All things Santa related at Mt. Rose on Saturday

The infamous Santa Ski Day will take place at Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe on Dec. 9.

Skiers and riders outfitted in their “finest Kris Kringle red and white,” or anything related to the holidays—elves, candy canes, shiny presents, Mrs. Clause and more—are invited to participate. Discounted lift tickets priced at just $69 will be available for purchase for those wearing Santa’s best.

This is a kick-off to the Great Reno Santa Pub Crawl that night.

At 10:45am, the mass Santa Ski Down will take place, with all participants invited to meet at the base of the Northwest Magnum 6 lift to head up the mountain as a group.

Other activities will include a “poker run” from 10am-noon, an eggnog station on the mountain starting at 10:30am, and a ski and snowboard raffle at the Timbers Bar in the Main Lodge at 1pm (beer purchase required for raffle entry). The poker run will feature five locations on the mountain where dealers will offer opportunities for guests to draw a card. The 10 best hands will win various swag.

Burn permits available in Incline Village

With the recent change in weather conditions, the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District will lift the seasonal fire

restrictions on outdoor burning on Dec. 9.

Permits for open burning of pine needles, slash pile, construction warming fires, and recreational fire pits are available for free at the district's administration, 866 Oriole Way, Incline Village.

The fire district reminds everyone to follow the safety guidelines on their burn permit. Guidelines for open burning are:

- Permit holder must call fire dispatch before burning
- Open burning starts at 6am and all piles must be extinguished by 3pm
- Provide a 30-minute fire watch after extinguishing any fire
- Have a charged garden hose and hand tools nearby
- Keep pine needle and slash piles small and manageable
- Fire must be constantly attended by an adult
- Clear a 25-foot radius noncombustible area around all fires
- Keep fires away from any overhanging branches
- Burning of household refuse, trash, cardboard, rubber products, tires, plastic, petroleum, construction debris and other non-vegetative materials is prohibited.

For any questions or to obtain a burn permit application, call the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District at 775.831.0351, ext. 0.

Backcountry demo day at

Alpine Meadows

The Lake Tahoe Backcountry Demo Event, North America's largest venue for all things alpine touring, telemark, and splitboard, is back. Alpenglow Sports has again partnered with Alpine Meadows for this annual opportunity to try the best backcountry gear of the season.

It will be Jan. 6, 9am to 3pm.

Participating vendors will include DPS, Black Crows, Tecnica, Blizzard, G3, Scarpa, NTN, Salomon, Scott, Marker, Volkl, Twenty-Two Designs, La Sportiva, Voile, Moment, Julbo, Fly Low, Jones Snowboards, and more. Meidjo telemark bindings will also be on hand for demo.

The event is free, but participants must have a valid lift ticket or season pass purchased from Alpine Meadows or Squaw Valley USA, along with a driver's license and credit card for deposit. Registration for the event will occur onsite at the Alpenglow Sports tent that day.

Russia banned from 2018 Winter Olympics

By Rebecca R. Ruiz and Tariq Panja, New York Times

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — Russia's Olympic team has been barred from the 2018 Winter Games in PyeongChang, South Korea. The country's government officials are forbidden to attend, its flag will not be displayed at the opening ceremony and its anthem will not sound. Any athletes from Russia who receive

special dispensation to compete will do so as individuals wearing a neutral uniform, and the official record books will forever show that Russia won zero medals.

That was the punishment issued Tuesday to the proud sports juggernaut that has long used the Olympics as a show of global force but was exposed for systematic doping in previously unfathomable ways.

The International Olympic Committee, after completing its own prolonged investigations that reiterated what had been known for more than a year, handed Russia penalties for doping so severe they were without precedent in Olympics history.

