Ideas for creating a fire-resistant garden

By Sunset

A lush, vibrant landsape is every gardeners aim. But what if you live in the middle of wildfire country?

Great news: Your gardening goals don’t have to change in high-risk fire areas, just the means by which you plan to reach them.

Before this landscape was reimagined, a thick blanket of worn-out junipers covered the slopes; their resinous foliage is potentially dangerous in a firestorm.

Read the whole story

Bay Area man to attempt to swim length of Lake Tahoe

By Jennifer Shaw, Contra Costa Times

Keris Dahlkamp has quite the conversation starter these days — his latest goal of joining the 22 athletes on record for successfully swimming the length of Lake Tahoe.

While Dahlkamp has Iron Man triathlons under his belt, news of this estimated 15-hour aquatic feat, which will start about 2am Aug. 11, typically gets an incredulous response.

He is quick to reply, sharing his own relatively recent awareness of the level of genocide, pillaging and rape of

people in the Congo, and his ensuing idea to promote his 22-mile swim as a means to educate others about the humanitarian crisis. Dahlkamp also is inviting swimmers to join him for any length of the lake they can muster.

Kambale Musavuli calls himself “one of the lucky ones,” who managed to immigrate to the United States in 1998. A spokesman for Friends of the Congo now likens himself to “one of the Freedom Riders,” traveling from city to city throughout the U.S. to generate support for the organization’s Congo Connect Youth Initiative Project.

While the Congo native had heard of many kindhearted means to speak out against the atrocities during his travels, and while he says that “there’s no small action,” nothing has matched Dahlkamp’s challenge.

“I’ve never heard of anyone swimming 22 miles for the Congo. This tops everything I’ve heard before … He’s here in America and he’s saying I’m going to use my talent and speak for these voices. Sometimes it can feel very hopeless, but what Keris is doing, that’s very moving for me,” says Musavuli of his restored faith. “It’s just a matter of time before the world knows the situation, that six million people have disappeared from the face of the earth.”

During the laudable swim, Dahlkamp, a former Martinez resident who recently moved to Canyon, will measure his progress in micro milestones.

Read the whole story

Tahoe company takes the mystery out of backpacking

By Kathryn Reed

Hiking is one thing, but staying overnight in the woods is a whole other experience. What to bring? How heavy should the pack be? Bring water or filter it? Sleeping pad or the ground? Tent or stars? Real food or that packaged stuff? Bear can or wing it? Permit or just go?

Backpacking can be a daunting experience even for an avid hiker or car camper. It’s an experience Renee Gorevin wants to share with more women so they feel comfortable in the woods.



Renee Gorevin's company Tahoe Treks teaches women all about backpacking. Photo/Provided

As someone who has been backpacking more than half her life (she started at age 23), Gorevin spent years in the woods with her husband, Mark. She came to realize she depended on him to take care of most things. Then about 15 years ago she started going on overnighters with female friends. She had to rely on herself.

“This was a huge transformation for me as a woman,” Gorevin told *Lake Tahoe News*.

“Nature provides perspective in your life. It’s not all about me. There is this big thing out there. I feel like you can’t have too many women who have experienced that.”

That is how Tahoe Treks was born.

This is the first summer Gorevin and her posse are offering multi-day backpacking excursions for women 18 and older. For now, six rookies will be paired with two experienced backpackers from Tahoe Treks. (People who have backpacked before are welcome.)

“My desire and goal is to stay small and maintain quality. And the other part is the leave no trace – to not have an impact on the area,” Gorevin said of why group sizes are limited.

Even though three levels of excursions are offered, a certain amount of fitness is required – like being comfortable to walk five miles with a pack at elevations that could reach 9,000 feet.

While trekkers must provide their pack, tent and most everything but stove and cooking equipment, Tahoe Treks advises people what to bring so people are prepared.

In fact, the first couple hours of each trip are spent at the trailhead with everyone emptying their backpacks to assess the contents to decide if something should be left in a vehicle.

Gorevin has training for guiding through the Tahoe Rim Trail Association. As a longtime teacher in Lake Tahoe Unified School District, she knows how to educate.

Tahoe Treks is a nonprofit, which allows the company to offer the guided trips onto U.S. Forest Service land. However, Gorevin said the federal agency is still reluctant to have her charge for her services on public lands. That is why the

company’s website says “donation” instead of “fee” for the trips.

Gorevin will be donating her services each year with one trip for young women ages 14-18 who might not otherwise have an opportunity to backpack.

She is also working on a volunteer component for Tahoe Treks, which may involve carrying out other people’s trash or helping with campsite inventory.

