Cutthroats successfully reproducing in Truckee River



Federal agencies are trying to restore the Lahontan cutthroat trout to regional waters. Photo/USFWS

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Lahontan cutthroat trout are successfully reproducing in the lower Truckee River in what experts are calling a major milestone in efforts to restore the threatened fish.

A year after cutthroats spawned up the lower Truckee from Pyramid Lake for the first time in nearly 80 years, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has documented about 1,000 newly hatched baby cutthroats swimming in the river after a second spawn this spring. They suspect as many as 45,000 may have hatched in recent weeks.

“We were able to document successful reproduction,” said Lisa Heki, complex manager for the Lahontan National Fish Hatchery. “This is a wild reproductive event. The fish are doing it on their own once again.”

Read the whole story

Reno woman shines in international race



Daron and Shannon Rahlves at the end of the May 3 race. Photo/Balazs Gardi/Red Bull Content Pool

In the world's only global race with a synchronized starting line and no traditional finish line, more than 101,000 runners from around the world ran the second annual Wings for Life World Run on Sunday, a race which aims to find a cure for spinal cord injury.

In the end, the last male and female running globally were Ethiopian Lemawork Ketema in Austria and Yuuko Watanabe in Japan, who ran for 49.7 miles and 35 miles, respectively, before being reeled in by a "catcher car", an innovative moving finish line that pursued the runners from behind.

In Santa Clarita, runners Thibault Baronian (34.3 miles; 2014 France male winner) and Shannon Rahlves (29.6 miles; sister of 2010 Winter Olympic freestyle skier Daron Rahlves), and Sunrise, Fla., runners Svein Risa (34.1 miles; 2014 Norway male winner) and Nathalie Vasseur (32.4 miles; 2014 France

female winner) were the last running before being caught.

As top U.S. finishers, they will choose anywhere in the world to run in next year's Wings for Life World Run. In all, there were runs in 35 locations in 33 countries on six continents (all concurrent).

"This was an opportunity to support the Wings for Life Foundation and run on the team my brother Daron Rahlves put together," Shannon Rahlves, who lives in Reno, said in a statement. "I expected to run 15-18 miles, but once I knew the catcher car was getting close, I told myself, I've got to run!

Time to be aware of waking bears

By Carol Singleton

May is Be Bear Aware Month and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife reminds the public to act responsibly when in bear country. Spring is the time of year when California's black bears emerge from their winter dens in search of food. Because bears are attracted to anything edible or smelly, their search often leads them into campsites and residential neighborhoods, where trash and food is readily available.

There are an estimated 35,000 bears in California. Throughout spring and summer, CDFW receives many calls when bears break into homes, rummage through trash bins and raid campsites. These bears are often labeled "nuisance" bears, but in reality they are just doing what comes naturally to them, foraging for food.

“During this extreme drought, it is particularly important that people who visit or live near bear habitat keep their food and trash secure at all times,” said Jesse Garcia, CDFW’s Bear Program manager. “These dry conditions are forcing some bears to travel longer distances in search of food and water, and sometimes these forays lead them into populated areas where bear-human conflicts occur. Bears that become conditioned to human sources of food and lose their fear of people can be become dangerous and often must be killed in order to protect public safety.”

Tips for bear-proofing your home, rental or time share:

Bears have keen noses and can smell an easy meal from miles away. They can easily tear a front door off its hinges if they smell food left out on the kitchen counter. The best defense against bear break-ins is not to attract them to your property by following these tips:

- 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.
- Only provide bird feeders during November through March and make them inaccessible to bears.
- Don’t leave any scented products outside, even non-food items such as suntan lotion, insect repellent, soap or candles.
- Keep doors and windows closed and locked.
- Consider installing motion-detector alarms and/or electric fencing.
- 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.

Tips for bear-proofing a campsite:

No one wants to worry about housekeeping on a camping trip, but maintaining a clean campsite is the responsible and safe thing to do when visiting black bear country. Here are a few tips for bear-proofing your campsite:

- Use bear-proof garbage cans whenever possible or store your garbage in a secure location with your food.
- Store food (including pet food) and toiletries in bear-proof containers or in an airtight container in the trunk of your vehicle if bear lockers are not available.
- Clean dishes and store food and garbage immediately after meals.
- Clean your barbecue grill after each use.
- Never keep food or toiletries in your tent.
- Change out of clothes you cooked in before going to bed.

