USFS fire operations on West Shore

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will begin prescribed fire operations on the West Shore beginning April 22.

Crews expect to burn approximately 50 acres in the Ward Canyon area south of Tahoe City. Operations may continue through the week, weather and conditions permitting.

Residents and visitors can expect to see smoke from this prescribed fire project area. Smoke may be visible on Highway 89.

The Forest Service strives to minimize the impacts of smoke on local communities. Smoke-sensitive residents should consider staying indoors and keeping doors, windows and outside vents closed.

To directly receive prescribed fire updates, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Truckee meeting about trail connection

There will be a meeting May 6 from 5:30-7pm to talk about the Tahoe Donner Trail.

Town officials want the public’s input about the final alignment to connect Tahoe Donner at Northwoods Boulevard by Coyote Moon Golf course to downtown Truckee at Bridge Street.

The meeting will be at the Tahoe Donner Club House, 11509 Northwoods Blvd., Truckee.

For more info, call Jessica Thompson at (530) 582.2938.

USFS prepping Tahoe sites for summer

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will soon begin the annual process of opening recreational facilities around the Lake Tahoe Basin. Campgrounds, beaches, and forest roads generally open in mid-May, weather permitting. The Taylor Creek Visitor Center and the Tallac Historic Site open Memorial Day weekend.

Before recreation sites can open to the public, the Forest Service must hire staff and clean up from winter, remove safety hazards and wait for the danger of a freeze to pass before turning on water systems.

The Forest Service is also working to repair damage from recent copper thefts at 15 recreation sites around the basin. Although crews are working hard to avoid public impact, the costly crime may cause a delay in opening some sites. The agency is replacing the stolen pipes with a non-copper material to eliminate the potential for vandalism in the future.

As a reminder, there is no parking, trash removal, or restroom facilities available until the recreation sites officially open. Until the parking lots open, please park vehicles off

the roadway, avoid parking on vegetation, and do not block access gates. Pack out all trash and where pets are allowed, clean up after your animal.

For a complete list of projected opening dates go online or call (530) 543.2694.

Mountain lion spotted in S. Tahoe meadow

A mountain lion has twice been seen this week in the meadow area between Black Bart Avenue and Al Tahoe Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe.

“In both instances, the mountain lion appeared to be calm and did not exhibit any aggressive behavior,” Lt. Robert Gerat with El Dorado County Animal Services said in a statement.

The first sighting was April 16 at approximately 2pm when an individual saw the mountain lion walking across the meadow from a South Tahoe Public Utility District building toward Lake Tahoe Community College. The second sighting was reported in the meadow April 18 at approximately 4:30pm when an individual was walking their dogs and saw the mountain lion lying in the field about 60 yards away.

In neither case did the mountain lion approach the individuals.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends the following regarding mountain lions:

• Do not hike, bike or jog alone. Go in groups, with adults supervising children.

• Avoid hiking or jogging when mountain lions are most active – dawn, dusk and at night.

• Do not leave small children or pets outside unattended.

• Do not approach a mountain lion.

• If you encounter a mountain lion, do not run; instead, face the animal, make noise and try to look bigger by waving your arms or other objects. Pick up small children.

• If attacked, fight back.

• If a mountain lion attacks a person, immediately call 911.

Getting schooled on the world's whitewaters

By Marek Warszawski, Fresno Bee

THREE RIVERS – Chase Hauber's friends from high school just don't understand. Well, except Logan Marlow.

They don't understand how Hauber can just bail from his junior year to go off on some whitewater kayaking adventure.

"A lot of them have asked me, 'So when are you going to come back to school?'" Hauber says while sitting on a bus stop bench across the street from the same rapids where he learned to kayak.

"They don't think I'm taking classes or anything. They think I'm just traveling and kayaking. I explain it to them, but

they don’t believe me.”

In fact, Hauber and Marlow, both 16, are attending school. They’re also traveling to exotic locales and kayaking on spectacular rivers. It’s all part of the curriculum for students of the World Class Kayak Academy.

