Run to benefit Wildland Firefighter Foundation

Registration is open for the Northern Nevada Wildfire Awareness Half Marathon and 5K Trail Run in Reno.

The May 29 event is hosted by University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's Living With Fire Program in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management and Desert Sky Adventures. All proceeds from the race will be donated to the Wildland Firefighter Foundation.

The half marathon and 5K run start at 8am at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park, 1595 N. Sierra St. in Reno. The race is limited to 300 participants. Cost is $40 and includes a tech T-shirt, goodie bag, finisher's medal, snacks and refreshments. To register or for more information, go **online**.

Participants will run through some of Nevada's most infamous wildfire fuels, and there will be a variety of fire engines and displays of educational information.

The Wildland Firefighter Foundation is a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to fallen firefighters' families and to firefighters injured in the line of duty.

League needs volunteers for Snapshot Day

On May 14 the League to Save Lake Tahoe will organize the year's largest single-day, hands-on citizens science effort to capture a snapshot of the water quality health of South Shore

streams feeding into Lake Tahoe.

The League will host Snapshot Day on the South Shore with support from Lahontan Water Quality Control Board, South Tahoe Public Utility District, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Tahoe Resource Conservation District.

South Shore monitoring will complement efforts happening simultaneously throughout the Truckee River Watershed from its tributaries upstream of Lake Tahoe to its end at Pyramid Lake in Nevada.

All ages and experiences are welcome. No pets allowed. At the South Shore location, organizers will provide a light breakfast and lunch to all volunteers.

Gather at 9am at Lake Tahoe Community College. League staff and trained team leader volunteers will provide an overview for the day's activities. No prior experience is needed. Participants will then work in teams to head out into the field to test the water quality of their assigned streams and rivers all across the South Shore.

To volunteer, contact Savannah Rudroff at 530.541.5388 or protect@keeptahoeblue.org.

Nesting falcons force closure of Donner trails

To protect nesting peregrine falcons, certain climbing routes on Donner Summit's Black Wall are closed until mid-summer.

Each year, volunteers with the Truckee Donner Land Trust and Access Fund monitor Donner Summit climbing areas for nesting raptors. A peregrine falcon nest with chicks has been located at the recently conserved Black Wall climbing area.

Raptors are well known to nest in the area, and this year's nest at Black Wall is in the grotto at the base of Rambo Crack in Cannibal Gully.

Volunteers will monitor the nest and lift the closure when nesting activities have ceased for the year. The nest has two eggs, and the female was incubating, thus they may fledge by mid-July. The female appeared more high-strung than birds in recent years, and is possibly a new individual, according to officials.

The following routes are closed until further notice: Touch and Go, Hungover Hangover, Rat's Tooth, Empty Sky, Rhythm Killer, Pinball Junkie, Inner Recess, Rambo Crack, Space Invaders, and Bourbon Street.

Important to remember to be bear aware

By Carol Singleton

With an estimated 35,000 bears, California has a healthy and growing black bear population. In spring, hibernating bears emerge from their winter slumber and begin an almost perpetual search for food.

It is not uncommon for a black bear to consume up to 20,000 calories a day. Unfortunately, this search can sometimes lead bears into populated areas and conflicts with humans.

“A bear’s nose is seven times better than a hound dog’s, and it will lead a bear to anything that is edible or smelly,” said Marc Kenyon, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s human-wildlife conflict expert. “Bears can smell meat drippings on your barbecue, dog food on your porch and candy in your sleeping bag. So if you live near or visit bear habitat, for your safety and the well-being of the bear, always keep your food and trash properly secured.”

Once a bear finds an easy food source, it will return again and again to the same location, and if that food source is a neighborhood or campground, the consequences are not going to be pleasant. Not only can bears get sick from ingesting trash, they can also become dangerous as they begin to associate humans with food.

Bears that become habituated to human sources of food must be killed. Relocating habituated bears does not work. The bears ultimately return to the same neighborhood or another populated area and continue their bad habits – scavenging through trash cans, breaking into homes and even attacking domestic animals.

