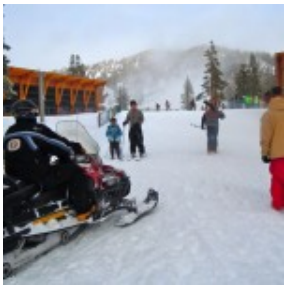
Ski readers: Heavenly best Lake Tahoe resort

Now in it's 24th year, *Ski* magazine's reader survey offers a glimpse into what people have to say about resorts in North America and provide a bit of insider info about why it's time to get out the wax.

The survey is divided between the West and East. No California (or Nevada) resort made it in the top 10. Deer Valley came in at No. 1. Heavenly did the best overall for Tahoe resorts at No. 13. Readers consider the proximity to the Stateline casinos a plus and a minus.



Heavenly is ranked the highest of any Tahoe resort in Ski magazine. Photo/LTN file

The magazine's editors, though, say keep an eye on Squaw Valley with all of the planned upgrades.

Mammoth Mountain was in the top 20 at No. 17.

No Tahoe area resort made it in the top 10 for snow, value, service, weather, on-mountain food, lodging, dining, character or overall satisfaction.

For grooming, Mammoth is No. 6, Northstar No. 7 and Heavenly No. 8.

Terrain variety: Mammoth No. 4, Squaw Valley No. 7

Terrain challenge: Squaw No. 3.

Lifts: Mammoth No. 7.

Access: Sugar Bowl No. 10.

Après/nightlife: Heavenly No. 5

Off-hill activities: Heavenly No. 2.

Family programs: Northstar No. 10.

Scenery: Heavenly No. 3, Homewood No. 5

Terrain parks: Mammoth No. 1, Northstar No. 2

Digital programs: Heavenly No. 9, Mammoth No. 10.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

S. Tahoe woman tearing it up at XTERRA competitions

By Jessie Marchesseau

Spending three hours dragging yourself and your bicycle over rocks, streams and mountains, swimming through cold and choppy waters, and scrambling down trails of dirt, sand and mud may not sound like your typical Sunday stroll.

Unless, that is, you are XTERRA athlete Heather Lyman.

Lyman, a South Lake Tahoe resident, will be competing in the XTERRA World Championship race in Maui today.



Heather Lyman of South Lake Tahoe is competing today in Maui. Photo/Kevin Joell

XTERRA races are essentially off-road triathlons. They involve open water swimming, mountain biking and trail running. A sort of competition of outdoor enthusiasts. And Lyman is good at it.

“You’ve got to realize, this is her first year, and look at where she is,” Eufay Wood, personal trainer and co-owner of Sierra Athletic Club, said. “She has a lot of natural skill.”

Not only did the 30-year-old qualify for the World Championship race, but Lyman also took home the top spot in the women’s 30-34 age group at the XTERRA USA Championship race in Ogden, Utah, in September.

She started the season with a third-place finish in the women’s amateur division of the EXTERRA Real in Granite Bay in March. Her time of 2 hours, 24 minutes, 27 seconds earned her second place in her age group. She followed that performance with a fifth-place finish in the amateur division and third in her age group at the XTERRA Pacific in Santa Cruz.

The Tahoe City race in June brought Lyman back to her home turf where she earned her first win of the season, taking the top spot in the 30-34 age group, second among the amateur women. She had hoped to continue the season with a strong finish at the August race in Incline Village, but a torn MCL forced her out of competition for nearly two months.

Though she says her knee still bothers her a little, it did not keep her from winning yet again at the Championship race in Utah. At just more than 3 hours, 5 minutes, Lyman was first in her age group and second in the amateur division.

Finishing in the top five of every race and overcoming a midseason injury would be a feat for any athlete. The fact that Lyman managed it without adhering to a formal training regime speaks loudly to the natural skill Wood mentioned.

Lyman generally does some sort of workout seven days a week, often more than one sport, but she is not shy about taking a day off if her body is tired. She trains with Wood twice a week in the gym, however prefers to do the majority of her training outdoors. She even admits to watching YouTube videos for tips on swim technique.

What Lyman may lack in strict workout regimes, she makes up for in sheer determination.

