Products in stores can be a death sentence for wildlife

By Cheryl Millham

I received a call asking if I had ever heard about a product called Bird Repellent by Tanglefoot. The person told me they were going to do some work on their house and wanted to stop any birds from nesting.

Tom and I were in town a few days later and stopped to buy this Bird Repellent. It made me sick when I read the warnings on the label.

First, there are hazards to humans and domestic animals. It can cause eye injury and is harmful if absorbed through the skin. In addition, it says to avoid contact with the skin. When you apply, wear goggles or a face shield, wear disposable gloves and consider using a respirator approved by the U.S. Bureau of Mines.

“Under environmental hazards, small birds may become fatally entrapped by the tack repellent.”

Think about what you just read. If this product is so toxic to humans, what in the world do you think it will do to birds, which do not wear rubber gloves or goggles and are not able to wash their feet or feathers?

This product is fatal to small birds. Please, do not use this bird repellent product – ever.

Another bad product for the life of many species of wildlife is the glue strip. I can tell you so many sad stories about some of the birds and chipmunks we have been able to save,

and, some we could not. Please, do not use glue strips.

I got a call from a young man who is a student at South Tahoe Middle School. He asked for information about Cliff Swallows. Upon questioning him, it turned out that some of the students were making a documentary about how good Cliff Swallows are for our environment.

He told me some students were throwing rocks at the nest, knocking the nest down. The nest had babies in it and they were killed when it hit the ground. Cliff Swallows are federally protected. It is illegal to disturb a Cliff Swallow nest when there are eggs and/or babies in the nest. It is accompanied with a hefty fine and/or jail time.

If you need some help with these birds, give us a call and we can offer some suggestions.

Some of the species of birds – in Tahoe during the summer months – come all the way from South America, just to raise their family. Unfortunately, they are met with hostility and death.

I wish we could welcome all of our birds as they arrive each spring.

Years ago, I got a call from a maintenance worker as he found dead birds on top of a time share roof. It turned out that the management was putting poisoned seed to kill the pigeons. But every bird that eats seed came for a free meal. There were about 30 dead song birds, along with a few pigeons.

Because of his concerns and his phone call we were able to put a stop to this one.

Again, please consider calling Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care (530.577.2273) if you have a situation where wildlife is a bother to you. We probably have come across a similar situation and have some suggestions for you.

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

Spend long weekend building mountain bike trails

TAMBA is putting on two trail days this weekend.

The first is Sunday on the Tyrolean Downhill Trail. Meet at 9am May 27 at the lower Diamond Peak parking lot across from the Big Water Grill. Workers will then caravan to the work site.

Volunteers must wear long pants, long sleeves and sturdy footwear. Bring drinking water and work gloves. A burrito lunch from T's will be provided and Village Ski Loft will be providing a cooler of drinks at the end of the day.

The Reno Pump Track will break ground later May 28 with TAMBA and the Poedunks hosting a community build day from 9am until mid-afternoon.

The location is Panther Valley Park, 650 Link Lane, Reno. There is plenty of room for parking around the corner on Western Drive.

Volunteer to work all or part of the day, every little bit helps. Monday's work day will involve the finishing and dialing in of the multiple tracks and jump lines. Wear Long pants, gloves, and sturdy shoes (no sandals, Teva's, Crocs,

etc,). We will be using hand tools and most will be provided. But rakes, square shovels, or tampers would be welcome.

Feel free to bring your bikes and helmets for test rides.

Black Rock Bicycles will be providing a barbecue lunch for all volunteers.

The grand opening party is tentatively scheduled for late afternoon on June 22.

Elementary track meet at STMS in June

The 8th edition of the South Shore 4-5 Elementary Track & Field Classic is June 5 at at South Tahoe Middle School.

This meet will include girls and boys from throughout the region.

In 2011 more than 500 parents and friends witnessed 400 student-athletes compete, with seven meet records broken.

The event is from 4-8pm. The cost is $4 for adults and free to kids.

Common sense stressed for crowded waters this weekend

The California Department of Boating and Waterway's urges boaters to be properly prepared for safe boating this Memorial Day weekend.

California's waterways will be crowded with motorized and non-motorized vessels. People will boat in groups creating numerous distractions, which can have deadly consequences.