Although there have been no documented human fatalities from black bears in the state’s history, attacks have occurred. In order to keep bears in the wild and people safe, CDFW provides the following Bear Aware tips for people living in or visiting bear country:

For residents:

- Purchase and properly use a bear-proof garbage container.
- Wait to put trash out until the morning of collection day.

- Don’t leave trash, groceries or animal feed in your car.
- Keep garbage cans clean and deodorize them with bleach or ammonia.
- Keep barbecue grills clean and stored in a garage or shed when not in use.
- Avoid using birdfeeders.
- Don’t leave any scented products outside, including non-food items like suntan lotion and candles.
- Keep doors and windows closed and locked.
- Consider installing motion-detector alarms and/or electric fencing.
- Keep livestock in secure enclosures.
- Harvest fruit off trees as soon as it is ripe, and promptly collect fruit that falls.
- Securely block access to potential hibernation sites such as crawl spaces under decks and buildings.

For campers and hikers:

- Use bear-proof trash cans whenever possible or store your garbage in a secure location with your food.
- Store anything smelly including food, pet food and toiletries in bear-proof containers or in an airtight container in the trunk of your vehicle.
- Clean dishes and store food and garbage immediately after meals.
- Clean your barbecue grill after each use.
- Never keep food, toiletries or anything with a scent in your tent.
- Never intentionally feed bears in order to attract them for viewing.
- When hiking make noise to prevent surprising a bear. Clap, sing or talk loudly.
- Travel in a group if possible.
- Pay attention to the surroundings and watch for bear signs, such as tracks or claw or bite marks on trees.
- Keep dogs on a leash.

- If you see a bear, do not approach it. Make sure it has an escape route.
- If you encounter a bear in the wild, back away slowly. Do not run. Raise your arms to look larger and speak in a calm, loud voice. Do not turn your back.

Carol Singleton works for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Tahoe's threatened meadows get a lifeline

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

They're some of the best places in the Tahoe basin for wildlife habitat or a picnic.

But if the region's meadows are going to survive climate change and other threats they're going to need some human help.

That's why the U.S. Forest Service selected six meadows for a restoration project set to launch by summer of 2017.

Read the whole story

Nevada Parks to pile burn in

Tahoe basin

During the first two weeks of May, the Nevada Division of State Lands and the Nevada Division of Forestry will be conducting a 2-acre prescribed burn in the Lake Tahoe Basin in the Rocky Point area along Tunnel Creek Road.

The burn will be completed in a 24-hour operational period.

The burn is part of ongoing fuels treatment and forest restoration efforts being conducted by the Nevada Tahoe Resource Team in the Lake Tahoe area. The goal of the project is to create a healthier forest and to make the area more resistant to catastrophic wildfire.

Tunnel Creek Road from the Ponderosa to the Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park boundary may be closed temporarily in order to conduct the burn. Trail users can expect to see and smell smoke with reduced visibility, and encounter fire crews and fire equipment.

Wet winter a good thing for Truckee River kayakers

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

What a difference a year makes.

Thanks to an El Nino-fueled surge of snowfall in the Sierra Nevada the Truckee River is once again flowing strong through the whitewater park in downtown Reno.

Thanks to an El Nino-fueled surge of snowfall in the Sierra Nevada the Truckee River is once again flowing strong through the whitewater park in downtown Reno.

That means kayakers will return to competition at May 7-8 Reno River Festival, which includes freestyle, slalom and boatercross events. This year River Festival will also serve as the USA Freestyle National Championships, which will help attract top level competitors.

Read the whole story

Zephyr Cove stables to be modernized

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will begin the first stage of the Zephyr Cove stables upgrade project this week.

Existing facilities, trails and utilities will be upgraded to meet current building code and accessibility standards. Erosion control measures will be put in, too.

