Sign up for Barton Foundation’s annual golf tournament

Barton Foundation’s 17th Annual Golf Tournament is July 22, with a 9am shotgun start.

Lunch and awards ceremony is 2pm.

This scramble golf tournament at Genoa Lakes Resort – Lakes Course give golfers the chance to take home special prizes. As the golfing ends, guests join the awards party, barbecue and announcement of raffle prize winners.

The entry fee is $175 per person, of which $100 is tax deductible, includes green fees, cart, golfer amenity package, a barbecue lunch and no host bar.

All proceeds help build Barton Foundation’s Community Health Endowment. Endowment investment earnings have allowed the Barton Foundation to fund various hospital projects including construction of the Helipad in 2001, the Hospice program and Health Resource Center, purchase automated external defibrillators for El Dorado and Douglas counties, pay for Life-Line units for Hospice and fund the hospital’s Healing Design program.

To register, go online or call (530) 543.5614.

Stand up paddle board festival in Lake Tahoe

The Lake Tahoe Paddle Festival is a solstice celebration of human powered watercraft featuring “Ancient Art to State of the Art” boats, boards and paddles.

The focus is the preservation of indigenous watercraft art and culture.

The paddle race through Emerald Bay starts in Meeks Bay on June 18 at 8am.

Interpretive exhibits will highlight sustainable recreation, healthy foods, yoga, healing arts and environmental awareness.

It is a weekend of workshops, clinics, fun, food and family entertainment. Try out the world’s fastest growing sport – standup paddling – on a demo, or paddle your canoe or kayak over to learn more about protecting Lake Tahoe’s clarity and efforts to prevent the proliferation of invasive species.

Go online for more information.

Trail building day ensures July opening for Van Sickle Park

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – I will never look at a trail the same.

Tahoe Rim Trail Association officials warned us this could happen. They even said next time we hike on this section of trail we'll smile, point out to our buddies what areas we are responsible for. I already feel that sense of ownership.

Saturday was my first experience with any type of trail building. I'm hooked. Besides spending time in the outdoors and feeling good about putting in a few hours of volunteer service – what made this different was the sense of accomplishment and camaraderie. More than 100 people signed up (a few probably didn't show up because of the lousy weather) to work on the trail at Van Sickle Bi-state Park.



Anna Watkins of Carson City works to improve the trail June 4 at Van Sickle Bi-state Park. Photos/Kathryn Reed

We walked through sections saying, "good job" "this looks great" "keep it up."

We weren't the only ones playing in the dirt. June 4 was National Trails Day, an event that has been going on for decades. The American Hiking Society always schedules it the first day of June. (It will be June 2 next year, so mark your calendar.)

“You will never look at a trail again when you are out hiking without realizing what it takes to build a trail,” Mary Bennington, TRTA executive director, told the volunteers before they headed out in the drizzle from Harrah’s Lake Tahoe parking lot.

That is one of the great things about the country’s only bi-state park – it’s accessible by foot from the South Shore’s main bed base at the state line.

Van Sickle Bi-state Park is scheduled to open in July.

The final work being done by professionals is construction of the California day use area under the oversight of the California Tahoe Conservancy. That work started June 1.

The 725-acre park is mostly in Nevada, but the entrance is in California near the intersection of Montreal Avenue and Heavenly Village Way.

The park will be open from sunrise to sunset all seasons except winter.

Steve Weaver, whose goal was to stay employed with Nevada State Parks until the park opened, just retired. But he plans to be at the official ribbon cutting during the environmental summit in August.

Weaver told *Lake Tahoe News* he is optimistic about the park opening because of a TRT grant. The Tahoe Rim Trail Association secured a $16,000 grant from the Van Sickle Foundation for fire suppression.

Bennington told the volunteers Saturday the TRTA has a five-year contract to pay the water and sewer bills. This commitment is what is allowing the park to open at a time when both states are in a precarious financial situation when it comes to putting money toward state parks.