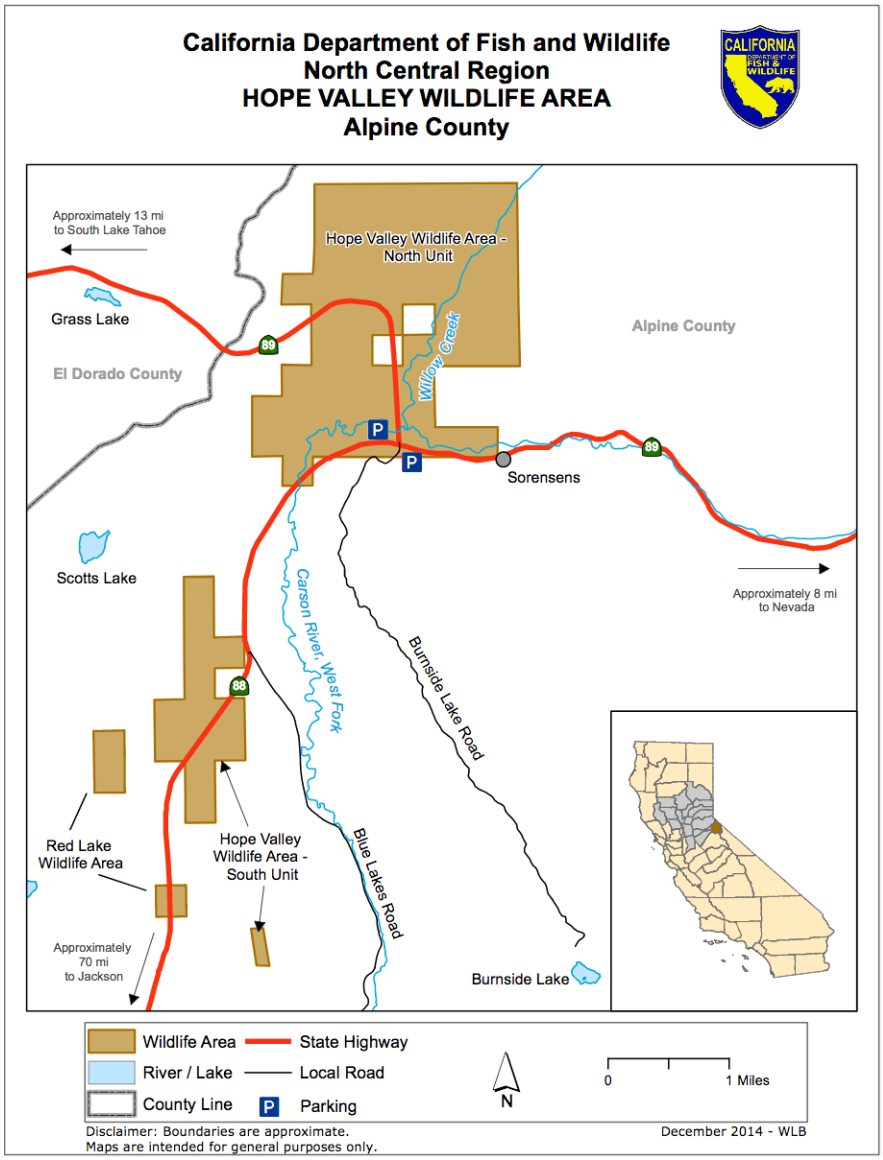
Read the whole story

User fee to take effect in Hope Valley on Jan. 1

By Kathryn Reed

Starting Jan. 1 it is going to cost money to recreate in parts of Hope Valley.

The land affected is owned by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. In Alpine County the areas are known as Hope Valley Wildlife Area-North Unit, Hope Valley Wildlife Area-South Unit, and Red Lake Wildlife Area. Most of the nearly 3,000 acres are at Picketts Junction and then north on both sides of Highway 89 up Luther Pass.



A user fee for the brown areas labeled Hope Valley Wildlife Area starts Jan. 1
Source: *CDFW*

The Land Pass Program dates back to 1988, but is only now taking full effect. At that time six properties had a fee, others were added this fall, with the remainder coming on board in 2018.

“Since 2006 the Legislature has been after the department to generate more income from user fees,” Julie Horenstein, ecological reserve coordinator with CDFW, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “In 2012 a statute was passed explicitly directing the (California Fish and Game) Commission to require a lands pass where it was practical and cost effective to do so.”

Statewide, 42 properties come under the land use fee program. The state agency does not have lands in El Dorado or Placer counties that will be subjected to the user fee.

In all, CDFW manages 247 wildlife areas and ecological reserves up and down that state, which encompasses about 1 million acres.

Hunters and anglers have had to pay to use these lands for years. Mostly the money came from licenses, duck stamps, and taxes on equipment they use for their sport. They have been vocal in wanting hikers, birders and wildflower enthusiasts to pay their share. Those with a hunting or fishing license do not have to pay the additional user fee.

Horenstein said a state blue ribbon committee in 2012 mandated the department to “develop more equitable funding sources.” This user fee is the source.

The money collected from the new user fee will go into the Native Species Conservation and Enhancement Account. It can only be used for managing the operating CDFW lands. If the agency can identify where the user was going to recreate, then 35 percent of the fee will be reinvested at that location.



A large swath of Hope Valley will no longer be free to access starting Jan. 1. Photo/LTN file

Day and annual passes will be available. They will be like sno-park passes, in that they are available online or at select outlets, and that they are not available at the parking location.