“Her work ethic is beyond comparison,” Reve Ramos said. “She prepares better than anyone I know currently.”

Ramos met Lyman a little more than a year ago at one of the spin classes he instructs at Sierra Athletic Club. Ramos has been teaching and coaching sports nearly all his life and has seen some great athletes, but says Lyman is truly unique. She has already inspired other women in spin class to follow in her footsteps.

“One thing that really drives me is that I’m super competitive,” Lyman said, and added with a laugh, “It’s kind

of annoying.”

But she did not set out to win. Not in the beginning, anyway. She entered a race last summer just for fun and because it was a good way to get into shape. She finished third in her age group, and was hooked.

“I always feel like I accomplish something by the time I cross the finish line. All that hard work that goes into it feels good when you actually come across the line and know, first of all, that it’s over and that you can do it,” Lyman said.

Looking to the future, she hopes to compete at the professional level eventually, and a good finish at the World Championships in Maui could go a long way in helping her achieve that goal. The race, which consists of a one mile rough-water swim, an 18.3 mile mountain bike ride and a 6.1 mile trail run, attracts more than 600 athletes from 28 countries. A top finish in the amateur division could earn her serious bragging rights.

Ramos, who has watched his own daughter become a professional athlete, says he believes this is just the beginning for Lyman: “Above all, she has the sweetest, gentlest heart, but it roars like a lion.”

Leaf peepers find perfection throughout Hope Valley

By Kathryn Reed

HOPE VALLEY – It’s here – that kaleidoscope of color Mother Nature dazzles leaf chasers with each autumn. This may be the

peak weekend for colors in and around the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Cresting Luther Pass near the cutoff for Armstrong Pass on Highway 89 the cars are parked on both sides of the road Saturday. Cameras are out. People are smiling and going “ooohhh” and “aaahhh”. Yellow and orange dominate the landscape.



Elephant's Back from a trail off Highway 88. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Looking across Hope Valley, pockets of aspens look like swatches of paint samples interspersed with the green conifers.

While some of the aspen leaves are still green, most have turned, with others already brown or fallen.

Some areas are like a carpet of leaves.

We pull over again, this time off Highway 88. Crossing a downed barbed wire fence we enter another aspen grove on the far side of the valley.

It’s one of those Tahoe bluebird days so the aspens are even more electrifying when looking up.

People seem mesmerized by the leaves dancing in the gentle breeze. A different type of fool’s gold, perhaps.

Jane Welles is near the highway painting what I’m photographing. Each fall she drives from her home in Nevada City to spend a few days capturing the Sierra autumn on canvas.

Driving up Highway 88 the usual line of cars is not at the old house. Colors here are past their prime – but still worth a stop.

We turn around.

Sue suggests we take a road to the left (about 4.3 miles west of Pickett’s Junction). We stop a little ways up, though the Jeep would have been fine to continue on the road. We wanted a little exercise.

A woman along the way said ahead is a meadow, while back at the Y would lead us to a lake. Oh, that meadow – the views to Elephant’s Back are magnificent.

Time for a bite to eat at Hope Valley Café. (It’s beyond Sorensen’s on the right.) Leesa Lopazanski has owned the place for the last four years. Pie is still a reason to go. But don’t expect to get the recipe. She’s not sharing.

We recommend the pumpkin – which she makes Southern style, with buttermilk.

“It makes it more fluffy,” Lopazanski said.

It’s not like any other pumpkin I’ve had before. Order a piece to go; we wish we had.

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EPA approves pesticide to fight zebra, quagga mussels

By Melissa Wiese, Sacramento Business Journal

Marrone Bio Innovations Inc. has gotten approval for its biopesticide against invasive freshwater mussels, after testing in Canada and the Colorado River.

The Environmental Protection Agency gave approval for the Davis-based company's Zequanox, which was derived from a common microbe found in soil and water, according to the company. Until now, there had been no environmentally safe, targeted ways to eliminate invasive zebra and quagga mussels.

"The addition of Zequanox to our product portfolio marks an important milestone for the company, as we expand beyond our agricultural roots into the fast-growing industrial and commercial water markets," said Pam Marrone, founder and chief executive officer of Marrone Bio Innovations, in a statement.

