Firewood permits available in Nevada

Permits are on sale now for the Nevada Division of State Parks' wood-sale Wednesdays.

Permits must be purchased at the State Parks Division office, located at 901 South Stewart St., Ste. 5005 in Carson City from 8am-5pm Wednesdays. Permits are $20 (exact cash or check only) per truck and are limited to one permit per address/family for each Wednesday.

Four-wheel drive trucks are required for wood pick up. Permits are being sold per truckload, not per cord. Therefore, only standard trucks – up to 1 ton – are allowed. Flatbeds, stakesides and trailers are not allowed.

Approximately 140 permits are available on a first-come, first-served basis. The sale will end Sept. 1 or once all permits are sold.

The pick-up schedule will be every Wednesday at 9am in July, August (excluding Aug. 18) and Sept. 1.

The wood is located above Hobart Reservoir in the backcountry of Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park. These special permits are being sold at a reduced rate because the wood will need to be moved by hand over a long distance – up to 150 feet – over steep and rough terrain.

The wood consists of a mixture of pine and fir, some seasoned and some green. Most of the wood is approximately 18 inches, although some odd sized and large rounds are possible.

The wood was cut by Nevada Division of Forestry and Great Basin Institute conservation crews as part of forest health efforts in Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park.

Call Joy Elwood at (775) 684.2793 for information.

Fallen Leaf Lake becomes a study about past droughts

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

Vacationers skim the surface of Fallen Leaf Lake on water skis or kayaks, oblivious that scientists are investigating the depths for signs of natural disasters to come.

Last week, scientists began crisscrossing the lake with a $450,000, state-of-the-art sonar tool that will map the lake bed in unprecedented detail.



What's beneath Fallen Leaf Lake is of interest to scientists. Photo/Kathryn Reed

They’re looking for two things:

• Subsurface seismic faults that could bode earthquakes and even tsunamis for the Tahoe region.

• Ancient trees along the outer edges of the lake bottom that are evidence that the region is subject to recurring 200-year droughts of catastrophic proportions.

Read the whole story

Laid-back start to annual celebrity golf tourney

By Austin Fay

STATELINE- – The first day of the American Century Celebrity Golf Tournament was a relatively sleepy one, with many of the invited players expected to arrive at the Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course today and Thursday.

Blue skies, a chilly lake and the chance of spotting NHL legend Mario Lemieux brought Jeff and Genny Isaachsen 17 hours from Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The die-hard hockey fan couple has been planning the trip for months.



The view from Brooks Sports Bar is ideal. Photos/Austin Fay

Only three days before the couple left for their trip, Lemieux canceled his invitation. But the couple is still determined to enjoy their stay in Tahoe.

The player list isn't final until it's final, but others expected to attend include: John Elway, Michael Jordan, Don Cheadle, Kevin Nealon, Marcus Allen, Dan Quinn, Jerry Rice, Ray Romano, Oscar de la Hoya, Rick Rhoden and Billy Joe Tolliver.

A few celebrities and athletes were in attendance Tuesday, namely Mike Shanahan, coach of the Washington Redskins and offensive coordinator for three Super Bowl wins.

"With the snow-capped mountains and you can hardly count the clouds in the sky, it's one of the most beautiful places to be," Shanahan said.



Brian Baumgartner, left, of NBC's "The Office" talks with an Edgewood employee on July 13.

Emmy-award winning Brian Baumgartner of NBC's "The Office" was stretching his shoulders on the driving range.

Only 50 miles away, the Reno-Tahoe Open at Montreux Golf Club is a sweltering 95 degrees. The British Open at St. Andrews is

also on this weekend in Scotland.

But neither of those has Edgewood's infamous 17th fairway, where sun burned lake-goers pull up their boats on the sand to catch glances of the celebrities or even catch a 50-yard bomb from NFL blow-in Matt Ryan.

Three boys from El Dorado Hills came to see Marcus Allen. Their parents and the young sports fans (two of them brothers) went to the 2007 U.S. Open to see Tiger Woods play. The boys spent the day wandering around having their T-shirts scrawled on with Sharpies by the athletes.