This season’s trips will be into the Desolation and Mokelumne wilderness areas.

Beyond teaching women the finer points of backpacking, the trekkers will also be taught about the principles of Leave No Trace, the differences in stoves, how to use a bear can (even though one is not required on any of the 2012 trips), how to filter water, and what wilderness areas are all about.

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Notes:

• Tahoe Treks is online

• Email: info@tahoetreks.org

• Telephone: (530) 318.0516.

Guided full moon kayak on

West Shore

California State Parks and West Shore Sports team up for this unique full moon kayak at Ed Z'berg-Sugar Pine Point State Park on Aug. 2.

Experience the magic of Lake Tahoe at dusk while learning about the area's unique history. The atmosphere is peaceful and calming, yet spectacular.

No experience is necessary and this activity is suitable for all ages. The tour is $25 per person and includes park entrance, kayak rental, life vests and instruction.

Wear synthetic clothing rather than cotton (swimsuit, shirt, shorts, lightweight pants, jacket and warm cap). Bring water, retainer strap for glasses and water shoes. Proceeds benefit the Sierra State Parks Foundation.

Meet at the North Boathouse on the day use side of the park at 7:30pm for the two-hour adventure.

Reservations are required by calling (530) 525.9920. Space is limited.

TRTA taking sign-ups for backcountry camp

Join the Tahoe Rim Trail Association for 2012's first Backcountry Trails Camp on Aug. 10-12.

Backcountry camps are a Tahoe Rim Trail Association tradition and your contribution to build and maintain the Tahoe Rim

Trail builds on the work of 25 years of backcountry camp volunteers. Camp will be near Barker Pass on the west side of the Tahoe basin.

Volunteers of all ages and skill levels are welcome to attend.

Food will be provided, but in order to offset this cost the camp is $55. Scholarships are available. Families are welcome, and children's camping equipment is available upon request.

For more information or to register, call Morgan Fessler at (775) 298.0232.

Volunteers must bring their camping equipment, and must wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, boots and work gloves; bring sunscreen, bug spray and plenty of water. Check the weather reports and bring additional clothing as necessary. The Tahoe Rim Trail Association will provide hard hats, trail tools, volunteer kitchen staff, and crew leaders to guide and support trail work.

Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care opens doors to public for one day

By Cheryl Millham

Things are really hopping at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.

To bring you up to date, I would like to list all of our current occupants, which you can expect to see if you visit us for our annual Open House on Aug. 5th (10am to 4pm).

What a wonderful event we expect to have. There will be so much to see.

We have three bobcats, five bear cubs, 13 raccoons, three golden eagles, a sharp-shinned hawk, a red-tailed hawk, a sparrow hawk (American Kestrel), a saw-whet owl (one of the smallest owls in the United States), along with two ravens, several squirrels, chipmunks, songbirds and a river otter.

We have lots of steller's jays and robins, including three mountain blue birds, which we very seldom receive at LTWC.

What is our annual Open House? Once a year, California Fish & Game allows LTWC to open our doors to the public and let them come into our compound. LTWC volunteers will take groups of people around the center and show them the birds and animals in house and relay the stories of how they came into our care.

We will have LTWC T-shirts and other products for sale.

Upstairs, in our clinic, there will be chairs set up where you will be able to sit and watch the bears and other birds and animals playing on our closed circuit BEAR TV. We have nine cameras in different cages for your enjoyment.

The BEAR League will be set up with literature and be happy to speak with you about how to co-exist with Tahoe bears.

Back downstairs for some cake (provided by MontBleu) and punch.

So, plan to drop by Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care (1485 Cherry Hills Circle, South Lake Tahoe) on Aug. 5 between 10am and 4pm.

For additional information, call (530) 577.2273 or go to our website.

Cheryl Millham is executive director of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe.

Athletes use clothing to keep them cool

By Joe Palca, NPR

The cool weather in London is good news for the Olympic athletes because their bodies won't need to put as much energy into cooling off.

But most of us aren't lucky enough to be headed to London, and we could use some help keeping cool.

When you get hot you sweat – but it's not enough to just sweat. To cool off, you need that sweat to evaporate. It's evaporation that drains the heat from your body.

To help the sweat evaporate, you want air to flow over your skin – as much of your skin as possible. So the best clothing for people to wear when exercising is none at all.

That's according to George Havenith, a professor of environmental physiology and ergonomics at Loughborough University in Leicestershire, England.

"They would probably want to wear some underwear to just cover up and be comfortable in that way. But in terms of the heat loss, the naked person is best able to lose heat."

That’s only if the sun’s not shining. If the sun’s out, you need clothing to protect your skin from burning.

