S. Tahoe celebrates Earth Day a week late

South Tahoe Earth Day is returning to the Bijou Community Park in South Lake Tahoe on April 28 from 10am-4pm.

This year’s free Earth Day event includes a speakers’ stage with talks on aquatic invasive species, the history of Lake Tahoe, the story of Tahoe Tessie, and edible plants of the Sierra.

The Kid Zone area will be full of recycle-themed arts and crafts, such as milk-carton wallets and sun print papers, and the Bounce House will help kids bounce out that extra energy.

A variety of events will be happening throughout the day, highlighted by the Sugar Pine Foundation’s native tree planting at 11:30am and the “Ballad of Aquatic Invasive Species” sing-along at noon.

Heavenly to host 2013-2014 U.S. Freestyle Championships

The U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association announced Thursday that the U.S. Freestyle Championships will return to Heavenly Mountain Resort for the 2013 and 2014 seasons.

Heavenly will play host to men’s and women’s aerials, dual moguls and moguls events March 29-31, 2013.

Heavenly last hosted the championships in 2004 and is one of only a handful of resorts to do so two years in a row.

Aerials competitions will again be at night under the lights while the competition finish lines will sit in direct view of the California Lodge.

Because the U.S. Championships event falls after the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, spectators will also have the opportunity to watch U.S. Olympic athletes compete after they return from the Games.

MojoMan Challenge may be coming to Heavenly

Should the MojoMan Challenge, an adventure race competition that covers approximately 10½ miles and incorporates 25 to 30 challenge obstacles along the course, come to Heavenly Mountain resort in August?

That is the question the local U.S. Forest Service wants people to answer.

The event would take place on forest lands at the ski resort that are within the special use permit boundary and would be open to the public.

Temporary obstacles would be constructed of natural and man-made elements, including water and mud pits, cargo nets and

log piles.

The comment period closes May 11. For more information, contact Matt Dickinson at (530) 543.2769 or go online.

Tahoe Mountain Bike Patrol ready to train new members

The Tahoe Mountain Bike Patrol is accepting new members who attend the joint Bike Patrol/Trail Ambassador training weekend on June 9-10.

The volunteer patrollers provide directions, education, assistance and medical response to all trail users.

Based out of Spooner Lake, the patrol covers all bike-legal sections of the Tahoe Rim Trail through an agreement with the TRTA and is in the process of penning an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service to include other trails in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

This is one of the largest chapter’s in the country of IMBA’s National Mountain Bike Patrol program.

Rain to stay in basin through

Thursday

A wind advisory for Lake Tahoe is in effect until 11 Wednesday night.

Gusts of 30mph and sustained winds of up to 20mph are forecast to bring waves of 1 to 3 feet.



Rain in Incline on April 25 does not stop these two from practicing their drives. Photo/LTN

Rain has been intermittent throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin on April 25. As temperatures drop, that precipitation is likely to change to snow on Thursday – especially at locations above 8,000 feet.

As the cold front moves in Thursday, the temperatures will drop by 10 to 15 degrees. The lows for most of this week will be in the 30s, though in South Lake Tahoe the National Weather Service is calling for a low of 27 on April 25.

Sun will return by the weekend, with highs returning to the 60s.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Food safety impacting wildlife, water quality

By Dan Charles, NPR

We'd probably like to think that clean, safe food goes hand in hand with pristine nature, with lots of wildlife and clean water. But in the part of California that grows a lot of the country's lettuce and spinach, these two goals have come into conflict.

Environmental advocates say a single-minded focus on food safety has forced growers of salad greens to strip vegetation from around their fields, harming wildlife and polluting streams and rivers.

The heart of this conflict is the Salinas Valley, on California's central coast. And my guide to the valley, on this beautiful spring day, is Daniel Mountjoy, an ecologist with a nonprofit organization called Sustainable Conservation. "I just love the drive down through here," Mountjoy says, as we head southeast from Castroville, the self-proclaimed "Artichoke Center of the World."

We can see mountains to the east and the west, but the valley itself, miles wide, is as flat as high-tech field-leveling machines could make it. The Salinas River meanders down the middle of the valley, visible as a thicket of trees.

But most of what we see, though, is mile after mile of fields. Some are bare, ready for planting, others with rows of green leaves just emerging from brown dirt. This is one of the country's biggest sources of fresh lettuce and spinach. It's often called America's salad bowl.

And for the past 40 years, this valley has been the scene of a struggle to find a balance between some of the most intensive farming in the world and what's left of nature.

When Mountjoy first came here, as a student, almost 40 years ago, farming had already taken over.

"One of my professors brought us out on a field trip," he recalls. This scientist had invented some of the first chemical herbicides that farmers used to kill off weeds. "He was very proud of the fact that farmers had been able to eliminate and restrict all noncrop vegetation from the farms, and pointed out that you could tell a good farm from a bad farm by that fact that, from fence post to fence post, the only thing that was growing was the crop."

Mountjoy, though, found it bleak. Ecologically, it was impoverished. There was barely any food or shelter for insects, or the birds that feed on them, or bigger animals that need even more space.