A Lake Tahoe boater gets assistance. Photo/LTN file

Below are some ways in which boat operators can decrease the chances of being involved in a boating accident:

Wear a life jacket.

Avoid alcohol. Everyone who drinks alcohol on board is at risk. Passengers can easily fall overboard, swim near the propeller, or cause vessels to capsize.

Designate a person aboard the vessel to help you act as a lookout.

Carry the required safety equipment such as fire extinguishers, sound signals, navigation lights, and life jackets for every person on board.

Inform everyone on board where the required safety equipment is located.

Turn off the engine when the boat is not moving to avoid propeller injuries.

Detailed information about this information and additional life saving tips can be found in boating safety courses online.

4-day camp trains cyclists for Death Ride

The 13th annual Near Death Experience will take place at Kirkwood Mountain Resort from June 7-10.

This camp prepares riders for the Death Ride, the 129-mile bike tour of the California Alps on July 14.

Led by coach Rob Panzera from Cycling Camp San Diego, campers will be provided the knowledge and hands-on training necessary to conquer the Death Ride. Each day consists of on-the-road coaching, including cycling safety, bike positioning, descending skills, climbing skills, nutrition tips, Death Ride insight and additional tools to master the event.

Riders will also have a chance to experience all three mountain passes of the Death Ride tour, depending on ability and inclination. Broken out among the three days of camp, riders can get a feel for the route by riding over Monitor

Pass (8,314 feet), Ebbetts Pass (8,730 feet) and Carson Pass (8,573 feet).

Participants in the camp are also guaranteed entry into the 2012 Death Ride, for which open registration is now closed. For a detailed camp itinerary or to register, click here.

Modest river flows a good thing for rafting season

By Paul McHugh, Sacramento Bee

California must have some of the hardest-working water in the world. Our mountains scrape abundant snowfall out of the sky to offer a playground for skiers and snowboarders.

Then, as snow melts in spring, runoff gushes down river canyons and provides thrills to rafters and kayakers.

Ultimately, of course, the stuff offers habitat for fish (and anglers), generates hydro power, gives us working showers, irrigates farms and provides so many other blessings into the bargain.

Each whitewater season has its own profile. For 2012, late spring and summer river-running looks to be benign, filled with sun and fun, reasonably safe, and of surprisingly long duration. Especially if you compare 2012 with last year, when a double- deep snowpack created an embarrassment of riches. Too many rivers ran too cold and too high for too long. It was

mid-summer before recreational users could really enjoy their sports. In contrast, this year the watchword is: Get out there right now, and begin enjoying yourself.

“Last season, all our whitewater outfitters had a pretty slow start,” said Dan Crandall, who runs Current Adventures kayak school and The River Store on the popular south fork of the American River at Coloma. “But this year, many rivers that have little or no dam control, like the Carson, are sweet and runnable right now. And other drainages that are metered with dams and reservoirs, such as the south fork and the Trinity, have enough water to provide good recreation all summer long.”

Known whitewater runs are divided into classes, based on the difficulty of their rapids. Class II-III runs provide suitable fun for beginners and families; Class III-IV runs are better reserved for those with some experience; and Class IV-V drops are best left to experts.

Read the whole story

Financial pact smooths path for Tahoe to host Olympics

By Susan Wood

With international and U.S. Olympic officials paving the ski trail this week for future bids in the States, organizers of a bi-state coalition to bring the 2022 Games to the Tahoe-Reno region solidified their dedication to the monumental effort.

It’s early, and there’s a lot to do. But great feats don’t happen overnight – and resolution is always within reach to

those who go for the gold. The International and U.S. Olympic committees agreeing on a revenue sharing plan in Quebec City after a two-year quagmire may serve as proof to that.



The Olympic flame may be reignited in 2022 in Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN

The last time the United States hosted the Olympics was 2002 in Salt Lake City and before that 1996 in Atlanta. In the last decade, the nation was perceived to have been snubbed.

The two entities were debating over a 1996 pact in the level of sponsorship revenue and broadcasting rights. The IOC believed the U.S. share was excessive. In the end, the USOC would take a lesser percentage after 2012 and absorb $20 million in Games costs, the *Washington Post* reported Wednesday.

