Federal shutdown doesn't threaten ski season

By Steven K. Paulson, AP

DENVER — A group representing the nation's ski industry said Monday it expects no major impact on this year's ski season because of federal furloughs, even though about a third of the more than 350 resorts are located on federal land regulated by the U.S. Forest Service.

Michael Berry, spokesman for the National Ski Areas Association, said most expansion projects and construction that require federal approval have been completed as opening days approach in the $6 billion a year industry. Delays could occur as a result of other projects in the pipeline, he said.

Berry said he talked with Forest Service chief Tom Tidwell to clarify how the shutdown would affect the 121 ski areas operating on federal land and was assured resort leases are not immediately affected.

"The fact of the matter is, this will have no impact on ski area operations. Having said that, there are certain things in progress, and Forest Service furloughs may slow things like that down," he said.

The federal government regulates expansion projects, environmental reviews and lease agreements that are subject to public review.

The ski association sent a memo last week to all ski areas operating with a special use permit on public lands administered by the Forest Service, advising them about the federal agency's decision.

"Ski areas may continue to operate, as the improvements are

not government-owned. Privately owned improvements are not to be affected by the shutdown," the memo said.

The ski areas were advised that the U.S. Forest Service will work with areas that are under construction on a case-by-case basis if an agency inspection or other action is needed.

Jeff Hanley, spokesman for Aspen Skiing Co. in Colorado, said hiring is under way and this year's projects have been completed.

"We're fired up and ready to go," he said.

However, the shutdown could affect plans by the company to create a better exit route off Burnt Mountain into the Snowmass Ski Area, which has already been tentatively approved. The project is now in a 45-day public comment period, which still has to be reviewed by the government before construction can begin next year.

He said because of the shutdown, he doesn't know where members of the public should go to turn in their comments.

"Right now, we have no property or anything impacted, but we don't know what we might see in the future. Hopefully, this won't last too long," Hanley said.

Time to think about being ready for ski season

By Heather Hansman, Outdoor

According to pro skier and personal trainer Pip Hunt the best way to get in shape for ski season is to already be in shape.

“I believe in training and staying active year-round,” she says. “Trying to get back in shape after a considerable amount of time of sucks.”

Hunt, who spent six years competing on the Freesking World Tour, and is a trainer at Jackson Hole-based Wright Training – owned by Crystal Wright, another FWT mainstay – knows a lot about ski-specific training.

You need a baseline of strength and endurance but, now that snow is starting to fall, Hunt says you should start challenging yourself aerobically and building the big muscles that’ll get you down the hill.

Read the whole story

LTWC could have new home in 2014

By Kathryn Reed

In a matter of days Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care may secure a 27-acre parcel on the South Shore where it will move to and develop a facility that encompasses its current rehabilitation headquarters, and add an education center and a site where animals that can’t be released will live out their lives.

Tom and Cheryl Millham, who founded and have operated LTWC for more than 30 years, will be meeting with a representative of the property owner on Oct. 8 with the intent to cement a deal.

Until an agreement is signed the exact location is not being made public.



Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care has been rehabbing animals for more than three decades. Photo/LTWC

The plan is to enter a long-term lease agreement instead of the center buying the land.

Some of the money for the deal would come from a pot of cash that was left to LTWC by a South Lake Tahoe resident who died. However, it will only cover a fraction of the more than $10 million that the new facility plus lease is expected to cost.

Securing necessary permits from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the jurisdiction where the property is located would still have to happen.

When LTWC was looking at the Echo Creek parcel at the bottom of the Old Meyers Grade, TRPA was open to having the animal care center go there.

LTWC is now in the middle of a residential community on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe. For years they have been looking to move.

The Echo Creek deal fell through when the property owner wouldn’t budge on the asking price and more areas were deemed stream environmental zones, which meant less land could be covered with structures.

The plot of land across from Lake Tahoe Airport where people

sled in the winter has been considered. LTWC reps have looked at about a half dozen locations this year, including two outside the basin. But in the end they want Lake Tahoe be a place as much as part of the name.

The parcel now under serious consideration is flat and comes with more than 200,000 square feet of coverage.

