Winter to descend upon Lake Tahoe Basin

Winter is returning with a bit of a vengeance. A winter weather advisory is in effect for 24 hours beginning 5am Tuesday.

Expect 3 to 6 inches at lake level, with 6 to 12 inches above 7,000 feet.

The National Weather Service in Reno expects the worst driving conditions to be Tuesday morning. For up-to-date road conditions, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Running events to bring awareness to wildfire

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension is partnering with the Bureau of Land Management, Nevada State Parks and Desert Sky Adventures to put on the Wildfire Awareness Half Marathon and 5K Trail Run.

The May 9 event at Washoe Lake State Park will begin at 8am. Participants will run through some of Nevada's most infamous wildfire fuels such as big sagebrush, bitterbrush, cheatgrass and rabbitbrush.

The race is part of Nevada Wildfire Awareness Month, a collaborative effort by local, state and federal firefighting agencies, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and others. The event will promote this year's wildfire awareness message: Improve Your Odds – Prepare for Wildfire.

The event will also raise funds for the Wildland Firefighter Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to fallen firefighters' families and to firefighters injured in the line of duty. All proceeds from the $35 entry fee and donations collected during the event will be donated to the foundation. As part of the race event, there will be displays of educational information, fire engines and a visit from Smokey Bear.

To register for the race or for more information about Nevada Wildfire Awareness Month, go online.

Tahoe area OHV riders seek more access

By Kathryn Reed

Look outside – that's why the U.S. Forest Service doesn't open all trails in April – especially ones that allow motorized vehicles.

Last week a group of off-highway vehicle enthusiasts gathered at the South Lake Tahoe Forest Service office to talk about how best to maintain the roads, suggest ways for user groups to work together and offer ideas to the Forest Service. Users included four-wheelers, all terrain vehicle riders and dirt bikers.

One thing many advocated for was access when spring arrives even if the calendar says winter. But it was pointed out that the storm that arrived Sunday, which was in the forecast days in advance, was reason alone to limit access.

“Gates are closed for resource reasons,” Jacob Quinn with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit told *Lake Tahoe News*. This includes critters nesting, and other fauna and flora considerations that go beyond looking at whether the ground is dry.

Users said if the sand pits and Twin Peaks on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe were open now, it might curtail the illegal activity that is going in places like Upper Kingsbury Grade. People are going around the gate off Andria Drive.

“They are running it like crazy right now,” Frank Machler, USFS law enforcement officer, said. “They are there illegally. We are trying to get a handle on it.”

One person suggested a few boulders and better signage. Signs may come later in the summer.

Those in the room want to be stewards of the land, including helping with trail maintenance. Much like the mountain bike community in the past few years has partnered with the USFS, the same goes for the motorized recreation community.

The Forest Service has actively been applying for grants from California and Nevada entities with the goal of helping make improvements for off-roaders.

With the Forest Service unable to be on every trail, the feds welcome input from users about what they see so improvements or enforcement can be more immediate.

The users spoke about how they often take apart illegal campfire rings. Fire is a concern for them, whether it’s from illegal fires or their vehicles. Most who belong to organized

riding groups have spark arresters on their vehicles and carry fire extinguishers.

Vegetation will be abnormally dry this summer because of the lack of snow. Safety is an issue especially when it comes to those in the backcountry knowing about dangerous conditions – something like last fall's King Fire. Cell phone service is usually non-existent so the use of ham radios is often used.

Later this year the LTBMU will be revising the motor use map. Public comments will be solicited in the fall.

"That's our legal document for when we can open and close gates," Quinn said. "The idea is to improve accuracy. That is the point of the revision."

Forest Service employees suggested users pay attention this season to what improvements they would like so they can be brought up in the form of a comment down the road, with the goal of its being addressed with the revised document. This would be the time to ask for more regulated fire pits with the goal of fewer illegal ones being built.

Will men race women at the next Olympics?