Further details will be available next week, Lake Tahoe-Reno regional coalition Chief Executive Officer Jon Killoran, who was in Canada for the meetings, told *Lake Tahoe News*. He deferred comments to Squaw Valley-Alpine Meadows Chief Executive Officer Andy Wirth. Squaw was home to the 1960 Winter Games, an event made possible by the insurmountable

persistence and vision of the late Squaw founder Alex Cushing.

Wirth, the interim chairman for the Lake Tahoe Winter Games Exploratory Committee, told *Lake Tahoe News* "any kind of progress" is a good thing for the ambitious effort.

"It's a great day for the U.S. Olympic Committee and Olympic movement," Wirth said.

"On one hand, it's great news. On the other hand, we have a lot of work to do," he said. "And regardless of this news, our effort really hasn't changed."

The introductory stages for Tahoe-Reno have included filling out a board of up to 25 members. The panel is currently 20 members – full of high-powered talent. Among the members are Nevada Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki, former Squaw owner-executive Nancy Cushing, Vail Resorts co-President of Mountain Operations Blaise Carrig, Reno Tahoe International Airport chief Krys Bart and Olympian Daron Rahlves, one of the greatest men's downhill racers of all time.

Now the coalition wants to organize an environmental standards committee to handle some of the biggest concerns surrounding the Reno-Tahoe bid. Denver and Salt Lake City are also vying for the 2022 Games, with Bozeman, Mont., joining the quest.

"This could be the most intriguing part – to have an environmentally sensitive Games," Wirth proposed.

One board member would lead the to-be-formed environmental committee, which is described by the Squaw head as one of "the most tangible things" the Games coalition has worked on.

The effort to bring the Games back to Tahoe started in 2001 with Reno sports commissioner Jim Vanden Heuvel, who died three years ago. The drive has enlisted the assistance of California Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, state Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, and a San Francisco Bay Area sporting event group.

The USOC could decide to focus its attention on the 2024 Summer Olympic Games. Either way, a layer of tension has been lifted with the May 23 news.

“It’s good if we have an agreement because this has created difficulties in the relations with USOC,” Swiss IOC executive board member Denis Oswald said early Tuesday according to an ESPN report.

STHS students plant rare yellow cress on shore of Tahoe

Nine South Tahoe High students, three scientists and one conservation coordinator spent part of Saturday planting 300 yellow cress on the beach at Edgewood Tahoe.

Edgewood Companies is participating in a volunteer program called the Tahoe Yellow Cress Stewardship Program and has been assisting with inventory surveys since 1979.



Tyler Meyers and Jocelyn DeLeon on May 19 plant yellow cress. Photo/Provided

The endangered plant only grows in Lake Tahoe.

The students – Leighton Cook, Jocelyn DeLeon, Tyler Meyers, Sam Burba, Nicholas Brogna, Kayla Owens, Larissa Gloutak, Jera Barney, and Rebecca Wesson – are part of Generation Green Club,

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Tahoe National Forest sites ready for visitors

Most campgrounds and recreation sites within the Tahoe National Forest will be open for Memorial Day; however snow is expected to keep some of the more popular trails closed until early or mid-June.

There are still some snow banks in the high country, especially on north facing slopes or in shaded areas.

Even so, fire season is arriving earlier than usual,

especially on the east side of the forest. Campfire permits are required outside of developed campgrounds and are free at all Forest Service, BLM, and CalFire offices.

The following status report of campgrounds, roads and trails is listed by major transportation corridor or area.

The campgrounds are open around Boca, Prosser and Stampede reservoirs. Water has not been tested for Prosser Reservoir. Contact the Truckee District Office for more information on water availability for Prosser sites (530.587.3558). The Sawtooth and 5 Lakes Trails are open. The Commemorative Overland Emigrant Trail is also open for mountain bikes or hiking.

Rivers are running fast, cold and high. Caution should be taken near the water – especially with children and pets.

For more information, go online.

Storm may dampen start of Memorial Day weekend

Enjoy the sunshine in Lake Tahoe because it’s about to go away.

It wouldn’t be a normal Memorial Day weekend if nasty weather weren’t in the forecast. The brunt of the bad weather is expected to land Friday. The National Weather Service in Reno is calling for 70 percent chance for rain-snow showers.



Wind is an issue at Kings Beach on May 23, but rain could be the word of the day Friday. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Those odds drop to 30 percent on Saturday.

Sun will dominate Sunday and Monday.