Wind makes scenic Echo Lake a challenge



Tom and Pam kayak toward the channel at at Echo Lakes. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Paddling is always a good upper body workout. Paddling against the wind with white caps is definitely going to require some therapy afterward. Such was the case for the four of us on the Sunday of Labor Day weekend.

Wind wasn't an issue when we left the house, so it came as a surprise when we got to Echo Lake. But we didn't let it deter us.

While it was near impossible to find a parking spot, all those vehicles must have belonged to either hikers/backpackers or cabin owners, because the lake was relatively boat free. The shuttle boat was the main vessel on Lower Echo Lake.



The channel separating the lakes.

Before we even got on the water our canoe and kayaks had to be inspected. Clean-drain-dry is the motto here and throughout the region so aquatic invasive species are not transported from one body of water to the other. Echo Lakes doesn’t want the two types of milfoil or the Asian clams that Lake Tahoe has.

It was my intent to take Pam and Tom to both lakes, but the wind changed those plans. It was so gusty at times that we weren’t making forward progress. AJ didn’t seem fazed though as she lay in the middle of the canoe while Sue and I dug in as hard as we could when the gusts came up.

Still, we took plenty of opportunities to enjoy the towering granite to one side, and the fir and pine-lined shore on the other. Much of the shoreline is rugged, so there are limited opportunities to stop.

Near the end of the lake and on both sides are modest summer cabins on U.S. Forest Service land. They are only accessible by boat.



Sue at the helm of the canoe.

At the channel leading from Lower to Upper Echo Lake we paused for snacks and a chance to rest and stretch our legs. An expansive granite beach of sorts is at the entrance, which made for an ideal break area.

Upper Lake is the smaller of the two. A few islands are on it. No waterskiing is allowed there, so it can be more peaceful.

We meandered through the shallow, windy connector to the upper lake just to say we did it. We were all too tired to do anything more than paddle back to the boat ramp.

We thought we would have a tailwind, but instead we were being pushed into the center of the lake. It was a challenge in both directions. Fortunately, the store was open so we could reward ourselves with ice cream. Adult beverages in the hot tub were next. By that time the paddle didn’t seem so bad.



AJ and Britton had it easy.

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Getting there: From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 west. A short distance after cresting Echo Summit, turn right on Johnson Pass Road. Stay to the left. The narrow road leads to the water.

Notes:

• The store is open Memorial Day to Labor Day.

• During that time it costs $5 to launch a human powered vessel.

Public agencies working to reduce fire risk



Public lands in Meyers to be cleaned up. Photo/Provided

The U.S. Forest Service is giving Lake Valley Fire Protection District a $26,000 grant to reduce wildfire risk in Meyers.

Lake Valley personnel will clear brush and hazard trees on a 6.5 acres owned by California Tahoe Conservancy across from the Tahoe Pines Campground.

The U.S. Forest Service Non-Federal Lands Grants support fuel reduction work on parcels adjacent to Forest Service land that has been or will be treated. The same contractor, CTL Forest Management, will be working on the Conservancy property and adjacent Forest Service land.

The project, which should be finished this month, will remove many of the lodgepole pines felled by a prior flood. CTL Forest Management will thin overgrown trees on the adjacent Forest Service properties as part of the South Shore Fuel Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration project.

Golf tourney benefits Squaw

Valley Institute

The third annual Local SVI Celebrity Golf Tournament is Sept. 22.

This year's tournament will be hosted by Uncle E of the X Games. Celebrity guests include Olympians Jonny Mosely, Nate Holland, Tamara McKinney, ski legends like Tanner Hall, Kevin Andrews, The Engerbretsons, Scott Gaffney and Eric Deslauriers Red Bull air force members, local politicians and leading educators such as Rob Leri of Tahoe Truckee Unified School District.

Prizes will be awarded to the top three teams. Mulligans will be available for purchase just in case. There will also be contests for closest to the pin and the longest drive as well as for any holes in one. Some of the sponsors will be holding their own fun contests at their sponsored holes.

The entry fee is $125 per person or $400 for a foursome. Money goes toward programs that Squaw Valley Institute has been bringing to North Lake Tahoe.

Go online to register.

Despite drought, ski gear-clothing sales rise

By Hugo Martin, Los Angeles Times

While California suffered through the driest winter on record,

ski gear and winter clothing sales rose nationwide last season thanks to frigid temperatures in other parts of the country, according to an industry trade report.

Businesses that sell snow gear and winter apparel reported $3.6 billion in sales in the 2013-14 ski season, up 7 percent over the previous season, according to an annual report by the Snow Sports Industry Association.

Although the snowpack in California's Sierra Nevada fell to less than 15 percent of the season average, snowfall and frigid temperatures elsewhere, particularly in the South, helped boost sales of winter clothes, gloves and hats, the report said.

The sale of ski equipment rose 2 percent last winter, while the sale of winter clothes jumped 4 percent and accessories like hats and gloves shot up 14 percent, the report said.

Read the whole story

Tennis club to host ghosts and goblins

Zephyr Cove Tennis Club is closing out the season with Spook-tacular-themed mixer.

