AAA rolling out plan to help cyclists

By Bill Chappell, NPR

It’s not going to change its name any time soon – but auto membership club AAA is increasingly in the business of fixing bikes and giving rides to cyclists who run into trouble. AAA clubs in Colorado and Southern New England announced the new service in time for this week’s Bike to Work Day, following the lead of other regional auto clubs.

The organization, whose territory includes Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island, will send mechanics in trucks that are outfitted with bike racks to cyclists who call for help, in a new benefit the company says comes with existing memberships.

Mary Wyatt, senior vice president of marketing and publications for AAA Southern New England, explained the thinking:

“Whether for sport, transportation or family fun, the number of people riding bicycles is on the rise. So in line with our goal to help keep our members moving, it made sense to extend our roadside assistance to include bicycles. It’s a natural.”

Read the whole story

Know your site, plant it

right gardening workshop

Learn about the ideal plants and shrubs for sun and shade in a high altitude, cold climate area like Tahoe.

Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe will demonstrate how garden maintenance is easier when you consider soil type, land slope, existing vegetation, sun and wind exposure, microclimates, mulching and more.

Dates:

- June 16, 5:30-6:30pm at Lake Tahoe Community College Demonstration Garden, 1 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe
- June 18, 5:30-6:30pm at North Lake Tahoe Demonstration Garden, Sierra Nevada College, 5:30-6:30pm at 999 Tahoe Blvd., Incline Village
- June 24 TERC Tahoe City Field Station, aka Historic Fish Hatchery, 2400 Lake Forest Road, Tahoe City.

LTCC to host Community Games

Lake Tahoe Community College’s student-led business club, the Future Business Leaders of Tahoe, is hosting the inaugural LTCC Community Games on May 31 from 9am-9:30pm.

This event-filled day will include table tennis and dodgeball tournaments, a charity basketball game between the South Lake Tahoe Police and Fire departments, a raffle, barbecue, live music, and lots of representation from other LTCC student

clubs.

The purpose of the LTCC Community Games is to raise money for student scholarships and to build a stronger bond between the college and the community.

The headlining event of the Community Games is the charity basketball game from 7-9:30pm in the fitness center.

In the morning there will be a double elimination individual player table tennis tournament from 9am-noon that is open to anyone. There is a $5 entry fee to play. Contact Jared Manninen at 612.788.0828 to register.

There’s also a single elimination dodgeball tournament from 1-5pm. There is a $30 entry fee for each six-player team. Contact Jose Perez at 530.318.0233 to register a team.

All fees and registrations to participate in either tournament should be submitted by May 20. Cash or check only

General admission to all Community Games events is $5, $3 for students with a valid ID, free for those younger than 10.

For more information about the LTCC Community Games, or to register, purchase raffle tickets, or to donate raffle prizes, email fblt.ltcc@gmail.com.

More money possible for Greenway bike trail

California Tahoe Conservancy is partnering with the Tahoe Transportation District to apply for a grant that would help fund the South Tahoe Greenway bike trail.

Caltrans has consolidated state and federal non-motorized funding sources to create the Active Transportation Program.

If the grant is secured, it would be spent on the final design and construction of phases 1 and 2 of the Greenway, extend the West Shore Bike Trail from Sugar Pine to Meeks Bay, and realign that same trail to accommodate the changes to Highway 89 as it is reconstructed around Fanny Bridge in Tahoe City. The two entities are seeking $10 million. Only the Greenway is a CTC project.

Phase 1A of the Greenway is to break ground in 2015. It will be a shared use trail between Herbert Avenue and edge of Bijou Meadow at Glenwood Way. This section has the money to go forward.

The grant would allow for building the trail that connects to Lake Tahoe Community College as well as to Van Sickle Bi-State Park.

Sue Rae Irelan with the Conservancy presented the proposal to the CTC board last week. The board agreed to go forward with the grant application and to finalize rights-of-way agreements.

This trail that one day will link Meyers to Stateline follows the old Caltrans right-of-way that the Conservancy acquired in 2000.

It’s possible maintenance of the trail will be provided by money coming from Measure R, the recreation measure California property owners on the South Shore fund.

– Kathryn Reed

Free yard waste disposal in Placer County

Placer County is offering free green waste disposal for most residents now through Oct. 31.

This is in response to the drought so people will clear their properties of flammable materials. Resident may unload a maximum of 6 yards throughout the summer. This is the equivalent of approximately 40 large plastic bags.

The drop off is at the Easter Regional Materials Recovery Facility at 900 Cabin Creek Road between Truckee and Squaw Valley.
For more info, call 530.583.7800.

Judge limits USFS fees in national forests

By Steve Scauzillo, San Gabriel Valley Tribune

A federal judge has ruled that the U.S. Forest Service can no longer charge fees to visitors who hike, walk and bike in the undeveloped regions of the Cleveland, Los Padres, Angeles and San Bernardino national forests.