If all goes as planned, the first phase would be built next year. It would include all of the cages, roads, maintenance garage and house for the caretaker. At all times someone will be on site.

In addition to increasing the number of cages of injured animals, many will be larger than they are today.

It’s possible the great horned owl at LTWC could become its first animal at the permanent care facility. With it being blind in its right eye, the bird may not be able to be released into the wild. That decision will be up to officials with the state Fish and Wildlife Department.

Today LTWC has three bear cubs, the owl, some squirrels, a red-tailed hawk, and nine raccoons. The raccoons will be released Oct. 12.

Kahle looking for youth basketball players

Registration is open for the upcoming girls’ and youth basketball leagues at Kahle Community Center.

The girl’s division are: grades 3-5 and 6-8t. The girls play 3-on-3 on a small court and the cost is $85. The younger girls

play on Tuesday nights while the older girl's play on Wednesdays and some Mondays.

There are several youth leagues offered. The 3-4 grade division plays on Tuesday nights on a small court and the cost is $70. The 5-6 grade division and 7-8 grade division plays on a full court with the 5-6 grade playing on Thursday nights and the 7-8 grades on Wednesday nights and maybe some Mondays. The cost for these divisions is $80.

All games are played at Kahle Community Center in Stateline.

For more information or to register, call (775) 586.7271.

Controlled burns planned in backcountry

The Nevada Division of Forestry will be conducting prescribed burns at Tunnel Creek in the Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park backcountry during October and November, weather permitting.

Tunnel Creek Road from Highway 28 to Tunnel Creek Station may be closed. Signs will be posted throughout the area when burns are being conducted.

Nearly 75 acres will be treated in 12 treatment units.

The burns are part of ongoing fuels treatment and forest restoration efforts being conducted by the Nevada Tahoe Resource Team in the Lake Tahoe area. The goal of the project is to create a healthier forest and to make the area more resistant to catastrophic wildfire.

Weather patterns will be monitored for smoke management prior

to and during burns.

For more information, call (775) 684.2500.

Sportsbooks picking Dodgers to win the Series

By Case Keefer, Las Vegas Sun

The Los Angeles Dodgers became the talk of Major League Baseball during a win streak that saw them victorious in 26 of their first 30 contests after the All-Star Game.

Las Vegas oddsmakers turned into the ones who needed a break as it felt like 26 out of every 30 people to enter the sports book wagered on the Dodgers to win the World Series.

“There are some people who have them at pretty decent odds,” conceded Chris Bennett, assistant manager and overseer of baseball odds at the LVH Superbook. “But even when we lowered their odds drastically when it became clear they were going to win their division, people were still firing away, which was a little surprising to me. I don’t think it’s a good bet now.”

No matter, the action on Los Angeles continues to pour in. With baseball’s postseason officially under way the Dodgers are alone as World Series favorites at 3-to-1.

Read the whole story

Angora burn trail system under construction

Updated Oct. 1 3:40pm: The Oct. 5 trail building day is canceled because of the federal shutdown.

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By Kathryn Reed

One of the final pieces of the Angora burn restoration should be completed this fall – the trail system.

When the more than dozen miles worth of trails are finished, it will be possible to hike, ride a bike or a horse from the gun mount near the base of Echo Summit to Camp Richardson. The Long Term Angora Restoration Project encompasses only the trail network in the area that burned in 2007.

"We have laid it out for different experiences," Garrett Villanueva, who heads the U.S. Forest Service's trails team, told *Lake Tahoe News*. This means some areas will be more challenging than others. "The challenging trails off Tahoe Mountain will be rockier, they have more trail texture. We are trying to lay out the trails so they are not in a straight line, but so they follow the landscape and are interesting."



South Tahoe Association of Realtors paid for the bridge

that crosses Angora Creek.
Photo/Jordan Burge

The grading work must end by Oct. 15 per Tahoe Regional Planning Agency rules. If need be, what doesn't get done this year, will be wrapped up in the spring.

The delay in doing the work is because it took so long to get the necessary permits from agencies in the basin.

Trails that had been next to stream zones have been relocated to benefit the ecosystem and help with water quality issues.

