Concessionaire sought for Spooner Lake

Nevada Division of State Parks is looking for someone or a business to provide concessionaire services at Spooner Lake.

Bike rental, bike shop operations, hiking supplies, cabin rentals, prepackaged food and drink sales, and shuttle services are what park officials want to provide. Winter operations would include snowshoes, cross country skis and other snow play items.

Max Jones for 27 years operated the concessionaire for the park at the junction of highways 28 and 50. This will the first winter without a formal cross country facility at the park.

The deadline to respond to the request for proposal is Feb. 15 at 2pm.

More info is online.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Skiers have chance to spend day with Rahlves at Sugar Bowl

Sugar Bowl Resort is giving away an all-inclusive adventure

with Daron Rahlves, one of the most versatile and accomplished U.S. skiers.

Contestants can win a full day of fun with Rahlves just by "liking" Sugar Bowl's Facebook page. Once on the page, click the "Enter To Win" sweepstakes tab near the top of the page.

"Any intermediate to advanced skier or snowboarder who dreams of having their best day in Tahoe should enter," Rahlves said in a press release. "We'll ski my favorite runs, exploring the mountain's best spots."

The winner will start the day off with Rahlves over breakfast at the lodge, then head out onto the hill for some morning laps, followed by lunch.

In the afternoon, head out of bounds for fresh tracks with a backcountry guides, then finish it all off at the Sierra Vista Bar for some drinks.

The mountain adventure will be Jan. 13, subject to winner's availability.

Mammoth's Teller finishes 7th in ski cross

By USSA

TELLURIDE – Ski Cross USA's John Teller of Mammoth skied his way into the semifinals in the Audi FIS Ski Cross World Cup at Telluride, but just missed the finals finishing seventh to lead the U.S.

Slovenian Filip Flisar won a close men’s final with Swiss Fanny Smith taking the women’s title.

It was the first U.S. World Cup stop for the skicross tour in three years.

In the semis, Teller got boxed out with a crash ahead of him – avoiding disaster but falling back and finishing third, missing the finals.

“I had a terrible start on my first run. I don’t know if I was awake yet,” Teller said. “In the semi I was trying to avoid traffic and had a big crash in front of me.”

Northstar making plans to turn 40

Shaun White will host Northstar’s 40th birthday bash on Dec. 22. The event takes place 40 years to the day the resort opened for skiing for the first time.

Activities for the whole family are planned, including a Burton Snowboard Academy Kids Clinic with White, live music on the mountain and in the Village at Northstar, a sparkling toast and s’mores in the village, 1970s costume contest and après party at Tavern 6330’.

White and Northstar COO, Bill Rock will lead the crowd in a complimentary sparkling cider and s’more toast at 4pm in the Village at Northstar, followed by the costume contest at 4:15pm, and an après ski party at Tavern 6330’ in the Village from 4:30-6:30pm.

Sledders unite to keep space open for their sport

By Kathryn Reed

With the greater Lake Tahoe area being in the news regarding access to public lands for snowmobilers and human-powered recreationists, the California-Nevada Snowmobile Association is having its convention in Stateline.

Greg McKay, a member of the Tahoe Sierra Snowmobile Club, told his group at a Dec. 6 meeting that discussions with Snowlands Network have been amicable, and that more meetings are scheduled for February before the March 1-3 convention at MontBleu.

“We are talking about how to co-exist. We have the right to ride the same area they want to play in,” McKay said.

Two representatives from the U.S. Forest Service were at Thursday’s gathering of snowmobilers at Tep’s restaurant in South Lake Tahoe.



Hanna Bernard of South Lake Tahoe rides as often as she can. Photo/Jeff Schauer

For now, the current level of access to sleds remains the same. This could change in the coming years depending on the outcome of the Forest Plan for the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.

Snowmobiles are not allowed in wilderness areas. And there was a push by some folks to increase the wilderness designation in Tahoe. However, the LTBMU staff at meetings regarding the plan did not advocate doing so.

