Para-snowboarding in Sochi Games could have Tahoe ties

Publisher's note: ***It is possible Brent Kuemmerle of Meyers would be the first Paralympic snowboarding coach for the United States.***

Two medal events in para-snowboard will be included in the Alpine Skiing program at the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games.

This brings to 72 the number of medal events at the Sochi 2014 Games and is the first time para-snowboard events have been included.

Gunnar Tveit, World Snowboard Federation president, in a press release said, "Knowing that the riders will have the chance to compete in the sport they love in 2014 is rewarding not only because the athletes will be recognized for their hard work but also because the inclusion of para-snowboard in the Sochi 2014 Winter Games will provide an unprecedented level of exposure to the sport."

The qualification criteria for the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games will be released online May 28.

Motherlode Century accepting cyclists

Cyclists from far and wide are signing up for the May 20 Motherlode Century.

Staged in the foothills of the historic Gold Country, the Motherlode offers three ride options: The Gold Dust (31 miles), The Gold Nugget (67 miles) and the Motherlode (100 miles).

The century bike ride benefits the American River Conservancy and Breathe California Sacramento Emigrant Trail charities. The start/finish and host camp is Earthtrek Expeditions in Lotus on the South Fork of the American River in the Coloma Valley.

Find out more online or contact Rob Swain at motherlodecentury@live.com or (530) 544.8705.

Limited public access in Ray May Fire area

A 6-square-mile area owned by the Bureau of Land Management near Gardnerville will have restrictions until Aug. 1, 2014.

Vehicles and woodcutting won’t be allowed in the Ray May burn area while rehab work is preformed.

Signs will be posted saying what areas are open.

Two teen-age boys started the first Aug. 16 by not fully

extinguishing their campfire.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Influx of rabbits in Lake Tahoe brings more bobcats

By Cheryl Millham

The first babies of the 2012 wildlife season arrived on April 17 when Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care received five mountain cottontail bunnies, which were dug up by a dog.



It is sad to say one of the bunnies did not make it. However, the other four are doing very well.

If you would like to see these little ones, go to our website, click on “photos and videos” and you will see their first feeding.

During the past two years, more and more bunnies – mostly mountain cottontails – have been spotted in the Lake Tahoe Basin. People have told us that they have lived here for 25 years (and longer) and have never seen a rabbit.

Now the bunnies are living under wood piles and decks. At the end of February, we saw some rabbit tracks in the snow in the wildlife compound area, but did not see one until the middle of March. By the end of April, we were seeing the one in our yard on a regular basis, especially in the evening.



Many baby squirrels arrive at LTWC still in the nest that was in a hole in a tree which was cut down. Photos/LTWC

Why am I telling you about the abundance of rabbits? Because in nature when you have prey, you will have predators.



Until their eyes open -- normally at 3 to 4 weeks of age -- baby squirrels must be fed a special formula via a syringe.

Can you guess what animal likes to eat rabbit more than

anything else? Bobcats!

Last summer we had numerous sightings of bobcats on the South Shore.

Have they been seen before? Yes. But, we heard of more sightings last year than any other year.

Let me assure you of this fact. Bobcats do not eat dogs and cats. They do not attack people of any size or age. But they do love rabbits.

So, here is another chance to observe wildlife in the wild, co-existing around us and living a normal life. Enjoy them, do not put out any food for them and be happy we can all live together.

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

Brighter, closer moon than usual fills the night sky



A Super Moon lights up the

Lake Tahoe Basin on May 4.
Photo/LTN

Expect some loud howling for a couple nights. And it won't have anything to do with Cinco de Mayo celebrations.

Look up – that's a Super Moon lighting up the sky.

On May 5 at 8:34pm the moon will be 14 percent larger than normal and 30 percent brighter.

NASA has a video about the special moon.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Lawsuit filed to stop feds' wildlife damage control program

By Tom Knudson, Sacramento Bee

The federal government's wildlife damage control program is based on outdated science and indiscriminate tools that kill many non-target animals, including protected species, according to a lawsuit filed Monday by WildEarth Guardians, a Colorado-based environmental group.

