Taking care of injured, unwanted wildlife should be immediate

By Cheryl Millham

I am so sad because a baby Steller's Jay was never brought in for care. I have had to learn just to let things go, but it still hurts.

As the story goes, I got a call last Saturday from a young lady at Lake Tahoe Community College saying some Jays built a nest on a piece of equipment and one egg hatched on Friday. Since she called me on Saturday, I told her to let the baby Jay stay as long as it could with its mom. I explained it only takes 23 days before the baby will fledge and leave the nest and would they be able to wait.

She told me the piece of equipment had to be used this week. I told her to bring in the nest – with the baby to the wildlife center – just before they would use the equipment.

We would then complete the "raising" of the baby. Well, here it is, a week later, and no baby. I do not know if they just threw out the nest with the baby (yes, it has been done before), or if someone took it home to raise, which is illegal in most states (including California).

Let me tell you why this is a bad idea.

It takes 14 days for an egg to hatch and 23 to 25 days for the baby bird to leave the nest. This is called fledging. The young bird goes to the ground to hop around and learn to fly. The parents feed it and encourage it to fly. Some kids are

quick learners and some take a few days.

If the baby bird does not get the proper diet – due to the fact they develop so fast in 23–25 days – they cannot develop strong bones and feathers. Baby birds get fed every 15 minutes for 14 hours, plus have to be kept warm.

If you know you are going to do work on your house or paint it and can't leave a nest alone for one month, please do not let the birds build a nest at your house.

Brewers Blackbirds might seem cute, building their nest and sitting on eggs, but once the eggs hatch and they are caring for their babies, they become very protective and will dive bomb anyone who gets close to the nest. Sometimes, even hitting people on the head.

One of our senior volunteers called this week and said her dog alerted her that something was in the chimney. So, she opened the flu and saw an adult raccoon looking down at her. So, she called LTWC for some direction.

She thought the raccoon was stuck. I assured her that raccoons climb up and down inside chimneys just like they do trees. They have their babies inside a chimney because to them it is a safe place.

Warning – do not start a fire. Doing this can kill her and if she has already had her babies, they will suffocate as well.

One way to get the raccoons to leave is to use regular scented Pine Sol. Soak the Pine Sol on some rags and stuff them up in the chimney (using a stick, pole, branch, etc.) close to where the raccoon is trying to nest. The fumes will definitely cause her to re-think where she should make her nest. Only use "regular" Pine Sol.



These newly hatched birds are called nestlings. They have just hatched and have no feathers. They rely on mom entirely for warmth, food and safety. Photo/LTWC

I got a call back about 30 minutes later by our volunteer, saying that within 5 minutes the mom raccoon made a bee line out of the chimney. She went to get her camera to take a picture of mom coming out of the chimney, but she had already left.

Please feel free to call Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care (530.577.2273) to receive some directions if you have wildlife trying to move in with you and your family. We have lots of suggestions.

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

Fields committee has full agenda for May 21 meeting

The Fields Advisory Committee of the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority has equity of facilities as its first action item on the agenda.

The meeting is May 21 at 4pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.

Other items for possible action include a workshop on a master plan, review of estimated costs, discussing ways to get volunteers and other funding, and possibly recommending priorities.

Here is a draft of field work being talked about.

Heavenly proposing changes for summer, winter guests

By Kathryn Reed

Riding four-wheelers on what are normally ski runs, more trails to hike on, an outdoor events center – those are just some of the offerings Heavenly Mountain Resort wants to provide guests in the coming years.

The U.S. Forest Service is taking comments until mid-June on

the resort's proposed plans.

"A lot of the hiking is just on the roads, which is not the best. We think this will be a big improvement," Matt Dickinson with Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Heavenly may put in a hiking trail that would eliminate the need to use Tamarack chairlift in the summer. Photo/LTN file

He is overseeing the application process. The Forest Service, as owner of most of the land Heavenly operates on, must make sure proposals fit into the already approved master plan and that the public has time to voice its opinions.

The hiking trail that would go from the base of the Tamarack chairlift to the top where it would intersect with other routes has been in the master plan for years.

