Crowds flock to Lake Tahoe beaches

Summer is definitely here.

Plenty of rum runners were being consumed at the Beacon Restaurant on Saturday on the South Shore. The beach and restaurant were packed. One local who has been in South Lake Tahoe for multiple decades told *Lake Tahoe News* this is the busiest he has seen it on a July 4th weekend.



The beach by the Beacon on July 2 is covered with people. Photo/Provided

The water was crowded July 2, too.

Lather up with the sunscreen because temps will continue to be in the 80s for the next several days.

Read *Lake Tahoe News* on July 3 to find out what the boat patrol is encountering on Lake Tahoe.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Squaw Valley hosts kite competition

Squaw Valley celebrates the art and sport of kite flying as host to the nation’s highest altitude organized kiting festival at High Camp, elevation 8,200 feet.

Gigantic flying creatures, professional kite flyers, kite-making and face painting for the kids, and the live music are all part of the high-flying enjoyment of the 10th Annual Soaring Kites & Music Festival on July 9.

The festival brings members of regional and national kite organizations to Squaw Valley’s mountaintop to launch dozens of elaborate and colorful kites. The Soaring Kites & Music Festival also includes live music, kite-making workshop for kids and professional kite flying demonstrations.

Kite flying, which originated in 5th century BC in China, is a popular pastime and a competitive sport.

The Soaring Kites & Music Festival is from noon to 5pm and the kite-making workshop will run from 1-3pm.

Guests are invited to bring their own kites or purchase kites at the festival.

For more information about the Soaring Kites & Music Festival, call (530) 452.4000.

Newsom leading effort to bring Olympics to Tahoe

Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom has been named chairman of the committee trying to bring the Winter Olympics back to Lake Tahoe.

The California Winter Games Committee is working with Nevada to have the Tahoe-Reno area host the games in 2022.

California has been a little late to join the effort, having done so just earlier this year. Whereas, Nevada has been in the game for years.

State Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, is one of several honorary chairmen.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Leave No Trace Family Hike out of Tahoe City

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association, the Leave No Trace Center for Ethics and Tahoe Mountain Sports is teaming up for an interactive Evening Leave No Trace Family Hike on July 6 from 4–6pm from the Tahoe City North Trailhead. (Directions to the trailhead will be provided upon registration for the hike).

Registration for this hike is available on the Tahoe Rim Trail Association website. This short hike will be full of Leave No Trace activities for all ages led by the Leave No Trace Traveling Trainers.

All three organizations will provide prizes for drawings and take-home gifts.

Bring water, a bagged dinner for your family, and wear comfortable hiking clothes. This hike will not be longer than four miles.

Snow may hamper weekend fun in Eldorado National Forest

The U.S. Forest Service is preparing for the usual Fourth of July crowds that come to the Eldorado National Forest, despite the unusual amount of snow in the higher elevations.

“Many of the popular campgrounds are open and ready for campers,” Eldorado National Forest Recreation Officer Lester Lubetkin said in a statement. “However, the following campgrounds remain closed due to snow or reconstruction: Wrights Lake, Wentworth Springs, Loon Lake, North Shore, Gerle Creek, Pleasant, Red Fir, Woods Lake, and Kirkwood Lake.

The Forest Service is preparing as many campgrounds as possible for holiday use. Current campground and road status is available on the Eldorado National Forest website. Lubetkin says a few more campgrounds may be opened before the weekend and that the Eldorado National Forest website will be updated with any changes.

Snow drifts continue to linger on some popular higher elevation forest roads. The most notable of these is the Mormon Emigrant Trail that’s located between Sly Park and Highway 88. Three feet of snow remains on portions of the road near Highway 88. Expect this road to be closed over the

holiday weekend.

If you have fireworks, plan to leave at home. Lubetkin says you are never allowed to possess or use fireworks in a National Forest, regardless of how wet or dry the conditions are.

Hiking in the Desolation and Mokelumne Wilderness Areas will be more difficult this year due to snow. Snow drifts continue to cover many popular hiking trails and snow is prevalent in many areas of the wilderness.

Camping outside of campgrounds is allowed in many areas of the National Forest. Visitors should keep two things in mind if this is their camping style: 1) they will need to obtain an annual campfire permit before building a campfire and 2) to park their vehicle no more than one car length off a designated road.

Placerville mechanic enjoys dream job – NASCAR mechanic

By Debbie Arrington, Sacramento Bee

SONOMA – The travel is crazy, the pressure intense. Work consumes almost every weekend. But Rick Bray of Placerville has his dream job: NASCAR mechanic on a top Sprint Cup team.

