Crews to conduct controlled burns in basin

Weather permitting, Nevada Division of State Lands, Nevada Division of Forestry and U.S. Forest Service may conduct prescribed fire operations beginning May 23.

Operations may take place near Incline Village in the Rocky Point area along Tunnel Creek Road. On the South Shore they may take place off Lake Tahoe Boulevard and Sawmill Road, off Panther Lane near the west end of Gardner Mountain and off Santa Claus Drive and West River Parkway near Christmas Valley.

To view a map with project locations and details, go **online**.

Residual smoke may be seen in locations where operations have taken place over the last several weeks.

Shining a light on Nevada’s dark skies



Great Basin National Park during the 2015 Astronomy Festival. Photo/Ryan Berendsen

By Tony Berendsen

I've often said Nevada has two great resources – rocks and stars. Anyone who has worked land in Nevada can attest to the abundance of rocks, and anyone that has strayed away from the meager city lights of most of Nevada has seen a multitude of stars in its night sky.

There is a great history of mining the rocks of our state. It's part of our culture and heritage. Nevada was built on the wealth of the ore rocks held for those who sought them. And all the time an unparalleled a wealth of stars and view into the cosmos lay above the land of Nevada receiving much less attention.

2016 heralds in a new era for our precious resource of star studded skies. Great Basin National Park has been designated a

DSP (Dark Sky Park) by the IDA (International Dark-Sky Association). The designation ensures the pristine darkness of the park will be preserved for visitors of the park to enjoy, and for the health and well being of the animals calling the park home.

The IDA, founded in 1988, works to educate the public about outdoor lighting that does not obscure our view of the stars, and with public and private entities to designate areas of land as dark sky preserves. Great Basin National Park is the most recent of 34 parks (25 in the U.S.) to become a DSP.

I talked to John Barentine, program manager for the IDA, about the status and development of GBNP as a DSP.

“Great Basin started their application effort some time before my arrival at IDA in late 2013. Their case is typical, in that it was a stop-and-start effort that moved ahead when staff and/or volunteers were available to work on it, and otherwise it went dormant for different lengths of time. It’s hard for parks to sustain the application effort, given the resources involved,” he said.

What level of designation did the park receive?

“Great Basin was certified as a gold-tier Dark Sky Park, indicating the highest level of natural darkness. To put that in context against our other designation tier levels (silver and bronze) Great Basin is certainly one of the darkest parks in our system, largely by virtue of its relative geographic isolation from big cities and the screening effect of topography that tends to block distant light sources like Las Vegas,” Barentine said.

What type of astronomy or star gazing programs should visitors to the park expect?

“The park is really exemplary in this respect, putting on over 100 programs a year that are specific to astronomy and/or dark

skies, including formal interpretive presentations, an annual Astronomy Festival each September, special events like full moon walks and meteor shower watch parties," Barentine said. "In addition to maintaining an active web and social media presence, they have also reached out to towns in the region to bring the park's night sky resource to the community. They really go above and beyond to uphold the adage that 'half the park is after dark' and offer visitors a significantly expanded experience that doesn't end at sunset and start at sunrise each day."

For more information about Nevada's new Dark Sky Park go to the Great Basin National Park's **website** or **International Dark-Sky Association**.

And of course, if you want to experience the DSP, take out your camping and hiking gear, binoculars, and telescope to spend a few days at the park. I guarantee you will not be disappointed.

Tony Berendsen, aka Tony the Star Guide, runs Tahoe Star Tours.

Tree removal could affect hikers on North Shore

Liberty Utilities this month will begin removing trees via helicopter on lands north of Highway 267 from Brockway Summit to Kings Beach for the 650 electrical line upgrade project.

Trees will be removed from U.S. Forest Service land and private property. Public access to the area will be limited during this time for safety reasons.

The Tahoe Rim Trail will not be closed during the project, but periodic access to the TRT by escort during the helicopter operations will be required where the trail crosses Highway 267 and the project area on the north side of Brockway Summit. Trails and forest roads may experience temporary restrictions and hazards may be present even when operations have ended for the day.

