Boat inspections, fees required throughout Nevada

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Statewide boat inspections to detect aquatic invaders are required and should be under way next year under a plan signed into law Wednesday by Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval.

More immediate changes – making it unlawful to deliberately introduce invasive species into Nevada's waters – take effect in July, with violators facing potential fines of between $25,000 and $250,000.

The program approved by Sandoval and the 2011 Legislature is designed to protect the state's rivers, streams, lakes and reservoirs from damaging invaders such as the quagga mussel. The mussels have overrun Lake Mead in Southern Nevada and might be present in Northern Nevada's Lahontan and Rye Patch reservoirs.

Sandoval dropped earlier objections to a fee charged to boaters to pay for the program, in part because of the degree of danger posed by mussels and other non-native aquatic species, Chief of Staff Heidi Gansert said. The fee is designed to help recover the cost of fighting the problem, Gansert said.

Read the whole story

Kings Beach landscaper donates services to spruce up area

By Lenita Powers, Reno Gazette-Journal

Mark Osberg, owner of Estate Landscape in Kings Beach, has fixed up four public gardens around the Lake Tahoe community for free to improve the area's appearance and raise the spirits of snow-weary residents.

"I saw these areas that looked kind of untidy, and I had the capacity and interest to make the community look better," said Osberg, who has lived in the Kings Beach area for 28 years.

"In this down economy when everything is a little tight, these gardens add value to those properties and they provide enjoyment to the community as a whole."

Osberg, who got permission from nearby property owners to do the projects, estimates it cost him a total of $4,000 to put in the gardens and will cost another $4,000 a year to maintain them.

Estate Landscape, his 22-year-old business, planted the gardens in the Kings Beach and Incline Village, using a variety of native plants and flowers that will bloom at different times.

Read the whole story

Rumors circulate Squaw, Alpine in merger talks

By Jeremy Benson, ESPN Action Sports

Recently, there has been chatter that Squaw Valley's new owner, KSL Capital Partners, is attempting to purchase neighboring Alpine Meadows from its owner, JMA Ventures.

The rumors have been circulating mostly on websites like Unofficialsquaw.com and Epicski.com. UnofficialSquaw.com contributor Miles Clark recently posted that a "letter of intent" had even been signed by both parties, signaling the first stages of a transaction that could eventually lead to the creation of a Tahoe mega-resort.



Right now it's rumors Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley will merge. Photo/LTN file

But rumors of a possible Alpine/Squaw merger have been around since Alpine Meadows opened in 1961 and never have the two resorts been able to strike a deal. As a 10-year resident of North Lake Tahoe and a passholder at both resorts, my interest was certainly piqued – Could it really be happening this time or is UnofficialSquaw.com just blowing smoke? – so I decided to investigate.

I started by calling Troy Caldwell, the man in the middle, who owns White Wolf, a 460-acre privately-owned property located between the two resorts (which includes the top of Squaw's KT-22 chair). His land is the link in an eventual connection of the two resorts. Caldwell has entertained combining the two resorts through his property for decades, saying, "We've always kept that door open." When asked last week what he thought about the rumored ski resort merger Caldwell said, "I've heard those rumors a lot this year, and I don't believe them to be true … If there is something going on, they haven't involved me."

Amelia Richmond, Squaw Valley's PR representative, also denied that a sale was in the works. "The rumors circulating regarding a letter of intent between KSL and JMA regarding the purchase of Alpine Meadows are simply incorrect," she said. Regarding Squaw's relationship with Caldwell, Richmond said, "Squaw Valley leases land from Troy Caldwell and we have committed to working together with him as neighbors. Troy is a great guy and good friend of ours."

Alpine Meadows spokesperson Rachael Woods also confirmed that they are "just rumors."

Read the whole story

Studying tree rings leads to answers about water issues

By Craig Welch, Seattle Times

They looked at the rings of thousands of ancient trees in the mountains above the most important rivers in the West.

What they found may influence how water gets used from Arizona to Canada – and particularly in the Columbia River basin.

Despite odd years like this one, researchers have long reported declines in the mountain snows that power Western rivers. But on Thursday a group of scientists said they now also know this: Those declines are virtually unprecedented throughout most of the last millennium.

Scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and University of Washington measured tree-ring growth from forests that included 800-year-old trees. They learned that snowpack reductions in the late 20th and early 21st centuries were unlike any other period dating to at least the year 1200, according to new research published in the journal *Science*.

Read the whole story

Monster trucks rev up engines for El Dorado County Fair

On June 18 in the arena at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds, WGAS Motorsports Entertainment presents the Truck Pull & Extreme Free Style Moto X Spectacular with shows at 2pm and 7pm.



Founded more than 30 years ago by John Borba, who grew up on a dairy farm in Central California, WGAS is now based in Cool and is California's leader in tractor and truck pulling events. Fans can expect to see 4X4 truck pulls from street to super stock classes. Plus, professional free style riders

Jeff Griffin and Garrett Allf will perform “sick tricks and back flips” on motocross motorcycles, just like in the X Games.