Bray, 45, has been part of Denny Hamlin's crew on the No. 11 FedEx Freight Toyota since 2006. It's been a good run; Hamlin won eight races in 2010 and finished second overall for the championship.

Currently ninth in the points standings, the team rolled into

Infineon Raceway for Sunday's Toyota/Save Mart 350 off a win at Michigan – its first of the season. They celebrated with some R&R in the Sierra.

"A bunch of us went up to Rubicon for three days; camped, fished, hiked," Bray said. "We got our heads clear."

Read the whole story

Track camp in South Lake Tahoe

Sports Fitness Track & Field Camp is July 5-13 from 9am-noon in South Lake Tahoe.

Anthony Davis the coach.

The registration fee is $150. Camp T-shirt is $14.

Go online to register.

Wildflowers cropping up along soggy bike trails

By Kathryn Reed

Wildflowers and mosquitoes are making their presence known in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Such are the benefits and hazards of a wet season.

The problem with pedaling in what is normally considered low-lying areas is water is still on the trails. This is leading to some sections having significant tire indentations and routes being created by cyclists to avoid the water.



Water on trails is creating an obstacle for mountain bike riders. Photos/Kathryn Reed

These user created trails could be doing harm to the landscape, but are likely to be less problematic than ruts that create erosion problems and potential safety issues.

Recreationists don’t know what trails are dry because with so much acreage in the basin it’s hard for landowners to mark what is unusable. After all, just last week the paved trail behind Meek’s in South Tahoe was under water in various sections as Trout Creek breached its banks.

Behind South Tahoe High School is normally a dry area this time of year. And for the most part it is on these trails on Gardner Mountain with its offshoots behind Camp Richardson and ones leading to Fallen Leaf Lake Road.

But some sections are swampy. Some are small ponds. Some are just puddles.

The problem could be exasperated by the burned trees from the 2007 Angora Fire not absorbing water so the low lying areas are more wet than usual.

Despite the muddy conditions in sections, what makes this area great right now is the lupine is coming out. The purple against the green of the meadows necessitates stopping pedaling to admire the abundance of life in this charred area. But the buzzing of skeeters requires moving on pretty fast.

The yellow flowers on the mule’s ear are sprouting. The distinctive red snow plants are in clumps. Groundcover of various colors is poking forth, too.

Each year since the devastating fire I’m amazed how the landscape looks different. It keeps getting better.

This is one of those bike rides that never has to be the same because there are so many routes. Usually we are up high enough to reach Fallen Leaf Lake Road. A week ago we had to dip down because the meadow we usually go through was more like a pond and was completely impassable.

This had us coming out right behind the stables at Camp Richardson. From there, we crossed Highway 89, got on the paved path and headed home.

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Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe avoid accessing the routes via the high school football field this summer because of construction going on. Instead, off Highway 89, go in behind St. Francis Condominiums. Follow that path up. Then it goes off in all different ways. Hang on, be adventurous and have fun. Some parking is on the highway in this area if you need to drive to get there.

Study: Livestock not culprit in Yosemite toad decline

By Pat Bailey, UC Davis

Livestock grazing is apparently not the culprit in the steep decline of Yosemite toads and their habitat, according to the results of an extensive, five-year study conducted by UC Davis, UC Berkeley and the U.S. Forest Service.

“A direct correlation between the intensity of cattle use and toad occupancy of meadows was not found for any portion of the grazing season – early, mid or late,” said Leslie Roche, a UC Davis Department of Plant Sciences graduate student who worked on the study.

Results from the study will impact ranchers whose grazing allotments were restricted by the U.S. Forest Service in 2001 based on the assumption that grazing is contributing to the toads’ decline. Forest Service officials will use the study to develop plans that allow grazing within appropriate standards while conserving toads.

The researchers had hypothesized that a reduction in grazing intensity would stop or even reverse the decline of the Yosemite toad but, in fact, they found no evidence to support that premise.

“Results strongly indicate that toad presence is driven by meadow wetness rather than cattle utilization,” said Roche, who is completing her doctoral dissertation on this project.

Read the whole story

Derby Dames to compete at home

Tahoe Derby Dames take on the NorCal Roller Girls on July 9 at 5pm.

Gates at Bijou Community Park open at 4pm.

Tickets are $10 at the door. Kids 10 and under free.

Click here for Derby Dames info.