Endurance mountain bike race at Northstar

The Tahoe Trail 100-Kilometer Race at Northstar is for endurance mountain bikers.

The July 19 event is a qualifier for the legendary challenge of the Leadville Trail 100-mile mountain bike race in August, which stretches through 100 miles of technical Colorado terrain.

Tahoe Trail 100 starts at 7am at the Northstar Castle Peak parking area beneath the village. Riders will negotiate two 50-kilometer loops.

Registration closes July 15. For more info, go online.

Needle miner infestation spreading in Tahoe



Trees in the Al Tahoe area of South Lake Tahoe are orange from the needle

miner. Photo/LTN file

The insect blamed for attacking trees in the Al Tahoe neighborhood of South Lake Tahoe is now making itself known along Pioneer Trail near the intersection with Highway 50 in Meyers.

While some Jeffrey pine trees appear to be dying, the yellowing of the needles is due to the work of a native insect species known as a needle miner. It feeds on the needles of pine trees.

While this particular needle miner feeds only on Jeffrey pines, it is closely related to others that live in lodgepole and ponderosa pines.

Jeffrey pine needleminers eat their way through the middle of the needle, causing the needle to die and turn yellow or, in extreme cases, red. When all the needles on an infested tree turn red the tree has died.

It’s possible the trees will not all die.

Jeffrey pines are more susceptible to needle miners when they are under severe drought stress.

Tahoe celebrity golf tourney aging gracefully



Edgewood Tahoe has been home to the ACC golf tournament all 25 years. Photos/LTN file

By Kathryn Reed

Combine a stunning setting with a mix of serious and comical golf played by athletes and stars who most people only dream of meeting, but suddenly are signing their program, and the result is the annual celebrity golf tournament at Lake Tahoe.

“The venue is a perfect storm in a positive way. You can’t ask for a nicer backdrop,” Gary Quinn, vice president of programming for NBC, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “You would be hard pressed to duplicate that setting anyplace else this time of year.”

A week from today a field of more than 80 celebrity golfers will tee off in the 25th annual American Century Championship golf tournament at Edgewood Tahoe in Stateline.

In this era of give me more, give me something bigger, better, new and different – making it to year 25 is an accomplishment. And everyone anticipates there being another 25 years.

Those who are intimately responsible for putting the event on attribute the success to the partnership of American Century (title sponsor since 1998), NBC, Harrah's, Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and Korbel.



American Century Investments has been the title sponsor since 1998.

"I think it is partially the spirit of the destination and the people that has helped forge strong bonds and helps to support its long running success. It is the highlight of our summer, if not the entire year," Carol Chaplin, LTVA executive director, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The five entities work closely to keep the feel of the tournament the same without having it get stale and introducing new elements that don't distract too much. That's a careful balance.

Edgewood Tahoe is another key player. While the privately-owned golf course is embarking on developing a hotel on property, it means holes will be changed. They have been meeting with tournament officials about this for the last two years.

"They made contingencies so it won't impact our event. We have been thankful to them for being overcommunicative and letting us know what is going on," Quinn said. "We are excited about

what it will become. It could be an added new component (to the tournament coverage) when it is done."

Success has not come without challenges. There was the year a truck lost its brakes on Highway 50, came barreling onto the course and landed in a creek on the third or fourth hole. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

Lightning has struck once, which caused everyone to scramble. Now NBC has someone on site to monitor passing storms.

The Angora Fire in 2007 also threatened to disrupt the tournament because no one knew how long it would last or if people would be in the mood for that kind of entertainment.

Charles Barkley and others toured the burn area. He gave $100,000 to recovery efforts and took firefighters out to dinner.

Officials point to how the community has embraced the event. This is hardly just something tourists attend.



Jerry Rice often interacts with the gallery perched in the sand and on boats at Hole 17.

"What has changed in the last seven years, maybe eight, it that it just seems the event has clicked in the community," Mike Milthorpe, tournament director for the past 23 years, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "People take vacation, there are more

boats on 17. It's now *the* event in the community."

It's also an affordable family attraction. Ticket prices haven't been raised in at least 10 years. Crowds have been topping 40,000 in recent years, with attendance records regularly broken.

Still, it is a major moneymaker for the area.

"It has an annual economic impact estimated at $15 million [per year] and is consistent with our economic vitality focus area of capitalizing on outdoor recreation and lifestyle," Lisa Granahan, Douglas County economic vitality manager, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry said, "Equally as important are the lasting benefits from national television coverage promoting Lake Tahoe's South Shore to the nation. Viewers watching the event on television may be inspired to visit Lake Tahoe. NBC does a good job weaving in local stories, stunning photographs of our unparalleled beauty promoting the importance of protecting our natural resource. The end result is an event that significantly supports the economy, promotes the natural environment, and even provides donations to local charities."

According to the LTVA, the tournament since it started has:

- Brought in $360 million to the community;
- $600,000 to local charities and service groups;
- National media exposure exceeding $120 million in value, which includes coverage in 168 media outlets.