Hauber enrolled in September and spent the fall semester in Canada and Nepal. Marlow joined up in January, and together they spent the past two months paddling (and taking classes) in Chile. After spring break back home in Three Rivers, and hitting up their favorite runs on the Kaweah River, they’re off to Northern California, Washington and Idaho.

“It’s pretty fun,” Hauber says. “Traveling around the world in these incredible places with this great group of kids, you make really close friends, friends you’ll know the rest of your life. And you go on all these adventures.”

The World Class Kayak Academy has 13 students (11 high school-aged boys and two girls) and five instructors. The typical day begins with P.E. before breakfast, then five hour-long class sessions and lunch followed by an afternoon of kayaking. After dinner, it’s time for homework and sleep.

The school generally stays at hostels, all the boys packed into one room, and uses vans with trailers to travel from place to place.

“Just kayak every day, do your homework and see some awesome places,” Marlow says. “A lot of the places we’ve been, all there is to do is school and kayaking – and watching kayaking videos on your computer.”

Hauber’s father, Mike, taught him to kayak when he was 11, and Marlow began accompanying them soon thereafter. When one of the Sierra’s steepest rivers flows through the middle of town, access is not a problem.

Both play other sports – Marlow was a strong safety on the Woodlake football team and is taking a break from baseball and Hauber played JV football – but neither sparks their excitement like kayaking.

“We get to see places that a lot of people don’t get to see,” Marlow says, “and there’s nothing like the adrenaline of getting down a big rapid and realizing you’ve done it.”

Marlow, Hauber and 17-year-old Tristan Gentry, a fellow World Class Kayak Academy student with family in Three Rivers, all pointed to Inferno Canyon on the Futaleufu River in Patagonia, Chile, as the highlight of their semester.

“It’s really big water and it all condenses into this walled-out gorge that’s a couple hundred feet wide at the most,” Hauber says. “And you’re in these Class IV or IV+ rapids that you have to run. You can’t get out and walk.

“It’s fun, but it’s also really nerve-racking because you don’t want to screw up.”

Classmates paddle as a group and are taught river safety by the instructors. And it’s like anything else: If you do something every day for weeks at a time, you improve in a hurry. Same with paddling.

Soon, you’ll have confidence enough to huck yourself (and your boat) off a 30-foot waterfall. As all three boys did in Chile.

“I focus on my hips and not landing too flat or not landing over,” Marlow says. “Tuck up really tight and make sure nothing’s hanging out that can get hurt.”

Hauber and Marlow both plan to return home next year and finish high school. It’ll be a rough transition because both have been bitten by the kayaking bug. But after that, they want to pursue their whitewater dreams – even if that means roughing it for a while.

“It’s super hard to make kayaking a full-time job,” Marlow says. “I’ve met some guys who kayak every day but are living out of their vans. It sounds like fun for a couple years.”

Golf tourney benefits South Shore booster clubs

The 26th annual Booster Club Golf Tournament is May 4-5.

This is a joint effort between the South Tahoe and Whittell booster clubs to raise funds for local students. The tournament is at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course. Each day is an individual tournament with a scramble format.

The $125 entry fee includes golf, golf cart and lunch.

For more info, call (775) 588.6354 or email kjkjer@aol.com.

Wildlife Service tightens dog policy

By Tom Knudson, Sacramento Bee

Stung by charges of animal abuse, Wildlife Services – the federal government’s animal damage control agency – has adopted new guidelines for how its employees are to handle dogs in the field.

The change comes after an agency employee’s photos surfaced on

the web in November showing his hunting dogs attacking a coyote caught in a leg-hold trap. The March 1 directive outlaws such behavior.

Wildlife advocates say it does not go far enough. They say Wyoming-based Wildlife Services trapper Jamie Olson should be fired and are calling on the agency to disclose the results of an investigation of the incident.

“This is unacceptable behavior for anyone, but such brutality is particularly alarming when demonstrated by a government employee tasked with responsibly managing wildlife,” wrote Cathy Liss, president of the Animal Welfare Institute, and Camilla Fox, executive director of Project Coyote, in a March 15 letter to the agency.