Facts about black bears:
There are two sub-species of American black bear in California: the northwestern black bear and the California black bear. They range in color from blonde to black, with cinnamon brown being the most common.

- There are an estimated 35,000 bears in California.
- Black bears will seek to avoid confrontation with humans. If encountered, always leave them an escape route.
- Males are much larger than females and can weigh up to 500 pounds, although average weight is about 300 pounds.
- Black bears can sprint up to 35 mph and they are strong swimmers and great tree climbers.
- A typical wild bear diet consists of berries, plants, nuts, roots, honey, honeycomb, insects, larvae, carrion and small mammals.

- As winter approaches, bears will forage for food up to 20 hours a day, storing enough fat to sustain them through hibernation. Bears often hibernate in large hollow trees 40 to 60 feet off the ground.
  Bears that are accustomed to people can become too bold and lose their fear of humans.

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

USFS thinning projects to resume this month

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will resume work on the Carnelian, Incline and South Shore Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration projects this month. These projects authorize thinning of trees and brush on National Forest System lands in the Lake Tahoe Basin to reduce the risk of severe wildfire and create healthier forests.

On the South Shore, hand thinning will take place near Angora Ridge, Twin Peaks, Fountain Place, Lower Echo Lake, Christmas Valley and Luther Pass. Mechanical cut-to-length thinning will take place near Pope Beach, 15th Street, Sawmill Pond, Spring Creek Tract and Christmas Valley. Mechanical whole tree removal will take place along Fallen Leaf Lake Road.

On the North Shore, hand thinning will take place near Kings Beach, north of Speckled Avenue and off Highway 431 near the Tyrolian Village in Incline Village. Mechanical cut-to-length thinning will take place on the east side of Highway 267 at the end of Beaver Street above Kings Beach. Whole tree removal

will take place in Cedar Flat, near Forest Road 74 (Old County Road) and on the north side of Highway 267, near Forest Road 16N52 (Gasline Road).

The Forest Service will post closure orders for mechanical work online.

In addition to short-term impacts to recreational access, major impacts from fuels reduction projects include changes to the appearance of basin forests. Treated areas look disturbed at first, but recover visually within a few years.

Regional trail advocates tout collaboration

By Kathryn Reed

RENO – Being on *Outside* magazine's top 10 list when it comes to trails. It's a goal trail advocates in the region are striving for.

More than 50 people – trail builders, land owners, nonprofits, government agencies, volunteers, contractors, sporting good store managers, users and others – attended an all-day summit last week at Bartley Ranch Regional Park to flush out how to be better at what they do. What they are doing is building trails and making a network that connects. This was the second annual Eastern Sierra/Tahoe Trails Summit.

"We want a regional trails plan from Markleeville to Plumas County. We want to have common trail standards," Cheryl Surface, with Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space, said.

Learning from one another, networking and finding common ground were some of the goals that were accomplished.

It was acknowledged that while trails can be an economic driver in terms of bringing in tourists, increasing property values and cutting down on health care expenses, those controlling the purse strings and issuing the permits are not always buying into those things.

While trails may bring money, they cost big bucks to build and maintain. That is why partnerships were stressed.

Garrett Villanueva, trail planning expert with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, and Clay Grubb, trail builder with the Tahoe Rim Trail Association, talked about their unique relationship.

“You need to establish relevancy with the agency,” Villanueva said. It’s not enough to identify a problem or have an idea. Have a solution or way to implement the idea is a must.

Grubb said, “If you can take on the maintenance, all of a sudden you are relevant.”

Every trail that gets built then must be maintained. That means someone’s budget has a new ongoing expense. The windstorms this last winter had crews contending with blow downs almost every place where trees grow. While volunteers can do some of the work, it is the landowner – usually a government agency – that at a minimum for legal reasons must oversee the work gets done.

