If it snows again, SLT ready to plow paths

South Lake Tahoe’s snow removal policy is to deploy snow plows when 3 inches of snow accumulates on roadways. Clearing of snow on roadways and city owned buildings and facilities is the primary purpose during a significant snow event.

This winter the city has launched a pilot program to include snow removal on class 1 bike paths as a secondary feature during a significant snow event.

Money from Measure R/S is available to contract snow removal services by Alpine Smith on the following paths:

· Both sides of Ski Run Boulevard.

· Eloise Avenue to Ponderosa Street (behind Motel 6).

· Harrison Avenue bike path to Lakeview Commons.

· Rubicon Trail to Tallac (behind Meek’s Lumber).

· Silver Dollar to Sussex Avenue (behind Fitness Evolution).

City staff will provide snow removal to the following Class 1 bike paths during a significant snow event when 3 inches of snow has fallen and after all roadways and city owned buildings and facilities have been cleared of snow.

· Al Tahoe Boulevard

· Campground by the Lake

· Lakeview Commons to Alta Mira

· Lyons Avenue

· Rufus Allen Boulevard

· Ski Run Bouleavard to Linear Park.

As a pilot program, the cost of providing these services will be evaluated by staff and it will determine if this is a feasible program that can be support in future fiscal years.

Wolverine thriving in Sierra

By Martin Griffith, AP

A wolverine appears to be thriving in the northern Sierra Nevada seven years after being confirmed as the first one in California since 1922, researchers said.

More than two dozen documented sightings of the solitary predator have occurred since it was first observed in March 2008 about 15 miles northwest of Truckee, said Chris Stermer, a biologist with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The same wolverine is believed to have been last detected in November by a motion-sensing camera in the Tahoe National Forest near Fordyce Lake, which is 15 miles southwest of where it was originally seen.

The male appears healthy with dense fur and ample weight, Stermer said, and has staked out a 300-square-mile swath of the Sierra between Interstate 80 and Highway 49 as its territory.

“I think it’s exciting,” he said. “It gives us some hope of bringing back some apex predators like that. It would be exciting to have wolverines back in the Sierra.”

Though its DNA has been linked to wolverines in Idaho’s Sawtooth Range, biologists are still unsure whether it wandered down to California or was released into the Sierra by

someone. Positive identification of the wolverine spotted Nov. 3 near Fordyce Lake is pending genetic testing by the U.S. Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station in Fort Collins, Colorado. Some of its fur was obtained for the test.

"Based on our history it's most likely going to be the same individual, but our hope is it's not," Stermer said. "Our hope is we have a pair here so they can mate … We're hoping that one animal turns into a population."

The odds are good over time that some wolverines will venture south to California from Idaho and the Cascades, he added. Once found throughout the Sierra and Rocky Mountains, wolverines were wiped out across most of the U.S. by the 1930s due to unregulated trapping and poisoning campaigns, said Bob Inman, a wolverine researcher with the Wildlife Conservation Society.

In the decades since, they largely have recovered in parts of the West, where 250 to 300 of the animals live, but not in other parts of their historical range. In the Lower 48, they live primarily in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and Washington. Larger populations persist in Alaska and Canada.

California has the habitat to support higher wolverine numbers, Stermer said, and his agency has discussed the possibility of reintroducing them to the state.

"They avoid residential areas and livestock. There's not a lot of controversy with having wolverines around," he said. "How many pairs can the habitat support? That's the question."

The rarely seen members of the weasel family have a reputation for ferocity and strength out of proportion to their size. Adults are about as big as medium-size dogs.

Guided snowshoes at Ehrman Mansion

California State Parks interpreters will be leading people on snowshoe treks on the West Shore this winter.

The events are Jan. 17, Feb. 14, March 21 and April 18 (if there is snow) – all starting at 11am.

They begin in front of the Ehrman Mansion. Rangers will talk about the natural environment that attracted Tahoe's earliest settlers and the history of the area.

Th snowshoe is free, though parking is $10. Participants must provide their own snowshoes.

Call 530.583.9911 to reserve a spot.

King Fire restoration plans to be discussed

The Eldorado National Forest is seeking comments as it prepare an environmental impact statement for the King Fire restoration project.

In order to be considered, comments must be submitted by Jan. 23.

An open house to discuss the project is on Jan. 13 at the Best

Western Plus Placerville Inn, 6850 Green Leaf Drive, Placerville from 6-8pm. A presentation on the proposed action will be followed by questions and answers with the planning team, and an opportunity to talk to specialists about specific aspects of the project including fuel reduction, tree salvage, reforestation, wildlife, watershed protection, and research.

