Wildflower hikes at Spooner Lake

Park rangers will lead four wildflower hikes around Spooner Lake this month.

Spooner Lake is home to more than 100 species of wildflowers. Participants will be taught plant names, uses, and habitats.

Group size is limited to 12 participants. Sign up by calling 775.749.5980 or email spooner.ranger@gmail.com.

Wear comfortable shoes and bring water. This is a leisurely one-mile hike.

Dates are June 9, 11, 23 and 25 at 10am. Spooner Lake State Park located just north of Highway 50 on Highway 28. The walks are free, but there is a $10 parking fee; Nevada residents receive a $2 discount.

Building a bridge over troublesome water



Tahoe Rim Trail volunteers prep the site for a bridge in Van Sickle Bi-State Park. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Five years after **Van Sickle Bi-State Park** opened, the main trail is getting a major upgrade.

A 26-foot long, 6-foot wide fiberglass composite bridge is being erected at the waterfall that is a little more than a mile up the trail from the parking lot.

The goal is provide access to more users of this 725-acre park – including equestrians, mountain bikers, small children, older people and those with some stability issues.

This is no easy undertaking. On Thursday about a dozen volunteers from the Tahoe Rim Trail Association were at the worksite. Horses were bringing in 80-pound sacks of cement. By the end of today more than 30 sacks will have been delivered.



Bonnie Fair and John McKenna work the hoist. Photo/Kathryn Reed

A grip hoist was rigged across the stream, with thick cables secured to trees. The cement bags were brought across the water this way – in the air – instead of carried by people. Mostly this had to do with ensuring it didn't get dropped in the water. That would be an environmental nightmare.

Safety for the people doing the work and for the land is of utmost importance.

Clay Grubb and Chris Strohm are the project leaders. Both are veteran trail builders with long histories tied to the South Shore.



Horses bring the sacks of cement to the worksite. Photo/Kathryn Reed

In surveying the site on June 2, Strohm described the location as dealing with two imperfect surfaces in a tight spot.

The stream crossing comes at a bend in the trail. As with most mountainous areas, it’s not flat or even. And working around any body of water in the basin means needing to adhere to strict guidelines to ensure nothing gets downstream that could negatively impact Lake Tahoe.

Rock being used for the project comes from the side of the hill. By the time everything is done the landscape will look as though the workers were never there.



Chris Binder creates a landing area to store the cement. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“We’re building a structure that will last 100 years or longer,” John McKenna, who was working the hoist, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

While horses were used for the cement, the men and women hauled the rest of the tools, including the 50-pound generator, up to the waterfall. Wheelbarrows were pushed up the slope with tools.

McKenna, who is 70, brought up 75 pounds of gear his first trip on June 1, 50 pounds the second.

Many of the men and women are in their 60s and 70s.

The youngster of the group was Chris Binder. He was also the only actual employee of the TRTA. He started with the group about a month ago as the director of trail operations, having come from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.



Clay Grubb, a former Marine officer, is a popular and well-regarded TRT leader. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“My involvement is fairly minimal,” Binder told *Lake Tahoe News*. This is because the logistics are done before the work begins. He praised the volunteers, realizing without them, this bridge and work on the 170-mile TRT wouldn’t get done.

The work actually started last fall with prepping the site, ordering the supplies and planning for the construction. Crews were back out in early May. The heavy lifting is this week. The bridge should be ready to be used in 10 days.

(The trail is still open while work is being done.)

Night of round robin doubles at ZCTC

Random partners are about to face-off against unknown opponents at the 2016 inaugural Hump Day tennis soiree.

This monthly round robin doubles at Zephyr Cove Tennis Club is for adults of all ability levels. It’s a light-hearted, casual night of tennis.

Play starts at 5:30pm on June 15. Cost is $10 for ZCTC members, $15 for non-members, and $5 for spectators (meal only). Membership is $80 for the year. First time members who signup that night get to play at this Hump Day for free. Membership information is available **online**.

Participants are encouraged to bring a side dish or dessert, as well as beverage of choice to complement what the chef will be barbecuing.

No advance sign-up is required.