The 650 line runs from Truckee to Kings Beach, parallel to Highway 267 for much of the alignment. Within the Lake Tahoe Basin, the project is primarily located on lands managed by the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and on private lands. Construction of the new power line to replace and upgrade the existing power line will take place throughout the summer and fall after the timber removal is complete.

Fire safety on USFS land being stressed

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is expecting a busy Memorial Day weekend.

With its 6.3 million acres, the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is the largest national forest in the lower 48 states. Most forest recreation sites have opened for the season, with the remainder expected to open later in the summer as the snow in higher elevations melt. Visitors should also be aware that even if a recreation site is accessible, all amenities may not be available yet.

The Forest Service is asking equestrians to stay off higher elevation trails until conditions become dryer.

Despite snowy and muddy conditions at higher elevations, it is extremely dry at lower elevations. Forest officials are asking the public to be cautious with activities that could start a wildfire.

Despite recent rains, overall fire danger remains elevated due to extended drought.

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is encouraging visitors to follow several fire safety tips:

· Do not leave campfires unattended.

· Clear vegetation and dry debris down to bare soil within 10 feet around campfire.

· Be sure to completely put out campfires, leaving the site cold to the touch.

· Make sure lighting and heating devices are cool before refueling.

· Ensure cigarettes, cigars and tobacco pipes are fully extinguished when not in use.

· Use caution when operating vehicles in close proximity to vegetation.

· Spark arresting devices must be properly installed and maintained on all internal combustion engines.

Forest users also are reminded to avoid driving on snowy, wet or muddy roads. If an area is saturated, on or off-road vehicles will cause significant damage such as rutting, erosion, potholes and mud bogs.

Amgen bike race blows through South Shore



The women start the four-stage event May 19 at Heavenly Mountain Resort. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

By Susan Wood

In two whirlwind finishes Thursday, the Amgen Tour of California women's and men's bike races came down to a sprint at the end. San Francisco rider Megan Guarnier made her move over Sarah Storey and Latvian Toms Skujins barely beat Adam De Vos.

Lake Tahoe served up one of its usual weather-challenging days

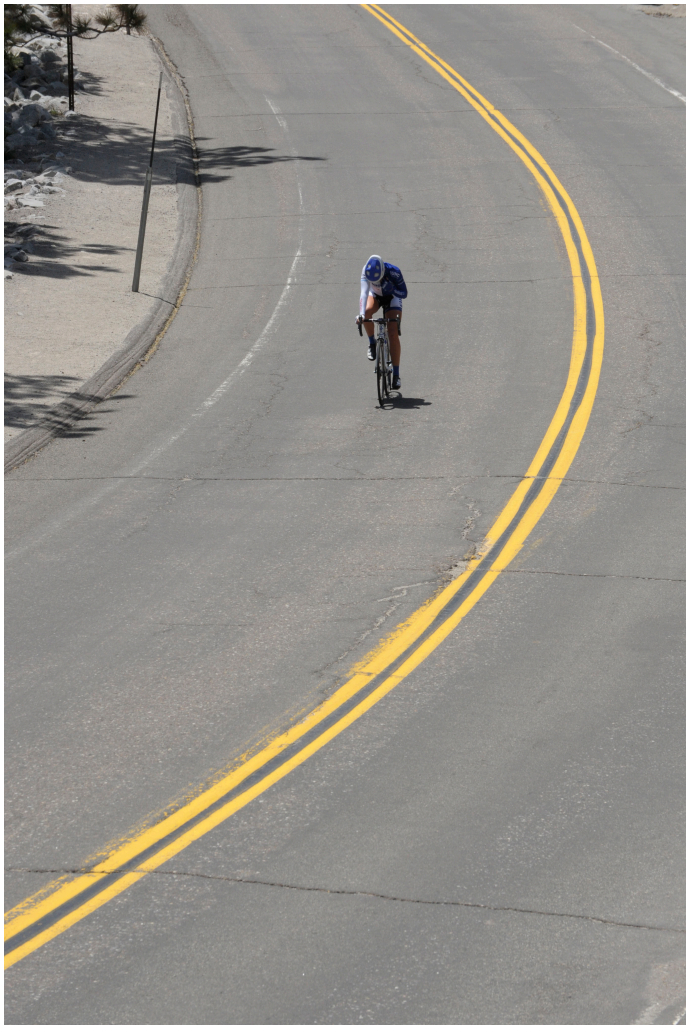
for the cyclists in this Tour de France-style ride. In 2011, the men's race got snowed out. This year, it was the wind taking center stage – with gusts up to 55 mph.