The purpose of the King Fire restoration project is to maintain the ecological integrity of post fire habitat; reduce future fuel loadings in strategic areas important to fire control; increase resiliency of the vegetation in the project area to future fire; reduce risk from dead, falling tree hazards to people, structures and cultural resources; recover some of the economic value of dead trees to help pay for restoration activities and contribute to societal needs for wood products; take advantage of opportunities for research to increase knowledge regarding effects on the environment from large fires and post-fire tree removal; and protect watersheds by reducing sediment input to streams and large woody fuel accumulation in sensitive areas.

A complete description of the proposed action, including project maps can be found by going online.

Nev. to consider allowing betting on Olympics

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

In recent years, gamblers expecting to place wagers on the Olympic Games at Nevada sports books were in for a letdown: Per state law, they were prohibited from doing so.

The South Point is trying to change that.

Next Thursday, the state Gaming Control Board will hold a workshop in Las Vegas to consider a regulation change proposed by the South Point that would allow for wagering on sporting events sanctioned by the International Olympic Committee.

South Point executives also are asking the board to loosen some regulatory language that would make it easier for sports books to accept wagers on other types of events, too.

Nevada gaming regulations ban wagering on any noncollegiate amateur sport or athletic event. The South Point wants to alter that language to expressly permit Olympics betting.

Read the whole story

Skate skiing tests agility, balance, patience



Truckee High School Nordic ski team member Grace Bronstone, left, gives skate skiing pointers to Darla Sadler. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

TRUCKEE – Push, glide, glide. Or was it glide, pole, pole, glide, glide?

Without the instruction of Grace Bronstone, we were a little unsure exactly what to do. Still, we kept at it to the point where we were fluid with our maneuvers, albeit a bit unsteady at times.

Skate skiing looks like ballet on snow when done correctly. We were not the models to emulate.

Bronstone, who is a member of the Truckee High School Nordic team, effortlessly slid across the snow at Tahoe Donner Cross Country Center on Jan. 10 during National Trails Day. She and teammates were helping out the rookies – and collecting donations for the team. Her patience with us was wonderful, as was her enthusiasm to teach us something she is clearly proficient at. A combination of grace and power.



Dan Hill with Fischer skis explains how the base pattern affects performance.

When Dan Hill, the Fischer-Swix rep, asked what our goals were for the day, I said, “To ski like Olympians.” Why not set the bar high?

While cross country Olympians tend to be in their 30s, the three of us are past the prime age for beginning such an endeavor. But Hill didn’t give up on us.

After Bronstone imparted her words of wisdom, Hill came to check on us. Darla and I needed to raise our poles up, use more force as we planted them, and engage our core for more oomph.

These poles that already seem super long – they come to our lower lip – are now to be raised in front of us to get that added power. I conjured images of past Olympics, remembering how those men and women seemed to be so aggressive. This isn’t just a sport that engages the leg muscles. I give Hill credit for helping me to achieve my goal in a little way. I was at least envisioning Olympians even though my technique was severely lacking.

Hill said to be an Olympian we would have to excel at classic cross country and skate skiing. We’ll keep working on just being proficient at both.



The groomer could use more snow to move around.

“The goal of Winter Trails Day is to gain more lifetime skiers. For anyone who has been unsure about giving cross country skiing or snowshoeing a try, it’s a great way for participants to come out, ski and snowshoe for free, and get some free tips,” Ashley Quadros with Tahoe Donner told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Tahoe Donner and REI put on the Truckee event, with representation from the Tahoe Rim Trail, Sierra Avalanche Center and several equipment manufacturers.

While there were snowshoe demos and guided tours along some of the more than 100 kilometers of trails, Darla, Kim and I stuck to classic cross country and skate skis. We left having gained new skills, gathered a ton of information about Nordic ski equipment and an appreciation for the venue. A state-of-the-art center is under construction that should open this winter, which will complement the on-snow experience.

Jitloff 14th in GS on rough

course

By USSA

ADELBODEN, Switzerland – It was a warm day at the Audi FIS Ski World Cup in Adelboden, following a night of heavy rain. And even with the race crew working around the clock, the conditions were rough for the giant slalom. Fighting against the bumpy, salted course, Ted Ligety (Park City) took seventh and Tim Jitloff (Reno) 14. Austria's Marcel Hirscher took the win.

