LTWC begins rehabbing first bear cub of the season

Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care received its first cub of the season on Memorial Day. This is just two months after the last bear was released.

Weighing-in at 9.8 pounds, the little guy was given a physical by Kevin Willitts. Willitts, who owns Alpine Animal Hospital, is also the veterinarian for the South Shore animal rehab center. Willitts takes blood, checks the bear's ears and extremities.

The bear was found in Humboldt County. He was rescued because his mom had died.

When the little guy woke up he was fed watermelon, grapes and a special bear formula.

Today he will be placed in a temporary cage until he graduates to the bear cage later in the summer. By that time it's likely he will have playmates. It's common for LTWC to rehab several bears in a season.

"More than likely, this cub will be released next January or February, back in the Humboldt area," Tom Millham, secretary-treasurer with LTWC, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report



Because his mom died this cub will spend the next eight months at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care. Photos/LTWC



Kevin Willitts examines the cub that came to LTWC on May 28.

Lecture geared toward cyclists

Physical therapist Chris Kozlowski will talk about maximizing bike performance on June 6 from 6-7pm at Kahle Community Center in Stateline.

The event is free.

She will talk about increasing pedaling efficiency, proper bike fit benefits, and bike-specific stretching and exercises.

Dry conditions increasing threat for wildfire

The Bureau of Land Management Carson City District would is warning people to be aware of the increased chance of wildfire due to extreme dry conditions and warmer temperatures.

“The current conditions for this time of the year are dryer than what we have seen in the last 20 years,” Ken Smihula, fire management officer, said in a statement. “The public needs to be aware of the dry conditions and the very high risk of wildfire. We encourage everyone using public lands to be careful in regards to human-caused fires and take appropriate steps to prevent them.”

The following precautions should be taken:

Never leave a campfire unattended and always make sure they are dead out. Extinguish all campfires completely and stir ashes to make sure no hot coals remain.

Dispose of cigarettes in proper containers away from any flammable material.

If off-road vehicle use is allowed, internal combustion equipment should have a spark arrester. Avoid driving though dry vegetation.

Never use stoves, lanterns or heaters inside a tent.

Store flammable liquid containers in a safe place.

Do not shoot any tracer bullets or incendiary ammunition.

Shoot only at cardboard or paper targets, manufactured metallic targets or manufactured thrown-type clay targets.

Remember, shots fired across open desert can travel more than a mile.

At the first sign of a wildfire, leave area immediately by established trails or roads. Contact Sierra Front Interagency Dispatch Center at (775) 883.5995.

Nevada State Parks to discuss basin mountain bike trails

Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park will discuss the General Management Plan as it pertains to mountain bike trails on June 7 from 5:30-7:30pm.

The meeting is at the Chateau-Incline Golf Course, 955 Fairway Drive, Incline Village.

The plan currently includes miles of new trails and the opening of the Snow Valley Peak section of the Tahoe Rim Trail to mountain bikes.

El Dorado County youth plans to swim from Alcatraz to SF

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

A girl from the tiny community of Lotus, El Dorado County, hopes to make a big splash by becoming one of the youngest people to swim from Alcatraz to San Francisco on Memorial Day.

Nine-year-old Jordan Freer will enter the water from a boat with 350 adults competing in an organized swim near the famed island in San Francisco Bay about 8am on Monday.

About 1.5 miles later, if all works out the way as planned, young Jordan will have made her way through the cold, salty waters to a beach at the Presidio. Her father, Tom, will be swimming right next to her.

Jordan has been on a swim team since she had been 4 years old. To prepare for Monday’s swim, she has been training at Folsom Lake.

Read the whole story

5-day cycling event goes through parts of Tahoe

Cycle the Sierra is an annual cycling event that takes place between the Gold Country and Lake Tahoe.

This fully supported, five-day tour starts June 23 and takes riders 300 miles beneath granite peaks, through evergreen

forests, into alpine hot springs, to Lake Tahoe, over the fourth highest bridge in the United States, to the site where gold was discovered starting the California Gold Rush, and through numerous unique and historical communities along the way.

Each day is 50-70 miles.

At night cyclists camp under the stars. Camps feature a beer garden, stage with live music, food, massage therapists, yoga sessions, bike mechanics and 300 other cyclists.

For more information, email info@cyclethesierra.com or call (530) 320.1625.

Venus Transit viewing at Sand Harbor

Space Science for Schools in collaboration with Sand Harbor Nevada State Park are sponsoring a free public astronomical viewing of the last Venus Transit of the solar disc this century.

