Massive tree thinning project to get under way

The multi-year South Shore Fuels Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration Project is about to resume.

On April 21, work will take place between Highway 89 and Cascade Lake, and between the west end of Gardner Mountain and lower Angora Ridge. Approximately 380 acres in these areas will be thinned by hand, which is done by crews with chainsaws and involves piling the material for burning at a later time. Work is expected to last approximately one month.

Work in units along Lake Tahoe Boulevard near South Tahoe High School and the Sand Pit OHV area may begin as early as May 1. Approximately 80 acres in these units will be thinned using mechanical equipment, which cuts the tree down, cuts the tree into sections in the cutting area, and then removes the tree and as much material as possible.

The Forest Service will officially close these areas while crews are working.

The Forest Service will provide periodic updates online.

For general information on the South Shore project, go online.

Baseball season opens Saturday in S. Tahoe

South Tahoe Little League opening day is April 19.

A parade of all the teams – representing 400 kids – will start from South Tahoe Middle School parking lot at 9am and travel down to the Al Tahoe fields.

There will be a welcoming ceremony, national anthem, Color Guard to raise the flag

CalStar will drop the first pitch ball for Mayor Hal Cole to throw.

Tahoe celeb golf tickets on sale at reduced price

Discount tickets are available for the 25th installment celebrity golf tournament at Edgewood Tahoe.

For six days it costs $50 – or $8.33 per day for a tournament pass to the July 15-20 American Century Championship. The price is good through May.

The tournament's silver anniversary will feature Golden State Warriors superstar Stephen Curry, Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers, comedian Larry the Cable Guy, Olympic skier and gold medalist Bode Miller, NFL Hall of Famers and Forty Niners Steve Young and Jerry Rice, NBA head coach of the Brooklyn Nets Jason Kidd, Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Alex Smith and University of South Carolina football coach Steve Spurrier.

For more info, go online.

Tiny bear cub being cared for at LTWC



Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care got custody of this bear cub on April 15. Photos/DanThriftPhotography.com

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care is caring for a healthy bear cub after it was first dropped off at the Bear League.

The little girl, about 2 months old and weighing 5.4 pounds, was discovered by Ann Bryant of the Bear League on April 15. The bear was in one of the cages she keeps out front of the West Shore-based animal group's offices. No note, no contact info – nothing was left with her.

Officials hope someone will call to say where the cub was found. Speculation is she was a twin or triplet, so if the mother was killed, it's possible other cubs are wandering around.



She is small, but healthy.

"She is healthy. She is not emaciated. She's a little dehydrated, but not enough to be worried about," Tom Millham with LTWC told *Lake Tahoe News.*

She has a little rash, which veterinarian Kevin Willitts took samples of, as well as some blood. Those have been sent to the lab for testing.

This is the second smallest cub LTWC has received. The smallest weighed in at 4.5 pounds. It, too, arrived on April 15 – but that was about seven years ago.

The South Shore animal rehab center usually doesn't see bears until June.

And normally the center has a lull in between bears because January and February is the usual time to release the animals back into the wild. But because there was no snow this year that didn't happen.

Instead, the three bears LTWC has rehabbed will be released by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on April 23. They came from Truckee, Meeks Bay and Heavenly. At this time

it is not known where they will be released.

Early spring = early openings at USFS sites

With snow being non-existent, some U.S. Forest Service recreation facilities in the Lake Tahoe Basin will open earlier than usual.

Inspiration Point, Logan Shoals, Chimney Beach, and Secret Harbor will open April 21. Sawmill Pond and the Sandpit OHV areas open May 1. Baldwin Beach, and Nevada Beach and Campground open May 9.

Kaspian, Meeks Bay, Bayview, and Fallen Leaf campgrounds and Kaspian and Meeks Bay beaches open May 16. Luther Pass Campground opens May 25, and Blackwood Canyon and Watson Lake open June 1.

William Kent Campground will be closed for construction during the 2014 operating season, which runs approximately May through October. The beach and day use William Kent area will be closed for portions of the season.

The Taylor Creek Visitor Center, Tallac Historic Site, and Kiva picnic area open for Memorial Day weekend.

Forest roads generally open between mid-May and June 1. For specific dates, go online.

Expect pile burning by USFS for rest of April

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews expect to continue prescribed fire operations around the Lake Tahoe Basin this week.

