# 3 cubs caught and released in Stateline



Nevada Department of Wildlife Conservation aid Cooper Munson holds two of three black bear cubs captured and released July 16 in Stateline. Photo/NDOW

Three 5-month-old black bears were captured and released July 16 on Kingsbury Grade.

Nevada Department of Wildlife personnel captured the three cubs in a trap, but their mother eluded capture.

The cubs, a female and two males, were tranquilized and processed by a NDOW biologist with the female bear never more

than about 40 yards away while the cubs were being examined. The processing includes attachment of identifying ear tags, a tattoo on the bear's inner lip, the affixing of a microchip and the taking of a sample of hair for DNA purposes. The cubs, weighing from 15 to 22 pounds, were released and reunited with their mother as soon as they awakened.

The female is estimated to be about 19 and has had at least three litters and 10 cubs since she was first captured in 2004 by NDOW.

"Besides tagging the female in 2004, we have now tagged the 10 cubs she has had since. She and her offspring have provided a lot of information to our ongoing research on Nevada's black bear population," NDOW black bear biologist Carl Lackey said in a statement.

Since July 1, NDOW has released nine black bears after trapping them.

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# Drought proves challenging for Edgewood Tahoe



Edgewood Tahoe has been rethinking how it uses water. Photo/Kathryn Reed

**By Susan Wood**

STATELINE – It's 7am Monday and there's as much bustling around as a New York City subway station. But this is Edgewood Tahoe – home of the 25th American Century Championship golf tournament.

Work crews are not only busy preparing the grounds for the South Shore's premier event of the summer, but golfers are getting in their tee times before some of the biggest names in athletic sports and entertainment take over.

Dan Zelhofer, who jokes by calling himself a "golf club relocation engineer," whizzes up to the clubhouse with a list of 200 golfers wanting to take on the course. A normal day would be 130 people.

Unbeknownst to the golfers, a crew of up to 30 people has been out for hours to get the grounds in order – trimming, mowing, troubleshooting and checking the irrigation system in one of the West's worst drought years.

It’s a challenge to the man who’s ultimately responsible for showcasing the 30-acre golf course.

“He’s probably one of the most important people at Edgewood now,” Zelhofer said of his colleague, Superintendent Brad Wunderlich.



The drought is challenging the golf course’s grounds crew. Photo/Kathryn Reed

But Wunderlich welcomes the challenge. He’s a pro himself at what he does.

“Broken pipe” could be heard on his radio as he rode the cart around the course. He is very calm and trusts his crew knows what to do while he gives their suggestion the green light.

It’s Wunderlich’s second year working the ACC golf tourney, but he’s had much practice honing his craft to be on top of his game. The 33-year-old, who started at a golf course in St. Louis at age 15, majored in landscaping and horticulture at Colorado State University. He worked the Reno-Tahoe Open at Montreux in Reno for 11 years. The difference between that tournament and the ACC lies in the skill level of the players.

“On the PGA, they’re more focused on the green areas,” he said. “These guys (here) could hit it anywhere.”

It’s all in good fun. And the fans appreciate it – no matter what they have seen over the 24 years at Edgewood from the celebrities. One year, NBA great Charles Barkley laid down on the grass. On another, 49ers wide receiver Jerry Rice threw a football to the boaters anchored at the beach. And yet in another year, actor Kevin Costner failed to “remove the mechanism” and lost his focus as his ball rolled way under the rope and almost onto the walkway.

No matter where the ball lands, Wunderlich will be ready. Not even big-event pressure or hotel construction or Mother Nature could trip him up.

“It’s definitely been an eventful summer,” Wunderlich told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Beyond a milestone year for the championship, the drought has made Wunderlich think outside the box to keep the grounds up and presentable while being responsible with water. The foundation of this effort started in 2010 when Edgewood completed a $2 million overhaul of its 40-year-old irrigation system. The equipment and tools are kept in a 12,000-square-foot facility tucked in the trees behind the course.