Exact alignment of the trail will be determined by Heavenly and Forest Service officials working in cooperation by surveying the land together.

Dickinson also said his agency will walk the route where Heavenly wants to install a surface tow lift so people can better access Player's Terrain Park on Upper Powderbowl run. This would keep skiers-boarders in the park without having to

take a chairlift.

To do this means taking out about 60 trees, six of which are more than 24 inches in diameter.

“The Jeep tours will start from the Tamarack Lodge or the top of the lift and go on to the top of Sky chair and possibly down and continue a loop back to the gondola,” Dickinson said.

With the passage in 2011 by Congress of an act that encourages more recreation on Forest Service land in the summer, this allows local land managers to approve more activities that had previously been frowned upon.

“More people visit Tahoe in the summer than the winter. We want to provide a more robust experience, have more attractions up there,” Heavenly spokesman Russ Pecoraro said of the top of the gondola area.

He also said not to expect any of the changes for summer recreation to come this season.

Pecoraro told *Lake Tahoe News* the timing of the Forest Service decision along with when corporate offices determine the capital improvement budget will dictate what is put in the ground this summer. Plus, the short construction season will also play a role.

Concerts at the Tamarack Lodge are being talked about for the future.

A summer pass for the gondola is $59. Still to be determined is if that will include a ride up Tamarack chairlift.

It’s likely the tubing hill for the summer – which operates on a synthetic turf-like surface – will have two lanes instead of one like last summer. Just enough snow still exists that the hill will not be open Memorial Day weekend when the gondola starts spinning again. And there’s not enough snow to tube on.

The gondola will be open next weekend from 10am-4pm each day and then everyday from 10am-5pm starting June 8 and until just past Labor Day.

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Info: For more information on the proposal or how to comment, contact Matt Dickinson at (530) 543.2769 or go online.

April one of the warmest on record

By Nick Wiltgen, Weather.com

The waning influence of La Niña helped April 2012 to become the fifth warmest April worldwide in 133 years of recordkeeping, and the warmest April on record in the Northern Hemisphere, according to scientists at NOAA's National Climatic Data Center.

The global average temperature of 57.87 degrees F last month was about 1.2 degrees above the 20th-century average. It was the greatest departure from that average since November 2010. The Northern Hemisphere was even farther above average, running a record 1.7 degrees above the 20th-century baseline.

Earlier this month, scientists determined that La Niña had ended during April as water temperatures continued to warm across the equatorial Pacific Ocean. La Niña is typically associated with relatively cooler global temperatures.

Read the whole story

Contractors being sought for Stateline bike route

One segment of the Stateline-to-Stateline bike trail should break ground this summer.

The bid process is open. Potential contractors have until June 1 at 1:30pm to submit their proposals.

Last fall planners had hoped to seek bids in April for the 3.2-mile south demo part of the larger 30-mile route that goes from Stateline to Crystal Bay.

The plan is the demo site, which goes from Stateline to Round Hill Pines, will be built in three phases – three consecutive summers. The middle section will be built first because it is all on U.S. Forest Service land through Rabe Meadow.

The three South Shore segments are:

• Casino area to Kahle Drive

• Kahle Drive to Elks Point Road

• Elks Point Road to Round Hill Pines.

Tahoe Transportation District is the lead agency.

Planning is under way for the north end, but not to the level it is on the south.

For more information about bidding on the south project, contact Alfred Knotts at (775) 589.5503 or

aknotts@tahoetransportation.org.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

1,188 – South Lake Tahoe sets a Guinness cycling record

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe is headed for the Guinness Book of World Records because 1,188 bicyclists rode in a single file on Thursday afternoon.

This broke the record of 916 cyclists who did the same thing in Davis.



More than 1,000 cyclists wait to be counted May 17

as they set a world record for the most number of riders in a single file. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Paperwork needs to be reviewed by the Guinness folks, along with the video of the riders, so it's not official until organizers hear back from London.

"It was way more thank I expected," Mark Cutright told *Lake Tahoe News* as he watched the cyclists roll through the official counting station near the senior center.