S. Tahoe youth captures mountain bike championship

A.J. Marino, 14, of South Lake Tahoe secured the title of the Pacific Regional Mountain Bike Champion and the California/Nevada State Champion in the Junior Cross Country Division in the final race of the Sierra Cup Series earlier this month.

Marino won the series by a close 12 points over Nelson Bedient of Incline Village.



Nelson Bedient of Incline, from left, A.J. Marino of South Tahoe, and Blake Milner of Reno. Photo/Provided

Marino has been competing locally and on the national level in the cross country discipline since he was 10. He is ranked 14th in his age group.

River restoration, golf course move OK’d by state board

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – Tears of relief. Gearing up for the next hearing.

Those were the reactions from the two sides in the divisive Washoe Meadows State Park, Upper Truckee River, Lake Tahoe Golf Course issue.

On Friday, before a crowd that at times numbered more than 100 people, the California State Park and Recreation Commission unanimously approved staff's recommendation to accept the final EIR for the river restoration project, and to swap land between the park and Lake Valley Recreation Area to allow the golf course to be reconfigured.



State Park and Recreation commissioners on Oct. 20 get an earlful. Photo/Kathryn Reed

It was Cyndie Walck, State Parks hydrologist who after the vote was taken, broke down in tears. She had no idea how the six commissioners would vote. She has been working on this project for five years, attending dozens of public forums.

"I'm surprised," Walck told *Lake Tahoe News* after the vote.

On the opposite side are members of Washoe Meadows Community. They don't want undisturbed parkland on the South Shore to be developed into nine holes of golf. They have been working just as hard as Walck – but for a different outcome.

"We revise our strategy and we get ready for TRPA," Lynne Paulson said outside Lake Tahoe Golf Course as to what is next for her group.

(On Dec. 7 at 9:30am, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency APC votes

on the EIR at the Stateline office. On Dec. 15 at 9am, the TRPA Governing Board votes on certification of final EIR at the Stateline office.)

Fifty people spoke during the 2½ hours of public testimony. Thirty-one were against the preferred alternative 2 in the environmental impact report, 17 in favor, and two were in the middle.

The reach of the Upper Truckee River that flows through State Parks property is called one of the worst. Banks are eroding, causing sediment to plop into the river and be carried into Lake Tahoe – which is said to be helping to maintain that body of water's clarity loss.

Most of the opponents to alternative 2 are in favor of river restoration. What they opposed is moving half of the 18-hole course into the park.

Each side disputes how much pristine v. disturbed land will be affected. Each side gives tours that are very different and show their respective realities.

Ultimately, though, the commissioners know that if they don't fix the sediment issue, Lahontan Water Quality Control Board will level the hammer. While they had issues with Washoe cultural sites being covered in dirt as a way to preserve them, it wasn't enough to vote against the project.

Commissioner Elva Yanez echoed LTVA Executive Director Carol Chaplin's comments that the triple bottom line is crucial – the economic, environmental, and social needs.

"It's very clear river restoration has to happen," Yanez said. "I'm moved by the notion that millions of dollars are generated by the golf course."

But alarming to many is that Goldman Sachs and Starwood Capital own American Golf Corporation, the concessionaire of

the Meyers course on Highway 50.

Jeff Perry, with American Golf, said the Meyers course generates $2 million a year in revenue, of which the State Parks receives one-quarter of that figure. His firm is interested in bidding on redesigning the course.

(Any concessionaire will pay for moving the holes, which will likely mean a smaller annual fee to State Parks. But in the end the park system owns the upgrades.)

Huey Johnson, California secretary of Resources from 1978 -82, gave the commissioners a book about how Michigan put together a trust from oil serverance taxes to fund its parks.

Some questioned how the parks people could think about spending millions of dollars on river restoration when dozens of parks are slated for closure in 2012. Officials said the money for restoration would come from grants, while the concessionaire pays for the golf course.

Mountain bikers gathering to work, ride this weekend

It’s all about mountain biking this weekend – riding and trail building. TAMBA says dirt conditions are pretty amazing and the weather will be sunny and in 60s.