By Peter Vigneron, Outside

According to a recent, rather cryptic Reuter's report, the International Olympic Committee is considering introducing mixed-gender competitions at the 2018 and 2020 Olympics. The three relevant sentences from the article:

> *Mixed-gender cycling events could form part of the 2020*

> *Tokyo Olympics if experiments prove successful, Brian Cookson, president of the sport's governing body, said on [March 17].*
>
> *With IOC president Thomas Bach pushing sports federations to improve gender equality, Cookson said trials would begin behind closed doors in Switzerland on Friday.*
>
> *Men and women could compete against each other in sports such as Alpine skiing and bobsleigh as soon as the Pyeongchang Winter Games in 2018.*

Notable, right? Women have been agitating to compete against men in golf, tennis, and skiing for years. One constant has been the resistance to those requests from the sports' governing bodies: Michelle Wei was allowed to compete in men's professional golf only after years of lobbying; Lindsey Vonn's request to ski against men in Lake Louise several years ago was essentially dismissed out of hand. And yet, here the International Olympic Committee seems to be floating the idea of mixed-gender competition without any pressure to speak of at all. What gives?

Read the whole story

Tahoe National Forest trails opening

As of April 1, many roads and trails are open for the season on the west side of the Tahoe National Forest. Most roads and trails on the east side of the forest will open April 24. Wet and snowy weather necessitates closure of some routes to prevent resource damage.

Most seasonal routes on the west side of the Tahoe National Forest, including the American River and Yuba River ranger districts, are open from April 1 to Dec. 31. Most seasonal routes on the east side of the forest, including the Sierraville and Truckee ranger districts, are open from April 24 to Dec. 31.

A complete list of roads and trails and closure dates or restrictions can be found on the Tahoe National Forest 2013 Motor Vehicle Use Maps. The maps are free and available at any Tahoe National Forest office, as well as online. Digital versions of the maps can also be downloaded to mobile devices through the Avenza PDF Map app.

Barton Foundation looking for golf players

Barton Foundation's 21st annual Tiki Tee Off Golf Tournament and Luau is May 22.

All proceeds support the Community Health Endowment.

It is at Lake Tahoe Golf Course in Meyers. Check-in and buffet brunch will start at noon. The shot gun scramble will tee off at 1:30pm.

Golfers play the scramble game in teams. Registration includes golf, buffet lunch, entertainment, games, and Luau dinner and dessert. Prizes will be awarded for cart decorating, team spirit, and the tournament winners.

Non-golfers and children may join the golfers for the family-friendly Hawaiian luau and awards ceremony at 6pm. New this

year, outdoors games and kid-friendly activities will be available. Children can also indulge in their own buffet.

Sign up by April 15 for the early bird price of $155. After that, the registration fee will go up to $175. Luau only tickets are $65 for adults and $15 for children. Buy tickets online.

TD Fire, USFS to pile burn next week

Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District and the U.S. Forest Service may continue prescribed fire operations beginning April 6, weather permitting.

Operations may take place in Blackwood Canyon between Tahoe City and Tahoma, on the south side of Meeks Bay, on Gardner Mountain near South Tahoe High School and off Gardner Street, in the Tahoe Keys, on Luther Pass near Grass Lake, at Ski Run Boulevard near Heavenly, on upper Kingsbury Grade and on the East Shore near Logan Creek Drive. Operations may last through the next several weeks 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.

Before conducting prescribed fire operations, agencies may post road signs around affected areas and make email or phone

notifications. The Forest Service updates the local fire information line at 530.543.2600, ext. 6.

SLT crews set to build bike park for summer use

By Kathryn Reed

By August cyclists may be cruising around Bijou Bike Park.

Bids are out for a professional park designer to be hired. The South Lake Tahoe City Council will likely award the contract in May to the person who will essentially be the construction manager.

It will be city crews doing most of the heavy lifting, with assistance from Bijou Bike Park Association volunteers and local contractors chipping in. It will take the better part of July to complete the park.

This is a change for the city. For the last 10 years most projects have been contracted out. Assistant Public Works Director Jim Marino is helping implement a new philosophy.

“We are trying to phase the street crews into doing more projects,” Marino told *Lake Tahoe News*. “There are talented operators with unique skills.”

Doing projects in house also saves money. The park, with two pump tracks and a BMX track in the center, will cost a little more than a half million dollars. The money is a mix of funds collected from the nonprofit cycling group, the city and in-kind work.