The LTVA says there are 6.5 million TV viewers per year.

"In the summer it is a challenging time because on the weekends people are out and about," NBC's Quinn said of getting people in front of televisions. "The audience has been

fairly consistent. This is an unheard of made-for-TV event."

The Golf Channel re-airing the broadcast will double this year's coverage to 18 hours.

Pairings on Friday are based in large part on what plays well to viewers and on-site spectators – like having hall of fame pitchers in a foursome, or all the NASCAR guys together.

"We try to keep balance between the fun side because that is why they tune into a celebrity event, but some of these guys are very good golfers," Quinn said.



David Justice and most of the stars have no problems signing autographs and being included in selfies.

The same anchors are the ones who will be broadcasting the U.S. Senior Open this weekend for NBC.

Quinn also expects viewers will be interested in seeing Annika Sorenstam play with the guys. Sorenstam, who has a second home in Incline Village, is thought of as the best women's golfer of all time. She retired in 2008 after having won 72 LPGA tournaments, including 10 majors and 18 other international tournaments.

It was Milthorpe's idea to invite Sorenstam.

"I called Annika's husband back in January. His initial

response he said, ‘I don’t think she’ll play.’ Five minutes later he said she was in,” Milthorpe said.

Keeping the field balanced with known celebrities, longtime favorites and newbies is a challenge. Jack Wagoner, John Elway, Mike Eruzione and Jim McMahon have played every year. It’s easier to get athletes than Hollywood-type celebs because their schedules are more concrete. And some entertainment folks aren’t ready for their golf game to go prime time.

“If you are going to play in this event, you have to be comfortable playing in front of people. If you are not good, you have to have a sense of humor and laugh,” Milthorpe said.

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Notes:

• For more info about the tournament, go online.

• Schedule: July 15 – Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority Tahoe South Celebrity-Am; July 16 – Practice round; July 17 – American Century Celeb-Am Tournament; July 18-20 – American Century Celebrity Golf Championship.

• TV coverage: July 18 live on NBC Sports Network, 1-4pm; July 19 live on NBC from noon-3pm; July 20 live on NBC from noon-3pm.

• Tickets: $15 Tuesday-Thursday, $25 Friday-Sunday.

TRTA looking for trail

builders

Tahoe Rim Trail Association needs people on July 19 to help build a trail to Mt. Houghton Summit from the Tahoe Rim Trail.

TRTA is providing lunch to all preregistered volunteers thanks to project sponsors Clif Bar Family Foundation and National Environmental Education Foundation.

This trail construction project is unique because it protects Tahoe Draba, a species that grows above 8,000 feet along the peaks of Lake Tahoe. The TRTA will be creating a single trail to Mt. Houghton that will keep users from damaging critical Tahoe Draba habitat.

Volunteers of all skill levels are welcome and encouraged to participate. Meet at the Mt. Rose Summit parking lot no later than 9am, then carpool up to Relay Ridge. The workday should end at 4pm.

To register, email amyt@tahoerimtrailassociation or call 775.298.4492.

150-foot bridge on Truckee trail installed

The bridge crossing Martis Creek for Phase 3B of the Truckee River Legacy Trail is in.

It is 150-feet long and spans Martis Creek and its 100-year floodplain. The bridge was transported to the site in three pieces. A crane was used to put the bridge together and to set it in place. The crane required 220,000 pounds of

counterweight.

This time lapse video shows the installation.

The bridge design was chosen to minimize the effect the project will have on the setting of the adjacent Truckee Ice Company Site (1885-1898). The Pratt truss design is consistent with truss configurations used on metal bridges during that time period. In addition, the weathered steel material was chosen to blend into the Martis Creek setting.

The contractor will continue to work on Phase 3B through July. It should be open to the public at the beginning of August.

Aquarium fish found near Kings Beach creek

By Heather Segale

Lucas McNamara, 7, was hiking around Griff Creek near Kings Beach Fire Station last week with his family when he saw a black, spiny fish, about 1-foot-long lying dead in the creek. He ran up the creek bed, yelling, “Dad, you need to look at the big crazy fish!”

Lucas’ parents, Steve and Jen McNamara, decided to make this a teachable moment for their son, who already shows active interest in science and the environment.

“I told Lucas that this fish is not normal for Lake Tahoe and may be harmful to the other fish and animals in the lake,” Steve McNamara said.

They brought the fish to the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental

Research Center in Incline Village.



Lucas McNamara, 7, finds a non-native fish in Griff Creek near Kings Beach. Photo/Steve McNamara

UC Davis TERC fish biologist Brant Allen recognized the fish as a Plecostomus, or common algae-eating aquarium fish. These fish can grow too large for their tanks. Allen presumed someone made the bad decision to release the non-native fish into the wild.

“This prehistoric-looking, tropical fish may have died because it couldn’t survive the cold creek temperatures or didn’t have enough accessible food,” Allen said. “Either way, it highlights the continued lack of understanding of aquarium dumping at Lake Tahoe.”

