

California skiers hit slopes in September

By Brennan Lagasse, San Francisco Chronicle

In the the last week of summer in California, I went skiing. Twice, actually. And to be honest, it was pretty good.

Both sessions were off Carson Pass near Kirkwood, and the conditions were a nod to last season's monster winter. For those with a mind to join the turns-all-year club, the Golden State hasn't had it this good in several years. Believe it or not, Mt. Shasta, Mt. Lassen, and resorts throughout the Sierra Nevada all have various panels, patches, and bowls that are still very skiable.

Since there are so many prime summer activities in the Sierra, it's fair to ask why someone might choose to go skiing in September. I think most people who do it would simply say, "Because we can."

Read the whole story

Van Sickle park evolving as popularity grows



The mural on the old barn at Van Sickle Bi-state Park was recently refurbished by Angie's Signs in Meyers. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

It's a park even for those who don't especially like the woods, or prefer to explore the outdoors in heels or flip flops. It's also a park for those wanting to hike the 165-mile Tahoe Rim Trail, or wanting a short trek to incredible views of Lake Tahoe.

Van Sickle Bi-state Park is proving to have a little something for a lot of people.

It's one of the few state parks anywhere that so many people can walk to from their hotel room.

Well more than sixty thousand people have visited the park this year. About 25,000 walked in, while another 30,000 drove. Those figures are from May 1 to Sept. 20. (The counters don't work in the winter.) And while the road is closed when it

snows, plenty of people walk in – some to snowshoe. The shoulder seasons are busy as well.

This park that opened in 2011 under adverse economic times has blossomed. Money is still an issue, but the two states continue to work for the greater good. The operating agreement is being revised, with partnerships expanded. The Van Sickle Foundation and Tahoe Rim Trail Association are key partners.

On Sept. 21 the California Tahoe Conservancy board members went on a little trek to this park that encompasses California and Nevada. It was the CTC that essentially bailed out California State Parks and came forward with funding, and continues to do so. Nevada State Parks, though, is the bigger player.



All the tools and materials to build the bridge were brought in by people or horses. Photo/LTN file

Starting Oct. 2 a ranger will be patrolling the park – the first time this has happened. Mike Shipman is a graduate of South Tahoe High School who now works for Nevada State Parks. He is who will be responsible for keeping an eye on things.

Homeless issues – notably fires in summer 2016 – were a huge issue, and continue to be a threat. Vandalism, graffiti and general misbehaving are all things Shipman will be handling – or hoping to prevent.

Frank Bosch and Linda Cook, who have been the onsite caretakers, are moving on – someplace out of the snow. Praise was given to them for the job they have done.

“We want to provide some level of visitor services. And we want to make sure the facilities stay clean,” Eric Johnson, administrator for Nevada State Parks, told *Lake Tahoe News* as to why a ranger has been hired.

A big change for the park will be the 20-site campground that is planned for the southern section of the Nevada side. It will have full hookups. The design is still a couple years out.



Views from hiking trails in Van Sickle Bi-State Park are stunning. Photo/LTN file

When the main road was built by Nevada Parks, the necessary infrastructure for the campground was installed.

The newest change was a fiberglass bridge that was installed last summer across the waterfall. It's the first of its kind

in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The Tahoe Rim Trail Association, Clay Grubb in particular, gets the kudos for this endeavor.

The TRTA has been an incredible partner to this park, having built a connector trail to its main trail. The agency also often leads hikes along the various trails, and does trainings there.

Land managers, though, are worried about outside impacts to the park. Near the old barn the Gondola Vista condo project can be seen. Per the CTC's insistence a fence will go up to block direct access from this development.

The CTC is also worried if the parcel on the west side of the entrance were to ever be developed by owner Randy Lane. A super-sized house could be built there. CTC staff would like the agency to purchase that land if the owner is willing and the state ever has the money.

The proposed loop road could be a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it will likely bring a huge influx of people to Van Sickle because Highway 50 would go directly in front of the park. This could be a strain on limited and fragile resources.

The entrance will have to be configured to accommodate the highway.

To make it so pedestrians and cyclists don't have to cross a four-lane highway to get to the park, an overpass is proposed closer to Harrah's Lake Tahoe. This, too, could provide for more traffic.

The park is here foremost because of Jack Van Sickle who in 1988 donated the 542 acres to Nevada in honor of his grandfather Henry Van Sickle. The younger Van Sickle died eight years before it opened.

WSOP.com marks four years of online poker

By Thomas Moore, Las Vegas Sun

One of only two remaining online poker providers in Nevada, WSOP.com is celebrating its fourth anniversary this week.

The company began operating on Sept. 19, 2013, several months after the Nevada Legislature passed Assembly Bill 114 and Gov. Brian Sandoval signed it into law legalizing the business.

At the time, skeptics said that if online poker was limited to a few states – the federal push to legalize has fizzled – the industry would struggle.

[Read the whole story](#)

Rangers leading hikes to Sand Harbor overlook

Park rangers will be providing free, guided hikes to Sand Harbor overlook on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1.

The hike is a four-mile loop and offers views of Sand Harbor. The hike is moderately difficult. Bring water, lunch, sunscreen, a hat and sturdy hiking boots.