The South Tahoe Association of Realtors paid for the bridge going over Angora Creek. Some of their members, along with TAMBA volunteers and anyone else will be helping the Forest Service with a trail day on Oct. 5.

STAR created the Angora Fire Disaster Relief fund immediately after the fire. Initial donations went to members who lost their homes in the fire. The remaining funds are being used for the bridge, which will be dedicated to the residents in the area.

The trails are single track. Drainage systems have been built into the system so little maintenance it required. Undulations will naturally shed water.

A road system still remains in the area, but that is for future management needs and will only be accessed by Forest Service personnel.

Signs will be installed so people know where they are and where they can go.

A kiosk with a map of the trail system will be installed at Sawmill Road and Lake Tahoe Boulevard. This is a good access point for people needing to drive to get to the trails. Another entry point via vehicle is from the Camp Richardson

side on Highway 89 where the four lanes end and there is a green gate.

Other projects to be done in the Angora burn area:

• Finish the pile burning in two units near South Tahoe High School.

• Seneca Pond restoration could begin in 2015. Phase one is to drain it and phase two is to restore the area to its natural setting – which means no pond. It is not funded yet.

• Angora Creek restoration does have funding. Next year crews will likely do some wood placement by hand. In 2015 there would be stream construction work and then work should be completed in 2017 with connection of the channel.

• There will be thinning work in the area, but it's part of the South Shore Fuels Reduction Project and not Angora restoration work.

Notes:

• There is a trail workday on Oct. 5 from 9am-4pm. Meet at the end of Forest Mountain Road off Tahoe Mountain Road. Hard hats and tools will be provided.

• Here is a copy of the Angora trail map.

Hockey season starts in S. Tahoe this week

Lake Tahoe Blue's first home game is Oct. 4 at South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena.



South Tahoe hockey players prepare for the season that starts Oct. 4. Photo/AJ Marino

There will be 21 home games. Here is a copy of the schedule.

Lake Tahoe Blue will play their inaugural Junior A hockey season in South Tahoe as part of the Pacific Division of the Western Conference of the Western States Hockey League.

Season tickets are available by calling (530) 544.4625 or in person at the Ice Arena. Single game tickets will be available at the arena beginning Oct. 1 at 9am and also at the door one hour prior to each game.

Season ticket are $160 for adults, $112 for students with ID and $80 for kids under 10. Single game ticket prices are $10 for adults, $7 for students with ID and $5 for kids under age 10. Kids aged 2 and under are free.

Algae bloom killing fish in Stampede Reservoir

By Barbara Barte Osborn, Sacramento Bee

A massive fish die-off at Stampede Reservoir, 19 miles northeast of Truckee, is thought to be due to an algae bloom.

“The bloom appears to be causing oxygen to lower in the deeper water, and there are hundreds and hundreds of dead kokanee and lake trout,” said fisheries biologist Amber Rossi.

The lake, which is in the Sierra County portion of the Tahoe National Forest, is a popular fishing spot.

Concerned anglers have called the state Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Forest Service’s Truckee Ranger District office for several weeks, said Rossi, who is Fish and Wildlife’s fisheries biologist for Sierra and Plumas counties.

“We’re still getting reports,” she said Friday, “so apparently it’s still going on.”

Read the whole story

Prescribed burn planned for South Lake Tahoe

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will begin the fall-winter prescribed fire program Sept. 30.

The first operation will take place near Pioneer Trail and Al Tahoe Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe. Approximately 9 acres will be burned in one or two days.

Fall and winter bring cooler temperatures and precipitation, which are ideal for prescribed burning. Each operation follows

a prescribed fire burn plan, which considers temperature, humidity, wind, moisture of the vegetation, and conditions for the dispersal of smoke. This information is used to decide when and where to burn. The Forest Service tries to give as much advance notice as possible before burning, but some operations may be conducted on short notice.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size. The Forest Service staff coordinates with state and local county air pollution control districts and monitor weather conditions closely prior to prescribed fire ignition.

Before prescribed fire operations are conducted, Forest Service staff post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, send email notifications and update the local fire information line at (530) 543.2600, No. 6. To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.