Boat inspections begin this week in Lake Tahoe

Inspections for Lake Tahoe boaters will take place at roadside inspection stations starting May 25. Off-highway inspection stations will be staffed by Tahoe Resource Conservation District inspectors from 8am to 8pm for the 2011 boating season.

Locations include:

* Meyers at the junction of highways 50 and 89

* Spooner Summit at the junction of highways 50 and 28

* Highway 267 at Northstar Drive near Truckee

* Highway 89 at Alpine Meadows Road near Tahoe City

* Highway 89 at Homewood Resort

An inspection station for Incline Village will be announced this summer. Until that time, Tahoe Resource Conservation District will continue to conduct inspections at Sand Harbor State Park and Ski Beach boat ramps.

Inspections are also required and available at Echo Lake and Fallen Leaf Lake in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Boaters are urged to go online or call 888.824.6267 for updates, fee information, questions or to schedule a decontamination appointment.

STHS football field expected to have lights for first game

It’s a tight time line, but Lake Tahoe Unified School District officials believe the football field at the high school will be ready for the first home game on Sept. 2.

Construction was pushed back to allow for graduation to continue the tradition of being conducted on the football field. This will be June 10 at 4pm, with crews starting the renovation June 13.



Donations are being sought to help with renovating STHS' football field. Photo/LTN

“There is a certain amount of anxiety, but this is not a complex project,” Steve Morales, LTUSD facilities director, said.

The field will be synthetic turf. A concession stand and restrooms will also be built.

However, the biggest change is lights will be on the field. This will allow the football team to play Friday night games, and have the field open to soccer on Saturdays. The goal is to

have the lights in before the beginning of August.

Morales said if work is not done on time, the Sept. 2 game will be moved to Sept. 3 as a day game.

This is the complete Viking Stadium renovation schedule.

– Kathryn Reed

Amgen official: Tahoe may be in the mix in the future

By Laura Weislo, Cycling News

The 2011 Amgen Tour of California has only just wrapped up, and organiser Andrew Messick of AEG has already announced one detail for next year's race: it will commence in Santa Rosa, the home of three-time champion Levi Leipheimer.

"The future starts 51 weeks from now in Santa Rosa, the start of the 2012 Amgen Tour of California," Messick said at the closing press conference in Thousand Oaks, California. "It's been an excellent home to the race as a venue, and for bringing the cycling community in North America together, there's no place better."



Even though

the would-be start of the 2011 Amgen bike race had people waiting in the snow May 15, Tahoe could be part of the mix in the future. Photo/Lisa J. Tolda

Messick and the race director Jim Birrell of Medalist Sports looked back on this year's race, the high points – both literally and figuratively – being the two summit finishes on Sierra Road and Mount Baldy, and the lows of cancelling stage one at Lake Tahoe and moving the start of stage two from Squaw Valley.

"If you look at the two summit finishes, you have to be impressed with the work of Jim's team. There was nothing on top of Sierra Road – it was a cow pasture. There was no power, no cell phone, no plumbing. Overnight they built a village. Same on Mount Baldy. It was really impressive," Messick said

Birrell pointed to the huge crowds, especially on Sierra Road, as a reason to look at continuing the trend of including summit finishes in the race.

"We saw some unbelievable dynamics unfold in the race, and our crowds on Sierra Road far exceeded those we've had in downtown San Jose in the past. It will be something to evaluate for the future."

Messick said that one feature which will be a part of the Tour of California in the future is Lake Tahoe. "It didn't work out this year because of factors outside our control.

“There is a place for Tahoe in this race. The teams that came early were rewarded with exceptional riding and great weather – we were hit with a fluke storm this year, but it is a fantastic venue that showcases an exceptionally beautiful part of California.”

Read the whole story

Tahoe Derby Dames ready for home opener

Tahoe Derby Dames first home bout is June 11.

Tickets are $10 and can be purchased at the gate. Season passes are available at Road Rash Cafe (four bouts $32). A portion of the proceeds go to South Lake Tahoe Park and Recreation Scholarship Fund.

Bouts are at Bijou Community Park in South Lake Tahoe.

Don’t forget your sunglasses and a little cash for some Gates open at 4pm. bout starts at 5pm. After party at Brothers Bar and Grill.

Skier visits drop 12% – too

much snow to get to resorts

By Hugo Martín, Los Angeles Times

California ski operators often complain that they don't have enough snow. This year, they're complaining that they had too much.

Mountain resorts saw a 12 percent decline in skiers and snowboarders this season compared with the previous one, with attendance falling to about 7.1 million, according to California Ski Industry Assn., the nonprofit trade group for the state's major winter sports areas.



