Dogs and fireworks often not a good combination

Fourth of July fireworks are no fun for dogs. Historically, Washoe County Regional Animal Services is flooded with calls from pet owners searching for dogs that became lost while trying to flee from the loud noise of the fireworks.

On July 4-5, 2011, Regional Animal Services retrieved 73 lost dogs in a 24-hour period.

Regional Animal Services offers the following safety tips to pet owners for the Fourth of July holiday:

Before the fireworks start, bring and keep your dog inside;

Keep windows and doors closed;

Leave a radio, television, fan, or air conditioner on as these will help to lower the noise from outside

If you know your dog does experience extreme; anxieties to loud noises, it may be worthwhile to contact your veterinarian to see what recommendations they have;

The best way for everyone to get the most enjoyment from a firework display, is to leave your pets at home.

Regional Animal Services staff also encourages dog owners to make sure all pets have identification tags and microchips just in case they do get lost. This will expedite getting pets and their families reunited.

USFS: Fireworks, alcohol and parking rules for Tahoe

Possession of fireworks of any kind, including sparklers, is illegal in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Campfires are not permitted on U.S. Forest Service beaches or in the general forest.

For July 4 only, personal barbecues are allowed at Nevada, Pope and Baldwin beaches but are not permitted on any other Forest Service beaches or in the general forest.

The annual alcohol ban will be in effect on Nevada Beach and within Zephyr Cove Resort and Zephyr Shoals (the former Dreyfus Estate).

In addition, county and state laws also ban the possession or consumption of alcohol on the Truckee River from Tahoe City to Alpine Meadows and Chamber's Landing Beach on the West Shore July 1-6. These areas will be patrolled by law enforcement personnel from the Forest Service, Douglas County, Placer County and Carson City sheriff departments, and by private security staff.

If you're parking on the side of the road to access Forest Service facilities, make sure you're parked completely on gravel or dirt, not on vegetation. Parking on vegetation may result in a citation for resource damage, plus there's a chance your car's catalytic converter could spark a fire. Consider public transportation if you're going to the beach that day. The Nifty Fifty Trolley stops at Forest Service beaches along the south and west shores.

Keep in mind that in developed recreation sites, such as Kiva,

Tallac and the Taylor Creek Visitor Center, parking is allowed only in designated parking spaces, not along the roadway.

Day-use fees for the Fourth of July at Pope, Baldwin, and Nevada beaches are $20 and at Zephyr Cove Beach $25 to cover increased security and facility maintenance costs of the holiday.

Respect the rules on where dogs are allowed. Dogs are not allowed at designated swim beaches, including Nevada, Pope, Baldwin, Meeks and William Kent. If you are looking for a place to take your leashed dog, try Kiva Picnic Area from Valhalla Boathouse/Pier to Tallac Point in South Lake Tahoe, Echo Lakes on Echo Summit, Zephyr Shoals on the East Shore (the old Dreyfus Estate located north of Zephyr Cove Resort), Hidden and Chimney beaches on the East Shore, Coon Street Beach (at the boat launch) in King’s Beach, Kaspian and 64 Acres in Tahoe City.

For more information, visit the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit website or call (530) 543.2694.

Taylor Creek speaker series, movie nights begin in July

The Summer Keynote Speaker Series at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center begins the first week of July and continues every Thursday evening through August at the Lake of the Sky Amphitheater.

The series kicks off July 5 with “Wild Things” featuring Sierra Nevada native animals live on stage at 7pm.

Programs in July include “An Evening with Mark Twain” on July 12 at 7pm, “Winged flight at Night” on July 19 at 8:30pm and “Climate Change, Forests and Fire” on July 26 at 8:30pm.

The visitor center also offers an assortment of visitor and kids programs daily as well as “Wild Outdoor Movie Night” Saturday nights through August. Upcoming films include “Bears: an IMAX movie featuring bears of the world” on July 7 at 8:30pm, “Beaver: an IMAX movie featuring beaver behavior and more” on July 14 at 8:30pm, “Keeper of the Flame: fire behavior and how to be better prepared” on July 21 at 8:30pm and “Frogs: the Think Green Line” on July 28 at 8:30pm.

These programs are sponsored by the Forest Service and the Tahoe Heritage Foundation. The Tahoe Heritage Foundation is a non-profit organization that works with the Forest Service to conduct interpretive and environmental education programs in the Tahoe. Donations to the Tahoe Heritage Foundation are welcome.

The Taylor Creek Visitor Center is located approximately three miles north of South Lake Tahoe on the lake side of Highway 89.

For more information, call (530) 543.2674 or go online.

Series of guided hikes offered in Van Sickle park

The Sugar Pine Foundation is organizing guided hikes and tree climbing demonstrations at Van Sickle Bi-State Park this summer.

Join an expert naturalist to hike to the waterfall (about 2 miles) and learn about the king of pines.