Monster Truck rides will be offered in conjunction with the show at the El Dorado County Fair in Placerville. Ticket holders to the 2pm show can take a free Monster Truck ride from 1-2pm on June 18. Rides will also be offered after each show and before the 7pm show for $5.

Admission to the 2pm show is $12 for adults and $8 for juniors. Admission to the 7pm show is $15 for adults and $9 for juniors; entry to the fair is included.

The 2011 El Dorado County Fair is June 16 to 19 in Placerville. For more information, call (530) 621.5860.

USFS warns people to stay out of old Meyers Landfill

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is continuing to enforce the expanded closure of the Meyers Landfill site and surrounding area while construction takes place.

The expanded closure, implemented in November 2010, is meant to protect the public from the hazards of heavy equipment operations, in addition to preventing potential exposure to contaminated materials which may be encountered during remedy construction activities.

The Meyers Landfill was a municipal landfill operated by El Dorado County under a Forest Service special use permit from

1955-71.

Groundwater beneath the site has been impacted by water leaching through the decomposing landfill waste.

For more information on the Meyers Landfill Site, including a map of the closure, go online.

Summer swim league looking for participants

Tahoe Swim Club Summer League is July 5-Aug. 25 from 6-6:30pm. at the community pool in South Lake Tahoe.

Cost is $180.

The program is for ages 5 and up and swimmers should be able to swim the length of the pool with limited assistance.

The coach is Jorie Turner. Email jorieturner@gmail.com with questions or to sign up.

Blasting winter away at Yosemite

By Mike Anton, Los Angeles Times

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK – It’s nearly summer, and swarms of cars, buses and RVs breeze through Yosemite Valley as if on

conveyor belts of asphalt. But up here at 8,400 feet, along the snowbound solitude of Tioga Road, winter is still in control.

Three members of a National Park Service avalanche control team move out from their camp near Olmsted Point. They are here to bend nature's timetable and help clear the highest automobile route across the Sierra.

From a distance, they are ephemeral figures dwarfed by the eternal landscape – a steep, treeless mountainside loaded with tons of ice and snow just waiting for a trigger.

It is shortly after 5am. The temperature is in the mid-20s, and a blue dawn signals the sun's arrival. Time is short.

Tim Esquivel and Steve Lynds stop to load their backpacks from a sled laden with supplies – explosives, a spool of detonator cord, bags of charcoal, shovels. Both are in their mid-40s with ponytails and earrings, both strong as climbing rope.

Edward Canapary, 44, has climbed above them and is whaling on the frozen snow with a pick-ax. Ching-ka! Ching-ka! Chunks skitter down the hill and into the valley below.

He works fast. Spring in the mountains is a violent alchemy of hydraulics and gravity. Snowfields benignantly frozen at night awaken to the sun's heat. This windless morning's silence will soon be replaced by the ominous gurgle of percolating water lubricating the rock underneath.

Ching-ka! Ching-ka! The minutes tick by. The sky brightens imperceptibly.

When the holes are dug, Canapary calls to the men below on his radio.

"Bring the bombs up."

Read the whole story

Utah bill will reach to the slopes of Calif., Nev.

By Ski Racing

During its latest session, the Utah Legislature handed down a new law that will reach far beyond state borders as all U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association coaches and officials now have the legal responsibility to remove young athletes with suspected head injuries from competition and training.

The new law (Utah House Bill 204), requires coaches and officials working with under-18 athletes in all sports to adhere to its strict guidelines. Since The USSA is headquartered in Park City, Utah, all of the organization's 450 clubs across the country are also required to comply as of May 20.

"It's a legislation designed to protect youth athletics, particularly high school athletes form returning from a head injury too soon, which could lead to other ramifications down the line," said USSA medical director Kyle Wilkens. "Anything we can do to protect the kids is going to be better for them in the long run."

Concussions were a hot topic during the 2011 ski racing season. Between Olympic gold medalist Lindsey Vonn's well publicized head injury complications at the 2011 World Championships and World Cup winner Marco Sullivan's season-ending concussion at the end of December, head injures and the protocols that dictate when athletes should return to activity took the center ring of the White Circus and has sparked concern down to the junior level.

Read the whole story

Boating compromise at Independence Lake doesn’t appease all

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

A conservation group that last year purchased the land around a scenic Sierra lake developed a recreation strategy designed to allow for limited boating while protecting the lake from aquatic invaders.

The plan for Independence Lake, released Thursday, is seen as a compromise after critics decried last summer’s closure of the lake to all motorboats, representatives of the Nature Conservancy said.

“This is probably the best approach. I think it’s a reasonable compromise,” said Chris Fichtel, the conservancy’s Independence Lake project director.

While the plan represents an improvement over an outright closure to all motorboats, it’s still unfair to many who have boated on the lake for generations, said Kenny Osburn, an organizer of the group Friends of Independence Lake.

“It’s very frustrating, and it angers me,” Osburn said. “We strongly suggest they open the lake to all user groups all summer long.”

In May 2010, the conservancy purchased 2,325 acres of land around the lake owned by NV Energy for $15 million. The lake

bottom is owned by California while the Truckee Meadows Water Authority owns up to 17,000 acre-feet of the lake’s waters as drought storage.

Read the whole story