Meet at Spooner Lake State Park parking lot at 9:30am. Ranger

will drive participants up to the Marlette Peak Campground to start the hike. Sign-ups are required and space is limited to 12 each day. The day will end about 4pm.

Interior secretary recommends shrinking Gold Butte in Nevada

By Matthew Daly, AP

WASHINGTON – Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is recommending that six of 27 national monuments under review by the Trump administration be reduced in size, with changes to several others proposed.

A leaked memo from Zinke to President Trump recommends that two Utah monuments – Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante – be reduced, along with Nevada’s Gold Butte and Oregon’s Cascade-Siskiyou.

Trump ordered the review earlier this year after complaining about improper “land grabs” by former presidents, including Barack Obama.

[Read the whole story](#)

Firewood available through Nevada parks

Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park will take applications for firewood permits now through Sept. 22 from 8:30am-4pm.

Applications will only be taken by phone, by calling 775.831.0494.

On Sept. 23, park staff will select a random list of names from among the applications received. Selected applicants will be contacted the following week to make an appointment to pick up firewood on one of the following dates in October: 14, 15, 21 or 22.

Payment for firewood will be collected at the time of pickup. There is a limit of one cord per household. The wood sells for \$65 per cord. The wood is available in the round and is a mix of fir, lodge pole pine and Jeffery pine. Cash, check or money order only.

Firewood will be picked up at Spooner Lake State Park.

Adventure travel has a long history in the region

By Meghan Herbst, Moonshine Ink

In 2016, Truckee launched its new slogan, "Base Camp for a Big Life." While it was chosen to epitomize Truckee's location as a jumping-off point for mountain experiences, there are a number of local expedition companies that have been making

Tahoe/Truckee a hub for adventures in the Sierra Nevada and abroad for decades.

Whether its rafting down a rough rapid in Chile, taking the whole family out for a day of rock climbing on Donner Summit, or traveling to a faraway land to learn about different cultures, these award-winning outfitters are ready to take you on a journey.

Read the whole story

Spartan Race World Championship returns to Squaw

The Reebok Spartan Race World Championship at Squaw Valley will be Sept. 30-Oct. 1.

Elite athletes representing nearly 50 countries will put their skills and endurance to the test in individual and team competitions.

Athletes will compete for more than \$100,000 in cash and prizes in the culminating event of the 2017 obstacle racing season at one of the most challenging courses in the world.

In addition to the World Team Championship, which will take place that Sunday, the weekend will feature Beast, Super and Sprint competitions, as well as a Kids Race, for ages 4-13. The event is the culmination of the 2017 Spartan Race Season, following the Global Elite Point Series.

Obstacle Course Racing fans are invited to take in all the action, including viewing access to select obstacles as well as the start and finish line, live music and entertainment,

panel discussions, raffles, spectator challenges, vendor tents, and more. The event itself is free to the public, with a VIP spectator package available at \$40. Tickets for a dinner with athletes are \$40 for adults and \$20 for children (13 and under).

For more details on Spartan World Championship events throughout the weekend, go **online**.

Wildlife-vehicle collisions more likely in fall

Caltrans and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife are encouraging people to pay closer attention for wildlife on roadways.

Watch Out for Wildlife Week is Sept. 18-24.

The state is using signage, fencing, and undercrossings to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions along roadways, especially in wildlife corridors.

Between now and December, deer and other wildlife are more susceptible than usual to vehicle collisions.

Wildlife experts offer the following tips for motorists:

- Be especially alert when driving in wildlife areas, and reduce speed to react safely.
- Pay particular attention when driving during the morning and evening, as wildlife are most active during these times.
- If you see an animal cross the road, know that others may be following.

- Don't litter. The odors may entice animals to venture near roadways.

On a stretch of Highway 89 between Truckee and Sierraville, a recently-completed \$2.08 million project consists of two new 12-foot by 10-foot wildlife undercrossings, providing a safe path for animals to cross under the roadway. The project also includes four escape ramps and more than 14,000 linear feet of deer fencing on both sides of the highway to help prevent wildlife-vehicle collisions.

Boat inspectors nab 30 contaminated vessels

During the 2017 boating season, Tahoe RCD watercraft inspectors performed more than 7,600 inspections. In total, more than 15,000 vessels launched at Lake Tahoe, including newly inspected vessels and those with intact Tahoe-issued inspection seals.

This year more than 30 of the inspected watercraft were harboring aquatic invasive plants, mussels or snails. With our efficient roadside inspection stations, Tahoe RCD decontaminated approximately 4,300 watercraft with hot water, preventing invasive species from entering Tahoe's waters.

Boat inspections will move to select launch ramps and winter hours starting Oct. 1.

Inspectors will be at Cave Rock and Lake Forest boat ramps from 6am-4pm seven days a week, weather permitting. All boats without an intact Tahoe inspection seal are required to get an inspection during daylight hours.

Decontaminations are available at Cave Rock and Lake Forest throughout October as weather permits. Decontamination fees will apply for watercraft that are not clean, drained and dry. Watercraft that has been in a known infested waterbody will require a precautionary decontamination at no cost regardless of whether it has been cleaned, drained, and dry. Boats with intact inspection seals are permitted to launch at all open launch facilities; however, inspections are only available at Cave Rock and Lake Forest boat launch ramps.

Boaters are encouraged to confirm hours and inspection locations by calling 888.824.6267.