

USFS to pile burn on South Shore

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit could begin the fall/winter prescribed fire program next week.

The first operation may take place near South Tahoe High School on Oct. 14 or Oct. 15. Approximately 100 acres may be burned depending on weather and fuel conditions.

In the event that conditions are not suitable for burning near the high school, operations may take place on 15 acres in Christmas Valley.

Fall and winter bring cooler temperatures and precipitation, which favor prescribed burning.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size.

Before prescribed fire operations are conducted, Forest Service staff post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, send email notifications and update 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.

If OK'd, sports betting in

N.J. could dwarf Nev.

By Tim Dahlberg, AP

There's a brand new sports bar at Monmouth Park with televisions hanging from nearly every available rafter.

Mostly empty now except on racing weekends at the horse track little more than an hour from Manhattan, it may not stay empty long. Depending on how a judge rules, it could soon become the first fully functioning – and fully legal – sports book in the country outside of Nevada.

The William Hill Race and Sports Bar would become the William Hill Race and Sports Book. And that could be a game changer for anyone in New Jersey who likes to have a little action on their favorite team.

"We're built out and ready to go," said Joe Asher, who heads operations for betting giant William Hill U.S. "This is a very sizeable market."

Of that, there is little doubt. There's no shortage of sports fans in the New Jersey/New York area, and bookmakers believe they will line up from opening day on with fistfuls of cash to wager on games.

Asher says that if sports betting is allowed in New Jersey it could dwarf the \$3.6 billion that was wagered legally on sports last year in Nevada, opening up an entire new industry on the East Coast. It might even help rescue Atlantic City casinos that are struggling to attract customers in the wake of casino expansion around the country.

New Jersey residents want it, voting overwhelmingly in 2011 to permit sports betting at race tracks and casinos. Gov. Chris Christie signed a bill into law approving sports betting, only to see it derailed in court because it conflicts with federal

law.

But now the issue is back before a federal judge, and all bets are off. An end-run around the federal prohibition of sports betting in all but four states is once again in play.

And the sharp guys from Vegas are poised, ready to jump in when they get the word.

"I believe the New Jersey market once fully up and going would be at least three times the Nevada market," Asher said. "This is an area with some of the most storied franchises in American sports where billions of dollars are already bet on sports illegally."

Unfortunately for would-be bettors, not everyone is enamored with the idea of sports betting. They're stuck in the past, still believing that betting on sports draws undesirables and is somehow a threat to the integrity of the games themselves. They don't understand that it's a lot easier to monitor betting trends in legal books than with an illegal bookmaker operating out of a corner bar.

There are some signs that even that may be changing. Daily fantasy sports wagering is exploding online thanks to a loophole in the federal law, and looks very similar to sports betting.

The NFL, meanwhile, holds games every year in London where there are betting parlors on every block offering a line on the action. And last month NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said at a business conference that he was not opposed to the idea of sports betting and expected his league to participate in it at some point

"Obviously we read with great interest Commissioner Silver's comments," said Asher, whose company runs more than 100 locations in Nevada and 2,400 shops in the United Kingdom. "I hope that signals a re-evaluation of what is obviously a

mindset that does not comport with 21st Century reality.”

For now, though, the NBA and the other major sports leagues are lining up against betting in New Jersey. Lawyers for the four leagues and the NCAA will argue Oct. 31 before U.S. District Judge Michael Shipp that the injunction he issued last year upholding the ban should stay in place despite Christie’s announcement that the state would not be involved in regulating the betting.

Should the door open in New Jersey, though, other states will surely follow, much the way they did when Atlantic City became the first place outside of Las Vegas to legalize casino gambling. The online market could explode, much like it is in Nevada where 36 percent of William Hill’s handle comes through bets on its mobile app.

Right now all they’re selling at the sports bar at Monmouth are food and drinks. Betting is limited to the expected finishing position of the horses on the track.

It might not be long, though, before you can order an NFL three-teamer to go with that trifecta on the ponies.

Tahoe National Forest to discuss roads

Tahoe National Forest will host two public open houses in October to discuss the forest roads system and look at the relationship between roads and various resource impacts.

The open houses are part of engaging the public in Subpart A of the U.S. Forest Service’s 2005 Travel Management Rule.

Subpart A is an analysis of the forest's road system.

Open houses are:

Oct. 22 4-7pm – Sierraville District Ranger Station, 317 South Lincoln St., Sierraville.

Oct. 28 4-7pm – Tahoe National Forest Office, 631 Coyote St., Nevada City.

Resource specialists have gathered data and developed maps, which will be shared at the open houses.

For more information on Subpart A and the Tahoe National Forest's Travel Analysis, go online.

Colorado resort sues over Salt Lake ski marketing

By Lindsay Whitehurst, AP

SALT LAKE CITY – A Colorado ski resort says Salt Lake City can't market itself as Ski City USA because the winter sports slogan is too similar to their decades-old nickname for Steamboat Springs.