The agency expects to generate a little more than $150,000 a year statewide. Expenses the first year could reach nearly $100,000, with metal signs being the most expensive item. Education material is another expense. So the net is about $50,000 a year to start with. The money could be leveraged to secure federal grants so more work is done on state lands.

Those caught without a pass will face a fine of between $50 and $250. Leniency is expected for the first six months or so for the public to become educated about the fee.

While this state department said it sent out notices to all counties and adjacent public land owners and likely interested agencies, Alpine County officials said they never received the information. That is in part why Horenstein will be speaking at today's Alpine's Board of Supervisors meeting.

Supervisor Don Jardine, who has been in office for 30 years, is very familiar with this land. He was on the board when it became public property.

“The county at the time didn’t want to see major development in Hope Valley,” Jardine told *Lake Tahoe News.*

The Trust for Public Land and Friends of Hope Valley partnered to protect 25,000 acres in the area that had been privately held. This started in the late 1980s and took more than 10 years to finalize. The CDFW and U.S. Forest Service bought the land.

Jardine said Alpine was not notified of the fee structure, that’s why he wants a CDFW official to speak to the board.

He is most worried about:

· Access for low income people. – *The state said lower income people mayaccess the land for less money.*

· Nonprofits that use the area. – *The state says schools and organized youth groups are exempt from the fee.*

· People wanting to get to USFS land having to pay. – *They will have to pay.*

Jardine said he isn’t necessarily opposed to the fee, but he and his colleagues want a better understanding of what the state is about to do and they want to make sure the original agreement when the lands became public is adhered to.

—

Notes:

· Passes may be purchased **online** and where hunting/fishing licenses are sold.

· Day passes are $4.32; 2017 annual pass is $24.33; 2018 annual pass is $25.10. Passes are good for a calendar year.

Skiing in Europe or America: which is best?

By Helen Coffey, Independent

USA vs Europe: which is best for a ski or snowboard holiday? The whole experience becomes very different depending on which side of the pond you're on – off-piste etiquette, chair-lift queuing, après ski and even the kind of snow you're turning on all vary wildly between continents. We look at the pros and cons for each to decide which might be right for you.

The prevalence of package deals mean a European ski holiday can work out cheaper than a North American equivalent. Of course, you can choose to spend thousands on a private chalet in Courchevel 1850 with a 24-hour butler, Champagne on tap and helicopter transfers, but there's also the option of booking a seven-night package deal to Bansko in Bulgaria for $618, including flights, transfers, B&B accommodation, ski hire and lift pass.

In comparison, U.S. lift tickets can work out to be pretty expensive for a week's ski trip: for example, a six-day pass for Breckenridge, Colo., is currently a whopping $727.

Read the whole story

SLT club soccer team headed to state competition



Top row: Ivy Gonzalez, Independence Newberry, Anna Lyle, Alexiah Solorzano, Jenni Arias, Isabel Wigart, Natalie Bitzer, Malia Solis, Leah Nisenfeld, Sydney Irwin, Olivia Kwachak Bottom row: Kiana Buchholz, Jazmyn Schumaker, Anna Sharpe, Gulia Lancelotti, Krystyna Schembri, Kylie Muskovitz, Blake Wallace

The South Tahoe Futbol Club U13 Girls, Tahoe Revolution, team is headed to the State Cup Championship in Modesto on Dec. 9.

The soccer team this past weekend won the quarter and semifinals of the NorCal Premier State Cup.

The Revolution battled in the quarter final to win 4-3 against Central Valley Premier from Visalia. The game was scoreless at the end of regulation, necessitating two overtimes. A shootout ultimately determined the winner, sending the Revolution to

the semi-finals the following day.

The next day the revolution competed against Sunnyvale Alliance, which once again ended in a shootout resulting in a 3-0 win. The winner was decided with goals from Malia Solis, Anna Sharpe, and Isabel Wigart, including a stunning performance from goal keeper Leah Nisenfeld.

The entire team played a stellar weekend of soccer, with every team member contributing to the team's success. It was a hard fought, suspenseful and emotional battle that resulted in an opportunity to compete for the NorCal State Cup this next weekend, said Russell Wigart, assistant Coach of the Revolution.

This weekend was a true test of mental mettle from the team. These 12 year olds have demonstrated all season that there are no limits with this passionate bunch. They stepped up to the penalty mark not once, but twice in two games; putting their stamp on a ticket to the State Cup Championship game, said Joaquin Solis, head coach of the Revolution.

The Tahoe revolution will compete against South Valley Chivas Academy from Porterville for the championship on Saturday at 1pm in Modesto.

– Provided to LTN

Controlled burns slated for Tahoe basin this month

The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team will continue prescribed fire operations over the next several weeks, weather permitting.