An online petition sponsored by Project Coyote calling for Olson’s termination has gathered more than 54,000 signatures.

Wildlife Services deputy administrator William Clay responded on March 25, writing to Liss and Fox that the investigation by USDA’s Administrative Investigations Compliance Branch is still in progress.

“Inhumane treatment of animals, if confirmed by a thorough review of the facts, would discredit the hundreds of professional, caring and responsible Wildlife Service employees dedicated to serving the American people,” Clay wrote.

Agency employees trap, shoot and poison hundreds of thousands of birds and mammals a year that are deemed a threat to agriculture, the public or the environment. Dogs are used to track, detect and disperse animals and as live decoys to lure coyotes within rifle range.

A 2004 agency directive said such activities “must be in compliance with state and local laws” and “dogs must be controllable at all times.”

The new directive, dated March 1, is more explicit.

“WS personnel shall not allow their trained dogs to have physical contact or in any way attack, bite or kill animals that are restrained in a trap or any other device,” it reads. “If a trained dog makes contact with a restrained animal, WS personnel must immediately intervene.”

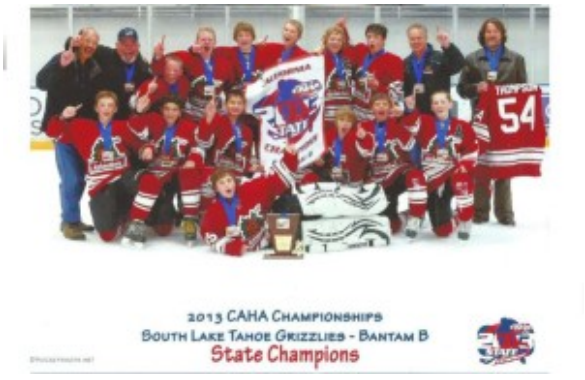
State hockey champs hail from Tahoe

By Ted Parkhill

The Tahoe Grizzlies Bantam hockey team won the state championship on Sunday.

The 13- to 15-year-olds entered the April 14 event as the underdogs. But that didn’t slow them down.

The boys, who are part of the South Tahoe Amateur Hockey Association, win the California State title at Sharks Ice in San Jose. It is the first state title ever won by a team from Lake Tahoe. Only once before had a team from Tahoe even made it to the state final.



The South Lake Tahoe Grizzlies are state champions. Photo/HockeyShots Photography

The championship banner will be displayed in the South Lake Tahoe arena.

“These boys came through when it really mattered in the championship game. They were down two players in the second period and the boys stuck to our game plan. They stepped up their tempo and took it to our opponent for the victory,” Head Coach Ken Wood said. “Like we have done all season through injuries, suspensions and a short bench [hockey -speak for not too many players] this Tahoe Grizzlies team played as a team and we won as a team.”

Indeed, there was a variety of talent on the team. But every player knew that to win, every player was important.

The state championships began April 12 when the Grizzlies faced the San Diego Jr. Gulls. The Grizzlies were ready and quickly discovered they could compete at the state level. They handily won the game 7-1. The Gulls were surprised by the Grizzlies incredible speed and offensive onslaught.

Later that day they faced their Northern California nemesis, the Fresno Junior Monsters. The Jr. Monsters had beaten the Grizzlies in the Northern California playoffs only two weeks before. Friday night was a hard fought game and Fresno finished just ahead, 3-2.

With this win Fresno qualified to play in the final championship game. It also meant the Grizzlies had to win on Saturday to make it to the final. Saturday night they faced the California Heat from Los Angeles.

It was a battle and the Heat were hungry. They wanted to win. But the Grizzlies did too. They went back and forth with the

scoring and there were tied 3-3 in the middle of the third period. With only 2½ minutes left the Grizzlies scored to take the lead. The Grizzlies won the game 4-3.

They would face the Jr. Monsters in the championship game.

On Sunday both teams knew there was a state title at stake. Both teams came out hitting. The Jr. Monsters scored first. But the Grizzlies quickly tied it up.

