity golf tournament at Edgewood Tahoe uses a Stableford scoring system instead of how the pros do it.

Mulder will take home \$125,000 for his win, Fish \$60,000 and Wagner \$35,000. The total prize pool was \$600,000.

Mulder had four birdies on the last four holes on the front nine Sunday.

"I knew going into today I needed to make a bunch of birdies, and I didn't make many putts the last few days. Today is one of those days I knew I had to. Luckily they started rolling in, and you start getting that – there's kind of a vibe out there. It's kind of a feeling at times," Mulder said at the press conference.

Like last year, Mulder came into the final round five points behind the leader.

Being confident, he said, is the key. He couldn't say his experience as a pitcher coming from behind had much to with his success on the links.

"Pitching and golf are about the only two things in sports – and maybe serving a tennis ball, where nothing can happen until you do it," Mulder said. "You still have to hit the golf shot."

He was four points shy of tying the tournament record of 33 for a single round on July 24.

The Harrah's and Harveys Race & Sports Book odds makers were spot on with Mulder and Fish favored 3-1 to win the tournament.

"The greens were fantastic. I asked Notah Begay today, he said they have probably 20 percent of their tournaments as fast as that, otherwise the PGA Tour has the rest of them are a bit slower," Fish said.

Many of players throughout the week commented about how fast and firm the greens were, instead of being spongy like years past.

Camp all about getting kids outdoors

Lake Tahoe Community College and Tahoe Center for Orthopedics are offering a weeklong summer camp for youth ages 10 to 15.

Youth will be exploring the mountains around Lake Tahoe. Each day will be at a different location.

The camp is Aug. 8-12, from 9am-4pm each day.

The days will be filled with activities encouraging trust and cooperation as kids venture in nature's playground. Day hikes will range from 3 to 5 miles and end with a swim in a stream or lake.

For more info and to sign up, go **online**. Cost is \$225.

Even legal target shooting starts fires

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Even after two men admitted their roles in starting a nine-acre fire during a July 2 target shooting session on the northern outskirts of Reno, Bureau of Land Management Ranger Scott Fischer didn't issue any citations.

That's because the men, who Fischer said even stated they had read a recent *Reno Gazette-Journal* article about how bullets can ignite vegetation, weren't breaking any rules.

Fischer, a certified wildland fire origin and cause investigator for six seasons, said the shooters were using a 9mm handgun to fire lead-core bullets into a paper target.

Read the whole story

Women descend upon Northstar's bike park



Instructor Kristen Martin Del Campo leads riders down Northstar's bike park. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

TRUCKEE – Take another look, that gnarly dude on the mountain

bike might just be a dudette. It's hard to tell with all that gear that makes riders look like Ninja warriors.

It's not just the hardcore riders who are decked out in this garb. So are newbies and the less experienced cyclists. It's all about safety.

Northstar's mountain bike park is attracting more women these days, and all levels of riders. The added enthusiasm has a lot to do with a weekly program called Pumps on Pedals. It's all about getting women to feel comfortable downhill mountain bike riding.

"You progress on the terrain you are comfortable on," Kristen Martin Del Campo told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Lift access speeds up the learning curve by not having to pedal up the mountain. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

She is one of the instructors for the Friday night rides. Del Campo has been certified by the International Mountain Biking Association to teach.

Her style is laid back and encouraging, making it comfortable to get outside your comfort zone.

First-timers go through a skills clinic that includes taking the gondola to the Zephyr Express and riding down to the village. It sounds simple until Del Campo has us leaning one way and the bike the other as we turn. It's all about keeping as much tread on the ground as possible. Skidding, we're told, is more dangerous than going fast.

Then people are divvied up in groups based on skill level. The mountain's routes are divided into green (easy), blue (intermediate) and black (advanced) just like ski runs.



Northstar has a variety of terrain – easy to double black diamond. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

“Mountain biking is relative to where you live,” Del Campo said. “Here it’s dry and loose. People’s mountain biking definition is different.”

That’s why they like to see what a rider is comfortable with before assigning her to a group for the free ride experience.

Standing is the norm. Getting used to riding over natural

features – aka rocks embedded in the ground – is part of the experience.

While the fire road intuitively seems easier and safer than the single track with banked turns, Del Campo is quick to dispel that belief.

“The flat, loose corner is more technical than the berm,” Del Campo said. “On the flat you have to be more active and balanced on the bike.”



Instructor Kristen Martin Del Campo is

also a mountain bike racer. Photo
Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

There are bikes designed just for downhill. Others are good for climbing. Some are all around. Tires are getting fatter. Components more light weight. Hydraulic brakes allow for one-finger breaking – also meaning more fingers are on the handlebars to control the bike. It's easy to spend \$5,000 on a new mountain bike.

This is the first year for Northstar's Specialized Academy. The bikes are in the village, whereas in the past they were mid-mountain. The thinking behind the academy approach is to brand the program much like they've done with the Burton Snowboard Academy. People will know what to expect and have a consistent experience.

A great thing about Specialized is that it is one of the few companies making mountain bikes specifically for women. The frames and other components are better designed for a women's physique.

Riders, though, may use their own equipment for the Friday rides – or anytime at Northstar. It's about the camaraderie and the riding.

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Kristen Martin Del Campo demonstrates how to lean when turning. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

Notes:

- Aug. 6-7, women's only mountain bike weekend at Northstar. Details are **online**.
- Pumps on Pedals – Every Friday through Sept. 2. Check-in by 4:45pm in front of the Big Springs Gondola. Lift tickets are \$28. Bikes and all necessary equipment are available to

rent for \$28.