Women racers approach Emerald Bay area during the 2016 Amgen race. Photo Copyright 2016 Lisa J. Tolda

"We knew it would be windy. We're just glad it's not snowing," Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority Events Director Mike Frye told *Lake Tahoe News*. Executive Director Carol Chaplin agreed – and assured that professional riders know how to work through the elements.

The riders seemed to take it in stride and at times embraced it. Some mentioned relishing being able to use a tailwind.



A lone woman at the end of the pack rounds a curve near Eagle Falls. Photo Copyright 2016 Lisa J. Tolda

The enthusiastic announcer called the wind “brutal” and the women’s finish “a throw down in Lake Tahoe.”

“You won’t win it in 1K, but you could lose it if you go too big,” he yelled over the speakers as the women seesawed into position.

Guarnier gasped as she pulled over the finish.



Megan Guarnier is surrounded by her teammates after winning Stage 1. Photo/Kathryn Reed

In the middle of the women's race, Storey had a four-minute lead, then Guarnier decided to move in the last few kilometers. She came in at 3:04.57.

"It was a good finish. I got awesome support from my team," Guarnier told *Lake Tahoe News*, as she rolled to a stop in the parking lot.



A field of more than 100 riders line up for the May 19 start at Heavenly. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

She admitted the wind “did neutralize” the ride, but she also welcomed tailwind at times. However, it was not her biggest concern at the start.

“It’s my first time riding in Tahoe. It’s beautiful. I was just afraid of the altitude,” Guarnier said. The women rolled up and down Emerald Bay and Spooner Summit, while the men came over Carson and Luther passes.



Lucinda Brand of the Netherlands is used to wind in her home country. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

“It’s not hard climbing here. The hills are rolling,” Rabo LIV Women Cycling Team rider Lucinda Brand told *Lake Tahoe News* at the start line. She said the altitude would be a bigger factor for her because her hometown is flat. One thing that Rotterdam and Tahoe shared May 19 was wind. She said she was riding two days ago here in the wind, where it was everywhere instead of being a distinct head or tail wind.



Toms Skujins, Stage 5 winner, makes his way up Luther Pass on May 19. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

In the men's ride, Skujins took full advantage of the wind during this stage in the last five kilometers. He just wished he would have enjoyed the Tahoe scenery more. "I didn't have enough time," he said at the finish.

Skujins said "it wasn't easy," but his strategy in the last stretch worked.



The peloton makes the ascent up Luther Pass. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

“I didn’t want to start sprinting too early,” Skujins said at a press conference. He added that logically he couldn’t make his move in the pack because he’d endure “attack on attack” from challengers. He completed the stage in 5:54.45.

Frenchman Julian Alaphilippe is wearing the yellow jersey.

During the men’s race, the announcer said the leaders were stretched out from the pack in what might as well be “a different ZIP code.”

Renee De Vos almost missed her son cross the finish line less than two bicycle lengths behind the winner.

“As I was walking up the hill I found out he was in third place,” the British Columbia resident told *Lake Tahoe News*. De Vos came in second in Stage 5.