U.S. District Court Judge Terry Hatter Jr. ruled in favor of four hikers who were tired of paying fees to hike in these popular Southern California forests, often called the backyard of Los Angeles.

The ruling is a victory for hikers and opponents of the 17-year-old federal Adventure Pass program.

The Forest Service improperly required all visitors to purchase the $5 daily or $30 annual pass upon entering any portion of these forests, even when they didn’t use developed facilities, according to the ruling.

Read the whole story

USFS to pile burn in Tahoe basin

The U.S. Forest Service plans prescribed fire operations around the Lake Tahoe Basin for much of the rest of the month.

Luther Pass Campground off Highway 89 will be one of the main sites.

Areas affected will be posted with road signs. Updates will be available by calling 530.543.2600, ext. 6. Prescribed-fire notifications are available by emailing pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Master gardeners teach techniques for Tahoe

Publisher’s note: ***This is one in a random series of stories about gardening in Lake Tahoe.***

By Kathryn Reed

People have been gardening in Tahoe for eons with varying degrees of success.

But 23 residents of the basin are masters at it.

This is the second summer for the UC Cooperative Extension Lake Tahoe Master Gardeners. While master gardeners have been around for some time, the concept is new to Tahoe.



A master gardener demonstrates a strategy for managing a gopher problem at the Evans Family Garden in the Angora burn area. Photo/Provided

They've been busy. In 2013, 1,200 volunteer hours were logged and they made contact with 1,421 people at events, workshops and farmers markets.

"We are a little intimidated ourselves about being master gardeners. People spend their entire career on one butterfly and we are tying to deal with all of Tahoe," Bonnie Turnbull, one of the master gardeners, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Our primary focus is educating people on science-based information. We are trying to make sure people are trying to take care of their environment."

They are doing this by having booths at events like Earth Day,

the Tuesday farmers market that starts next month in South Lake Tahoe, and putting on workshops. All involved are volunteers.

Coming up June 7 is the June Day Jamboree: Vegetable Gardening Seminar and Plant Sale. The 9am-1pm event is at Lake Tahoe Community College's demonstration garden and costs $15. (Call 530.543.1501, ext. 101 for info or to register.)

Topics include: Choosing What to Grow, Improving Your Soil, Planning Your Layout, Strategies for Extending the Growing Season, Summer Maintenance, and Harvest.

Part of the protocol of being a master gardener is not making a profit. Money collected should only cover the costs involved to put on a program.

Worm bins and composting were the popular topics at the South Shore Earth Day event.

"I think the only trouble is if people expect us to answer every question," Turnbull said. While an answer may not be immediate, the gardeners do have the resources to track down the information and get it to the person.

Issues they are interested in run the gamut from wanting to educate people about how flammable juniper is to knowing invasive weeds to proper watering to what veggies grow well.

Turnbull was picking asparagus, Swiss chard and spinach from her garden last month.

"You have to be flexible and willing to deal with disappointment," Turnbull said of growing vegetables in the basin.

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Notes:

• More info about UCCE Master Gardeners Lake Tahoe is available online.

• The group is on Facebook.

• Here is a list of master gardener events for this summer.

Quest to golf every course in Northern California

By Steve Pajak, Sacramento Bee

Most golfers covet local knowledge and a member's bounce.

Matt Corsaut is the opposite of most golfers. The less he knows about a course, the more he likes it. It's best if he knows nothing.

"I'd rather play a course that I haven't played before and it wasn't great than one I've played before that was," he said.

Corsaut is on an odyssey that suits him to a tee – to play every course in Northern California, all 415 by his calculation. Great and goat track. Public and private. Eighteen-hole and nine-hole.

Corsaut's off-the-beaten-path favorites include Twain Harte ("Maybe the best course for the money – $12 – that I've played), Fall River, Baywood and The Ranch. His duds include Benbow ("The worst golf value of any course I've played"), Tahoe Bijou, French Camp and Gator Creek at Dingus McGee's.

Read the whole story

Kokanee, mackinaw biting at Lake Tahoe

By Danny Lloyd, Fish Sniffer

Kokanee salmon season at Lake Tahoe looks to be under way with some very nice fish being caught over the past couple of weeks.

“I got a call the other day from a friend saying he was catching some kokanee while fishing the South Shore area,” reported Rick Kennedy of Tight Lines Guide Service. “My last trip on Tahoe was a bit slow, but after spending a few months on stripers I am looking forward to getting on Tahoe in the next week or so.”

Reports from fellow guides indicated the kokanee were being caught trolling a dodger/spoon or fly combo tipped with corn in the 25-50 foot water depth. The fish are not congregated yet, so hooking multiple fish might take 20 seconds up to an hour.

Read the whole story