What the volunteers were working on Saturday was the Daggett

Summit system. Most of the work was maintenance. Widening the trail a bit so hikers won't feel like they are teetering off the edge, trimming back manzanita, removing pine needles and other debris that has been deposited over the winter.

This is a connector trail from Van Sickle to the TRT. The project, which has a couple years before it is complete, includes eliminating three miles of paved trail and putting them in the forest. The whole project adds 13 miles of trail. Included is a short, scenic loop around the Upper Kingsbury neighborhood and out to Castle Rock.

Equestrians will be able to use this trail network. To test what has been built, Petra Keller took Tiara Nevada and Paula Walkins had Jake on the trail. The horses did not like the narrow, rocky stream crossing at the waterfall. This means more technical work by the experts is needed to make it horse friendly.

Rosemary Manning of South Lake Tahoe said women are probably part of the crew because of the detail they put into their work – like getting the pine needles off the trail and making it just so.

A foursome of friends from Carson City came up to work on this trail system in their back yard. They met a couple years ago through Muscle Powered Carson City.

"We love to hike and we want to give back," Anna Watkins said.

For Watkins, Gina DaSilva and Gisele Geary this was their first experience at trail building. Jenny Haas was the veteran of the group – this being her second time.

"It's a passive way to get exercise," Haas said.

Although the TRT says trail building is for all abilities, I have to disagree. A certain amount of physical shape is necessary. You have to hike to the work area – and part of the

way includes carrying tools. And then it’s manual labor.

John McCall, who has been building TRT trails since 1985, had his crew of 11 (myself included) make sure some of the spots on the sandy trail we were working on were widened so horses wouldn’t have a problem.

McCall’s basic advice was, “Two things make a successful trail – it keeps water off and it keeps people on.”

We used tools I wasn’t familiar with – like a pickmatic and McLeod. And some tool I didn’t get the name of that a U.S. Forest Service employee created.

Then there was the loper – which I always thought was just called a trimmer.

I learned it is best not to use a shovel for prying things out of the ground. McCall said this is because it’s likely the tool will soon be in two pieces.

It was hard not to put the tools down for a minute to take in the views – even under the always cloudy and intermittent rainy conditions. The views of Lake Tahoe from this trail are stunning. A few offshoots (which have to be enjoyed on a non-work day) look like they will provide even more incredible unobstructed views of the South Shore.

The TRTA needs volunteers on the Daggett Summit portion Tuesdays and Saturdays. Go online for more information.

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Intrigue of wild horses draws tourists to rural Nevada

By Bonnie Matton, Reno Gazette-Journal

Ecotourism isn’t a word one hears often in reference to Lyon County, but a significant number of people are willing to travel thousands of miles to visit the area in search of wild horses.

I recently had the privilege of taking two groups of tourists out to see wild horses that roam the Stagecoach area.

As president of Wild Horse Preservation League, I receive many calls, emails and letters from people, not only from Nevada, but other states and other countries. They all ask the same question: “Where can we go to see wild horses?”

Several years ago the league established a Wild Horse Adventure Program, with the goal providing tourists the opportunity to see the wild ones, while bringing ecotourism dollars into rural Nevada communities. The tourists seeking a glimpse of the wild horses hires tour guides, stays in hotels or motels, eat in our restaurants and take in attractions.

On this particular April Saturday a group of nine people in search of wild horses gathered at the Carson Plains Casino restaurant to plan the morning’s activities and eat a hearty breakfast.

Read the whole story

Tahoe’s Sullivan, Ganong impressive in spring speed training

By U.S. Ski Team

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN – Audi FIS Alpine World Cup winners Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley) and Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah) are not interested in holding back during spring training. But according to newly named speed Head Coach Forest Carey, it was the young athletes holding down the throttle at Mammoth Mountain.

“The young guys were completely willing to throw down in May – they’re definitely eager,” said Carey, the 2011 USSA International Alpine Coach of the Year. “We free skied a few days with over three feet of fresh powder and trained full-on downhill and super G training in some pretty bumpy snow with flat light towards the end. It was a good mix.”