“We do everything we can not to waste any water,” he said.

Crews are doing more hand irrigation, which saves more water than time.

In addition, watering has been halted in the native grass areas and other sections considered not critical to the course.

In normal years, the Edgewood Lake fed by Edgewood Creek usually is enough of a water source to rely on for irrigation. This is not a normal year.



Brad Wunderlich is responsible for making sure Edgewood Tahoe is in pristine condition no matter what Mother Nature does. Photo/Susan Wood

“It’s pretty scary,” Wunderlich said, as he surveyed the water level of the dam bridging the lake and the creek. The watermark shows the level a foot below normal.

The golf course is buying water from Edgewood Water Company every day in the amount of what some families live on in Tahoe per month. This is only the third time in the history of Edgewood that the golf course has been forced to do so, he added.

With the drought turning everything brown early, Edgewood was forced to turn on the irrigation system in January, months ahead of schedule.

“We don’t want to do that,” he said.

Water may stay in the line and therefore damage the pipes if they freeze.

To be on top of the situation, Edgewood installed a weather station between holes 2 and 3 that measures wind speed, humidity and calculates how much water the grass uses. The station is called E.T., which stands for evapo transpiration in landscaping talk.

“We use all the tools we can,” Wunderlich said.

Edgewood also seeded more this year – flinging 4 tons instead of its usual 3 to sustain its three types of grasses. Ironically, the Kentucky bluegrass is more tolerant of winter – a major consideration for these challenging mountain courses.

“You know, we spend all summer getting the course perfect before winter comes,” he said of the continuous cycle.

The job also requires a bit of a chemist’s flair to keep a course perfect in the mountains. Pine cones, needles and debris fall out of the sky and affect the acidity of the grass. The crews apply soil conditioners as well to balance the pH levels. Think of a swimming pool on steroids.

The work has to be completed in front of eager golfers. It gets more intense during tournament week, which started Tuesday. (The actual tournament is Friday-Sunday.) Crews have been mowing every day instead of the usual every other day. In the last few weeks, some workers like Wunderlich come in at 5am and leave at 9:30pm. They call it the dark-to-dark shift.



Native grasses surrounding the

course are no longer
watered.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

The hard work seems to pay off.

“The grounds are fantastic,” Keith Mirchan said. The New Jersey man had just finished playing with his 12-year-old son, Rohan, who plays in a PGA junior league back home.

“They’re fast,” the young Mirchan piped in.

His father came to play Edgewood Tahoe last year and prefers the grounds this year – despite hearing of the monumental drought year.

“I think they’re better this year. You would not even notice,” he said.

It’s comments such as this one that have brought pride to Wunderlich’s efforts.

And, it’s not too shabby when your work environment faces Lake Tahoe on one side and rolling green knolls on another. Wunderlich admits to having his dream job.

What’s his favorite part?

“Every day is different. You can get tunnel vision in what you’re doing. But when I look out on that beauty – I love being here,” he said.

Edgewood Tahoe management hopes visitors who want to stay over and soak up the beauty will have the same thought – especially with a 159-room hotel going in at Tahoe’s best parking lot view. Groundbreaking could start as early as August on the anticipated Edgewood Lodge. It’s due to be open in May 2016.

After the celebrity golf tournament, construction crews are coming in with the help of golf course workers to rebuild

holes 8 and 9 on the far south side near Manzanita Street. A massive mound of dirt marks the prep for that effort. Wunderlich said hotel guests would use the same service road as those going to the clubhouse with a slight veering south.

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# Anderson wins ESPY award for Olympic prowess

Jamie Anderson was named Best Female U.S. Olympian, Best Female Action Sports Athlete at the 22nd annual ESPYS in Los Angeles on Wednesday.

Anderson, who rides for Sierra-at-Tahoe and lives in Meyers, scored a near-perfect 95.25 on her final run to win the inaugural women's snowboard slopestyle at the Sochi Olympics.