Record high temps possible in Tahoe, Truckee



Afternoon winds on June 1 brought out kite surfers on the South Shore. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Keep the sunscreen handy, it's just going to get hotter.

Temps in the Lake Tahoe Basin are expected to stay above normal through Saturday.

"We are not going to be this hot the rest of the summer. We had all those cold low pressures moving inland. This time it stayed off the coast so the high pressure could build and strengthen," NWS meteorologist Mark Deutschendorf told *Lake Tahoe News*.

If record highs are going to be broken, it will mostly happen on Friday or Saturday, according to the National Weather Service in Reno.

Stats from the NWS:

· **June 3**

· South Lake Tahoe record high – 80, set in 1980

Forecast high – 81

· Tahoe City record high – 83, set in 1924

Forecast high – 77

· Truckee record high – 88, set in 1912

Forecast high – 86

· **June 4**

· South Lake Tahoe record high – 83, set in 2013

Forecast high – 81

· Tahoe City record high – 83, set in 1992

Forecast high – 79

· Truckee record high – 87, set in 2003

Forecast high – 89.

“There’s a little bit of a lake influence forecast for that side,” Deutschendorf said of the North Shore.

Temperatures will be trending lower starting Sunday, returning to normal for early June, which is right about 70 degrees for the basin.

There is a slight chance of late afternoon thunderstorms on Saturday and Sunday. The unstable conditions could last into Monday.

Students use pedal power to get to school



Students at Bijou Community School bike to school on June 1. Photo/Provided

Yes, there were more kids than usual on bikes today. And there will be on Thursday and Friday, too.



Bijou students met at the bike park at 8am and were at school 15 minutes later. Photo/Provided

Students in Lake Tahoe Tahoe Unified School District are participating in the Bike to School Challenge.

Kids are wearing school colors and biking together under the guidance of teachers and parents.

Changes to know at the 2016 World Series of Poker

By Case Keefer, Las Vegas Sun

Beware, those who are hoping to poker-star-gaze at the start of the World Series of Poker: The forecast inside the Rio ballrooms is cloudy.

The 47th annual event begins in earnest today, but unlike in past years, there’s no tournament clustering all of the biggest-name poker professionals for at least a few days. The WSOP is focusing on its more common clientele to start, with the $565 buy-in Casino Employee’s event in its traditional opening slot today but followed by the identically priced Colossus II Thursday.

Last year’s Colossus set a live-poker record for 22,374 entries. Recognizable pros will join the field, but they’ll be hard to spot among a galaxy of players over the next three days.

Read the whole story

Feds make it easier for kids to get outdoors

By Katie Arnold, Outside

As a kid, Sally Jewell spent a lot of time outside. Her parents took her to her first national park when she was 4 years old, and by age 15, she'd scaled Mount St. Helen's with a group of friends.

But the current Secretary of the Interior, now 60, isn't as interested in recounting her childhood adventures as she is in trying to ensure that all American kids have the same opportunity to get outdoors that she had. Her latest initiative seeks to help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds experience the wilderness. Her new Secretarial Order aims to do just that, by making it easier, faster, and less costly for youth organizations to obtain permits to explore public wild lands on overnight or multi-day trips.

Jewell has issued similar orders, like one from 2014—the year after President Obama appointed her to the post—that sought to expand recreational, education, volunteer, and career opportunities for kids and veterans on public lands by encouraging the DOI to work with business and nonprofits. The new order goes a step further by targeting a very specific demographic. All participants must be under 26 years old, and 70 percent of the group must meet one or more of the following criteria: live in foster homes, have limited English proficiency, have run away from home or are homeless, live with disabilities, are at risk of dropping out, or are former juvenile delinquents or at risk of delinquency.

Read the whole story

Used bikes refurbished for those in need

Truckee Police Department has partnered with Tahoe Forest Church’s Pedal Project. The nonprofit Pedal Project collects bikes in any condition, refurbishes and distributes them to those of any age in need.

Since the project began in early April, donations have been pouring in. People have been donating their unused or outgrown bikes. Volunteers have graciously donated their time and expertise repairing, cleaning, and restoring these recycled bikes. The Truckee Police Department has donated helmets for every bike.