Snowstorms kept people from visiting ski areas in the 2010-11 season.
Photo/LTN file

The trouble was that near-record snow too often closed roads or discouraged driving to the slopes under harsh conditions – particularly during crucial weekend periods.

"Had the snow fallen in the right times, it would have been a sensational season," said Bob Roberts, director the trade group. "It was a challenging year."

The bad timing began around the Christmas holidays and

happened again in March, when fierce storms dropped so much snow on weekends that it prevented eager skiers and snowboarders from getting to the resorts.

Instead of colossal attendance numbers to match the massive snowfall this season, the state's ski resorts have reported an overall drop in visitor numbers compared with last season, when there was less snow but easier access to the slopes.

In California, where all outdoor activities generate about $44 billion in spending annually, weather can affect ski resort revenue, the length of the white-water rafting season and even attendance at county fairs.

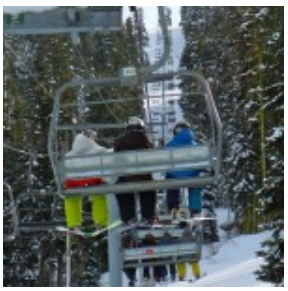
Read the whole story

The good and the bad of an epic snow season

By Agatha Wasilewska, Transworld Business

Resorts and their marketers dream of big dumps and lots of them to befall their mountains; the press is fabulous and it brings the crowds out in droves and makes for fantastic photo opps. This year the ski areas around Lake Tahoe must have been praying extra hard because they got more than anyone could have imagined or bargained for.

As the season winds down and the mountains start closing, *Transworld Business* thought it would be interesting to pay Tahoe a visit and find out how this record breaking snow season has affected the resorts and local retailers from both the good and bad sides of the fence.



2010-11 was an epic ski season in Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN

Lake Tahoe is perfectly situated to attract the San Francisco Bay Area crowd and keep a steady stream of visitors from far and away coming to this unique ski destination. With so many resorts, all of which set record breaking snowfall amounts this year despite a drought-ridden January, at such close proximity to each other, the competition for customer loyalty is steep, and each resort has uniquely branded itself with that in mind.

Here is an overview of a selection of resorts we visited and their reflections on how the season went down.

Read the whole story

Amateur bodybuilding competition at MontBleu

The Tahoe Show, a National Physique Committee-sanctioned amateur bodybuilding, figure, bikini and fitness championship, is Aug. 27 at MontBleu in Stateline.

Promoters of the Tahoe Show are offering a number features that are outside the norm. From the website, competitor may register to compete, as well as purchase show photos, tanning, event DVD, hair and makeup, a posing clinic with Greg Atoyan and a lakeside photo shoot after the show. Plus, recognizing the stringent dieting of a competitor, registrants will, have free access to microwaves to heat their pre-prepared food, free buffet after the show along with free access to an after party at MontBleu's Opal Ultra Lounge.

Categories include bodybuilding, bikini, figure and fitness with open, novice, masters and teen divisions. The show will be fast passed and energetic. Included will be special celebrity appearances, a live DJ, video broadcast and a pound-for-pound lifting contest. The pound-for-pound lifting contest gives those who might not want to show off their physique an opportunity to participate. These competitors will compete to see who can bench press their body weight for the most number of repetitions.

Expected at the show are about 200 competitors and 1,500 or more spectators.

The title sponsor is Zephyr Cove's Anytime Fitness.

For tickets, information, registration and a full event schedule, go online, email Chris@TahoeShow.com or call (775) 267.7564.

Foothills provide mountain

biking, spectacular scenery

By Kathryn Reed

COLOMA – Hiking, biking and waterfalls – all in one day.

Blood, scratches and poison oak – all in one day.

Happy, irritated and in pain – all in one day.

The idea was to drop in elevation without going too far. Done. Then to mountain bike in a pretty area. Done. And to walk to waterfalls more than 100-feet high. Done.



Sue Wood on a bike trail May 7 outside Coloma. Photos/Kathryn Reed

If only I hadn't fallen off my bike, landing smack in the middle of my back on a log about 7 inches in diameter.

The National Outdoor Leadership School says 50 percent of outdoor injuries come from falls. I think 100 percent of mine come from falling – or tripping. My back, left arm, right leg and both ankles have recovered from my tumble earlier this month.

Once I caught my breath, we kept pedaling along this rocky, single-track trail off Highway 49 near Coloma. Magnolia Ranch

is part of the 362 acres that were acquired in 1996 by the American River Conservancy and Bureau of Land Management.

Green grasses more than a foot high and sprawling oaks are a welcome change from the muddy-snowy trails of Tahoe and all the pine trees.