Thanks to incredible late season snow conditions, the Team was able to run near full-length downhill and super G from the top of the cornice. The opportunity was a huge bonus for a group that missed a good portion of speed training last summer due to rough weather in New Zealand.

“Mammoth Mountain, as they always do, really did a great job accommodating us,” said Carey. “They spent a lot of time on the cats pushing things around, which turned into 75-80 seconds of downhill and super G training. We’re pretty lucky to be able to run from the top because that really takes up a lot of the mountain.”

Young athletes Wiley Maple (Aspen), Will Gregorak (Longmont, Colo.) and Tommy Biesemeyer (Keene, N.Y.) had their foot on the gas the entire camp. But Sullivan, Olympic bronze medalist

Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid) and Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) showed they were ready to play after returning from injuries and Erik Fisher (Middleton, Idaho) is ready to carry his late winter charge into the 2012 prep period.

Weibrecht missed the last three months of the season after shoulder surgery as did Sullivan, who was out following a December head injury and Ganong broke his hand while competing at the February World Championships.

“Ganong looks like he’s darn near 100 percent and Marco is right there too. It’s safe to say that injury-wise – nothing is holding them back,” added Carey. “Weibrecht was only with us for a week since he was still wrapping things up at Dartmouth, but he looked solid.”

Most impressive for Carey was the team dynamic with Sullivan and Nyman taking leadership roles within the group.

“Marco and those guys were helping the young guys with their glide turns and subtle things for downhill, which was cool to see,” he said.

“There were a few days where Marco would stand on the side and just watch those young guys like Biesemeyer just slay down the pitch. He has such a good eye for making subtle changes to find speed.”

While the men’s speed program has a brief break from formal camps, their conditioning programs are now locked full-time. Carey, however, will return to snow in a few days to help technical Head Coach Mike Day with a training camp for his group back in Mammoth.

“I’m psyched for the new challenge as head coach,” said Carey. “It’s quite the group with a lot of different types of skiers who have a lot of different needs. But we have an awesome support structure in place and most importantly athletes who want to win.”

Weed warriors teach about invasive species in local watershed

The Truckee River Watershed Council's weed warriors will be leading two weed walks and two weed pulls – the June 18, July 9, June 21 and July 23, respectively.

The Weed Warriors are hoping to bring awareness to the public about invasive weeds in the area and the proper ways to dispose of them.

Weed walks, lead by volunteer weed warriors Annaliese Miller and Kathy Welch, will be in locations where infestations have been confirmed in order to learn about what plants are invasive to this area. The weed pulls, lead by botanist Susan Urie of the U.S. Forest Service, at Boca Hill on June 21 and Stampede on July 23 will show how to properly remove weeds as well as help with the infestation at locations in the Tahoe National Forest.

Invasive weeds are aggressive plants that have been introduced into an area outside of their native range and are dangerous because they out-compete native and other desirable plants. As a result, they reduce land and recreational values, damage water quality, contribute to soil erosion, degrade plant and animal habitat and increase the risk of wildland fire.

Early detection and rapid response is crucial when it comes to the invasive weeds found in the Truckee meadows.

The weed warrior program's goal is to educate the public on how to find, report and properly dispose of invasive weeds.

There are two ways to report potential weeds. The first is online, where there is a Report-a-Weed page. The second way is to report on the go. Iphone and Droid users can download the "What's Invasive" app. When the reports are received volunteers will be sent to the location to verify the weed and log it in the database, once verified the appropriate agency will be notified to have the infestation taken care of.

Volunteers are needed. If you would like to attend a weed walk or pull, contact the Truckee River Watershed Council at truckeeriverwc.org, or call Andy Otto at (530) 550.8760, ext.3.

For more information on the Weed Warriors or to become a volunteer, go online.