"This one's a baseball player," one boy said, showing off the garbled lines on the shoulder of his white shirt. "It's just a bunch of scribbles but they're celebrities so ...."

Tahoe-Douglas Fire Protection District was also in attendance, standing by in case of health emergencies, or sometimes "golf-ball incidents." Brandon Spry and Brian Zabel, two Tahoe-Douglas paramedics, remember two years ago when Sugar Ray Leonard hit a young spectator in the head at the tournament. Leonard signed the ball and gave the boy a hundred dollar bill.



Crowds are expected to increase starting today.

Altitude, medications and tourists standing in the heat all

day make for a wicked environment to bring out health problems. Stay hydrated if you do head out to Edgewood this week.

It’s $60 for the whole week, with Wednesday and Thursday admission $15 a day. Friday, Saturday and Sunday when the actual tournament goes into full swing, the price jumps to $25 and the athletes will mostly be unavailable for autographs and photos as the tournament will be under way.

Squaw opens kids-only zipline

Squaw Valley opened its kids zipline this past weekend. Built for high flying fun at the mountain’s base, the zipline lets kids soar over the mountain.

Kids slide into a harness, climb up to the top of the launch tower and fly across the field to a landing 200 feet away.

Located next to the Funitel, the zipline looks out onto the granite peaks of Red Dog and KT-22.

The zipline is open daily from 11am to 7pm. It can accommodate kids up to 120 pounds. Tickets cost $12, with an added cost of $6 for additional zips.

For more information about the zipline, call (530) 452.4000 or visit www.squaw.com.

High maintenance takes on new meaning at Edgewood

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – Coming off a wet winter and massive upgrades, Edgewood Tahoe stands to show off more than stars when the American Century golf championship swings into action this week.

The Stateline golf course has spruced up its grounds with a $2 million overhaul on its 40-year-old irrigation system. Barely a few weeks into operation, the upgrade from grounds to pump house amounts to 20 and 30 miles of new pipes and wires, respectively.



Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course is ready to host the annual celebrity golf tournament July 13-18. Photos/Kathryn Reed

“It was time for a change. There was a desire from the company to improve the condition of the golf course,” Edgewood’s new Golf Course Superintendent Scott Schunter said in his office before touring the grounds. Golf shoes lie on the floor. A

U.S. Open flag from the 1991 tournament’s sixth hole in Minnesota adorns his wall.

“From here, I have control of every single (sprinkler) head on the golf course,” he said.

As a groundskeeper, Schunter is a pro. He came on board last August from Breezy Point, Minn., so he knows what big winters are like, such as the one Lake Tahoe experienced this past season. Since arriving, Schunter’s vision was to bring Edgewood’s eco-conscious grounds to a level equivalent to its world-class views.

Tahoe’s roller-coaster winter prompted Schunter’s crew to take the snowblower out in early March. The seventh hole’s green had a 3.5 foot snowdrift on it that was settling into the ground with the melting and freezing of the bright sun and nighttime low temperatures.

“Water has to go somewhere. And that ice can be fatal to turf in as little as 75 days,” he said. “With Mother Nature, you deal with what she gives you. Once you try to control her, she’ll bite you in the butt.”

Winter conditions on the grounds so late this year compressed the maintenance season.

“With the shortness of season – especially this year – it’s imperative we come out and hit the ground running,” he said.

Schunter must consider more than regular maintenance duties for his 22 seasonal and six full-time workers. To be an excellent groundskeeper means knowing your grass and knowing the way the ball rolls. A mix of grass covers the greens, which are flanked by a strip of Kentucky Blue to slow down a fast roller. A rougher grass that is cut higher covers most of the 250-acre course. The height of the grass and the water content affects the speed of the rolling ball. Edgewood mows at 0.145 of an inch. In comparison, Pebble Beach scraped its

grass to less than 0.1 of an inch for this year's U.S. Open.

"This is something we look for," Schunter said, while rolling a ball over the greens on the 14th hole. "It was bumping before we mowed. You can't have that. Consistency is the key."