Read the whole story

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2 cycling bridges to be replaced in South Lake Tahoe

Ball fields group sitting on half a million bucks

By Kathryn Reed

Cyclists in South Lake Tahoe will soon have a less bumpy ride across two bridges.

The old Douglas fir planks on the structures spanning Trout Creek and Upper Truckee River will be replaced with a material similar to what is on the 15th Street Bridge. Even road bike riders should be able to use them.



Bike trails in South Lake Tahoe will be upgraded this year. Photo/LTN file

The allocation of $30,000 to get this work done was granted July 27 by the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority board. It's anticipated the city's public works crew can do the job this building season.

Friday morning's three-hour meeting at Lake Tahoe Airport was the JPA's annual meeting. An unexpected expense for the JPA board was the need to pay El Dorado County $44,000 for the assessor's office to notify property owners of the annual assessment. When this was first done in 1991, it cost $11,000. El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago, who also chairs the JPA board, is going to research why the fee has quadrupled and see if it can be lowered.

With the passage of Measure R, which altered the original language of Measure S to allow for more flexibility in spending recreation dollars, the JPA will now meet twice a year. The next meeting will be in January, though no specific date was agreed to.

The bike improvement money comes from Measure R and would not have been allowed under Measure S. One of the significant changes in the measures was to allow for current trails to receive maintenance funds.

The other thing the bike committee recommended and the board agreed to is to put $100,000 as matching dollars for a $600,000-plus grant that would go toward cycling on the South Shore.

If the grant were not secured, it would have to be decided if the $100,000 goes into trails or is again used as a tool to go after more money. Notification should come in October if South Tahoe is awarded the grant.

The other component to Measure R is that the ball fields – baseball, softball, soccer – have $500,000 now to spend. But the committee tasked with making recommendation to the board had nothing definitive to recommend. This, despite the members

having met for half a year.

Sue Novasel, who is on the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board, made a pitch for the high school softball field to get $45,000. (She is not on the ball field committee.) That field has taken up an inordinate amount of the committee's time. Issues with state and federal laws involving equality of boys and girls' facilities is at stake.

South Lake Tahoe City Councilman Hal Cole, who is on the JPA board, said to *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting, "Are we going to do the high school field which is not part of the JPA?"

He said if the JPA puts money into that field, then the JPA will have further responsibilities for that field down the road.

"We need to fund the biggest priority and go from there," Cole said. He doesn't want to do a bunch of insignificant improvements.

John Upton, the lone paid staff member of the JPA, said it's possible if the fields committee comes up with a true recommendation for the board, that a special meeting could be called.

"I think everyone supports a third field at the Al Tahoe site. I feel it will be a field for baseball and softball. The committee needs to decide that," Upton said after the meeting.

Steve Knoll and Chuck Leonard, field committee members, gave a presentation to the board about the state of fields on the California side of the South Shore. (The recreation measure's boundaries are essentially the same as Lake Tahoe Unified.)

The field and bike committees plan to keep meeting and figuring what is best for Tahoe.

As was pointed out by some at the meeting, the cycling

community had an edge because a master plan through the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency exists. No master plan is in place for the fields. The committee could as the board to fund a master plan, but what was proposed to voters was the taxpayer money would be used on actual field upgrades, not a planning document.

Mountain lion sighting in Zephyr Cove

Mountain lions eating deer – that's how the food chain works. It's something that goes on every day in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Because a mountain lion killed a mule deer close to the stables of Zephyr Cove's stables this week, the Nevada Department of Wildlife set a trap. But nothing was caught.

"It has been taken away," Chris Healy with the Nevada Department of Wildlife told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Since it was a mountain lion doing what it's supposed to do we probably won't set another trap."

It was such a non-event for the resort that the spokesman didn't even know about it until *Lake Tahoe News* called Friday.

Bobcats also prowl the basin and have been increasing in numbers as the rabbit population grows, according to Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Incline looking at ways to improve trail system

The Incline Village and Crystal Bay Community Trail Plan Committee and IVGID Parks and Recreation are hosting a workshop to help plan the future of the trails in Incline.

The goal is to gather community ideas and feedback on the draft plan map.

The plan will address the needs for trails to be interconnected and sustainable, provide transportation routes for residents, safe routes to school, opportunities for visitors or residents to walk or ride through the village and finally provide access to a variety of recreation opportunities in the adjacent U.S. Forest Service or Nevada State Park public lands.

The workshop is Aug. 1 from 5:30-7:30pm at the Chateau (955 Fairway) in Incline.

For more information, email mrkkimbrough@gmail.com or call (775) 720-4732.