Trail building day in Genoa

Carson Valley Trails Association is planning a Genoa Foothill Trail Project kick-off celebration and trail building day June 5 at the Eagle Ridge Trailhead, located 1.8 miles north of Genoa off of Jacks Valley Road on Adams Ranch Road.

An information booth will be set up from 9am-5pm to learn more about the Genoa Foothill Trail Project and pick up a copy of CVTA' Local Trails Guide map.

Trail building volunteers will meet at the Eagle Ridge Trailhead at 9am. Volunteers should bring lunch and water, wear long pants, long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes, work gloves and sunglasses. Tools and hard hats will be provided.

For more information, go online or call (775) 722.8784.

Efforts under way to preserve Nevada butterfly habitat

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Through much of March, Ramona Cordasco and friends were in New Orleans rebuilding homes ravaged by Hurricane Katrina.

Last week, they were in the middle of the Nevada desert, climbing hills of sand so steep some likened it to trying to scale a vertical treadmill.

Cordasco, 22, and colleague Gina Giraldo, 25, paused part way up the slope, dug a hole, and planted a knee-high shrub pulled from a patch of nearby desert.

Volunteers with AmeriCorps, the two women were among a crew erasing some established off-highway vehicle trails at Sand Mountain, one of the West's largest and most popular sand dune formations.

It's part of an ongoing effort to protect a rare butterfly, the vegetation it depends upon and preserve the ability of off-roaders to continue to enjoy their sport at one of their favorite places.

"I like to think that I'm helping," said Cordasco of Cherry Hill, N.J. "It's definitely hard work climbing up and down every day, but I really hope it's going to help."

Work is being headed up by the nonprofit Great Basin Institute, which has taken over implementation of a near-$1 million grant to manage activities at Sand Mountain and in doing so, protect the Sand Mountain blue butterfly.

Read the whole story

Special Olympics Nevada raising money with rappel challenge

More than 100 intrepid individuals will go Over the Edge for Special Olympics Nevada at the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino in Reno June 3-4 to scale 27 stories down the side of one of the most recognized buildings in Reno. Over the Edge is a skyscraper rappel adventure for ordinary people who raise at least $1,000 to support the activities and programs of Special Olympics in Nevada.

When individuals and corporate teams sign up for Over the Edge, they receive the necessary training, equipment and professional supervision to make their skyscraper rappel challenge safe and secure. Special Olympics also provides strategies and tips for successfully raising the minimum donations required to participate in the event.

Many corporations use the events as a team-building exercise that also enables them to do good in their community.

Individuals can register to go over the edge on June 4 right up until the day of the event – $1,000 in donations is required either from a single individual or from among an individual's friends, family and colleagues. Credit card payments are welcome. Go online for more information and to register.

Special Olympics provides athletic opportunities that instill

the confidence young people and adults with intellectual disabilities need to navigate life more successfully. Special Olympics serves more than 5,000 participants and their families throughout Nevada year-round.

All programs are free of charge to participants and Special Olympics Nevada is entirely funded through the generosity local individuals and businesses.

Minden’s Dangberg Ranch to offer tours through June

Dangberg Home Ranch Historic Park is extending its tour schedule through June 30. After that date, Nevada State Parks will discontinue its operation of the park.

Park tours include a presentation on Dangberg family history and the family’s role in the development of Carson Valley. Displays of historic objects include furniture, clothing, books, dishes, artwork, photographs, phonographs and other items that give insight into the lives of four generations of Nevadans and Carson Valley’s agricultural history.

The park features several historic buildings constructed between 1857 and 1917. Of particular interest is the 15-room main residence, once one of the most prominent homes in Carson Valley.

The park is located on Highway 88 west of Minden, one mile south of the junction between highways 395 and 88.

Tours are Wednesdays through Fridays at 10am; Saturdays and Sundays at 10am and 2pm. Reservations are required by calling

Mark Jensen at (775) 783.9417.

Cost is $3 for adults; free for children 12 and younger.