When: June 30, July 20, July 27 and Aug. 4.

Time: 10am-noon.

Where: Nevada parking lot at Van Sickle Bi-State Park.

For the Saturday hikes, RSVP to Maria@SugarPineFoundation.org. More information is on the flyer.

For the Friday family hikes sign up on the Tahoe Rim Trail Association website.

El Dorado County embracing travelers who have dogs

El Dorado County offers plenty of things to do and places to go with your dog.

Travelers can turn to the new “El Dorado County Visitors’ Guide” featuring listings with paw prints to indicate pet-friendly attractions and lodging in the area. Along Main Street in Placerville, look for paw prints in windows to identify pet-friendly stores, shops and cafes.

There are hundreds of miles of scenic hiking trails where dogs are allowed on leashes or under direct voice control. Choices abound in the Eldorado National Forest and Desolation Wilderness.

On the West Shore, stay at Meeks Bay, where you’ll find a campground, resort and marina that are dog-friendly.

On the South Shore, Fallen Leaf and Tahoe Valley RV campgrounds welcome dogs.

Most El Dorado County farms and ranches welcome well-behaved dogs on leashes.

Many of the family owned wineries welcome well-mannered, leashed dogs, and several have winery dogs and cats on the property. Before visiting, contact destinations to verify that they are dog-friendly.

Adventure kayak trips on Lake Tahoe

Tahoe Adventure Company is offering several astronomy kayak and full moon kayak tours, as well as sunset kayak tours every Friday.

The next full moon kayak is July 3 from 7-10pm and the astronomy paddle is July 6 from 6-10pm.

For more information, call (530) 913.9212.

Olympic Day at South Lake Tahoe BMX

South Lake Tahoe BMX partners with USA BMX and the U.S. Olympic team to host a free race at the track on June 28.

The race is open to all ages and abilities and all participants will receive an Olympic Day certificate. All riders must wear long pants, long sleeve shirt and a helmet. Bicycles must pass a safety inspection prior to riding.

Registration begins at 5:30pm and racing starts at 7pm.

For more information, call the track hotline at (530) 542.9337.

The track is at 1100 Lyons Ave., South Lake Tahoe.

Paying attention to kids near water key to keeping them safe

By Warren Withers

For kids, summertime sure does ramp up the fun. And when it’s hot, it’s water they want. Consider these reminders when kids are looking to make a splash.

Watch them like a hawk. Pay close attention whenever kids are in or near water – and always keep little ones within arm's reach. Texting, phoning, reading or doing yard work could be risky distractions.



Warren Withers

Take precautions with pools. Remember, it takes only minutes for kids to wander away into danger.

Issue life jackets. These are especially important for the lake, but consider having young or inexperienced swimmers use them in swimming pools too. Water wings – inflatable arm flotation devices – are great for beginners, but children must be carefully supervised, as the devices are not a life jacket and will not prevent a child from going under the water.

Always know where they're going. Remind kids to ask before going near water, and never entrust their care to another child.

Don't forget the sunscreen. Always put kid-friendly sunscreen on your child before going outside, starting at 6 months of age. Be sure to re-apply every two hours and after getting out of the water. Hats, clothing and plenty of shade will help with sun protection in the Lake Tahoe area.

Most of all, have fun with your kids, and enjoy the summer.

Warren Withers is director of Emergency Services at Barton Memorial Hospital.

Mama bear rescues cub from South Tahoe garage

By CBS-13

A South Lake Tahoe homeowner captured incredible video of a bear cub trapped inside her garage and the momma bear doing whatever it took to rescue her baby.

It’s impossible to stop watching the video as the baby bear hangs on to garage door tracks, flings its legs around trying to find solid ground, sees the ladder, probably the same one it used to get up there.

One try. Two tries. And it sticks. Down the ladder goes baby into mama’s massive yet loving arms.

All of it was captured by Judy Coover.

“I had one foot in the door here, so I had an easy exit plan,” she told CBS13 on Monday. “I was tempted to go and pick him up, but I thought ‘No, where there’s a baby bear there’s a mama bear.”

Yes, a 500- to 600-pound mama just a few feet away trying to open the garage.

“It lifted a foot off the ground, then slammed back shut, lifted up, slammed back shut,” Judy said.

Read the whole story

Evening event all about the good bats do

Learn what bats eat, where they live, and why they are important. Bat sounds will be presented along with photos of bats from around the world at Washoe Lake State Park.

Bats: Truth or Tales is June 30 from 8:30-9:30pm.

Washoe Lake State Park is 18 miles south of Reno and five miles north of Carson City. From Highway 395, take the Eastlake Boulevard Exit (exit 44). The park entrance is on the left.

Local bat expert Brian Buttazoni will present the program.

There is no charge for the program, but there is a $7 per vehicle entry fee. Nevada residents receive a $2 discount.

Bring a blanket or lawn chair for the program.