It is a tight race for women racers as they turn from Pioneer Trail onto Ski Run Boulevard. Photo Copyright Lisa J. Tolda

Several riders noted how they enjoyed the enthusiasm from hundreds gathered at Heavenly's California Lodge for the start and two finishes. In some instances, spectators numbered about five deep from the barriers to catch a glimpse of 300 top professional cyclists giving it their all.

South Shore enthusiasts rewarded the athletes with support along the route from Meyers to the ski resort. Cowbells were clanging hard and spectators were beating on the barricades at Heavenly. The noise was accompanied by the commentator who got the crowd geared up with his play-by-play assessment with an education in how altitude makes it more difficult for recovery.

Missy Hansen of Chicago and Karen Pollack of Delaware camped out on the Heavenly Tram loading area steps to see the two finishes.

"You don't have to be a cyclist to get into it," said Hansen, who thoroughly enjoyed her Amgen event.



The last of the pack climb Ski Run Boulevard. Photo Copyright Lisa J. Tolda

Her friend, Pollack, is a regular as a spectator on the professional cycling circuit, having witnessed two Tour de France rides. It was her second Amgen, and she talked Hansen into coming to Tahoe just for this event.

“Our whole trip was to follow this race,” said Pollack, who rides on occasion.

Hansen said she’s learned a lot from Pollack, who even knows what a neutral start is. It’s essentially a warm up until the

race director drops the flag, then “it’s game on,” she explained.

Pollack disagrees with some who call cycling boring to watch.

“It’s a fascinating sport,” she said, adding that it was a good idea to have the men and women finish in the same spot.



The women fly past Eagle Falls on May 19. Photo Copyright Lisa J. Tolda

The women did 72 miles around the lake to launch the UCI World Tour. The men completed the 130-mile route from Lodi, which made history for the Tour of California race with having its highest peak elevation of 8,600 feet.

“It’s so exciting. It’s pretty incredible, this route, because it’s so steep. And the wind was out of control,” Hilary Bailey said, standing near the finish line. She and husband Don make the race their vacation every year from their home in McMinnville, Ore.

Friday’s Tour of California race takes the men through Folsom before they hit the rolling, vineyard-lined hills of Sonoma County for Santa Rosa’s Stage 7. The women will have a time trial in Folsom for Stage 2.

Kathryn Reed contributed to this story.

No consensus on bike helmets

By Blair Anthony Robertson, Sacramento Bee

It seems like such a no-brainer. You get out your bike to go for a ride and you put on your helmet, a highly engineered and carefully scrutinized piece of equipment designed to protect you from serious brain injury, even death.

Helmets are lighter, more comfortable, more versatile and more stylish than ever. If you come out to watch the Amgen Tour of California this week, when the peloton of 100-plus riders will be speeding around the state, it goes without saying that all of the racers will be wearing helmets.

But helmet use at the recreational level does not enjoy that kind of consensus, something you’re bound to realize during May is Bike Month events, when thousands of local bike riders will be racking up close to 2 million miles commuting, touring, cruising, training and, in some cases, racing. For something that seems so obvious – helmets protect the brain in a fall or collision – it may surprise you that helmet use has been studied and studied again for decades.

Read the whole story

Elite cyclists ready to tame Tahoe’s roads



This is the second year South Lake Tahoe is hosting the women’s Tour of California. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – The National Weather Service in Reno has issued an advisory today for boats on Lake Tahoe. However, meteorologists aren’t warning cyclists about the gusts that may reach 50 mph.

Tahoe continues to present the Amgen Tour of California bike race officials and riders a challenge when it comes to weather. In 2011, the men’s race was snowed out; last year it was touch and go for the women. The good thing for today – no

precipitation is in the forecast.

This is the first U.S. event on the inaugural UCI world tour for the women. Eighteen teams with 108 riders will start and end at Heavenly's California Lodge today – with a ride around the lake in between.

The men finish their fifth stage this afternoon at the Cal Lodge.