He said about 1,200 tags were printed out that were attached to handlebars. To be counted, a cyclist had to ride through the counting station. Kids in carriers were not counted – just the adult doing the work. Nor were the dogs in carriers and baskets counted.

The Slow Rollers bicycle group put on the event. Cutright credits Steve Barker for coming up with the idea. The city participated by giving a police, fire and ambulance escort. Cutright did the legwork of getting the permits to allow for a lane of traffic to be dedicated to the cyclists from the Y to the senior center parking lot.

Joanne King of South Lake Tahoe was riding through when the record was broken, while it was Jeremy Jensen who was the last rider.

When the fire truck sounded its horn at 4:20pm May 17, the cyclists gathered in the soon to be T.J. Maxx parking lot whooped it up.

Bob Harms with his 18 horns – one even from Brazil – and four dingers had already been adding to the festivities before any pedaling began.

Besides being an event to set a record, it was a costume

parade. It was a bit remarkable the footwear people could pedal in – from sandals to cowboy boots to heels.

Goofy hats and helmets that were decorated filled the mass. Full costume suits from bears to Tigger to a bumblebee were on two wheels.

However, some bikes came with three wheels, and at least one was a unicycle. With all the shapes and sizes of bikes, it was a bit like a museum. Bill Yale was on a Coker from the early 1970s.

It was a slow ride – living up to the organizer's name – as it took about an hour for the first cyclist to reach MontBleu.

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Truckee River restoration creates new trail system

By Emerson Marcus, Reno Gazette-Journal

Explorer John C. Fremont originally named the Truckee River the Salmon Trout River in 1844 because of its exceptionally tasty resident.

The trout, and the vegetation that blossomed from the river, have seen their share of detrimental effects from urbanization, but local groups are looking to change that and build it as a place for people to enjoy its serenity.

The Nature Conservancy completed a decadelong $6.5 million beautification effort May 6 on the river east of Sparks traveling through McCarran Ranch and Mustang Ranch.

“The lower river has not had public access for people to enjoy for many decades,” Nature Conservancy spokesman Michael Cameron said. “The land, up until recently, has all been privately owned.”

The nine-mile stretch, with its new public affiliation, has given Janet Phillips a leg up in her vision of a 116-mile bike path that follows the river.

That leg up comes seven years to the month after the project completed its first achievement with the completion of the Mogul-Verdi bike path.

The Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway will celebrate the seventh anniversary of that path Sunday. Nearly two-thirds of the path along the river has been completed since the project started in 2003, Phillips said.

Read the whole story

USFS listens – saves popular trails in Fallen Leaf Lake area

By Kathryn Reed

While a final decision has not been made about what the Fallen Leaf Lake-Camp Richardson area trail system will look like, the U.S. Forest Service has incorporated the public’s views

into the alternatives that are now under consideration.

Two trails on the far end of Fallen Leaf Lake that end on private property were going to be decommissioned as was a trail on the west side of Taylor Creek.



Jacob Quinn with the U.S. Forest Service on May 16 talks about plans to change trails in the Fallen Leaf Lake-Camp Richardson area. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Public outcry has the Forest Service rethinking its original plans. Those three trails are in Alternative 4 – the preferred alternative of the six that will be included in the environmental analysis when it is released in mid-July.

“We would devote significant energy to keep those trails and get the easements,” Jacob Quinn said of the trails on the west end of Fallen Leaf.

Quinn, who is leading the charge on this project for the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, gave a presentation Wednesday at the South Lake Tahoe branch of the county library.

By some accounts, those trails have been used for close to 100 years.

The trail next to Taylor Creek has a steep bank that is eroding that could mean relocating that section back about 35 feet. Otherwise, that trail is not likely to see much upgrading.

“There may be be stone steps or native material to get to the creek,” Quinn said.

Quinn explained the five ratings for trails go from being accessible for practically everyone to rugged where being hit by a branch while mountain biking would be expected.

All Forest Service trails in the basin are open for multiple uses – hiking, biking, equestrian – but trail builders create routes that are more desirable for certain users to naturally keep them separate.