Fellow Olympian and Meyers resident Maddie Bowman was also nominated, as was David Wise of Reno.

ESPN's annual sports awards recognize the best athletes and moments in sports in the last year.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# Time to count butterflies

Do you like butterflies? Do you want to learn more about them?

North American Butterfly Association's 40th annual Butterfly

Count is July 20.

It is a long-term citizen-scientist project, involving almost 500 counts and thousands of volunteers throughout North America.

Much like the Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count, volunteers select a count area with a 15-mile diameter count circle and assemble a group to conduct a one-day census of all butterflies sighted within that circle. Experienced butterfly counters head out in small groups or on their own, but there is also a group for beginners.

For more info, go online.

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# SLT looking for ideas for city bike network

South Lake Tahoe is hosting a workshop to focus on options for additional bike routes, enhancing the bicycling experience, and reviewing strategies for promoting safe bicycling in and around the Y.

Specifically, the area is contained within the Tahoe Valley Area Plan, which is being put together.

City officials want to know what the public envisions for future links and strategies that should be considered to improve safety.

The July 21 meeting is at 5:30pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.

For more information, contact John Hitchcock at 530.542.7472.

# South Tahoe All Stars fall short in championship game



Aaron Johnson, front row from left, Cody Ruby, Kody Griffis, Tyler Wattanachinda, Jakob Costley, Assistant Coach John Pfister. Back row from left, Assistant Coach Sean Griffis, Kevin Lehmann, Alex Kasper, Chris Pfister, Daniel Hibler, Cameron Johnson, Kyle Dane, and Manager Mark Lehmann. Photo/Provided

**By Kelly Johnson**

The South Tahoe All Stars gave their all at last weekend's tournament at Jack Tighe Memorial Park in Reno.

The 13-year-olds were led by pitchers Kevin Lehmann, Chris Pfister and Cody Ruby during the four-day tournament. All three shared responsibilities at second base and short stop

when not on the mound.

Cameron Johnson had the responsibility behind the plate in three of the four games. He was responsible for picking off several runners at second and third base.

Kyle Dane finished out the tournament behind the plate.

Completing the infield were Alex Kasper at first base, who dug every ball that came his way, and Daniel Hibler at third base, who was responsible for laying down the tags when the pick-off throws were made.

The outfield was led by Kody Griffis at center, with Aaron Johnson, Tyler Wattanachinda and Jakob Costley sharing the responsibilities of left field and right field. They were kept busy with some big hitters from the other teams sending fly balls their way all weekend. The most commanding performance at the plate for South Tahoe was Alex Kasper's opposite field two-run home run, clearing the fence at least 315 feet.

All other batters took their turns getting base hits and driving in runs. The team was led by Manager Mark Lehmann, and assistant coaches Sean Griffis and John Pfister.

South Tahoe fell short in game one to Yerington 5-4 on Thursday, but came back with a strong performance Saturday morning against Sparks, winning 7-1. That meant facing Yerington again Saturday evening, where the team ended out front 8-7. South Tahoe was down 7-6 going into the top of the seventh inning with the top of the order up. Kevin Lehmann hit a double and stole third base, leaving the tying run in scoring position. Cameron Johnson drove the tying run in with a single shot over the short stop's head.

Yerington was fearful to pitch to Alex Kasper again after he sent one over the fence earlier in the game. This left the opportunity wide-open for Cameron Johnson to advance to second and third on steals, and eventually scoring the game-winning

run.

The defense was able to hold them in the bottom of the seventh inning.

With Yerington and South Tahoe having 2-1 records, the true championship game or the “if” game was played Sunday morning. In 103-degree heat, South Tahoe came out wanting to send Yerington home, but fell short with a final score of 9-7.