Steamboat Ski Resort is suing Utah tourism officials, claiming a \$1.8 million campaign designed to lure tourists from Colorado violates their Ski Town, U.S.A. trademark.

"They're trying to leverage the value we worked hard to create for their own commercial benefit," resort spokesman Rob Perlman said.

Visit Salt Lake, the tourism-promotion group that created the

campaign, declined to comment on the suit Wednesday, communications director Shawn Stinson said.

The package of online and print ads emblazoned with the new Ski City logo was announced last month in a press conference that drew local elected officials as well as tourism authorities and ski resort executives.

The name is designed to tout the Salt Lake area's restaurants, bars and night life a short drive from four resorts: Alta Ski Area, Brighton Resort, Snowbird Ski Resort and Solitude Mountain Resort.

The trademark infringement suit filed in Denver by the Steamboat Ski Resort and Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club names those four Utah resorts and Visit Salt Lake.

The lawsuit asks a federal judge to stop Salt Lake from using the Ski City brand and seeks unspecified damages and any profits they make from the name.

No hearings have been scheduled in the case.

In September, Visit Salt Lake President Scott Beck said the new campaign is absolutely aimed at luring skiers away from Colorado, which annually registers about three times more skier visits than Utah, according to figures from the National Ski Area Association. Last season, Utah had 4.1 million day visits from skiers and snowboarders – compared to 12.6 million in Colorado.

Vicki Varela, managing director of the Utah Office of Tourism, said her office's research has shown that more than half of people who are shown a picture of Salt Lake City's skyline with the mountains behind it think it is Denver.

The campaign "gives us the story that we deserve to have on the national stage," Varela said last month.

The Ski City marketing is paid for by the private nonprofit

Visit Salt Lake, which gets its revenue from a tax visitors pay when they stay at hotels. It isn't meant to replace the long-running statewide slogan, "The Greatest Snow on Earth," which is on Utah license plates and used throughout promotional materials.

The ads don't include three resorts near Park City, Utah, which are also a short drive from Salt Lake City. Colorado-based ski industry titan Vail Resorts Inc. last month purchased Park City Mountain Resort in a move that put an end to a legal battle between the two companies. It also paved the way for the creation of what could be the country's largest resort because Vail also operates the adjacent Canyons ski area.

Beck said the campaign wasn't a response to Vail's expansion in the market or an attempt to draw skiers from other Utah resorts.

Prescribed burns planned for Tunnel Creek

The Nevada Division of Forestry will be conducting prescribed burns at Tunnel Creek in the Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park backcountry this month and in November, weather permitting.

Tunnel Creek Road from Highway 28 to Tunnel Creek Station may be closed in order to conduct the burns. Signs will be posted throughout the area when burns are being conducted. Thirty-five acres will be burned in six treatment units.

The burns are 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.

For more information, contact the Nevada Division of Forestry at 775.684.2500.

Vail is not the enemy

By Derek Taylor, Outside

When it comes time to throw stones in the ski world, there's no easier target than Vail. A \$3 billion-plus publicly traded company, Vail is an easy target because it's a big target. Taking it down verbally is a rite of passage in many mountain communities. Just as a generation of Red Sox fans can't mention Bucky Dent without giving him a middle name that starts with F, many denizens of ski towns across the nation find it impossible to say the word Vail without immediately following it with "sucks."

Vail, there is no doubt, brings much of this on itself. Look no further than the recent diarrhea storm it recently created when it purchased Utah's Park City Mountain Resort after the ski area inexplicably failed to renew the terms of its lease. Even setting aside that it was Canadian real estate developer Talisker, not Vail, that originally evicted PCMR, or that it was neither Talisker's nor Vail's responsibility to remind PCMR that its sweetheart lease was about to expire, the strong-arm tactics Vail employed in acquiring its nearest competitor for just slightly more than Randolph Hearst's former Beverly Hills home were decidedly "un-bro" and left many people with a bitter taste. When Outside first reported that Vail acquired PCMR, the comment section of our Facebook

wall overflowed with vitriol directed at Vail.

But before you grab a torch and join the lynch mob, I have something to tell you. Vail is not your enemy. Don't get me wrong, I've done more than my fair share of Vail bashing. I used to live in a town (Crested Butte) that sold "Vail Sucks" shirts in most storefronts. And if I were to compile a list my favorite ski resorts, there might –might – be one from the Vail Resorts portfolio on the list. But when it comes time to spew venom, there's something else to remember. Unlike many entities that storm in and adversely affect our little mountain utopias (Talisker?), Vail is a ski company.

Not only is Vail a ski company, it is a successful ski company. The 11 areas the company runs survive. They attract people. They create skiers. At a time when the buzz in the long-struggling ski industry is about increasing the size of the pie rather than fighting over the pieces, Vail is actually doing that.

