Weekend backpacking course through TRTA

If you've wanted to try backpacking, but weren't quite sure how to get started then join the TRTA for the Backpacking 101 class.

Led by our seasoned guides and Snow Camping 101 instructors Wayne McClelland and Jordan Summers, this class will go over all the basics of backpacking from how to pack to choosing a campsite and cooking your meals.

They will guide participants to Gray Lake on a 5-mile hike with 2,000 feet of elevation gain. Participants must provide their gear and clothing. The TRTA will provide dehydrated backpacker meals.

This course will start in the classroom, but then you actually practice the skills you just learned in an overnight experience.

Start time: 10am Oct. 2

End time: 2pm on Oct. 3

Cost: Suggested $40 donation

For more information, and for prerequisites for this course, call the TRTA office at (775) 298.0012 or email programs@tahoerimtrail.org.

3rd win for Kenyan in LT Marathon

It was win No. 3 at the Lake Tahoe Marathon on Sunday for 31-year-old Kenyan John Weru.

Weru, who lives in Oakland now, won the race for the with a time of 2 hours, 59 minutes and 50.31 seconds.

Weru was also a champion in 2003 and 2004.

Margaret Ashe, 52, of Olympic Valley took home the 2010 women's title for the 26.2-mile race with a time of 3 hours, 34 minute and 29.18 seconds.

Nearly 3,000 participants took part in Lake Tahoe Marathon Race Week, Sept. 22-26, with another 6,000 friends and family members visiting the region to support the racers.

In the Great Lake Tahoe Cycle Race, Jesse Miller-Smith of Truckee finished the 72-mile race with a record-breaking time of 2 hours, 50 minutes and 21.9 seconds, followed closely by Justin Rossi of Reno with a time of 2 hours, 50 minutes and 22 seconds.

For a complete list of winners and times, click to the Lake Tahoe Marathon website and then to 2010 Results.

TRTA leader blends outdoor,

nonprofit experience

By Maggie O’Neill, Reno Gazette-Journal

If things go as planned Mary Bennington, 53, will be the Tahoe Rim Trail Association’s executive director when the nonprofit celebrates 30 years in 2011.

Bennington became executive director in May, replacing Mark Kimbrough who served as executive director for 7.5 years.

“This is one of those dream jobs,” she said recently. “I have people come in and ask what I love about the organization. It’s really the people. Everyone is so happy and so excited. It’s just such a positive place to work, a really fun place to work.”

“She’s doing absolutely great,” said TRTA board president Sam Viviano. “From the Rim Trail and from the board’s perspective, she’s an absolutely perfect fit.”

Read the whole story

Zero boating fatalities in Nevada for 2010 season

By Reno Gazette-Journal

For the first time in 18 years, the Nevada Department of Wildlife reports no fatal boat accidents on Nevada’s waters.

“The boating season draws to its traditional September close in the next couple weeks and this is great news – no

fatalities in Nevada's boating community," David Pfiffner, Nevada's boating law administrator, said in a statement.

Officials are not sure there is one cause for the lack of fatalities, but believe boater reducation efforts by NDOW, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxillary and others deserve some of the credit.

Boating safety enforcement on Lake Tahoe and increased patrols looking for boaters under the influence of alohcol at Lake Mead and Lake Mohave also deserve credit, NDOW said.

Read the whole story

Guns allowed in Nevada state parks

By Steve Green, Las Vegas Sun

People who can lawfully possess firearms can now take their loaded guns into Nevada's state parks under a legal agreement approved Tuesday.

Attorneys for the Nevada Attorney General's office, representing the state park system, agreed in a lawsuit stipulation that the parks will stop enforcing a law that critics said generally barred park visitors from possessing loaded firearms – even for self defense.

The agreement is valid for one year and will give the parks system a chance to amend its regulations so they comply with the U.S. Constitution's Second Amendment right to possess firearms, said James Manley, an attorney for the Mountain States Legal Foundation who was involved in the litigation.

The agreement came after the Colorado-based legal foundation filed suit in federal court in Nevada in July challenging a law that allowed visitors to bring guns into state parks, but only if they were unloaded and locked in vehicles.

Read the whole story

Ski helmets remain a matter of choice for kids in Calif.

By Jim Sanders, Sacramento Bee

Kids will not have to wear helmets when they ski or snowboard in California after all.



Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger applauded a proposed mandatory helmet law for minors Friday but took action that shelved it.

The Legislature, in passing the helmet law, stipulated that it would take effect only if a separate bill targeting ski resort signage and safety plans also was signed by the governor. Schwarzenegger said no.

Read the whole story

Amgen cycling tour eliminating cities; Tahoe still in running

By John Schumacher, Sacramento Bee

Sacramento remains in, but Nevada City is out, and several other changes are likely coming to the 2011 Amgen Tour of California pro cycling race.

City Manager Gene Albaugh said Friday he hopes Nevada City, which hosted the start of the 2010 first stage in May, can return to the race's lineup in the future.

"I think we'll get it back," said Albaugh, whose city hosts the annual Nevada City Bicycle Classic in June.

"Disappointed? Yes and no. It was probably good timing for us to get a little break from all that work."

John McCasey, executive director of the Sacramento Sports Commission, said the capital city would be in the race lineup for the fifth time in six years.