Goldfish found in the Tahoe Keys were most likely the result of private citizens dumping their unwanted pets. The goldfish were able to find mates, spawn, and have babies in the lake. Some of the goldfish caught in Lake Tahoe had grown to between 7 and 15 inches in length, and approximately 0.3 to 4 pounds.

Other non-native warmwater species such as largemouth bass, bluegill and crappies have also gotten a foothold in the lake and are competing with native fishes and changing the food web in ways that are still being investigated. UNR and California Department of Fish and Wildlife researchers have removed more

than 50,000 fish (weighing 7,000 pounds) from the Tahoe Keys through mechanical removal electroshocking projects in an attempt to reduce the harmful impact on the native fish populations.

“One of the most powerful tools in keeping Lake Tahoe beautiful is the connection between people using the lake and scientists trying to understand what may be impacting it,” said UNR researcher Marion Wittmann.

She commended the McNamara family for taking the extra step to inform scientists of unknown organisms found in or near the lake. An organism like this tropical fish that does not belong here could potentially impact the lake’s health.

Citizen monitoring gives scientists quick notice about problems before they can become greater problems.

“I think it’s exciting to show my son and others the importance of protecting our environment,” McNamara said.

This past holiday weekend had a huge number of people visiting the Lake Tahoe region. There was also a high amount of careless behavior, including littering, vandalism, dangerous fireworks and non-native species transport. Volunteer beach clean-up events organized by the League to Save Lake Tahoe indicated that 2,260 pounds of trash were picked up from five sites around the lake.

Thankfully, there were also a large number of caring volunteers and citizens who had their boats inspected for invasive species, cleaned up the beaches, picked up trash, and did their part to protect the environment at Lake Tahoe.

Watercraft are the largest transporters of aquatic invasive species (AIS), and the boat inspection program is critical to preventing the spread of AIS into Lake Tahoe and the surrounding water bodies. A new invasive species infestation in Lake Tahoe could have devastating impacts.

Invasive species multiply quickly and can colonize on all underwater objects including docs, water pipes, filtration systems, piers, ramps, and boats. They destroy fish habitat, impair boat engines and negatively impact water quality and recreation.

This season alone, inspectors have intercepted and decontaminated 23 boats containing invasive species bound for the waters of Lake Tahoe. Some of these boats contained invasive quagga mussels, and some were carrying unidentified snail species. Without natural predators, these invasive species pose serious threats to the ecology, recreation and local economies of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Heather Segale works for the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center in Incline Village.

CTC has free firewood available

California Tahoe Conservancy is offering free permits for up to two cords of wood.

The Conservancy treats about 100 acres by hand per year. Usable wood generated by these treatments is bucked into rounds for public collection by permit holders.

Permits and location maps may be picked up at the Conservancy office at 1061 Third S., South Lake Tahoe.

For more information, stop by our office or call the firewood information line, updated weekly, at 530.543.6061.

Baseball career likely over for ex-UNR standout

By Michael Grant, Courier-Journal

Corky Miller's season – quite possibly his playing career – is likely over.

The longtime Louisville Bats catcher is currently working as a roving minor league instructor within the Cincinnati Reds organization. Miller, who hasn't played for the Bats since May, was recently in Billings, Mont., mentoring the Reds' rookie league team.

"I don't anticipate him coming back," Bats manager Jim Riggleman said of the 38-year-old former UNR standout.

When asked if Miller's professional career is over, Riggleman said: "You never know, but it looks like it's moving in that direction."

On May 22, the Bats placed Miller on the temporary inactive list, but he was moved to the disabled list June 13 with a lower back strain. However, he hasn't been with the Reds' Triple-A affiliate for months. Louisville is set at catcher with 23-year-old prospect Tucker Barnhart and 27-year-old Bryan Anderson. Miller has played 23 games this season, batting .190.

Before this season, Miller mulled over retirement and expressed interest in becoming a coach and possibly a manager.

Read the whole story

Mountain bike clinics at Kirkwood

Tahoe Center for Orthopedics will host mountain bike clinics Aug. 2 and Aug. 23 at Kirkwood Mountain Resort.

Participants will ride with a pro and practice pump track training, while working on climbing, descending, and turning skills.

This is for men, women and children of all riding levels. It is from 9am-3pm.

The fee is $75 for ages 8-13, $150 per adult. Register online or call 530.543.5896.

Zephyr Cove hosting doubles tennis tournament

Top doubles teams from across the nation have signed up for the 31st annual Tahoe Tennis Classic Tournament.

Approximately 110 teams will participate in women’s, men’s and mixed doubles tournament on Aug. 1-3 at Zephyr Cove Tennis Club.

The Tahoe Tennis Class is an all-doubles format tournament with divisions for multiple skill levels. Registration costs $70 per player for the first event, $30 for the second, and

includes a player dinner party on Saturday, a raffle, and tournament hat and shirt. Each team is guaranteed two matches.

Complete information about the event and entry form are available online.