Truckee nonprofit bring sustainability to the slopes

By Katie Schou, Triple Pundit

The newly formed Mountain Riders Alliance is a grassroots movement committed to changing the way the ski industry conducts business. Shifting the focus of resort development from profit oriented real estate sales and over-priced restaurant and boutique income, MRA aims to develop mountain playgrounds that are values-driven, environmentally friendly, and rider-owned.

The nonprofit, Truckee-based organization hopes to shift the ski industry toward sustainability, environmental protection, and positive influence on the surrounding communities' cultural, social and economic concerns, and seeks to involve community members in every step.

To generate awareness of this ideological shift in ski area management, MRA has invested its efforts heavily in social media and online presence to gain community interest and buy-in through the use of Facebook, Twitter, and blog posts. And, the community has responded in full support of the MRA mission and vision.

MRA has established partnerships with like-minded community and environmental snow sports organizations and other non-profit such as Protect Our Winters, Ski Duck, High Fives, and Winter Wildlands Alliance. However, MRA has neglected to reach out to private companies and investment firms with heavy influence in the ski industry and resort development.

Read the whole story

Firewood permits for Tahoe National Forest go on sale this month

Woodcutting permits for the Tahoe National Forest can be purchased beginning May 11.

The price for permits is $15 per cord with a two-cord minimum and an annual 10-cord maximum per household. Permits can be obtained at all TNF ranger stations, the forest headquarters or by mail. Applications for mail-in permits can be found online under “Passes and Permits”.

Firewood season will extend into the fall, until rain and snow traditionally make the roads impassable.

On the Yuba River Ranger District, woodcutting will end no later than Nov. 6 to protect hardwood trees that lose their leaves and may appear to be dead. The remainder of the forest will be open for cutting until Dec. 4, weather and road conditions permitting.

In general, the woodcutting permit allows removal of dead and down wood on TNF system lands unless otherwise designated. It does not allow cutting on private land. It authorizes removal of standing dead conifer trees within 200 feet of some roads. Trees may not be cut if marked with paint, wildlife signs, boundary signs, other official signs or in areas closed to woodcutting.

As summer progresses and the forest dries out, preventing fire is critical. Calling the woodcutting hotline is important to make sure that cutting is permitted that day. Wood cutters are

also reminded that they are required to keep a serviceable shovel at least 46 inches long and an approved fire extinguisher (2 pound dry chemical or 1 pound foam type – ABC or greater) within 25 feet of where saws are being operated. All gasoline-powered saws and other internal combustion engines such as motorized splitters must have a USFS approved spark arrester installed. Transportation load tickets will be issued along with the permit.

Federal protection sought for Sierra red fox

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

A conservation group on Wednesday asked the federal government to protect the Sierra Nevada red fox under the Endangered Species Act, a move that may have broad effects on land management.

The petition came from the Center for Biological Diversity. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service now has 90 days to review the petition, and then 12 months to make a ruling.

The Sierra Nevada red fox is one of the rarest mammals in North America. Until recently, only a few dozen were known to exist at Lassen Volcanic National Park.

But in August, U.S. Forest Service biologists found a handful more than 200 miles away, near Sonora Pass, a discovery later confirmed through genetic tests.

The fox once existed throughout the Sierra Nevada, but its numbers were decimated by trapping, logging and development.

Read the whole story

Seasonal burn permits required in El Dorado, Amador counties

The Amador-El Dorado-Sacramento-Alpine Unit of CalFire is reminding everyone dooryard burn permits are required starting May 1.

These permits are issued to the public for free, are valid for three years from the date of issuance, and allows for the burning of dry vegetation (not household trash) that originates on the landowner's property.

Unit Chief Kelly Keenan in a press release said, "We still have a lot of extra vegetation (fuel) all over the county from the very destructive December storms and if we don't continue to aggressively dispose of this fuel, come summer our wildfires will have the potential of becoming catastrophic. It is estimated that in some areas there is 33 percent more fuel on the ground than in past years from this single storm."

Last year 23 percent of wildland fires in Amador and El Dorado counties was from burning debris piles that escaped the control of the person in charge, Keenan said.

For Amador County call (209) 223.6246 and for El Dorado County call (530) 621.5897.

Burn permits are available at most locally staffed fire stations.

The use of burn barrels is no longer legal in El Dorado or Amador counties.

Bike derby in Tahoe City during Amgen weekend

The Tahoe City Parks and Recreation Department “Bike Derby” is going into its 4th year at the Rideout Community Center May 14 from 11am-2pm.

The Tahoe City Recreation Department along with the other hosting associations have an afternoon planned full of food, games, bike safety and repair stations, obstacle course, and even the “Tour de Rideout.”

This free event is the day before professional cyclists ride around Lake Tahoe.

For more information on this event or if you are interested in volunteering, contact Shaun at (530) 583.3440, ext.14.

The address for the Rideout Community Center is 740 Timberland Lane, Tahoe City.