To date, 40 bikes have been restored and distributed to various locations such as Truckee Elementary School, Truckee Family Resource Center of Truckee, Sierra High School, Grass Valley Foster Care System, Boys and Girls Club of Truckee and the homeless in our community.

For more info about Pedal Project, call 530.550.1516 or email mrcks04@yahoo.com, or drop any used, unneeded bikes at 10315 Hirschdale Road in Truckee.

Zero-turf yard beginning to bloom, look mature

By Kathryn Reed

Sweet woodruff is spreading, with tiny white flowers blooming. The yarrow is going nuts. The salvia is strong and the maple

is happy.

Those are the sentiments of **landscaper Brian Hirdman** about the plants in my yard.

“This is what I aim for every year,” Hirdman said as he surveyed the work he did last year.

The growth since last August has been phenomenal. The mounds shrunk a little, which was to be expected. Nothing died, though a couple items that were transplanted look a little sketchy. Hirdman bent them – soft, not brittle, as well scratched a bit of the bark to reveal green – meaning it’s alive even though it doesn’t look like it.

I went through South Tahoe Public Utility District’s **turf buyback program** last summer. I took out all of the grass and then had Hirdman work his magic.



Brian Hirdman talks about what to plant to fill in the herb garden. Photo/Kathryn Reed

He was like a proud dad walking through the front yard last

week. A smile never left his face. Looking at every plant, he marveled at the success.

“Your catmint exploded. You will have some beautiful purple flowers coming up soon,” Hirdman said.

The Shasta daises are taller than he would have expected this time of year.

As the snow was melting and things in the herb garden started to come to life, I would eat a little of the plant to determine if it stayed. There’s probably a more scientific method, but this worked.

I have a few holes to fill in because not everything is a perennial. Cilantro and basil for sure will be planted. Hirdman reminded me to plant those so they aren’t getting the intense sun.

The chives have already been prolific. The catnip has been a delight for my friends’ cats. The mint is doing well, I just haven’t done anything with it.

I’d like to think every year I’ll get morels in this spiral herb garden, but that is doubtful. I’m savoring the two I found in there.



Polemonium, the purple, and sweet woodruff, white, are already blooming. Photo/Kathryn Reed

While it’s still possible to get a late frost in Tahoe, any time after June 1 is usually OK to plant.

Something the herb garden didn’t have last year is salad greens, which Hirdman highly suggested. He even said tomatoes would do well in the hugel mound closest to the property line because of the amount of sun it gets.

“As for the irrigation, the way I tell if I need to turn it on is if I move the soil around, like dig an inch or 2 below the surface of your mounds. If it’s still wet, which it should be with the mulch that’s on the mounds, then I hold off turning on the irrigation,” Hirdman said. “If it’s looking dry, I turn it on. Also, the plants help me judge that too, cause I’ll pay attention to see if any of them begin to weep. If only a few weep, I’ll spot water until the majority of the garden needs water, then turn on all the irrigation.”

The whole point of the turf buyback is to use less water. Which I have. And I have a full rain barrel right now that will cover any spot watering I need before the sprinklers are turned on.

Keeping vehicles safe at trailheads

Whether you are taking a rafting trip on the Truckee, and leaving your car at one of our local river parks, or getting away from it all on a wilderness trail, remember that criminals are looking for opportunities. Leave nothing of value, or any visible trace of valuables, in the car when you're in the outdoors.

Bring an appropriate sized back pack or water proof container to carry essential belongings and leave non-essential valuables at home.

Here are other tips from the Washoe County Sheriff's Department:

- Lock the door when leaving the car.
- Don't leave valuables in the car. If valuables must be left in a vehicle, be sure to lock them in the trunk or glove compartment not under jackets or blankets behind the seat as that is one of the first places criminals look.
- Leave no trace. Don't leave any sign that there might be valuables hidden in a vehicle by leaving items such as docking stations or connector cables visible. Leave nothing in plain sight that might make the vehicle a target for thieves, not even loose coins or a CD.

- Be sure to set the car alarm or anti-theft devices. These are still effective deterrents against criminals who are looking for the easiest target.
- Keep windows completely closed.