It’s likely operations will continue throughout April, weather permitting. During the next few weeks, burning may take place on Spooner Summit, in the Luther Pass Campground off of Highway 89, and on the west side of Highway 89near Tahoma. Locations could vary due to changing conditions.

Forest Service staff will post road signs around the areas affected by the 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.

Lake Tahoe – an all-day playground



David Turner and Chris Hernandez bike, golf, ski and wake surf – all on April 14 at Lake Tahoe. Photos/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe is well known for mountain biking, golfing, skiing and water sports.

What it isn't well known for is being able to do all four sports in the same day. But then, what place is?

Two longtime South Shore locals could now be the poster men for all things outdoors at Lake Tahoe.

"We were thinking there are not too many places in the world, if any, you can do all those sports in one day," David Turner

told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The 42-year-old South Lake Tahoe resident with his 35-year-old brother-in-law Chris Hernandez of South Lake Tahoe started Monday by riding Coral Loop when it was about 40 degrees out. Then they played 18 holes at Lake Tahoe Golf Course, skied the face at Heavenly Mountain Resort still in their golf shirts, and then went wake surfing on Lake Tahoe.

“The coldest part of the day was climbing up Coral Loop. My hands were freezing compared to the lake at 57 degrees,” Hernandez told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The duo had been thinking about this quad-fecta for several weeks. It had to be just the right day to get in all four sports. Plus, time was running out as ski season is only going to last about another week in Tahoe.

April 14 became that special day.

For much of their outing they were the only ones re-creating — which added a special twist. No one else was mountain biking at that time or on the lake.

Because they were on a time schedule, they were playing golf as fast as they could. This meant passing some people.

The face was only open in the afternoon, so they had to time it just right. The three laps got them 4,800 vertical feet.

Then it was time to get into wetsuits for the wake surfing. This is like wakeboarding, but without bindings. Plus, the surfer is close enough to the boat to have a conversation with those on board.

“It was like an ice bath,” Hernandez said of the lake water. “It made our legs feel better. We were pretty toasted on the face. It was such a long mogul, bumped out run. Our legs were just noodles.” Plus, they had already had an active morning besides skiing.

Still, the two are ready for more. If conditions align themselves just so in another year, they are thinking of adding a fifth sport. But what sport, well, they aren’t saying.

Tahoe Nearshore Dippers being formed

Friends of the West Shore is organizing a volunteer program for residents and visitors called Tahoe Nearshore Dippers.

The program provides a different way to spend some time on the beach this summer. It will involve collecting information that will help monitor the water clarity of near shore areas.

Tahoe Nearshore Dippers will help collect information for Lake Tahoe using an easy and fun method to take measurements, and on your schedule.

To learn more or to sign up, go online.

Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep transported to their historical range

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times

Bighorn sheep are skilled mountain climbers. But one group recently made it over the Sierra Nevada crest in record time.

As part of an ongoing effort to return endangered Sierra Nevada bighorns to more of their historical range, state and federal wildlife workers captured 14 of the animals in the Inyo National Forest and transported them by helicopter to the Big Arroyo area of Sequoia National Park on the range's west side.

The four rams and 10 ewes, all but one of which was pregnant, were moved in late March to a part of the Sierra that bighorns have not occupied for more than a century.

Read the whole story

Firewood permits available for Tahoe National Forest

Woodcutting permits for the Tahoe National Forest may be purchased beginning April 17.

The price for permits is $15 per cord with a two-cord minimum and an annual 10-cord maximum per household. Permits may be obtained at all TNF Ranger Stations, the Forest Headquarters or by mail. Applications for mail-in permits can be found online under "Passes and Permits."

Firewood season will extend through Dec. 31; however, districts may close roads prior to that date if rain or snow makes them impassable.

In general, the woodcutting permit allows removal of dead or down wood on TNF lands unless otherwise designated. It does

not allow cutting on private land. Trees may not be cut if marked with paint, wildlife signs, boundary signs, and other official signs or in areas closed to woodcutting.

Woodcutters are required to keep a serviceable shovel at least 46-inches long and an approved fire extinguisher (2 pound dry chemical or 1 pound foam type – ABC or greater) within 25 feet of where saws are being operated. All gasoline-powered saws and other internal combustion engines such as motorized splitters must have a U.S. Forest Service approved spark arrester installed. Transportation load tickets will be issued along with the permit.

For more information, call 530.265.4531.