Oct. 22 is Trail Day No. 2 on Toads (Saxon Creek. Work will be on the upper sections of Toads, picking up where work was left off last month.

Ride to the work area and then ride down afterward. All tools will be at the site.

Meet at the rock sections at 9:30am, which is about one-half mile down from the intersection of Saxon Creek and the Tahoe Rim Trail. Work will end about 3pm.

Watta Bike Shop will be hosting a free barbecue with drinks for all volunteers. The lunch will be provided on the trail from Yellow Sub, including free Clif Bars. No need to work all day.

Bring water, long sleeves, sunglasses, gloves, your bike.

On Oct. 23 is a group ride from Stagecoach to Star Lake Connector and Cold Creek Trails.

This will showcase what the U.S. Forest Service did this summer with the Star Lake Connector Trail. This section of single track connects the Tahoe Rim Trail at Star Lake down to High Meadow and Cold Creek Trail.

Sunday's ride will start at Stagecoach Lodge and follow the Rim Trail out to Star Lake, after eating lunch at Star riders then descend down the new Star Connector Trail and continue on to the descent of Cold Creek Trail while ending on Powerlines back to Ski Run Boulevard. Blue Dog Pizza near the Heavenly Gondola is offering discounted pizza after the ride to all paid TAMBA members.

To carpool, meet at 10:30am on Ski Run Boulevard on the mountain side of Pioneer Trail between Needle Peak (near Hansens Tubing Resort). If you do not need to car pool, meet at 11am at Heavenly's Stagecoach Lodge parking lot.

This ride is about 20 miles, with close to 3,000-vertical feet of climbing and 4,000 vertical of decent over some fun rocky trails.

RSVP to these events by emailing trails@mountainbiketahoe.org.

IOC: Denver won’t be punished for giving back Olympics

By Brian Gomez, Gazette

COLORADO SPRINGS – If the U.S. Olympic Committee submits a bid for the 2022 Winter Games with Denver as a candidate, the black eye of the Mile High City once returning the Olympics won’t play a factor with International Olympic Committee voters, according to the leader of the IOC.

“There would definitely be no grudge for the fact that Denver abandoned the race,” IOC president Jacques Rogge said this week at The Broadmoor hotel before the end of the IOC international athletes’ forum, a biennial gathering staged in the U.S. for the first time.



The Colorado Ski Museum in Vail talks about the Denver Olympics that never happened. Photo/LTN

The Colorado Springs-based USOC still hasn't determined whether it will enter the fray for 2022, with Bozeman, Mont., Reno/Lake Tahoe, Nev., and Salt Lake City also in the mix, or throw its weight behind a bid for the 2024 Summer Games, in which possibilities are Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia and Tulsa, Okla. Bids for 2022 are due in 2013, with the IOC scheduled to pick the winner in 2015.

Denver is the only city to give back the Olympics. The IOC relocated the 1976 Winter Games to Innsbruck, Austria, in 1973 after outcries from Colorado taxpayers over rising costs and environmental effects. It hasn't reappeared on the Olympic ballot, and since the United States hosted four Olympics – two winter and two summer – from 1980 to 2002, it has lost its past two Olympic bids, faltering with New York for 2012 and with Chicago for 2016.

Read the whole story

Heavenly Foundation increasing its freestyle programs

The Heavenly Ski and Snowboard Foundation has two new programs for the 2011–12 winter season under the freestyle umbrella.

The foundation will offer two freeride program options, the One-Day Program and the Full-Time Competitive Program. These programs are open to intermediate to advanced level skiers ages 10 to 18 who have a passion for slopestyle, skiercross and halfpipe training.

“The Foundation recognized the need to create the Freeride program as we continue to stand by our commitment to provide training for regional Olympic hopefuls,” foundation President Jim Plake said in a statement. “With the addition of skiing halfpipe and slopestyle to the 2014 Sochi Olympics, we felt it necessary to provide coaching for those athletes who strive to compete in these events.”