“It’s not just recreation we look at,” Quinn told the group.

This is why the trail to Mount Tallac via Spring Creek will be decommissioned. This is a breeding area for northern goshawk.

This summer the agency will also try to determine if Lahontan cutthroat trout are in Taylor Creek.

Yellow cress is one of the plant species the Forest Service will be paying attention to.

While more than 13,000 acres are included in the plan area of this heavily used system on the South Shore, a much smaller area will be touched.

The point of the Fallen Leaf Lake Trail Access and Travel Management Proposal is to create a user-friendly trail system with routes that are all designated and then maintained by the Forest Service. Gone will be the user-created trails.

The problem is trampling on so much land compromises vegetation and habitat. It’s also a safety concern because land managers may not travel those routes and therefore not

find someone who is injured.

In showing maps of what is in the area now compared to what could be there in several years when the work is completed, more loops and fewer offshoots are visible.

But new routes are also slated to be built – like one between Tahoe Mountain and Fallen Leaf Lake. More parking is expected to be put in at Tahoe Mountain, too.

Gone completely, at least as proposed now, will be all the routes from West Way through the meadow to the dirt trails to the east of the paved Camp Rich trail. People in the Tahoe Keys-Tahoe Island areas use this to avoid the masses on the paved trail. A private property owner who lives part time on that street in fall 2009 cut off access to mountain bike riders who would use the edge of his property to get to or from the meadow. According to Quinn, even the California Tahoe Conservancy parcel farther up the street will no longer be an access point for the meadow.

Unrelated to this massive project is the repair work to the Pope-Baldwin Bike Path (aka Camp Rich paved trail) that started Tuesday. This is a stopgap measure to fill in the holes on the heavily used route.

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Note: More information about the project is online. The draft EA when it is released this summer will be out for public comment for 30 days. The final EA is expected to be done in mid-October.

Annual bike ride big money for leukemia, Lake Tahoe area

By Curtis Fong

Imagine the scenic beauty of Lake Tahoe with its crystal clear blue waters surrounded by towering majestic snow capped peaks. Imagine being able to ride a bicycle around its 72-mile shoreline or a 100-mile century ride.

On June 3, more than 3,300 bicycling enthusiasts from all over the country will participate in the 21st annual America's Most Beautiful Bike Ride around Lake Tahoe. This fun ride is not a race, but a tour and promotes the Lake Tahoe Bikeway project, the master plan to construct and inter-connect all the bike lanes around Lake Tahoe.



Curtis Fong

The event is sold out.

The ride is also the culmination of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's spring Team In Training Cycle 100 national fund raising program where 1,300-plus participants from 59 chapters and branches are participating and expect to raise more than $6.5 million.

During the past 14 years, TNT has brought nearly 19,500 participants to Lake Tahoe for America's Most Beautiful Bike Ride, bringing their total funds raised to $68.5 million.

Since its founding in 1949, the society has invested more than $750 million in research to support their mission of finding a cure for leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin’s disease and myeloma and to improve the quality of life for patients and families.

Curtis Fong, in addition to being Lake Tahoe News’ ski reporter, produces America’s Most Beautiful Bike Ride.

Tahoe City Field Station schedules open house

Join UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center researchers for an open house at the Tahoe City Field Station at 2400 Lake Forest Road from 10am-2pm June 2.

Tour the historic building, talk to scientists about their work, and learn something about Lake Tahoe.

The UC Davis Tahoe City Field Station has evolved from its origins as a state fish hatchery to a field station for UC Davis researchers at Lake Tahoe. The Field Station houses the Eriksson Education Center, native plant demonstration garden, a small laboratory facility, and the equipment necessary for researchers to boat on, dive in, and scientifically examine Lake Tahoe.

The living laboratory and demonstration garden of native plants surrounding the Field Station provide visitors an opportunity to learn about truly “green” gardening.

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, the Eriksson Education Center offers visitors an opportunity to explore the facility at their pace with self-guided tours between 8am and 6pm daily. Volunteer docents are available on Saturdays from 10am-2pm for guided tours and hands-on science activities.