Women's Stage 1
Heavenly California Lodge, South Lake Tahoe
Start: 10:50am
Estimated finish: 2pm
Men's Stage 5
Lodi to South Lake Tahoe (Cal Lodge)
Start: 9:45am
Estimated finish: 3:46pm
Lifestyle Festival
Cal Lodge
10am-4:30pm
Television coverage
Amgen Tour of California is live on NBC Sports Network.
Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

The women cyclists were introduced Wednesday night at a special reception at Harrah's Lake Tahoe. Many expressed an appreciation for what Amgen has done to bring the women's sport more prominence. Even in Europe, where road bike riding is much more of a spectator sport than in the United States, this particular race has been generating a buzz.

World, national and Amgen champs, along with Olympians will be racing. Kristin Armstrong, who won Olympic gold in 2008 and 2012 for the United States, is racing for Rally Cycling. Eight of the 10 Olympic hopefuls for the U.S. are here.

Evelyn Stevens with Roels Dolan's Cycling Team said she expects an all-round cyclist to win the women's four-stage race. Stevens earlier this year set the hour record, going 47.98 kilometers.

Canyon Sram Racing is hoping to defend its title.

Mara Abbott with the Wiggle High5 team has a reputation as a climber. She said, "There are medium sized climbs here." The hometown, obviously biased crowd seemed to disagree with her description.

Amgen to cause some road closures in Tahoe

The annual Amgen Tour of California bike race hits South Lake Tahoe on Thursday.

The women will start at Heavenly's California base lodge at 10:50am May 19, with an expected finish at the same location at 2pm. The men are expected to ride in about 3:45pm to the

Cal Lodge after coming from Lodi.

The women will ride around the lake. The men will come through Hope Valley, to Meyers, to Heavenly.

There will be what’s called a lifestyle festival at the base lodge throughout the day.

Expect rolling road closures as the riders go by a particular area.

Here are the expected times when the riders will be at various locations:

Women

10:50am – Leave Heavenly Cal Lodge

11am – Al Tahoe Boulevard-Highway 50

11:05am – Highways 50-89

11:11am – Camp Richardson

1:19pm – Spooner Summit

1:49pm – Highway 50-Lake Parkway

1:52pm Highway 50-Pioneer Trail

1:54pm – Pioneer Trail-Ski Run Boulevard

2pm – Finish at Heavenly

Men

10am – Start in Lodi

3:20pm – Highway 89-Cornelian Drive

3:27pm – Mandan Street-Pioneer Trail

3:42pm – Pioneer Trail-Ski Run Boulevard

3:45pm – Finish at Heavenly.

Night bike races to resume in Meyers

Tahoe Games Bike Night series returns May 27 at Lake Tahoe Golf Course in Meyers.

On Course Events plans to use lights, themed bridges and music throughout to transform the golf course into a family-friendly, cross country course that will challenge every rider. The course will be designed for ages 10 and older.

The event series will be the last Friday of the month through September.

Registration will open at 7pm, with races set to begin about 9pm. Races will be conducted in three heats. Awards and an after party in the clubhouse will follow the race.

Tahoe Little Leaguer makes triple play



Jean Patrick Datoc of South Lake Tahoe completes an unassisted triple play. Photos/John Gomez

This last weekend, the South Lake Tahoe AAA Little League had one of the rarest feats in baseball occur. More rare than a no hitter. More rare than a perfect game.

Little Leaguer Jean Patrick Datoc on the Colorado Rockies fielded not just a triple play, an unassisted triple play.

According to Wikipedia, "in baseball an unassisted triple play occurs when a defensive player makes all three outs by himself in one continuous play" without his teammates making any assists.

There have only been 15 such plays in Major League Baseball since 1909.

Datoc pulled his off by fielding a fly ball, tagging the second base runner heading to third, and then tagged third base before that runner could get back to third.

If your kids are interested in playing Little League, sign them up or get more information **online**. Cheryl Orr, president of South Lake Tahoe Little League, does an incredible job at keeping our league organized and informed during all this crazy weather causing delays and cancellations.

— John Gomez