Read the whole story

TAMBA hosting 2 fun rides in October

TAMBA is putting on two fun rides this month.

The first is Oct. 12 in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service for the grand opening celebration and showcase ride on the new Monument Pass Trail above Cold Creek and High Meadow.

USFS employees and trail builders will be on the ride.

Meet at 9am at Bijou Community Park. Cyclists will ride from there on a big “lollipop” loop up to high Meadow and Star Lake and then end with a barbecue at the park.

Oct. 18 is the Corral Night Ride. Hearty souls will stage a night ride with Halloween revelry. Riders dressed as ghouls, disco freaks, and other random weirdness are all ready to ride mountain bikes in the dark.

Meet at the Corral parking area at 5:30pm.

For more info about either ride, go online.

TRCD working to remove milfoil from river

The Tahoe Resource Conservation District is pioneering a project on the Truckee River to control the aquatic invasive plant, Eurasian watermilfoil, which has been growing prolifically since the late 1990s.

Eurasian watermilfoil is a nonnative aquatic plant that can spread easily between water bodies by plant fragments adhering to boats, trailers and other recreational and angling equipment. Eurasian watermilfoil likely entered the Truckee River following the overflow of the dam in 1997 and has been more prolific in the last five to seven years.

For this project only diver assisted hand removal will be used. Permitting constraints and river flows are contributing factors to this decision.

Funding for this project has been provided by the Community Foundation of Western Nevada/Truckee River Fund, California

Department of Parks and Recreation and the Tahoe Fund.

For more info, contact Nicole Cartwright at ncartwright@tahoercd.org.

Time to plant sugar pines in Tahoe

The Sugar Pine Foundation is starting its planting season this weekend.

The foundation will provide seedlings, shovels and gloves. Volunteers should dress in layers with closed toe shoes and bring plenty of water.

Community planting schedule:

Oct. 11, 11am-1pm – Rubicon McKinney planting at 6445 Chamberland Drive, Tahoe

Oct. 18, 10am-noon – Kingsbury Middle School planting at 1900 Echo Court, Glenbrook

Oct. 19, 10am-noon – Zephyr Cove Park planting at 240 Warrior Way, Zephyr Cove.

For more info, call Maria at 650.814.9565.

Skydiving Squaw CEO cheats death

By Andy Wirth, Outside

I came to Squaw Valley in August 2010 to be president and CEO of Squaw Valley Ski Holdings and quickly befriended mountain athlete J.T. Holmes. J.T. is predominantly known for BASE jumping, wingsuiting, and big mountain skiing, but when we skied together, I'd tell him how I really wanted to get into skydiving.



Andy Wirth has given up skydiving. Photo/LTN file

In spring 2011, he hooked me up with Red Bull athlete Sean McCormick, who helped me certify to jump, and we saw to that in Perris, California. From the very first time I did it, I was in love with it. I've rapelled big faces and skied some big and hairy lines, but nothing felt like this.

We would jump as often as my schedule allowed, which frequently felt like not enough, as many addictions go. There were days when we would jump from first load to sundown, getting as many jumps as possible. On those days when we were really getting after it, we'd get seven jumps in. I got comfortable enough to do some pretty cool things out of the

plane and in the air, like four-way inverted exits—where we'd grab each other and exit facing one another—and delta tracking, where you put your hands by your sides, straighten your legs, and fly like a dart, sometimes in formation with other jumpers.

On Oct. 12, 2013, J.T., some friends, and I went to Davis to jump. We had a great, full day of jumping. On Sunday the 13th, the Davis drop zone was shut down due to winds, so we drove over to a drop zone in Lodi. It was windy, but they were still flying. I'd jumped there before, so I knew this drop zone pretty well. We went up, played in freefall, and delta tracked.

But then a few things went wrong. The pilot flew a bad flight line, so we were too far away from the drop zone, and we exited last, taking us even farther from the drop zone. I pulled my canopy too low at 2,500 feet AGL (above ground level). Normally I'd pull the canopy at 4,000 feet AGL. Unknown to all of us, the winds had changed since takeoff, so I had a headwind going into the drop zone instead of a tailwind.

I realized I wasn't going to make the drop zone, and I didn't have any good landing options: power lines on three sides and a vineyard on the other. I decided to land in the vineyard rather than try to make it over or under the power lines. I lined up parallel with the rows of the vines, but just as I was coming in and flared my canopy to slow down and land, a small crosswind forced me to my right.

I caught a pole with my right arm. The pole tore off my arm and stripped all the tissue from my shoulder down to mid-forearm. When I looked down, I knew I was in a rough spot. My brachial artery, which runs from your shoulder to your forearm, was bleeding out. Within a short period of time, I had lost a substantial amount of blood.

Read the whole story