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# Thunderstorms may bring flooding to Tahoe



It will not be boating weather at Lake Tahoe for the next few afternoons. Photo/LTN

Temperatures are cooling off in the Lake Tahoe Basin as the threat of afternoon thunderstorms escalates.

Thunderheads have been accumulating most afternoons, with the severest weather expected on Thursday. The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a flash flood watch for the basin that day.

“There’s lot of moisture hanging around the area,” NWS meteorologist Shane Snyder told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Lightning ignited a grass fire north of Reno on July 15 near the California border. Firefighters are on alert as lightning could bring more fires.

Temps will be in the 80s for much of the week, after being well above normal last weekend.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# Disabled vet to challenge celebs at golf tourney

**By John McMullen, Sports Network**

There are quite a few stars scheduled for the 25th anniversary of the American Century Championship but only one real hero.

Chad Pfeifer lost his left leg during a deployment with the U.S. Army in Iraq but that won’t stop him from appearing in beautiful Lake Tahoe with a field of 80 professional athletes and entertainers, jockeying for $600,000 in prize money during the charity tournament’s silver anniversary.

“I’m no celebrity, that’s for sure,” Pfeifer told the Sports Network in a phone interview, “(so) it was exciting to get the invitation and be included. It’s really cool.”

Cool to meet – and compete against – all-time LPGA great Annika Sorenstam and to hang with Charles Barkley, Aaron Rodgers, Jerry Rice, Ray Romano and scores of others who are part of the scene every year in Lake Tahoe.

The 32-year-old Pfeifer, a retired corporal, lost his left leg above the knee on April 12, 2007, when a roadside IED exploded while he was on patrol, the kind of horrific injury which would send most into a tailspin and take any kind of athletics completely off the table.

For Pfeifer, a former baseball player at the junior college level who also enjoyed playing pickup basketball with his friends, it certainly ended any hopes of returning to the diamond or hardwood. When one door closes, however, another can open.

“I grew up as a big baseball player, played basketball and football as well, but played a little college baseball. And golf was just a sport that allowed me to be a competitor again,” he said.

Pfeifer did play golf a few times before joining the Army but only on a casual basis. He really took to the sport when tackling an extensive rehabilitation process and trying to master his prosthetic leg at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio.

A friend and fellow amputee convinced him the links could be a great outlet, both mentally and physically.

“It really gave me good practice with that prosthetic, walking around up and down hills, into bunkers, just different terrains that the golf course has,” Pfeifer said. “It was great practice as far as getting used to the prosthetic leg.”

Used to it may be a bit of a understatement.

These days Pfeifer is a tremendous player, a three-time George W. Bush Presidential Center’s Warrior Open champion, the National Amputee Golf Association Tournament kingpin in 2011, and a PGA club professional at Goodyear’s Golf Club of Estrella in Phoenix.

“I guess I’m pretty good,” Pfeifer joked.

Good enough to be installed as a 15-to-1 shot to win the American Century Championship, far better than most of the sports stars and celebrities who will be playing alongside him, an eclectic bunch which also includes football legend John Elway and comedian Larry the Cable Guy.

One competitor Pfeifer isn’t expected to hold up against is Sorenstam, who won 72 LPGA tournaments, including ten majors, before stepping away from the game at the end of 2008.

“I don’t compete any more, as you know,” Sorenstam said. “It’s been six years since I stepped away. It will be interesting to see how my game stacks up to these world-renowned athletes and actors.”

For Pfeifer, though, the tournament is about far more than winning or even testing himself alongside legends like Sorenstam. He hopes his story will resonate with others struggling with disabilities, combat-related or not.

“I hope I can be an inspiration to anyone with disabilities,” he said. “It’s very important to understand there are so many things you can accomplish and if I can give anyone struggling some hope. That’s more important than anything else.”

That doesn’t mean Pfeifer isn’t excited about playing with some of the big names scheduled, however.