Their equipment is based in a 12,000-square-foot facility tucked into the trees behind the course.

Ready for the celebs

The Edgewood crew has been working diligently to get the golf course up to par before its premier event – the American Century Championship, (http://www.tahoecelebritygolf.com/) a golf tournament that brings out a score of television celebrities and sports figures. They range from basketball great Michael Jordan to Ray Romano. One year soccer star Brandi Chastain started "extreme golfing" by running from hole to hole.

In its 21st year, the tournament – which runs today through July 18 – attracts thousands of spectators.

The event has such a reputation it's brought every day golfers like Jerry Thompson to the grounds. He's watched the tournament on television from his Atlanta home and decided it was time to try it out.

"I like this golf course. It has fast fairways," Thompson said, while hitting balls at the driving range. He noticed the altitude drives the ball farther.

"I can't wait to come back to try it for the first time in the morning. I'll be here first thing," he said last week. Tee times when the tournament isn't going start at 6:45am. About an hour later, Schunter's crew wraps up its maintenance rounds of mowing, fertilizing and watering.

Sprucing up the course

Improvement is the name of the game here.

By damming and pumping out its own, on-site water source, Edgewood has reduced its water and electrical usage by at least 30 percent. That savings to the system within the Stateline Stormwater Association system equates to about $15,000 a year.

With Schunter at the helm, Edgewood has also taken special measures to review the amount and type of fertilizer its uses under Tahoe Regional Planning Agency guidelines. The grounds are fertilized once a month – with the greens receiving the spray once every two weeks. None is used on more than 30 acres of the golf course.

The golf course crews have even gone to the effort of overseeing a goose roundup on the grounds in order for the Nevada Division of Wildlife to conduct tests for avian cholera and West Nile diseases. This is no light chore. Geese extract about 4 pounds of fecal matter a day, according to Schunter.

It’s a balancing act as the veteran groundskeeper weighs the environmental benefits of saving water and letting nature take its course, with the embedded desire to please golfers and spectators who live in a green grass world.

“As we’ve grown up, the only thing we’ve known are irrigated greens,” he said. “We’re obsessed with green. But it’s easier to kill grass by overwatering it.”

Despite the challenges, Schunter shows a genuine satisfaction of his job. Driving a golf cart on this lakefront golf course with his dog Nikki running alongside suits the man who has worked on Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus signature resorts.

“If I’m happy, any golfer coming here will be happy,” he said.

To Steve Rennie, there must be something to that logic.

“It doesn’t get any better than this,” the Los Angeles golfer

said on the putting green, while looking out at the lake on a picture-perfect day.

Rennie plays at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course every year. He plans his trips before the celebrity golf tournament to get more playing time in.

Beyond the view and the challenge of the tricky wind, he enjoys the conditions of the grounds.

“The grass is always in great shape,” he said.

Rennie has noticed the strip of Kentucky Blue Grass surrounding the greens. He likes how the grass slows the ball down around the greens.

“But you can still putt off it,” he said, while demonstrating a short putt. He smiled as the ball kissed the hole.

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Lahontan cutthroat trout thriving at Independence Lake

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

At a “gem” of a Sierra lake recently purchased for the public, native inhabitants are making a record comeback.

At Independence Lake, one of only two lakes in the world with an indigenous population of Lahontan cutthroat trout, the threatened fish are now spawning at levels not seen since 1956.

“It’s a real success story. They’re coming back,” said Gary

Scoppettone, a cutthroat expert with the U.S. Geological Survey.

This summer, 223 cutthroat have been counted spawning from the lake up Upper Independence Creek, from 176 last year and 165 the year before. In 2003, as the lake's fish teetered at extinction, only 17 cutthroat spawned at the lake, Scoppettone said.

Read the whole story

Paddling on Lake Tahoe can take some patience

By Kathryn Reed

It's not the Boundary Waters, but canoeing on Lake Tahoe can be fun – even if it means taking deep breaths while some guy on a Jet Ski spins in circles close to our canoe. Unfortunately, the choppy water and deafening noise made me briefly forget I was in one of the most magical outdoor playgrounds.