There were some big hits early in the game and one of the Grizzlies was given a five-minute major penalty and a game misconduct for a big hit. The Jr. Monsters capitalized on the power play and scored four minutes into the major penalty. The Grizzlies responded with a power play goal of their own to once again tie it up, 2-2.

The Grizzlies scored again to take the lead in the middle of the second.

Then one of the Fresno players hit one of the Grizzlies from behind and in the head. The Grizzly player was knocked unconscious. There was no penalty called on the play. However, the game was delayed for about 30 minutes.

The Grizzlies were now determined to win for themselves, their ejected teammate and the one on his way to the hospital. When play resumed with one minute left in the second period the Grizzlies were on the attack. The scored with one second left in the second period!. The Grizzlies were ahead now 4-2.

The Jr. Monsters did not give up. But at this point the Grizzlies were on a tear. In the third period they scored two unanswered goals and ended up winning 6-2.

These boys came from almost not having a team at all and not being able to play to banding together to form a championship team. It was an incredible effort.

Back in August STAHA tried assembling a Bantam age hockey

team. Early on it became clear there might not be enough players to enter a team in NorCal travel hockey. Parents started recruiting. They ended up with boys coming from Carson City, Reno, Incline Village, Stockton, Valley Springs, Roseville and Rocklin.

—

Tahoe Grizzlies 2012-13 Bantam Roster:

Spencer Olson, Carson City

Alexander Low, Stockton

Jakob DeGregory, South Lake Tahoe

Edward Parkhill, Incline Village

Reiss Jensen, Reno

Janez Demsar, South Lake Tahoe

Colby Boucher, Sparks

John Moffat, South Lake Tahoe

Adam Contreras, Valley Springs

John Gist, Rocklin

Joseph Cookson, Stockton

Braydon Thompson, Roseville

Reed Leqeurica, Carson City

Travis Wood, South Lake Tahoe

Ted Parkhill works for STAHA.

LTWC releases bald eagle into the wild

That was no ordinary bald eagle soaring near the Carson Pass on Sunday.

Four months ago he couldn’t do that. But thanks to the volunteers and experts at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care the animal was nursed back to health and on Sunday released back into the wild.

The bird came to the South Shore animal rehab facility in December with a damaged right wing.



A bald eagle on April 14 is released back into the wild. Photo/John Adamsky

“The bird could not hold the wing in the proper position and could not fly. After X-rays were taken, it was determined that there were no broken bones, so, it just needed time,” said Tom Millham, who with his wife Cheryl, run the facility.

Before the eagle was allowed to soar on its own the center’s volunteers began exercising it two weeks ago.

On April 14 with about 70 people watching, LTWC volunteer Pete Van Arnum released the animal at the overlook near Red Lake.

On Sunday, it just kept flying. No one ever saw it land in a tree.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Weed control to close 2 El Dorado County trails

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

A popular recreation area along the south fork of the American River in El Dorado County will be closed for two days this week for weed-control work.

The Bureau of Land Management announced that it will close the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek parcels to public access Tuesday and Wednesday, when herbicides will be applied to control invasive weeds.

A notice of intent to apply herbicides will be posted on signs at the trailhead at least 24 hours before the application, and closure signs will be posted during the herbicide application, according to a news release from the BLM's Mother Lode Field Office.

Broadcast and spot herbicide applications are planned along approximately 14 miles of trail edges to reduce weeds and make trails more accessible for recreational use.

"We are taking an integrated weed management approach to control invasive weeds throughout the Cronan Ranch and

Greenwood Creek areas," Jeff Horn, outdoor recreation planner with the Mother Lode Field Office, said in a written statement.

The weed treatments are needed to reduce invasive plants, predominantly yellow star thistle and medusahead, he said.

Land use practices, Horn said, have created extensive infestations of these invasive weeds throughout the Cronan Ranch and Greenwood Creek areas.

In addition to herbicides, the BLM is using mowing, pulling and prescribed fire to help control weeds.

The BLM plans to use prescribed fire, possibly later this year, on 66 acres infested with yellow star thistle and medusahead within the Long Valley portion of the Cronan Ranch parcel.