“Wow, there are just so many (people) I’m looking forward to seeing,” he said. “So many big names I grew up with it. John Elway, Greg Maddux and certainly Charles Barkley, who I have heard some great things about. And Kenny Lofton for me. I grew up a (Cleveland) Indians fan and he was such a big deal.”

The 25th American Century Championship takes place from July 18-20 at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course.

“My expectations are just to have fun,” Pfeifer said. “I mean,

this is an incredible opportunity for me, not only to test my golf game, just to be on the golf course with legendary athletes. There's so many names in the field that have been huge for their sports."

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# Mountain lion leaves behind deer carcass



A deer carcass found July 14 in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Toogee Sielsch

While mountain lions are not often seen in the Lake Tahoe Basin, they do live here.

El Dorado County Vector Control employees were reminded of this today when they found a deer carcass that was the work of a mountain lion.

The skeletal remains were found July 14 near Trout Creek right below Pioneer Trail in South Lake Tahoe.

Deer are a primary food source for mountain lions, though they will also eat coyotes and raccoons.

The last reported sighting of a mountain lion in the basin was

summer 2013 in the meadow between Lake Tahoe Community College and South Tahoe Public Utility District. In 2008, a mountain lion was caught in the Tahoe Keys.

*– Lake Tahoe News staff report*

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# TRT challenges inexperienced mountain bikers



Rosemary Manning rides a section of the Tahoe Rim Trail. Photos/Kathryn Reed

**By Kathryn Reed**

STATELINE – Experienced mountain bikers had warned us the Kingsbury Grade to Spooner Summit segment of the Tahoe Rim

Trail was beyond our abilities.

We didn’t listen.

We didn’t make it.

It didn’t matter.

The three of us accomplished much more. We proved to ourselves that we are better mountain bikers than we thought and we can handle more than just a dirt trail. We liked pushing ourselves to traverse what was new terrain to us.

Admittedly, it does say something about our mountain biking skills when it’s probably going to be faster to hike this section than it is to bike it.

Still, we had a blast.

We were fortunate to run into Clay Grubb at the trailhead. He was the interagency and TRT Association project manager for the Daggett Summit Trail System Project.



A few optional features are along the trail.



This section had few people on it on a Sunday in June.

He told us that going straight up from the trailhead was going to be a bit difficult for us after we told him our ability level. He suggested riding down a bit to the U.S. Forest Service gate to swing around to the trail.

Grubb also pointed out how across the street is another connector section of the TRT that was completed last year.

Rosemary, Sue and I pedaled down to our new beginning point. It starts out as a descent, rolling over some embedded rocks along a single-track trail.

We meet up with Grubb again. He’s out for a jog. He warns us uphill is up ahead.

No problem. And when we did complain on this early section, it had more to do with not having bike leg muscles than the skill to pedal forward.

Not too far in there is an optional feature – as in riding across a log. Not for us – at least not yet.

For the most part it is quiet, isolated and tranquil. Lupine are out – at least they were in late June.

The noisiest part is when a section of the trail crosses an area where dirt bikes are allowed. Those guys were having a blast. It kind of made us jealous how they could just speed

along in the dirt.

We were getting more exercise is how I rationalized it.

We pedal on.

At one point we get off our bikes to scamper up a knoll that provides a view of Lake Tahoe.

Finally, we reach a section that is uphill and full of rocks that resemble a staircase. We leave our bikes behind to go on a scouting mission to see if at the top we get a view or the terrain seems more accessible. Neither. We choose to turn around.



Views of Lake Tahoe are visible a short ways off the trail.

We didn’t achieve our goal, but we had a great time.

We don’t know how many miles we went. Kingsbury to Spooner is 12 miles.

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**Getting there:**

From South Lake Tahoe, go east on Highway 50. Turn right on Kingsbury Grade. Turn left on North Benjamin Drive. This turns into Andria Drive. The road gets a bit rough. The trailhead sign is obvious on the left.

We started just below the main trailhead where the green U.S. Forest Service gate is.