Only during this episode did I long to be on the lakes of Minnesota where motorized watercraft are not allowed. Maybe it's time to plan a visit to see my sister and paddle a few days with her. Or maybe it's time for law enforcement in Tahoe to crackdown on violators like this.



Sue Wood cruises along Lake Tahoe. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The speed limit on Lake Tahoe for all vessels is 5mph 600 feet or closer to the shore.

With Tahoe's push to be welcoming to paddlers, encounters like the one Sue and I experienced would deter a lot of people from returning.

Gliding across Lake Tahoe one stroke at a time, it was part scenic tour, part architectural tour as our 17-foot canoe took us from Timber Cove Pier to Tahoe Shores to Edgewood Tahoe back to our starting point.

It was another tough Sunday living and playing in Lake Tahoe.

Meandering along it was the echoes of people having fun that resonates most – not that yahoo on his personal watercraft. Many are on shore, but more are out in the water. Several wave as they paddle by in kayaks. Some are too wobbly on paddleboards let go long enough to wave. One person is swimming, oblivious to those who are dry.

It was a bit disconcerting that no one stopped us at Timber Cove to ask what body of water our canoe was last in. (It was the Upper Truckee River in case anyone wants to know.) The concern is because of possibly transporting aquatic invasive species into Lake Tahoe. Signs are posted at other non-motorized launches about what paddlers should do – but not

here.

Paddling toward Nevada, one gets an architectural tour to start with. Some lovely houses sit back not far from the shore.

Various lodging resorts dot the shore. With the snow-capped mountains all around, it’s a reminder this really is a year-round destination.

Photographers are busy snapping pictures of wedding parties at Edgewood and Timber Cove.

The farther we paddle, the quieter and less congested it gets. That won’t necessarily be the case this week as Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course hosts the annual celebrity golf tournament.

After turning around near Tahoe Shores, we paddled back the short distance to Edgewood. It was a fitting place to get a cocktail and appetizer before heading for Timber Cove Pier. We didn’t care we were the only ones dressed in lifejackets at Brooks Sports Bar.

Something to remember is California and Nevada have different rules for accessing private land. In the Golden State, the public has access to land that is below the high water mark – so that’s quite a bit right now. In the Silver State, landing on a private beach is equivalent to trespassing.

The Lake Tahoe Water Trail is a great resource for paddling at Tahoe. The website has information about memberships and trail maps.

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Assault on Asian clams in Tahoe under way

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

Scuba-diving scientists and a federal, state and regional battalion launched an aquatic assault Friday on alien invaders threatening to slime one of the world's most pristine lakes.

In a $1.4 million experiment led by researchers from the University of California, Davis and the University of Nevada, the team set out to smother hundreds of thousands of the slovenly freeloaders – non-native Asian clams that spew algae-causing concentrates into Lake Tahoe.

Read the whole story

Golf fans must choose between celebs and pros

By Dan Hinxman, Reno Gazette Journal

The Reno-Tahoe Open and American Century Championship, the area's two prominent golf tournaments, are the same week this year – July 12-18 – for the first time in the history of the two popular events.

"That's unfortunate, isn't it?" local golf enthusiast John Coats said.

The tournaments have been three to six weeks apart since the RTO, a PGA Tour event, began in 1999 at Montreux Golf &

Country Club. That was the ninth year for the ACC, a celebrity tournament at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course that annually draws celebrities including Michael Jordan, John Elway and Ray Romano.

Read the whole story

Rice’s soft hands make him a threat on links

By Chris Murray, Reno Gazette-Journal

Jerry Rice readily will admit that when he played football he was addicted to the game.

He’d do whatever it took to get better. And by the time he retired in 2004, with three Super Bowl rings in hand, there was little doubt he was the greatest wide receiver in NFL history.



Jerry Rice

But once his Hall of Fame career ended, he was left with a void. The all-consuming passion that was football was gone.

“I was like, ‘OK, what am I going to do now?'” Rice said Wednesday during a teleconference to promote next week’s

American Century Championship golf tournament.

Well, he’s found plenty of things to fill the void.

Read the whole story