It will be built near the play area, down from the skate park and bordering the meadow. The future Greenway Bike Path will provide easy access to the park.

It will not impact the disc golf course. However, the par course will be eliminated at least temporarily. In future years the city is looking at replacing it with better, newer equipment around the perimeter of the bike park.

Because the city has access to dirt this has helped keep costs down. Marino said if soil had to be purchased, it would have made the bike park cost prohibitive.

About 800-cubic-yards are sitting at the park ready to be used as the base layer. This came from the Harrison Avenue project. El Dorado County will be able to supply about another 800-cubic-yards from a project it is doing this season. And the city will have access to dirt from this summer's Sierra Tract work.

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency requires a permit to move dirt, though there are fewer hurdles when it is moved within the basin.

Bike parks are a growing attraction throughout the United States.

"It's the perfect avenue to teach kids how to mountain bike," Marino said.

Youngsters – and others – usually don't like pedaling uphill. That leaves driving or taking a lift as the other options to get to the top in order to ride down. Bike parks eliminate the need to pedal uphill, but still provide the mountain bike experience.

All that dirt is needed to create the paths that have features on which to learn so riders can take those skills onto trails.

It's not just newbies who use these parks. Parks like this are

a way to practice, unwind and for friends to gather. So many mountain biking destinations – which Lake Tahoe is trying to become – have these parks.

Pros better prepared to recover from injury than weekend warriors

By Amanda MacMillan, Outdoors

Lindsey Vonn made history this year with her 64th World Cup win – the most ever for a female skier – after spending most of 2014 rehabbing a torn ACL. Even more remarkable: she had not one but two major knee surgeries in the past two years.

Many people who tear their ACLs are told it can take at least a full year, post-surgery, to get 100 percent of their strength and function back. For them, Vonn's return to the slopes, just 10 months after her second operation, may have seemed a bit hasty.

But compared to other professional athletes who've battled similar or equally devastating injuries, a recovery like Vonn's has become standard, if not leisurely. Take Adrian Peterson, who returned to football just nine months after his own ACL tear in 2012. Or Monster Energy snowboarder Iouri Podladtchikov, who won a bronze medal in Snowboard SuperPipe at last month's X Games just two months after having surgery for a fracture, torn ligament, and misplaced tendon in his ankle.

So what is it about the pros? Do they recover more quickly

because they’re better athletes, or because they get better care? According to John Xerogeanes, chief of sports medicine and professor of orthopedic surgery at Emory University Hospital, it’s usually a bit of both.

When an injury occurs – whether it’s a torn ligament or a broken bone – it’s the muscles and tendons around that injury that are so important for recovery after surgery, says Xerogeanes. And compared to amateur athletes, the pros almost always have an advantage there.

Read the whole story

Time for contractors to become BMP certified

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension will host best management practices workshops for contractors and landscape designers April 24 and April 29.

The full-day basic workshop will be from 8am-4:50pm April 24 at Sierra Nevada College, 999 Tahoe Blvd. in Incline Village, and the half-day refresher course will be 8am-noon April 29 at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, 128 Market St. in Stateline.

BMPs are land-management and landscaping practices that control erosion and encourage runoff from rooftops and pavement to infiltrate into the ground.

TRPA, Nevada Tahoe Conservation District, Resource Concepts Incorporated and North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District personnel will explain the basics of proper installation of

the practices around homes and small businesses.

Topics include:

- How to use TRPA’s online resources
- TRPA’s electronic approval process for Small BMP Retrofit Design
- Commercial and multi-family residential BMP permits and maintenance.

Attendance by at least one supervisor per business is required to get on the Service Providers List.

Early registration fees for the workshops are $25 for the basic workshop and $18 for the refresher course. These rates go up after April 8 and again at the door. Registration includes refreshments, workshop materials, Cooperative Extension’s Home Landscaping Guide for Lake Tahoe and Vicinity and the 2012 Natural Resources Conservation Service’s booklet of Standard Drawings of Residential Scale BMPs.

Register online. For more information, call 775.336.0244.