The focus of the lawsuit is a little-known arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture called Wildlife Services that has long specialized in killing animals that are deemed to pose a threat to agriculture, the public and – more recently – the

environment.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Las Vegas, asks that the agency's activities be halted until it prepares a new, more comprehensive environmental impact statement. The suit also calls for a halt to its aerial gunning of predators in federally designated wilderness areas.

"It's high time for the federal court to take a hard look at Wildlife Services' slaughter of the nation's wildlife on public and private land with our tax dollars," said Wendy Keefover, director of carnivore protection for the group.

Read the whole story

Mountain bike trail work begins this weekend

Mountain bike trail work begins May 6 in South Lake Tahoe.

Work will be from 9am to 4pm, although helpers do not need to stay all day.

Meet at the first gate off Oneidas (which is off Pioneer Trail) to ride bikes to the trail. Work will be on the Sidewinder Trail, including rebuilding berms, buffing out the trail, fixing log rides, and general maintenance. Free lunch and a post work barbecue will be provided for all volunteers.

Weather, killing of problem bears cited for drop in conflicts

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Problems with nuisance bears dropped dramatically in 2011, a fact attributed by a state biologist to favorable climatic conditions and the fact a record number of problem-causing bears were killed the year before.

Only 130 bear complaints were received by the Nevada Department of Wildlife last year, down from 440 in 2010 for a 70 percent decrease, according to an annual report prepared by bear biologist Carl Lackey.

The primary reason for the decline, Lackey said, was an epic winter in 2010-2011 that produced a bountiful snowpack, with a significant amount of snowfall coming during the spring. Resulting moisture nourished healthy crops of vegetation that serve as natural food for black bears, including berries, pine nuts, forbs and grasses. Insects and mammals bears sometimes eat are also present in greater numbers during wet years.

“Conditions were just really good,” Lackey said. “Bears didn’t have to come down into urban areas.”

During drought years, things can be profoundly different. During the record year for bear problems of 2007 when natural foods in the backcountry were all but non-existent, bears wandered into neighborhoods in search of food in huge numbers, raiding trash bins and breaking into homes. The Nevada Department of Wildlife received a record 1,500 complaints over nuisance bears.

Read the whole story

NASA scientists looking for meteor remnants in El Dorado County

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

It’s not every day that NASA descends on your backyard, hunting for clues to extraterrestrial life.

But that is the drama unfolding this week in and around the community of Lotus, along the south fork of the American River in El Dorado County. Scientists from NASA and the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute are hunting for pieces of a meteorite that plunged to Earth on April 22.

The SETI Institute, based in Mountain View, is the same nonprofit that has spent decades searching for radio signals from outer space in hopes of locating other advanced life forms.

On Thursday, the scientists flew over the Sierra Nevada foothill region in a chartered zeppelin, hoping to spot craters, burn marks or other signs of falling space particles.

The meteorite did not arrive quietly early on that Sunday morning. Residents throughout the Sierra Nevada, from Lassen to Kernville, reported hearing explosive sounds as it burned in the atmosphere. Many saw a bright white streak in the sky.

The track of that streak ended around Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park in Coloma, where pieces of the meteorite were found in the parking lot. It was here, in 1848, that gold was discovered in the American River’s south fork, touching

off the legendary Gold Rush that transformed California and the West.

Read the whole story

Cyclists return to Tahoe to train for Tour of California

Even though the Amgen Tour of California is not returning to Lake Tahoe this year, some of the cyclists are.

Liquigas-Cannondale, a professional Italian racing team in the UCI ProTour, will train in North Lake Tahoe May 5-11 for the Tour of California, which is May 13-20.

“Many cyclists got a taste of Lake Tahoe last May while training for the 2011 Amgen Tour of California,” Andy Chapman of the North Lake Tahoe Chamber/CVB/Resort Association said in a statement. “These professionals had the opportunity to experience the beauty of the area firsthand and its challenging, high-altitude terrain. Although last year’s Tahoe stages of the Amgen Tour of California were canceled due to an untimely snowstorm, riders have been eager to get back and hit our scenic steeps.”

Liquigas-Cannondale will be difficult to miss because they’ll be outfitted in their team jerseys and accompanied by support vehicles as they make their way around Lake Tahoe.