Players are encouraged to dress in a Halloween costume Oct. 1. The best dressed will win a prize. Play starts at 5:30pm.

The doubles mixer is for adult players of all abilities.

The Hump Day Mixers are $10 for club members, $15 for non-members, and $5 for the meal only. The fun includes a

barbecue, raffle prizes, and lots of tennis. Participants of Hump Day events are encouraged to bring a side dish or dessert, as well as beverage of choice that does not come in a glass container. No advance sign-up is required.

The club is on Warrior Way off Highway 50 in Zephyr Cove.

Climate change threatens half of North American bird species



LTWC volunteer Wayne McKnight throws a golden eagle into the air as way to exercise it. Photo/John Adamski

By Louis Sahagun, Los Angeles Times

Half of all bird species in North America – including the bald eagle – are at risk of severe population decline by 2080 if the swift pace of global warming continues, the National Audubon Society concluded in a study released Monday.

“The scale of the disruption we’re projecting is a real punch in the gut,” said Gary Langham, chief Audubon scientist.

Langham led an Audubon study that examined more than 500 bird species and determined that more than 300 in Canada and the United States face large climate shifts that could reduce their habitat by half or more by 2080. The changing environment will force birds to adapt to new habitats with different temperature and precipitation rates if they are to survive.

The first comprehensive species study of its kind, it will be used to help federal wildlife officials develop improved strategies to conserve bird species, whose abundance and migratory patterns depend on specialized habitats, such as forests, grasslands and coastal areas.

By 2080, the bald eagle, the national symbol of the United States, could see its habitat decrease by 75 percent, the report says.

Read the whole story

USFS expands its land holdings in Tahoe



U.S. Forest Service buys land on Tahoe Mountain. Photo/Provided

The U.S. Forest Service, the largest land owner in the Lake Tahoe Basin, has added two 3.13 acre lots on Tahoe Mountain to its ledger.

Both are adjacent to existing USFS parcels on the South Shore. They are between Fallen Leaf Lake and Lake Tahoe, near the top of Tahoe Mountain, north of the Angora Heights subdivision.

One purchased for $135,000 offers views of Lake Tahoe. The second, purchased for $100,000, is adjacent to the new hiking and mountain biking trail that begins on Deveron Way. The money came from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act.

“These two purchases, along with two 2012 purchases in this area, will help restore and maintain a healthy watershed for Lake Tahoe, prevent conversion of forest to residential estate homes, and secure public access and open space, providing additional recreation opportunities in the Lake Tahoe Basin,” the USFS said in a press release.

Study: Fishing makes you a better person

By Abigail Wise, Huffington Post

Fishing is one of the most accessible outdoor sports. Nearly anyone, no matter age, income level or even fitness ability, can easily participate. And the sport is no longer the boys’

club it was once thought of either. Of the 46 million Americans who fish today, over one third of them are women, according to a report released by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation and the Outdoor Foundation. There's also growing age and ethnic diversity within the sport.

Whether they grew up heading out onto the lake every Sunday with Grandpa or are one of the millions trying the sport for the first time every year, those who fish have a direct connection to health and well-being. Here's how fishing can help you lead a happier, healthier life.

Fishing can keep you physically fit.

While fishing itself isn't necessarily going to get your heart rate up, many of the best fishing spots require a bit of paddling, biking or hiking to reach, all of which have proven cardiovascular benefits.

"You can make your fishing excursion as physical as you want," Janna Superstein, president of fly fishing company Superfly International Inc., tells the *Huffington Post*. She stresses, however, that you don't need to be incredibly active to participate. "Even just getting out there, you'll still get the benefits of the outdoors and maybe that's the beginning of a new fit, healthy lifestyle," she says.

Of course, just spending time outside is good for your body and your brain. The outdoors gives us plenty of vitamin D (but don't forget the SPF!), makes us happier and helps us age gracefully.

Read the whole story

Rock climbing movie coming to Incline

“Reel Rock 9, Valley Uprising” will be shown Oct. 2 at 7pm at High Altitude Fitness in Incline Village. The movie is about Yosemite’s rock climbing revolution.

It is free for members; $12 for non-members at the door; $10 tickets available for advanced purchase online. Proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to the Access Fund and Truckee Donner Land Trust in a joint effort to purchase the Donner Summit Black Wall climbing area.

Mamasake Food Truck will be outside to serve dinner. Snacks and baked goods will also be available for purchase in the lobby. Beer and wine specials are available inside during the event.

Traffic issues expected with weekend marathon

The 19th Lake Tahoe Marathon is this weekend.

On Friday there will be traffic delays between Spring Creek Road and Inspiration Point on the South Shore between 6:50 and 7:30am for participants in the triple marathons and trifecta half marathons begin their first race of three. About 300 of runners will be pounding down the switch backs and heading for the bike path across from Spring Creek Road.

On Sunday, Highway 89 will be closed one-quarter mile south of Spring Creek Road starting at 6:30am and reopening at noon.

There is no road issues on Saturday in South Lake Tahoe.