(The Forest Plan may be out for comment in late summer/early fall, with a decision in early 2014.)

An updated map for where snowmobilers may ride in the basin is being printed. It will be available by the first of the year at the South Lake Tahoe office or online.

Copies of the Carson Ranger District Winter Recreation Guide, which includes Alpine County, were distributed.

Dan Morris with the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest tried to explain why some routes are open to off–highway vehicles, but not to snowmobiles.

“We manage over-the-snow separately from OHV,” Morris told the group. He said the state has different definitions for the user groups.

When it comes to why Sonora Pass access is cut off in April even in heavy snow years, Morris explained that sensitive species live in the area and therefore biologists have found that habitat disturbance can occur.

A change coming to Nevada is that as of July 1, 2013, all Silver State residents must register their sleds – just like a

car.

Frank Machler with the LTBMU knows firsthand what is going on in the woods because he's on a sled patrolling the forests.

"I find my biggest issue is with people not taking responsibility to know what the rules and regulations on the land are," Machler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Much like operating a boat, no special license is needed to operate a snowmobile so the riders don't have to pass a written or driving test before turning on the ignition. This can contribute to not knowing the rules.

But through groups like this club, information is passed along. What is open and closed is often posted on the Tahoe Sierra Snowmobile Club's Facebook page so sledders can stay in the know.

While there is no snow at lake level, there is white stuff to ride on just a little higher up, according to many in the room who've already been out riding.

USFS taking reservations for Winter Trek Express

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will begin accepting reservations for the 2013 Winter Trek Express program on Dec. 17.

Teachers may reserve a spot by calling the Forest Service front desk at (530) 543.2694, Monday through Friday from 8am-4:30pm.

Winter Trek Express is a fifth-grade environmental education program that takes place at Heavenly Mountain Resort via the gondola. Forest Service rangers lead the class through the wilderness to learn snowshoe skills and discover winter adapting animals.

Winter Trek Express is a cooperative effort between the Forest Service, Heavenly Mountain Resort, South Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Heritage Foundation.

Winter Trek Express is Jan. 8-March 28. Field trips are offered on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10am-1pm.

For more information, contact Megan Dee at (530) 543.2618, email mldee@fs.fed.us or Joy Barney at (530) 543.2685, email jbarney@fs.fed.us.

Squaw's Bennett second at U.S. Championship in downhill

By USSA

COPPER MOUNTAIN, Colo. – Jared Goldberg and Jacqueline Wiles conquered the U.S. Ski Team Speed Center at Copper Mountain Friday to capture U.S. Championship downhill titles.

Bryce Bennett of Squaw Valley was second for the men.

Traditionally held in February, the premier speed titles were shifted to December in order to take advantage of the world

class facility at Copper, which is operated by the U.S. Ski Team until Dec. 15.

Goldberg proved to be the pace setter for the week after winning a pair of NorAm downhill races leading up to the championship event. Wiles danced with the top spot earlier in the week by taking third in each of the two warm up NorAm downhills before capitalizing during the big show.

The remaining U.S. titles – super G, giant slalom, slalom and combined – will be determined March 20-24 during the Nature Valley U.S. Alpine Championships at Squaw Valley.

Vonn, Mancuso share podium in super G

By USSA

ST. MORITZ, Switzerland -– Lindsey Vonn (Vail) skied a tactically perfect weather shortened super G to capture her 57th Audi FIS Alpine World Cup victory and fourth this season. Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) continued the U.S. Ski Team's speed dominance with third, the fourth straight World Cup speed race where two U.S. athletes have been in the top three.

Slovenia's Tina Maze, who won the opening super combined in St. Moritz, was second by 0.37 to keep the overall chase tight.

It was the 20th super G podium of Vonn's career placing her second in all-time SG wins behind Austrian great Hermann Maier (24). She is now five short of tying another Austrian

Annemarie Moser-Proell for the women's all-time World Cup win total with 62.