Several trails for cyclists, walkers and equestrians leave from here. We head to the river trail. Rafters are making their way down the South Fork of the American River. Although they are in wet suits and helmets, the water looks appealing. It's hot in this part of El Dorado County on May 7.

Wildflowers are out – mostly lupine, a few poppies and some yellow bush with buttercup-like flowers.

Sweat beads on our foreheads as we pedal. It's more the sun than the exertion at this point.

Neither Sue nor I are gnarly mountain bikers and usually we start the season with something tamer than the trail we are on to get our legs, balance and arms all in sync. The rocks on the trail are testing us. I obviously failed one of the tests in a big way.

Still, even after landing with my head pointed toward the water, I got back on the bike. I'll admit we had to walk our bikes at times. Finally, the trail disappeared because the river is running so high.

This section ends at Folsom Lake.

A change of scenery often provides me with a much needed attitude adjustment this time of year. The fall required another attitude adjustment because it sent me into unpleasant whiney world.

Up the road a bit we arrived (by Jeep) at Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park. The walk to the falls was just what I needed – loosening up the muscles that were stiffening

and doing something other than cycling.

We met a group of guys coming off the trail who said don’t go beyond the waterfalls because they encountered a lot of snakes. Great. Give me a bear or coyote any day, snakes are not the kind of critter I ever like to see.

Meandering along the trail, we finally hear water. Not knowing how far the falls are, we are skeptical about going farther. Snake fear has taken hold of me.

A couple comes by and encourages us to keep going.

Wow.

Dutch Creek Falls are really two falls that plunge more than 100 feet each into the creek that then feeds into the American River.

Laying on the rock, listening to the water tumble from above, wispy clouds float by, as half dozen hawks scan the area for lunch. If only it didn’t hurt to be on my back, I would be in heaven.

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 west to Placerville. Turn right (north) onto Highway 49. Travel about 12 miles. Magnolia Ranch trailhead is on the left.

From there, head toward Placerville. Go back a short ways to Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park. Pay the $8 to park near the museum. Cross the street and walk on Mt. Murphy Road, cross the Coloma Bridge (built in 1915), turn right on Bayne Road. The trail entrance is on the left across the street from a brown house. This is about 1.25 miles from the museum.

The waterfalls are another mile up on an old goat trail that is not maintained.

Both venues are in El Dorado County.

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Combining cycling with wine tasting

By Blair Anthony Robertson, McClatchy-Tribune Newspapers

The rolling hills and the largely quiet country roads in and around Auburn make it one of the most reliable areas for a great cycling experience.

Over the years while riding these roads, we kept noticing the appealing little wineries that have cropped up. Wouldn’t it be nice if we could combine two of our favorite things bike riding and wine tasting?

In the Napa Valley, folks from around the world come to rent bikes, follow routes and hop from one great winery to the next. The Placer Wine Trail isn’t on that scale yet, but there is a map and a website that promotes the Sacramento-area wines.

In this installment of “Great Rides,” we’re going to give the activity a try in this emerging wine region. I’m no exercise physiologist, but I know that a sip or two of wine won’t interfere with a bike ride of moderate intensity. Wine has plenty of carbs for energy and tastes far better than Gatorade. And you don’t have to dress in Lycra from head to toe in order to do this ride. Less conspicuous attire might be more suitable if you plan to stop in at the wineries.

We’ve mapped out a route of about 25 miles that leads you past

four wineries, gives you a good workout, and tests your legs on plenty of gentle hills and one long, steep climb on Baxter Grade on the way to Auburn that is so tough you'll think you've stumbled upon a route suitable for the Tour de France.

If this hill isn't tough enough for you, there's a secret little hill thrown in as an option at the end of the ride. It's not that long, but it is incredibly steep. If you're not in tiptop shape, you may have to get off your bike and push it up the hill. More on that in a moment.

Of course, no one says you have to cover the entire route by bike. You can tackle some of it as a cyclist and some as a motorist. Or, if you're not into cycling, this route makes for an excellent sightseeing drive.

Read the whole story

Cyclists may enter Nevada State Parks for free

The Nevada Division of State Parks is waiving entrance fees for bicyclists coming into any Nevada State Park May 21-22 in celebration of National Bike Month.

Touring cyclists may also benefit from a new State Parks policy that helps bicycle riders find camping spaces in the park, even if State Parks' campgrounds are full.

The free bike-to-State Parks weekend is in conjunction with Nevada Bike to Work Week, May 16-20 and the League of American Bicyclists' National Bike Month.

For more information on bicycling opportunities in Nevada

State Parks in Northern Nevada, contact Jenny Scanland, at (775) 684.2787.