Lake Valley, North Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Douglas fire protection districts, California State Parks, California Tahoe Conservancy and the U.S. Forest Service will conduct prescribed fire operations in multiple areas around Lake Tahoe. Smoke may be present. View the **online map** with project locations and details.

Each prescribed fire operation follows a specialized 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.

Before prescribed fire operations are conducted, agencies post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, send email notifications and update the local fire information line at 530.543.2816.

Supermoon: The biggest full moon of 2017



The Dec. 3 supermoon is the only one of 2017.
Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Trevor Nace, Forbes

Tonight, skywatchers will be treated to the only supermoon (scientific name: perigee syzygy) in 2017. If you step outside you'll notice the Moon is especially large and bright, which is because the moon is at its closest distance to Earth.

The perigee moon (prerequisite for a supermoon) exists because as the moon orbits the Earth it does so in an oval or elliptical shape, meaning sometimes the moon is closer to the Earth and other times it's farther. For a supermoon to exist, there must both be a full moon as well as a perigee moon, hence why the moon tonight will look especially close, full, and bright.

This is your opportunity in 2017 to see a supermoon. The most

recent supermoon was around a year ago on Nov. 14, 2016.

Read the whole story

Carson River, grasslands, sage dominate easy hike



Rhoda, Liz and Rosemary along the Carson River on the Bentley Heritage Trail. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

MINDEN – Meandering through grasses more than 6-feet high, mesmerized by sage bushes just as tall and with thick trunks, a brief oops where the trek went through slick mud, the Carson River wending its way through the valley as the snow covered

Sierra peaks scratched the sky – all of this provided more reasons to be thankful on Thanksgiving weekend.

With the recent snow in Tahoe, hiking at any elevation above lake level may necessitate snowshoes, and yet it doesn't quite feel like snowshoe season has truly arrived. To keep hiking this time of year requires dropping in elevation. That's just what the four of us did the day after Thanksgiving.



The Carson River and Sierra mountains are focal points along the trail. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The Carson Valley Trails Association has been busy creating a trails throughout the Minden-Gardnerville-Genoa area.

This particular one – the Bentley Heritage Trail – is like being in the middle of nowhere, and yet so close to civilization.

We are so used to hiking in the Tahoe area that is was strange to have no elevation gain. A 1 percent grade is what you'll encounter.

With no trees, it seemed like you could see forever – which

was wonderful.

While the network of trails here is 4.8 miles, what is great is that hikers can easily make it shorter. This is because trail builders made several links from one side to the other. The other nice touch was the off-shoots to the Carson River.

Our goal was to make a circle. We kinda did that.



Private property via an easement has created this nearly 5-mile trail system. Photo/Kathryn Reed

While at first I was thinking the signage was wonderful, there were a couple incidents where we weren't quite sure where to go. The main obstacle was when we got to what I would call the end of trail before it curves around to head back. The arrows pointed left and right. We thought we needed to go right to keep with our plan to go counter-clockwise. Well, it turns out this was one of the spurs to the river and not the actual trail. After a muddy adventure near the water, we turned around and figured out our mistake.

We also weren't sure which direction to go at another

junction. Instead of completing the circle, we wound up going across to the side we started on.

Neither of these hiccups was that big of a deal, but for first-timers a little more info besides an arrow would have been nice. Things like “river,” “trailhead,” “eastern trail” would have kept us where we wanted to be.

Still, we’d all recommend this trail – just not in the summer or anytime it is hot. It is completely exposed, with zero shade. The river might provide some cooling off, though.

It was easy to see how high the river had been this spring based on the erosion along the banks and the wash along the side.

A surprising find were some tiny clam shells along the shore, that to this non-scientist looked like the invasive clams found at Lake Tahoe.

Carson Valley Trails Association, with the Nature Conservancy, local Eagle Scouts, and the property owner built the hiking trail system.

The trails association had to replace some of the boardwalks this year that had been ruined by the spring flooding.

The biggest negative for me is that dogs are not allowed. This is because cattle could be in the area. Horses, bikes and motorized vehicles are also not permitted. But I’m thankful the private property owner agreed to the easement that allows the public onto these lands. The easement protects four miles of the Carson River, conserves wildlife habitat, safeguards more than 1,000 acres of floodplain, and encourages sustainable agricultural practices.



This hike is mostly a single-track trail through grassland. Photo/Kathryn Reed

—

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe head east on Highway 50. Go right onto Kingsbury Grade. At the bottom, go left on Foothill Road. Turn right on Muller Lane. Turn left onto Highway 395. Turn right on Stephanie Lane, then left on Heybourne Road. The trailhead is to the left and is well marked.