The One-Day Freeride program offers skiers 10-18 18 training days, primarily Sundays, December through March. A Heavenly restricted pass, equipment and gear are required. Freeride registrants can choose to participate in the U.S.A.S.A. South Shore Series or USSA events for an additional fee.

The Full-Time Freeride program requires additional commitments from parents and athletes. With a longer season, December through as late as mid-May, this program offers more time on the mountain with professional coaches and more participation in competitions. Dry land and gymnastics training, Sunday Fundays, night training, video analysis, pro clinics and more advanced competition training are some of the bonuses of this program, depending upon what is right for your young athlete.

As with all programs, the emphasis is placed on skiing preparation and equipment care, as well as focusing on physical and mental competition techniques, physical fitness through healthy activity and good eating habits while promoting the values of teamwork and good sportsmanship.

Brad Scott is the head coach. He was a member of the Heavenly Freestyle Team for many years and was a multi-discipline competitor in skiercross, slopestyle, halfpipe and big air. Scott is a former professional skier and an alumni member of the British Ski Team for slopestyle and big air. Assistant coach is local Yamato Kashima. He trained with the Heavenly Foundation freestyle team for more than 10 years and competed in USSA events for many of those.

For more information about the Heavenly Foundation or any of its programs go online or call (530)541.7354.

Kirkwood looking at finacial, partnership options

By Kathryn Reed

“As one of the few independent resorts left at this point and time, it is clearly in our best interest to see what type of partnerships exist and to see what our best opportunities are.”

So says David Likins, CEO for Mountain Springs Kirkwood, which owns Kirkwood Mountain Resort.

Likins acknowledged a bevy of activity has been going on at the resort on Highway 88, south of Lake Tahoe. But he was adamant the resort has not sold. Nor is it in any hurry to enter any type of agreement with anyone.



Kirkwood usually gets the most snow of any Tahoe-area resort. Photo/Jessie

Marchesseau

“We are in a good financial state. We have no pressing needs. We had solid years back-to-back and almost no leverage on assets. We sold more real estate in the last two months than we have in the last two years,” Likins told *Lake Tahoe News*.

“We are looking at ways of restructuring, but not along the lines of JMA buying Kirkwood.”

JMA Ventures owns Homewood Mountain Resort and until the announcement last month, all of Alpine Meadows. Squaw Valley’s owners, KSL Capital Partners, and JMA have formed a third company to operate Squaw and Alpine.

Kirkwood, Alpine and Homewood have various pass deals that link the resorts.

With the California Ski Industry Association having a meeting at Northstar on Thursday, talk of consolidation in the industry was rampant. Lake Tahoe has lost some of its market share to Colorado and Utah. It’s the Vails and Whistlers of the world that Tahoe area ski operators want to compete against – not with each other.

Likins doesn’t believe KSL and Vail Resorts are finished with acquisitions. The latter bought Northstar a year ago.

“Big, successful companies go to areas that they see are attractive and then other folks follow,” Likins said. “Resorts with real estate are even more attractive.”

Likins knows his employees saw JMA and other folks at Kirkwood on Oct. 14 – after the ski industry meeting – and that rumors are running rampant.

“I won’t deny people have been out at Kirkwood and I’ve been out at places,” Likins said. “Every discussion we’ve had is focused on how to improve strategic opportunities at Kirkwood

so we can accelerate the pace of mountain and real estate development.”

Kirkwood officials have never been shy about saying real estate will fund on-mountain improvements. With the housing and financial markets tanking, this meant all upgrades were put on hold. The Expedition Lodge, five years ago touted as the resort’s showcase property of the future, was supposed to be occupied in summer 2009. It hasn’t even been built.

When Kirkwood is built-out it will have about 1,400 housing units – double what it has today. Sales of that property will allow for expanding the ski area into the 1,100 acres of terrain it has a permit to use – nearly doubling the acreage that is now lift accessed.

With Chip Seamans, COO and general manager at Kirkwood, having left about six weeks ago, personnel changes are likely, according to Kirkwood insiders.

Likins doesn’t deny management and financing discussions are what are taking place.

“Ultimately there are always possibilities for ownership mergers, investment and co-investments, either financial investors, or equity investors. There’s lots of that out there now,” Likins said.