More than one speaker talked of the need to find someone in the agency to be a champion for the cause. And once that person is identified, don’t go over their head, be appreciative and be patient. Government can work at glacial speed because there is a process.

Persistence is key, as is understanding the agency has

constraints that may not be obvious.

So often a trail crosses land that has multiple owners who don’t all have the same interests, time schedule or rules that must be followed.

“We as an agency get all the responsibility, but none of the credit,” Villanueva said. The nonprofit trail group usually is touted as the one that made everything come together.

Villanueva pointed out the lack of trail etiquette in the Lake Tahoe and surrounding area, especially compared to Colorado and Utah.

“We need to start behaving better. It’s about sharing the trail. We are all out there for the same reasons,” he said.

Grubb said as a trail builder it’s important to think of all the users and not just a group’s special interest. This means paying attention to site lines and passing points.

Michael Ward, a consultant with the Eastern Sierra Recreation Collaborative, spoke about how his group won over the Forest Service after receiving a chilly reception. The Inyo National Forest was working on its Forest Plan and Ward’s group only wanted to address recreation.

“Shared values” was the thrust of Ward’s group. It brought people together. He said having people participate in activities to bring their beliefs to the forefront instead of just talking at them or having advocates write comments helped spur collaboration and build consensus.

Dan Morris with the Carson Ranger District of the USFS said the problem he has is the demand for trails outweighs the opportunities. What allowed his office to build 50 miles of trails in the last five years are partnerships with groups.

Funding is his biggest challenge. Today there is no money for new trails.

“We have to get creative,” Morris said. This means the nonprofits are likely the ones to come up with the funding and the Forest Service provides the guidance.

Time alcohol consumption to not impact workouts

By Amanda MacMillan, Outside

You don’t have to give up drinking in moderation before a big race. That said, if you choose to drink, do so in amounts and at times that least impact your performance.

For athletes who enjoy alcohol in moderation, it’s hard to say how much of a difference, if any, they’ll notice by giving it up entirely.

That’s because not much has been studied on the long-term effects of moderate drinking versus teetotaling on performance.

“This is a very difficult and specific question,” says Matthew Barnes, a professor of sport and medicine, and a prominent researcher on alcohol and exercise at New Zealand’s Massey University. “Most alcohol research, including my own, has looked at acute responses to alcohol, either before or after exercise.”

In other words, we know that drinking in the hours prior to a workout is a bad idea—reduced coordination, for instance, can increase your injury risk. And we know that drinking immediately following a workout impairs recovery by interfering with muscles’ repair process. But in general, says

Barnes, the effects of alcohol in moderation – defined as one drink a day for women and two drinks a day for men – are less clear.

Read the whole story

Tahoe geology more than just granite

By Kathryn Reed

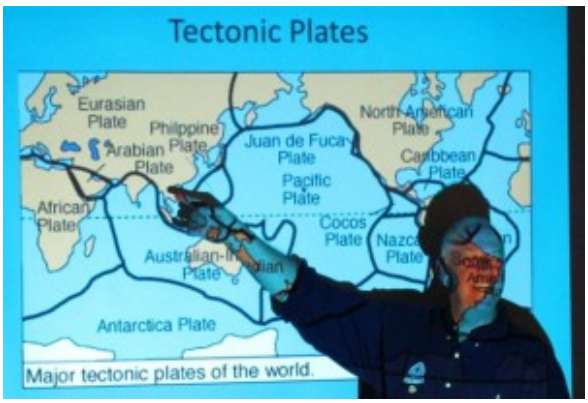
Volcanoes aren't usually something people associate with Lake Tahoe.

However, evidence of their existence is all around. It was volcanoes that plugged the valley to form the lake. Mount Watson, Mount Pluto, Cave Rock and Martis Peak are the major markers of the volcanic activity from millions of years ago.

Lava flow cut off the Truckee River drainage. Volcanic bombs are dispersed in various parts of the Lake Tahoe Basin. These rocks can be the size of a fist and as large as a Volkswagen.