Record crowds witness stars battle for ACC lead



Mardy Fish was in the hunt last year at the ACC, and goes into the final round this year as the man to beat. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – This time it was the swing of a golf club that pushed retired tennis great Mardy Fish to the lead on the second day of the American Century Championship at Edgewood

Tahoe Golf Course.

The three-day celebrity golf tournament wraps up Sunday.

The sports celebrities were out in rare form with swarms of fans, many of whom followed Warriors guard Steph Curry among others.

Fish is in the lead going into Sunday, scoring 50 points, with longtime player and actor Jack Wagner just behind with 48 points. Mike Modano is tied at 45 with pitcher Mark Mulder, who won the tournament last year. Chicago Bears linebacker Brian Urlacher is in fifth at 41.



Retired baseball pitcher Derek Lowe gladly quenches his thirst with an adult beverage provided by fans. Photo/Susan Wood

All the players seem to be in good spirits at the end of their rounds, with compliments to their fellow competitors, a

genuine happiness about being there with the fan support, and some with gratefulness their families could cheer them on.

“Daddy, daddy,” Fish’s 2-year-old son called out as the tennis pro made his rounds. At one point, the youngster was holding a golf club.

“He’s pretty good at his swing. It’s been great having (the family) here. He was able to walk a few holes with me. And we’ve got another one on the way,” a beaming Fish told *Lake Tahoe News* when asked if the family support helps the game given Mulder’s family presence was strong last year. “This is a great family atmosphere.”

There must be something to that. Mulder’s children were seated in the front row of their father’s press conference.



2015 ACC champion Mark Mulder is in the hunt for the lead this year. Photo/Susan Wood

Whether it’s using family support, fans cheering or a mechanism to calm nerves, the sports celebrities try to pull out all the stops they can to win on the 18-hole course.

For Mulder, he told *Lake Tahoe News* during his press conference that he still trains in high altitude.

For hockey greats Mike Modano and Jeremy Roenick, it's a "bro-mance" of sorts since they played together Saturday, according to Modano. Both men had major compliments for each other, despite Roenick allegedly giving Modano a concussion when they played hockey against each other.

For ex-soap opera star Wagner – a crowd favorite over many years – it's knowing that in his competitive nature he can be grace under pressure when the bright sun hits him like the bright illumination of a studio light.

This could be especially put to the test Sunday when he, Modano and Mulder will need to fight off Fish. Fish and Mulder are lefties, even though Fish played tennis right-handed.

"We're all hitting the ball pretty well," Wagner said, while complimenting Fish. Fish places fourth last year. But at the end of the day, the actor made it clear he's been there before and plans to play for the title on Sunday.

Wagner characterized the competition as "eat or be eaten."

All the competitors appear to realize the big stage they're on, with Mulder telling *Lake Tahoe News* that he thinks "these are the biggest crowds ever seen at this tournament."



Record crowds have been descending upon Edgewood Tahoe for the 27th annual celebrity golf tournament. Photo/Susan Wood

The moments are priceless and lasting. Mulder shook his head when also telling *LTN* he was excited to see Heather LeMaster come out and make the record 336-yard drive this week. LeMaster is a long-drive golf pro.

"That's so impressive to see something like that," he said. "But that's what this event has come to."

Tickets sales are up 66 percent and concessions increased 40 percent from last year. Many of the "concessions" were cold alcoholic beverages to balance the near record heat on a beautiful picturesque Lake Tahoe day.

Some of the celebrities even stopped to partake in the beverages with fans hugging the ropes. Baseball pitcher Derek Lowe, who played on the Boston Red Sox World Series team, rushed up to get his own cup of vodka lemonade from a large group of Stockton fans.

When asked by *Lake Tahoe News* what he thought of David "Big Papi" Ortiz retiring this year, he said: "He shouldn't."

There were good spirits throughout the grounds.

Jordyn Bsharah of Reno was speechless when she got Green Bay Packer quarterback Aaron Rodgers to sign the Packers golf bag she bought at Edgewood.

“I bought it for him, but it’s really for me,” she said, turning to friend Patrick Mahoney, while jumping up and down.

The biggest fan draw was Curry, who seemed to prompt a cheer every time he drove or putt the ball. When the ball didn’t cooperate on the 12th, he acted like he wanted to elbow it in. The crowd erupted.

Backcountry trek all about Tahoe history

Nevada State Parks is putting on a ranger-led tour in the backcountry of Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park on Aug. 26.

Travel up Tunnel Creek Road and view the remains of the tunnel that took two flumes through the mountain, then hike out to the Bullwheel at the top of the historic Crystal Bay Railroad for talk about logging history.

The tour will begin at the Tunnel Creek Café parking lot in Incline Village at 8:45a. Four-wheel drive is necessary since the tour will follow an unpaved backcountry road. Let park staff know if you’re willing to take additional passengers.

There will also be some moderate hiking so come prepared with sturdy boots, sunscreen, lunch, drinks or snacks. Children over 8 years of age are welcome. The tour is free, but any donations to the park will be accepted..

Reservations are necessary; call 775.831.0494. The tour is from 9am-1:30pm.

Wagner leads ACC tourney after 1st round



Putting practice on July 21 helped Jack Wagner secure the lead after the first day of the ACC on July 22.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Jim Krajewski, Reno Gazette-Journal

STATELINE – The fast greens suited Jack Wagner just fine.

Wagner raced around the Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course and emerged on top after the first day of the American Century Championship on Friday.

Wagner, known for his short game, scored 27 points to lead Mike Modano by 3 points. Defending champion Mark Mulder scored 23 points Friday, Mardy Fish has 22 and Sterling Sharpe has 23 points.

Read the whole story