This was Mancuso's second SG podium of the season.

"I like super G a lot and it's been good for me this year with my new equipment. I'm having fun. It was good that we had downhill before super G because I was really able to figure out what was working," Mancuso said.

Leanne Smith (North Conway, N.H.) was 15th, Laurenne Ross (Bend, Ore.) 17th and Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain) 26th.

Mancuso's 11th the best for U.S. in super combined

By USSA

ST. MORITZ, Switzerland – Slovenia's Tina Maze mastered incredibly flat light to stretch her Audi FIS Alpine World Cup overall lead to 187 points over reigning champion Lindsey Vonn (Vail) with a super combined victory Friday in St. Moritz, her third win of the season.

Vonn, who stood fourth after the opening leg of super G, skied out in the slalom portion and dropped to fourth in the overall standings.

Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley posted the top U.S. finish with

11th and Laurenne Ross of Bend, Ore., was 25th.

Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain) went out in the slalom.

The race was one of only two scheduled World Cup super combined events this season and will not award a discipline title, however it will be a medal event at the World Championships.

Climate changing taking a toll on California ski industry

By Mark Glover, Sacramento Bee

A warming climate is melting California's winter tourism dollars.

That's the conclusion of a new economic analysis released Thursday.

The study – titled "Climate Impacts on the Winter Tourism Economy in the United States" and written by two University of New Hampshire researchers – said California and 37 other states have lost an estimated $1 billion and up to 27,000 jobs over the last decade alone due to less snowfall and shorter winters that research indicates are linked to global climate change.



Snowmaking at Tahoe resorts helps supplement the natural white stuff. Photo/LTN file

The report warned that a continuation of the global warming trend could result in the loss of thousands more jobs at ski resorts and create numerous related economic setbacks, costing billions in lost revenue and tax dollars.

The report, released by the advocacy groups Protect Our Winters in Pacific Palisades and the Natural Resources Defense Council in New York, offered this grim look at the future: “Without intervention, winter temperatures are projected to warm an additional 4 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century, with subsequent decreases in snow cover area, snowfall and (a) shorter snow season. Snow depths could decline in the West by 25 to 100 percent ….”

The related effects would include economic and job losses in the restaurant/hotel industries, grocery stores and gas stations, as well as a reduced tax base, possible winter resort closures and sharp declines in sales of winter sports equipment.

The report calls for the winter tourism industry to press federal lawmakers and the Obama administration for further action to reduce carbon pollution. Officials particularly focused on a revised pollution standard for large power plants.

The report cited an industry survey that said 50 percent of responding U.S. ski areas opened late in 2011 and 48 percent closed early.

“This spells significant economic uncertainty for a winter sports industry deeply dependent upon predictable, heavy snowfall,” said Elizabeth Burakowski, co-author of the report.

For California’s winter sports industry, the potential downfalls are significant.

During the 2009-10 winter sports season, the most recent measured by the report’s authors, nearly 24,000 jobs were supported by the industry in California, providing an economic boost of $1.37 billion statewide. Labor income alone that year was put at $787 million.

The report cited evidence of reduced activity as a result of low snow years. It said California saw a nearly 5 percent loss in skier visits to resorts between high and low snowfall years from November 1999 to April 2010, with a projected economic loss of $75.2 million over that period.

Burakowski said California stands to be one of the most affected states, noting that “snow is currency.”

The Lakewood, Colo.-based National Ski Areas Association released a statement Thursday saying that “resorts nationwide are taking meaningful steps toward combating climate change.”

That includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions through investments in wind, solar, geothermal micro-hydro and other sources.

“Ski areas have not been on the sidelines when it comes to climate change,” said Michael Berry, NSAA president.

“The ski industry took a leadership role on this issue over a decade ago, and we continue to advance that mission.”

Berry added that the industry remains optimistic about the future. He said U.S. winter resort areas have enjoyed the best 10-year average on record, with 57.5 million skier and snowboarder visits on average nationally.