Hirscher of Austria grabbed his sixth victory this season, beating the field by more than a second. The Frenchman Alex Pinturault–with "Je Suis Charlie" written on his helmet – took second and Henrik Kristoffersen from Norway was third.

Although spectators could see many patches of green next to the course, the race did not meet the same fate as the simultaneously scheduled Bad Kleinkirchheim and the spectators turned out in droves. After a fun public bib draw the night before – in which the men entered the stage on a zipline – the men were excited for the race.

With a fifth place first run, Ligety was poised for the podium, but the bumpy conditions slowed him down on second run. Disappointed in the finish, he sits in second in the fight for the overall globe.

Jitloff had a great morning in Adelboden, finishing in 13 after the first run, but had a wild ride second run with plenty of bobbles on the tough snow. The run sat him in 14 place overall, leaving his quest for a top-10 GS finish for another day.

Brennan Rubie (Salt Lake City), Mark Engel (Truckee), Kieffer Christianson (Anchorage) and David Chodounsky (Crested Butte, Colo.) did not qualify for the second run.

Prescribed fires planned for much of Tahoe

Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, California State Parks, Nevada Division of Forestry and U.S. Forest Service will continue prescribed fire operations beginning Jan. 12.

Operations may take place near Tahoe City on Highway 28 between Rocky Ridge and Lake Forest, near Emerald Bay at Eagle Point Campground, the boat camp and behind Vikingsholm, Fallen Leaf Lake, Ski Run Boulevard near Heavenly, Kingsbury Grade near Buchanan Road and Lake Village, north of Spooner Summit, and Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park near Sand Harbor.

Operations will last through the next several weeks as conditions allow.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size. Agencies coordinate with state and local county air pollution control districts and monitors weather conditions closely prior to prescribed fire ignition. They wait for favorable conditions that will carry smoke up and out of the basin. Crews also conduct test burns before igniting a larger area, to verify how effectively fuels are consumed how smoke will travel.

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. To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Wandering wolf gets official pack status



OR-7, which briefly called California home, is no longer a lone wolf. Photo/Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

By Jeff Barnard, AP

GRANTS PASS, Ore. – Oregon's famous wandering wolf, OR-7, is now officially the leader of his own pack.

State and federal wildlife agencies said Wednesday they have designated OR-7, his mate and their pups the Rogue Pack, for their location in the Rogue River drainage in the Cascades east of Medford.

It's the first pack in western Oregon and the ninth in the state since wolves from Idaho started swimming the Snake River in the 1990s.

As a youngster, OR-7 left his pack in northeastern Oregon in September 2011 in search of a mate. He traveled thousands of

miles across Oregon and back and forth into Northern California before finding a mate last winter in the southern Cascades on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.

The GPS collar that tracked his travels is still working, but biologists hope to replace it this spring.

Efforts to trap OR-7, his mate or one of the pups to put a tracking collar on them were not successful last fall, said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist John Stephenson. They hope to have better luck this May, when the pack dens up for more pups.

Even if the GPS tracking collar fails, a separate unit on the collar that emits a radio signal that can be tracked by a directional antenna should continue working, Stephenson said.

Oregon could consider lifting state Endangered Species Act protections for wolves this year if biologists confirm that four or more packs produced pups that survived through the end of the year. The earliest a proposal could go before the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission is April, said spokeswoman Michelle Dennehy. Delisting would not mean an end to protections for wolves, but would give ranchers more options for dealing with wolves that attack livestock.

OR-7 has continued to stay out of trouble as far as livestock are concerned.

Oregon’s management plan calls for protections to continue for the Rogue Pack until there are four packs in western Oregon producing pups for three years running. Federal Endangered Species Act protection also remains in force in western Oregon and California.

Senior competitors being sought for Reno games

Registration is open for the 2015 Reno/Tahoe Senior Winter Games, which run Feb. 2-14.

Registration is $20 (there is an additional $10 per-sport fee) and includes a Senior Games T-shirt, water bottle, carry bag, and ticket to the Valentine’s Day Dinner and Dance. For a schedule of events, and information on how to register, go online.

Reno/Tahoe Senior Winter Games is organized by the Reno’s Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department and is for athletes 50 and older. The deadline to register is Jan. 23.

Senior Games includes more than a dozen sports and activities, such as ski/snowboard downhill racing, cross country skiing/snowshoeing, and hockey slapshot/ice skating for outdoor enthusiasts. There’s also pickleball, table tennis, bowling, archery, and Texas hold’em poker. New this year is the cribbage tournament.

For more information, call 775.657.460.