The first stage, which will last through mid-July, will include construction of stormwater infiltration basins, and a new driveway and parking area. Under an agreement with Douglas County, a bike path will be constructed from the stables to Warrior Way to improve pedestrian safety and

access. This will also decrease impacts to the meadow and Zephyr Creek.

The next step will be to replace the current buildings with one structure, which will include administrative office space, a ticket vending area, an enclosed storage area and public restrooms. Work on this phase of the project will likely begin at the end of summer or in early fall and is expected to be completed by the end of October, with some remaining work possible during summer 2017.

The stable will remain open during the regularly scheduled season, but there may be limited parking.

Recreation – the cornerstone of South Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Parks and recreation – it's the toy department of any municipality and South Lake Tahoe isn't any different.

It's all about fun and games for the public, and that spills over a bit for the local staff. Lauren Thomaselli, who runs the department, insists her staff work and play hard. The same went for her day leading the Citizens Academy.

In between learning about the inner workings of the department, academy members played pickleball, basketball, ping pong and spun hula hoops. These are all activities available at the rec center.

The academy is a free seven-week course designed to give residents a better understanding about how the city works as

well as an opportunity to ask questions of staff. (This reporter is part of the current class.)

Campground by the Lake and Bijou Golf Course are money makers for the city. (The golf course is slated to open May 16.) Last fiscal year the campground netted $388,000. It's bound to do even better in 2016-17 because this spring the council agreed to raise rates. The city has made incremental improvements to the grounds, like adding six tent cabins in 2011. The stumbling block is El Dorado County owns the land, so until the city and county have resolution regarding that parcel and the surrounding land, nothing major will take place.

Another recent change, though, to the campground is that online reservations are possible.



A slew of activities are available at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center. Photo/LTN

One of the main programs city staff oversees is the summer STAR camps for youth in grades K-5.

"The whole concept is no child left inside," Thomaselli said. She called the camps "authentic Tahoe recreation."

These camps are so popular that a waiting list is often

necessary.

A facility designed more for the tourist is Explore Tahoe near Heavenly Village. This visitors center has a wealth of information about Tahoe in terms of how it was created, the forest, the lake and history.

“The final message we promote is recreation with a conscious,” Thomaselli said of Explore Tahoe.

Aquatics at the swimming pool at the rec center is one of the core services the city provides. Every **fourth-grader** in Lake Tahoe Unified School District may participate in swim lessons during the school year. A variety of programs are offered year round. A bubble on the pool makes it more enjoyable in the winter. It comes off every May.

Thomaselli’s department is also responsible for some of what goes on at the senior center. This is coordinated with the county, which owns the building and provides services like meals and veterans’ care.

Special events such as Live at Lakeview are under the rec department’s purview.

The city and county developed a recreation master plan that is now being implemented. Douglas County simultaneously created a plan, too, using the same consultant. One thing to come out of that is a joint activity guide for the South Shore.

“It recognized recreation is our economy. So what should we be doing to deliver a better product?” Thomaselli said of the master plan.

A bigger picture item to come out of the master is potentially overhauling the recreation center. It was identified as a need for locals and tourists. It could mean razing what is there and starting from scratch, or renovating what exists. Ultimately that will be the City Council’s decision.

Funding to do so, though, is likely to be up to the voters. The city is contemplating raising the hotel and sales taxes to create a dedicated source of income for recreation.

Prescribed fires to be scattered about basin

Weather permitting, the U.S. Forest Service, Nevada Division of State Lands and Nevada Division of Forestry may conduct prescribed fire operations beginning May 2.

On the East Shore, operations may take place in the Rocky Point area near Tunnel Creek Road, Montreal Canyon near Spooner Summit and south of Glenbrook near Camp Galilee. On the South Shore, operations may take place near Lake Tahoe Boulevard and Sawmill Road, Panther Lane near South Tahoe High School, off Highway 89 near Spring Creek, and off Santa Claus Drive and West River Parkway near Christmas Valley.

To view a map with project locations and details, visit the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team **website**.

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