The event in the past was used to establish the size of the Solar System and measurements of the size of the Sun and Venus.

Specially equipped telescopes for solar viewing will be provided by Space Science for Schools to follow this epic event.

The event is June 5 from 5-7pm at Sand Harbor.

For more information, click on the flyer.

TRTA looking for AmeriCorps volunteers

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association is looking for two people fill AmeriCorps summer of Service positions. The positions will run from June 7-Aug. 24.

AmeriCorps members will receive a $2,000 living stipend, a $1,000 education award, CPR and first aid training, and the opportunity to give back to trails.

The AmeriCorps member at the Tahoe Rim Trail Association will provide 300 hours of support assisting with volunteer trail work days, backcountry camps and other trail operations programs. Member will maintain inventory of field gear and tools, provide vehicle support, and provide logistical support for the TRTA annual through hike and Youth Back Country Camps. Additionally, member will collect GPS data and improve GIS mapping of the trail.

Valid driver’s license needed.

For more information, call (775) 298.0186.

Deadline to apply is June 1.

California invasive weed problem could grow with budget cuts

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

It doesn't take a botanist or even a nature nut to identify yellow star thistle along a favorite hiking trail. Every outdoor enthusiast has felt the familiar stab of introduction.

The invasive weed can reach 6 feet high with stiff limbs that seem to sprout daggers from every pore. Each arm is topped with a crown of inch-long spikes – and one showy yellow flower – that seem perfectly placed to stab a shoulder or poke an eye.

Yellow star thistle is public enemy No. 1 in the California weed world, found in every county but one and covering as much as 14 million acres. It is blamed for altering native landscapes, turning meadows into deserts and even killing horses, which are uniquely vulnerable to a toxin in the plant's leaves.

"Yellow star thistle is kind of like the state weed," said Doug Johnson, executive director of the California Invasive Plant Council, a nonprofit research group. "There's tons of it."

A coordinated effort across 14 counties has made strides in recent years to keep star thistle out of the Sierra Nevada, one of the few California regions the weed has not yet penetrated entirely. But now star thistle appears poised to win that battle, too, with a powerful ally on its side: state budget cuts.

The Star Thistle Leading Edge Project was funded by the state

Department of Food and Agriculture as part of its weed control budget totaling $2.7 million in 2011. The money funded county weed management agencies statewide, as well as coordination among Sierra counties from Plumas to Kern, which jointly drew a line at about the 4,000-foot elevation mark to combat star thistle.

All that money was cut from the 2011-2012 state budget cycle.

Over the past year, the Leading Edge Project cobbled together local and federal dollars, including grants from the U.S. Forest Service. But that money runs out next month. The project sought a $314,000 grant from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to continue the work for four years. But it learned Thursday the grant will not be funded because the group failed to meet the application requirements.

The result? Weed experts say yellow star thistle could begin to crowd out native plants in the Sierra, becoming a common sight – and literally a thorn in the side – for hikers, cattle ranchers and other nature lovers who enjoy the mountains as they are, free of this prickly nuisance.

“Walking through it is totally miserable. It’s a terrible plant,” said Garrett Dickman, a botanist and biologist at Yosemite National Park. “I deal with quite a variety of nonnative plants, and I try to be professional about them. But I personally dislike yellow star thistle. I’ve been jabbed by it so many times. It’s a really easy plant to hate.”

Read the whole story

Firewood sale permits to be available in Tahoe basin

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will begin the sale of fuelwood permits at the South Shore office on June 4 and at the North Shore office on June 6.

Permits cost $20 per cord with a two-cord minimum purchase and a limit of 10-cords per household.

Permits have specific conditions and complete information is provided when the permit is issued. Maps to designated cutting areas are provided and must be in your possession along with the valid permit. The permit is for collection of “down-dead” wood up to a 30-inch maximum diameter in designated fuelwood areas within the Lake Tahoe Basin. “Down-dead” means the tree is down on the ground and dead, rather than dead and standing. Cutting any standing tree, whether dead or green, is not allowed.

Permit holders should keep vehicles on National Forest roads. No off-road travel is allowed and permit holders must comply with all permit conditions.

Permits are available through Oct. 31 at the LTBMU Supervisor’s Office at 35 College Drive in South Lake Tahoe, Monday through Friday, 8am-4:30pm and at 855 Alder Ave. in Incline Village, Wednesday through Friday, 8am to 4:30pm.