Dave Schnake, local geologist and Tahoe Rim Trail Association board member, spoke about the various geologic formations in the basin to about 90 people last week at the South Lake Tahoe Library as part of the Friends of the Library programs.

"It's not something that happened. It is happening," Schnake said of the changing landscape.



Geologist Dave Schnake talks about rock formations in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Photo/Denise Haerr

Underground activity that finally reached the surface is in large part how the mountains came about.

“When magna reaches the surface you get a line of volcanoes,” Schnake said.

Nevada is full of mountains – having more mountain ranges in the United States than any state except Alaska.

About 70 million years ago this active volcanic activity subsided.

The rocks at Sand Harbor are other evidence of underground objects reaching the surface. Their roundness was formed under water and has nothing to do with wave action.

Most land movement is so minuscule that in a normal lifespan it is not noticeable. Geology tends to be measured in millions of years.

The Sierra Nevada is rising, but it’s hard to notice. Schnake said the biggest movement today is because of groundwater being drained from the San Joaquin Valley. This is pushing them up because it is taking weight off of the mountain range.

It takes something like the earthquake in Nepal to make

massive movement. Schnake said Kathmandu moved 10 feet.

Substantive knowledge about plate tectonics wasn’t known until the 1950s as submarines started mapping the ocean floor. Deep ocean drilling also brought forward more information. This led to better understanding of how the continents separated.

The Earth is always moving in some ways – some noticeable, some not.

Areas around Lake Tahoe have had plenty of changes through the years. A chunk of Slide Mountain slid off in 1983, with debris reaching Highway 395. The scar from the slide at Emerald Bay is still visible.

The McKinney Bay slide was more than 10,000 years ago. Schnake said it caused a wave more than 300 feet that sloshed back and forth for days.

ACC recognizing vets at annual golf tourney

Rodney Gorman, retired Army sergeant major, will join the American Century Championship field of golfers in July.

This is the second year the Stateline celebrity golf tournament has invited the winner of the George W. Bush Presidential Center’s Warrior Open.

Gorman is a Gulf War veteran who has also experienced multiple deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. He now trains Special Operations Forces for the Department of Defense. Now 49, Gorman received multiple injuries, most significantly his right forearm and hand where he took enemy fire.

At the Warrior Open, Gorman shot 145 in 36 holes over two days, and finished two strokes in front of Cpl. Chad Pfeifer Pfeifer, the three-time defending champion.

At this year's American Century Championship, Gorman will join Pfeifer, the retired Army corporal who lost his left leg to an IED explosion in Iraq in 2007. Pfeifer led the American Century Championship after the first round in his debut last summer and went on to finish fifth.

American Century Championship will once again offer complimentary tickets for all U.S. military when the event tees off July 14-19 at Edgewood Tahoe. For more info, go online.

Controlled burns to resume in basin

Weather permitting, the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit may conduct prescribed fire operations starting May 4 off Ski Run Boulevard near Heavenly and near Logan Creek Drive on the East Shore. Operations may last through the week as conditions allow.

Each operation follows a prescribed fire burn plan, which considers temperature, humidity, wind, moisture of the vegetation, and conditions for the dispersal of smoke.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size. The Forest Service updates the local fire information line at 530.543.2600, ext. 6.

California Chrome still a contender in horse races



Steve Coburn, right, with Joe Asher of William Hill Sportbook and Sharkey's owner Harold holder. Photo/LTN file

By Chris Murray, Reno Gazette-Journal

It's been a year since Steve and Carolyn Coburn experienced one of the greatest days of their lives.

You remember the Coburns. They're the couple from Topaz Lake, about 70 miles south of Reno, who used some wisdom, a lot of fortune and an unbending belief in California Chrome, the fairy-tale horse, to get within 1.5 lengths of winning the first Triple Crown in 36 years.

The whirlwind experience, which pushed the Coburns into the national spotlight and took them to New York, Hawaii and even Dubai, all began a year ago at Churchill Downs in the Kentucky Derby.

With the Derby crowning a new champion today, Coburn recalled

his crazy year.

“This year has gone by so fast,” Coburn said this week. “This year has literally flown by for me.”

Read the whole story