Read the whole story

Water board monitoring Leviathan Mine activity

By Harold Singer

The Water Board's Leviathan Mine treatment contractor began

this year’s acid mine drainage (AMD) treatment activities on July 9. This followed the late-June sludge disposal activities for about 600 tons of sludge from the previous year’s treatment activities.

Three ponds at the Alpine County site collect AMD from a former mine tunnel (the Adit) and from an underdrain system in the former mine pit. The ponds were constructed in 1984 by the Water Board as part of a pollution abatement project at the site. The ponds capture these two AMD sources that otherwise would discharge to Leviathan Creek.

Significant mining activities that started in about 1952 by the Anaconda Company exposed the pyrite and other sulfide minerals in the rocks at the site to water and air. AMD is formed by the oxidation of these minerals, resulting in the production of hydrogen ions, and ultimately sulfuric acid. This acid solubilizes iron and other metals in the rock.

The resultant AMD is very acidic (typical pH of about 2) and contains arsenic, cadmium, copper, aluminum, nickel, iron, and other metals at concentrations that are deleterious to water quality and that would adversely affect aquatic organisms. The Water Board’s capture and treatment of the AMD results in removal of most of the metals, neutralization of the acidity, and discharge of water that meets the established U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (USEPA) discharge criteria.

As of mid-August, the Water Board’s treatment contractor had treated and discharged about 5.8 million gallons of AMD from the ponds. Water Board staff estimate that a total of about 7.5 million gallons of AMD will be treated this year, making it the third highest volume treated since the Water Board began treatment in 1999. The variation in amount of AMD generated in any year is directly proportional to the amount of precipitation.

Higher precipitation years result in greater groundwater flows

into the adit and underdrain system. All of the AMD in the ponds is treated during the summer in order to maximize the pond volume available for AMD capture through the fall, winter and spring, when access to the site is limited and treatment is not readily available.

Water Board staff provide oversight of the treatment contractor through the treatment season. Oversight activities include checking plant operations, treatment quality, sludge production, and effluent quality. Effluent discharge monitoring is conducted twice weekly by Water Board staff through sampling and laboratory analysis. Stream monitoring is conducted monthly at numerous sampling sites by Water Board staff. All treatment and monitoring activities are conducted in conformance with the USEPA's orders to the Water Board and Annual Workplans approved by the USEPA.

A couple of significant staffing changes have occurred on the project this past month. Laurie Scribe, an environmental scientist who has worked on the project for ten years, transferred to the TMDL and Basin Planning Unit to expand her Water Board experience.

Scribe managed all the Water Board's monitoring activities, laboratory contracts, and much of the supply and equipment purchasing for the project, as well as providing support for other Leviathan project activities. Her presence on the project will be missed. Scribe has trained Lisa Scoralle, an engineering geologist, to take over the monitoring and related activities.

Also, Chein Kao, the Leviathan Mine Unit supervisor, retired at the end of July, after two and a half years with the Water Board and many years at the Department of Toxic Substances Control. Due to the current state budget situation, we will not be able to fill that supervisory position for some time. Chuck Curtis, division manager for the the Cleanup and Enforcement Division of Lahontan, will be in charge in the

interim.

Harold Singer is executive director of Lahontan Water Quality Control Board.

Marathon events expected to slow weekend traffic in basin

Drivers in the Lake Tahoe Basin should expect a few inconveniences this weekend because of Lake Tahoe Marathon events.

On Sept. 25 is the Great Lake Tahoe 72 Mile Bike Race that starts and finishes at Zephyr Cove. Anticipate the peloton coming across the state line into California from the start in Zephyr Cove about 7:15am. The California Highway Patrol will lead them through South Lake Tahoe and arrive at the Y about 7:35am before heading up Emerald Bay.

Try to avoid Highway 89 north between 7:30 and 8:30am as there will be some slow going. Race officials also advise avoiding traveling from Tahoe City around the East Shore to intersection of highways 28 and 50 between 8:30 and 9:30am.

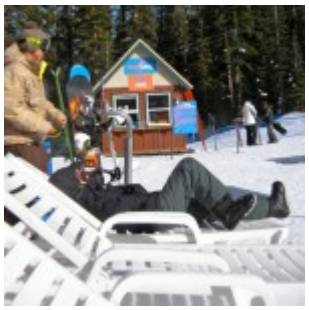
Marathon Sunday, Sept. 26, will see Emerald Bay Road closed at 7am at Spring Creek. Camp Richardson and Fallen Leaf Lake Road will remain open all the time. Highway 89 will reopen northbound at about 1:30pm. Southbound remains open, but slow and with delays, south from Tahoe City.

Traffic between Tahoe City, Homewood, and Tahoma should be clear in both directions by 10am. The leaders will leave Commons Beach in Tahoe City at 8am.

Tahoe ski resorts looking for local employees

By Kara LaPoint, Reno Gazette-Journal

It’s only September, but the time has come for those seeking resort employment this ski season to start thinking about winter.



“We’re at that transition point, where summer operations are winding down, and we’re looking ahead to winter season,” said Kirt Zimmer, director of marketing for Tahoe Donner Association.

Hiring time is just around the corner, and resorts around the Tahoe area are gearing up for annual job fairs and assessing their employment outlook for the coming season. Overall, resorts said they’re looking to hire at least as many employees as last year, and in some cases more. At several resorts, new developments are the reason for an increase in positions.

While demographics vary, many resorts have indicated that local employees will comprise the bulk of their staffs.

Read the whole story