Also, when it rained, soil and fertilizer washed straight into drainage ditches, streams, and the Monterey Bay.

Mountjoy became part of a movement to change that. He went to work for the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It's the arm of the USDA that promotes environmental quality. And for almost 20 years, part of his job was encouraging farmers in this valley to create a greener, more diverse landscape.

Read the whole story

USFS wants input on proposed improvements at William Kent near Tahoe City

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is asking for public input on the environmental assessment prepared for the William Kent Best Management Practices Retrofit and Administrative Site Redevelopment project.

The proposed project area is approximately 22 acres and is located one mile south of Tahoe City, and consists of the William Kent Campground, William Kent administrative site, William Kent day-use beach area.

Proposed improvements include installation of BMPs, reconfiguration of the campground circulation pattern, relocation of the kiosk area and the RV dump station and construction of accessible restroom facilities.

In addition, a fire station would be built that would replace the Meeks Bay Fire Station. The existing Meeks Bay Fire Station would be removed and the area rehabilitated.

The William Kent beach/day-use site would be re-contoured, the current slope stabilized, BMPs installed and the storm water pipe on the beach shortened. This would provide increased filtration and reduce sediment before storm water enters Lake Tahoe. An accessible path would be constructed to access the beach from the picnic area.

Work on the campground retrofit portion of the project could begin in May 2014 and would take approximately six months to complete.

Comments are being accepted until May 25. For more information on how to comment and a detailed description of the proposed

action, contact Ashley Sommer at (530) 543. 2615 or go online.

Eldorado National Forest lifts seasonal road closures

The U.S. Forest Service announced Tuesday that the wet weather seasonal closure of designated dirt roads and trails in the Eldorado National Forest has ended, with the exception of 42 routes that remain closed by court order.

Some of the open routes aren’t as dried out as others. Forest visitors are responsible for staying on the routes and not causing resource damage. Travelers may also encounter hazards on the open routes because little maintenance has been completed.

Many high elevation routes are still covered with snow and the Forest Service says drivers should use care not to cause resource damage. In most cases, these routes are located on soils that drain better than lower elevation routes constructed in clay based soils.

Forest visitors can obtain free-of-charge motorized vehicle use maps at all Eldorado National Forest ranger stations and at the forest headquarter’ s office in Placerville.

The U.S. District Court directed the Forest Service to keep the 42 routes seasonally closed until a final court order is issued later this spring.

The Mormon Emigrant Trail remains closed to through traffic due to snow.

Edgewood to begin S. Tahoe park; lodge project draft EIS out

By the end of July there will be another place to re-create in South Lake Tahoe.

The official groundbreaking of Bonanza Park is April 30 at 5:30pm at 1209 Bonanza St.

This will mark the start of turning what is now a vacant lot – but what was once a rundown hotel called the C&M Lodge – into a neighborhood park.



Bonanza Park will be open mid-summer in South Lake Tahoe.

The park is being built by Edgewood Companies. The Nevada-based company is doing this project in exchange for the right to transfer the use of the tourist accommodation units from South Lake Tahoe to Stateline. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency in its desire to control development in the Lake Tahoe Basin has made TAUs a commodity.

TRPA also limits free market by not allowing the owner of the TAU to use them where he wants. It’s up to the powers that be in the jurisdiction where the TAU resides to decide if they can be transferred.

Edgewood will use those TAUs as it goes forward with building the Edgewood Lodge near the lakefront of the Stateline golf course by the same name.

The draft environment impact statement for the lodge project is in circulation, with comments being taken until June 18.

The project will be before the TRPA Advisory Planning Commission on May 9 and on the Governing Board agenda on May 30.

For more information about the lodge and how to comment, contact Theresa Avance at the TRPA – (775) 589.5224.

As for the park, it will include a children’s play area, grass play area, picnic pods, basketball court, and a horseshoe toss. It will also include solar lighting, recycling containers, low flow irrigation and a native demonstration landscape planting material.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Study: Cyclists will come if there are bike lanes to ride in

By Brad Plumer, Washington Post

Is there anything cities can do to encourage cycling? Portland, for instance, has twice as many bike commuters per 1,000 people as Washington. But maybe that's just because Portland has nicer weather or more young people. It's not clear that there's an actual policy issue here.

Yet in a new study in the journal Transport Policy, Ralph Buehler and John Pucher suggest that cities might actually be able to influence how many cyclists are on the road. Perhaps all they have to do is — and this shouldn't come as a huge surprise — build more bike lanes and bike paths.

Buehler and Pucher found that the presence of off-road bike paths and on-street bike lanes were, by far, the biggest determinant of cycling rates in cities. And that's true even after you control for a variety of other factors like how hot or cold a city is, how much rain falls, how dense the city is, how high gas prices are, the type of people that live there, or how safe it is to cycle. None of those things seem to matter quite as much. The results, the authors write, "are consistent with the hypothesis that bike lanes and bike paths encourage cycling."

Read the whole story