South Tahoe bike festival and parade

Tahoe Bike Day Parade & Festival is June 5.

To inaugurate this day, a family oriented Parade & Festival will be at Ski Run Marina in South Lake Tahoe. Everyone is invited to ride in the parade – any age, skill level, type of bike, and decorated bikes are particularly welcome. The parade begins noon following the official ribbon cutting ceremony and travels 2.2 miles over a downtown loop.

The festival hours are 12:30–5pm.

Click here for more information.

Carnelian fuels project meeting June 3

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is seeking public comment on the proposed action for the Carnelian Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration Project.

The agency will host a public meeting on June 3 to share details of the proposed project activities, answer questions, and encourage comment on the project. The meeting will be at the North Tahoe Conference Center at 8318 North Lake Blvd. in Kings Beach from 5-7pm.

The proposed project area includes approximately 3,290 acres of thinning and fuels reduction treatments on the North Shore of Lake Tahoe. The project is located on National Forest System lands within the wildland urban interface on the California side along the west and east sides of Highway 28.

The proposed treatments are intended to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire and its impacts to commercial, private and public infrastructure, as well as preserve the ecological values along the lake.

A detailed description of the project, including a color map, can be downloaded.

For further information regarding this proposed action including requesting a paper copy or CD of the proposed action, contact Denise Downie at (530) 543.2683. Comments may be submitted until June 17.

Fallen Leaf Lake – an opening without controversy

By Kathryn Reed

FALLEN LEAF LAKE – Not a cloud in the sky – it's a bluebird day. Boats fill the slips. Children run around; some getting wetter than their parents would like. Ice cream is one of the most sought after items in the store. Hikers are in short-sleeves. Those from off the hill are the ones in the turtlenecks on a day like this. Unfamiliar drivers wonder what kind of road they are on – some of the potholes seem as wide as the narrow, mostly one-lane road.

It must be Fallen Leaf Lake.

With the bevy of activity going on, evidence of all of the unrest and name-calling that went on during the winter at this small mountain enclave on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe is well hidden.



Fallen Leaf Lake from the back counter at the store. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The worst thing, and some would argue the best, is the store ran out of food Saturday and had to borrow from its neighbors – Stanford Sierra Camp.

Rob and Sandy Wirth took over the concessionaire this season, with this being their first weekend to be open.

“We’ve had lots of compliments,” Sandy Wirth said in between helping customers at the store.

Stephanie Bryan and Mona Brauer looked around the outside before going in. They commented on the outdoor teak tables, giving them their approval.

“The store feels more open. You don’t feel like you have to squeeze between the aisles,” Brauer said after perusing the inside.

Bryan owns a house at the lake, while Brauer is an occasional

guest at the lake. Neither frequents the store a ton, but they like being able to pick something up they may have forgotten and they like to browse the T-shirt selection.

The Wirths opened the interior of the store by pushing one of the coolers to a wall, and bringing the shirt and hat selection toward the middle of the store.

It’s clear on Day 2 of being open that all the shelves are not stocked. That was planned. A variety of sundries, fishing goods, some fresh produce, mixings for s’mores and other items are available. More will be added.

The menu choices will also grow as the season takes off. For now, burgers, sandwiches, soup and ice cream are the staples. Vegetarians will be accommodated as summer truly unfolds.

The Wirths are working on securing their beer and wine license so people can have a cocktail.

On the back deck are two old sugar pine slabs that have been turned into counters.

Mother Nature didn’t help the Fallen Leaf Lake opening. It was snowing in Lake Tahoe this past week. Piles of snow had to be cleared from the area. A team of about 20 volunteers helped get the docks in the water and grounds looking as though it’s been spring in the mountains for more than two days.

Ted Wendell spent about four hours in a wetsuit cleaning the lakeshore of debris.

General Manager Tom Barnes is walking around the docks with a clipboard on Saturday in the late afternoon. He is smiling.

He points to Rob Wirth with a rake in his hand on the shore making sure the sand is just right. He calls the people by name who are helping make sure opening weekend comes off without a hitch – people who are volunteering their time.

Barnes talks a bit about what it’s been like since coming on board last August. He doesn’t want to badmouth anyone, but he said things had not been as well kept as they could have been.

