

Nev. board gives up control of wild horses

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Nevada Board of Agriculture voted 8-1 to hand over control of as many as 3,000 wild horses in the Virginia Range to a yet-to-be-determined nonprofit group.

The board's vote in favor of the plan came despite widespread opposition from wild horse enthusiasts who say it puts the horses at risk of slaughter and business interests who say horses on the range are integral to the state's frontier image and business recruitment.

"This is a dangerous move, it is an illegal move and it is totally against the will of the public," said Suzanne Roy, executive director of the American Wild Horse Campaign.

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Bobcat cubs spotted on Tahoe Mountain



One of three bobcat cubs on Tahoe Mountain on Dec. 12. Photo/Nancy Hedqvist

While bobcats are known to live in the Lake Tahoe Basin, it's unusual to see them.

It's even more rare to see three at once. But that happened today.

Nancy Hedqvist spotted three cubs on Dec. 12 at about 1pm on Tahoe Mountain.

Even more rare is to see them in the daylight because they are nocturnal animals.

Their food of choice is rabbits.

"They will also take small cats and small dogs, if given the opportunity," Tom Millham with Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "They will definitely shy away from humans. Do not corner them. They will not attack humans, but, they will go 'through' someone if that is the only way out."

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

No snow in forecast for Tahoe's holiday ski season

By Tom Stienstra, San Francisco Chronicle

On Sunday morning at Tahoe, there wasn't a cloud in the sky. The long-range outlook, though not always reliable, showed no storms into early January.

There's hardly a soul there who isn't concerned about the lack of snow in the forecast across the Sierra, Cascade and Shasta-Siskiyou ranges. The Christmas and New Year's holidays, popular times for skiing, snowboarding and other winter sports, are a couple of weeks away.

In the greater Tahoe region, it snowed enough in late November, and was cushioned by snowmaking on recent cold nights, that 10 of 13 ski areas were open in some capacity this past weekend: Squaw Valley/Alpine Meadows, Northstar, Heavenly, Kirkwood, Mount Rose, Sierra-at-Tahoe, Sugar Bowl, Boreal, Tahoe Donner and Soda Springs.

Read the whole story

USOC is full speed ahead to the Winter Olympics

By Rick Maese, Washington Post

While senior members of the Trump administration have suggested that tensions on the Korean Peninsula could force the United States to skip the Winter Olympics, the U.S. Olympic Committee on Friday reaffirmed its intention to send a full squad to the PyeongChang Games in February.

USOC officials were taken aback this week when two high-ranking members of the Trump administration appeared to cast some doubt on the United States' participation in the Olympics, citing possible security concerns and safety issues. U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley said it was an "open question" and White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said "no official decision has been made" as to whether the United States would send a team. Both later softened their stance, and Sanders tweeted, "The U.S. looks forward to participating in the Winter Olympics in South Korea."

Read the whole story

For some skiers, it's uphill all the way

By Elaine Glusac, New York Times

In a DIY precursor to downhill skiing, the latest on-slope trend is to go uphill.

Called skinning, the activity of walking up a downhill slope on skis to schuss back down exemplifies a no-pain, no-gain ethos among skiers determined to earn their turns for the sheer challenge (or to burn calories). Skinning falls under the family of activities known as uphilling, which includes snowboarders using special split boards, snowshoers and hikers.

What was once strictly a backcountry practice, used to explore ungroomed, off-piste terrain, is becoming more common in the front country. Fifty percent of ski resorts in the country now allow uphill skiing on their slopes, according to the National Ski Areas Association, an industry resort group. Several are adding new uphill ski races this year.

Read the whole story

Mancuso returns to ski racing

By Sean Higgins, Ski Racing

It was an interesting weekend of racing in St. Moritz, Switzerland, to say the least. Weather forced the cancellation of two out of the three days of women's World Cup action with a lone super-G from a lowered start taking place on Saturday.

One could say the real winner of the weekend was the infamous "Maloja Snake." The notorious weather phenomenon is caused by warm air rising up the nearby mountains and forming a thick layer of low-lying fog that winds its way through the St. Moritz valley. It caused more than a few problems for racers over the three days of action.

Friday's alpine combined saw the much-anticipated return of

America's most decorated female Olympic skier, Julia Mancuso, but after morning weather forced organizers to flip the script and run the slalom portion first, the fog failed to clear in time for the afternoon super-G run. The day was unfortunately scrapped after the slalom run with Mikaela Shiffrin leading and Squaw Valley's Mancuso feeling out her race legs.

Read the whole story

Redwood grove no longer so elusive, trees suffering

By Lizzie Johnson, San Francisco Chronicle

For years, the Grove of Titans was barely more than a myth. Incredibly old. Incredibly large. And incredibly hard to find.

It used to be that the grouping of eight old-growth redwood trees deep within Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park near Crescent City could be reached only by following clues in a book about tree hunters. There were no direct hiking trails, and the nearest road was miles away.

Then, in 2011, someone uploaded a geotag marking the trees' location online. As many as 50 people a day began finding their way to the grove and loving it to death.

The onslaught of tourists bushwhacking through the rain forest is slowly killing the giant trees, park officials say. The damage can be reversed by building elevated walkways and viewing platforms, similar to the ones used at Muir Woods, they say. But it's going to cost more than \$1.4 million.

Read the whole story

Nevada monuments expected to avoid major cuts

By Debra J. Saunders and Henry Brean, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Two national monuments in Nevada have been spared from dramatic downsizing, but Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke confirmed this week that he wants to see some land carved from Gold Butte in northeastern Clark County.

Zinke is recommending what he characterized as a minor adjustment to the northern boundary of the 297,000-acre monument to exclude five springs held by the Virgin Valley Water District as a future water source for Mesquite.

But when and how that change might be made remains unclear.

Read the whole story

Wise one step closer to defending Olympic gold

By Peggy Shinn, Team USA

COPPER MOUNTAIN, Colo. — Reno's David Wise would like to win another Olympic gold medal at the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018. And the 27-year-old freeskier is finally one step closer.

“It’s a boost of confidence, it’s a pressure ease, it’s everything,” Wise said with a big smile. “The weight’s off my shoulders now.”

He nailed his first run at the Toyota U.S. Grand Prix, sailing high above Copper’s sunny superpipe and linking a series of double corks. He scored an un-toppable 92.80 and made a statement to the eight other men in the final, including Torin Yater-Wallace, who won the first Olympic qualifier last February as well as the PyeongChang test event, and reigning world champion and X Games gold medalist Aaron Blunck, who also competed in the 2014 Sochi Games.

The U.S. Grand Prix at Copper is serving as the second 2018 U.S. Olympic qualifier for freeski halfpipe. Up to three skiers who earn two top-three finishes in the five qualifiers will qualify for the PyeongChang Games.

Read the whole story

‘Open question’ on U.S. Olympic participation



Members of the women's U.S. hockey team practice in Park City. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

COPPER MOUNTAIN, Colo. – As the best snowboarders and skiers in the world kicked off their quest to reach the South Korea Olympics next year, America's ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, suggested that the United States' participation in the Winter Olympics is "an open question."

In an interview with Fox News on Wednesday, Haley suggested it was not certain that the U.S. would send athletes to South Korea in February. She cited escalating tensions in the region with North Korea testing increasingly powerful missiles. She rekindled simmering concerns about safety for the athletes in South Korea's PyeongChang, which is 50 miles from the North Korean border.

On Thursday afternoon, however, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said during a briefing that no official decision had been made and then sent an update on Twitter, saying the U.S. "looks forward to participating" in the Winter Olympics.

Read the whole story