Tahoe basin pumping up

mountain bike trail

By Kathryn Reed

Heading into fall, the Corral Trail may be an entirely different experience for mountain bikers and motorized vehicles.

This is because the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit spent $24,000 from its trail budget to bring in Hilride Progression Development Group to design the trail that could lead to a more sophisticated mountain bike system throughout the basin. Construction is slated to begin in late summer. Between now and then a series of design workshops will be conducted.



Improvements to the South Shore's Corral Trail are likely to begin this summer.

At a meeting Thursday night of more than 24 fat tire die-hards, it sounded like a foreign language was being spoken – though it was a bit like how riders talk about terrain parks at ski resorts.

Right now three jumps are on the trail that is accessed off Pioneer Trail at Oneidas Road. Those who spoke out April 28 want more jumps, some want bigger features, all said it needs

to flow better.

Len Holmgren cautioned that the route needs to match the ability of the riders – who aren't all gnarly riders like many of whom attended the meeting put on by the U.S. Forest Service.

Garrett Villanueva, assistant forest engineer with the Forest Service, agreed after the meeting that the array of users on this particular trail were not at the meeting – particularly the mainstream mountain biker, motorcyclists and quad ATV.

"Without input, they won't have the options they desire," Villanueva warned.

The next meeting is June 11 at the Forest Service office in South Lake Tahoe. The morning will start at 9 going over a map Hilride officials will have devised that will contain potential locations for various features. The rest of the day, which will end about 4pm, will be scoping out the actual trail.

"This will be built by volunteers. It's the only way it will be put in the ground," Villanueva told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Several at the meeting are members of Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association, which has pledged its support to help build the trail.

Mountain biking is big business. People travel all over the world to ride specific trails. In Whistler, 10 percent of the residents belong to the cycling club there, according to a Hilride official.

Matt Lopes of Hilride showed endless video of trails – mostly in the Western United States. Most people at the meeting have traveled to these and other locations to ride their mountain bikes.

Rose Daiek is one of those traveling riders. But she also

likes the idea of improving her back yard. And she recognizes needing something for all levels.

“Progression is how people get better,” Daiek said.

For more information about the Corral Trail project, contact Villanueva or Jacob Quinn at the LTBMU office at (530) 543.2600.

Coast Guard reminds people to wear life jackets

By Reno Gazette-Journal

FERNLEY — The Fernley-Fallon-Silver Springs Coast Guard Auxiliary is reminding boaters to never go boating without a life jacket.

Additionally, passengers inside the boat are encouraged to wear life jackets.

Rick Thomas, flotilla commander, says that “wearing a life jacket on a boat is akin to wearing a seat belt in a car. Just as you shouldn’t start your journey in your car without buckling up, you shouldn’t start your journey on a boat without buckling up your life jacket.”

Additionally, the Auxiliary says nearly 75 percent of the 736 people who died by drowning were not wearing their life jacket.

Read the whole story

Fees to inspect boats in Tahoe announced

The watercraft inspection and decontamination program operated by the Tahoe Resource Conservation District has a price tag this year of nearly $2 million, but most of the cost is carried by grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Boat inspection fees pay for about one-third of the inspection services, according to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. All currently sealed Tahoe-only boats this year will pay $30 for a full year of AIS services.

All the rates may be found by clicking on fees. This rate is for the inspection. Marinas may have an additional fee.

Boating season on Tahoe begins May 1; inspections mandatory

The 2011 summer boating season starts May 1. Lake Tahoe boat inspection procedures are changing.

The following changes are taking place:

· All inspections will take place at roadside inspection stations.

· Blue Tahoe inspection seals from 2010 must be kept on boats.

· Plan ahead to ensure awareness of new requirements, inspection locations and to pre-purchase 2011 stickers.

· Remember to clean, drain and dry boats and equipment to protect boats and Lake Tahoe .

For more information, call 888.824.6267 or go online.

To receive Twitter updates on mobile phones, text “follow tahoeaquatic” to 40404.

The Sand Harbor and Cave Rock boat ramps will be open for the summer season from 6am to 8pm May 1 through Sept. 30. Watercraft inspectors will be provided at both sites by the Tahoe Resource Conservation District to check seals and stickers.

This process is important in protecting Lake Tahoe from the threat of aquatic invasive species such as quagga and zebra mussels.

Big tournaments highlight Tahoe-Reno golf season

By Dan Hinxman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Northern Nevada golf fans who enjoy watching high-level competition are in for a treat this year.

The region will host four professional events, two celebrity events and a high-profile amateur tournament between June and October. And the two that have the biggest following – the PGA

Tour’s Reno-Tahoe Open and the American Century Championship celebrity tournament – won’t be held on the same week as they were in 2010.

New to the area are two LPGA tournaments – Patty Sheehan & Friends, an LPGA Legends event hosted by Hall of Famer Patty Sheehan, and the Western Section LPGA T&CP Championship. Also making its first appearance in the region is the Pacific Coast Amateur, considered one of the most prestigious amateur tournaments in the country.

Read the whole story