At the morning community meeting at the firehouse, resident Tom Beales sang the praises of the Wirths and commended them for their efforts in getting things going in such a short period of time. (The Wirths had six weeks to get the site ready, having taken over for the John and Ruth Rich who had the concessionaire job for the last 14 years.)

Rob Wirth gave a brief presentation to the board and nearly 50 people at Saturday’s meeting. He told them about the two electric boats the marina has for rent – and that had already been plying the glass-like morning water.

A couple aluminum fishing boats are also new.

Gas is selling for $3.99 a gallon. That wasn’t stopping people from churning through the dark, cold waters that sit on the edge of Desolation Wilderness.

Wirth even said he would deliver food to the firehouse. This may be good news for Gary Gerren; the board hired him that day to be the fire chief.

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Learn about migratory birds in Tahoe basin

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit has partnered with the newly formed Tahoe Institute for Natural Science to bring an International Migratory Bird Day Festival

to Lake Tahoe.

The event is from 9:30am-3:30pm June 5 at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center on Emerald Bay Road in South Lake Tahoe.

The festival will provide an opportunity for the whole family to learn about migratory birds and how local scientists are working for their benefit. It will include games, crafts, and a special bird walk for children. Aspiring birdwatchers can learn about the latest binoculars and spotting scopes, and homeowners can get tips on dealing with those pesky woodpeckers. Raptor enthusiasts will enjoy a talk on osprey, presented by California State Parks biologist Lisa Fields, and a presentation from a local falconer featuring a live bird of prey.

In addition, guided bird walks will take place at Spooner Lake, Cove East, and Blackwood Canyon from approximately 8am to 10:30am. Walks are free, but space is limited and preregistration is required.

For walk registration, call Will Richardson at (530) 587.6895 or email will@tinsweb.org.

For more information on the festival, call Forest Service wildlife biologist Rena Escobedo at (530) 543.2733.

Trek along Emerald Bay a vision of Sierra beauty

By Kathryn Reed

Hiking season in the Lake Tahoe area is a gradual migration from lake level to higher elevations. It may be an extended

lake level season this year based on the weather the Sierra has experienced this month.

Still, I was able to get in one of my favorite hikes earlier this month – Rubicon Trail. The four of us started at the Vikingsholm parking lot at Emerald Bay and went as far as Rubicon Point at the end of the bay. (It costs $7 to park because it's a state park.)



Emerald Bay along the Rubicon Trail. Photos/Kathryn Reed

When the hiking legs are more energized we often do the nine-mile round-trip to the beach at D.L. Bliss State Park as the halfway point. The round-trip is my favorite hike in the basin. It's one of those ones where bringing an extra camera battery is a good idea.

Going part way like we did this particular Saturday or having another vehicle at D.L. Bliss makes it less strenuous. To the point it's flat and about two miles. To the state park means a few slight hills, but nothing overly taxing. The worst part about the hike is the mile-long trek up from Vikingsholm to the parking lot.

The 200-foot elevation gain feels like a lot more than that.

An old lighthouse is close to D.L. Bliss. California Conservation Crops crews built a trail to it as an offshoot

from the main route. It’s worth a look.

I’ve seen a few daring soles jump from the rocks into the water below. I’m not sure how safe this is, so I’m not recommending it. But it does look like fun for people who don’t have height or cold-water issues. There have been fatalities in the past with jumpers.

It’s the views along the entire route that are breathtaking. Sauntering along Emerald Bay is mesmerizing. Boats cruise by. The only downside this day is a boat overloaded with partiers looking for a cove to anchor in. Luckily, our lunch spot was too rocky for them.

A kayaker has paddled up to the boat-in only campground. The M.S. Dixie takes a boatload around Fanette Island.

An eagles’ nest is on the other side of the bay, so don’t be surprised to see one of these majestic birds.

It’s mid-May and the trail is well used. It’s popular most of the year when snow is not on the ground.

The odd-looking bright red snow plant is sprouting. People have put sticks and rocks around them so they won’t be trampled.

Massive sugar pine cones dot the area.

Make sure you are not in a rush. This is one of those hikes that can take all day, not because of the distance, but because of the scenery.

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Recreation sites in California at the click of a button

California State Parks and GreenInfo Network have created a web portal that makes it dramatically easier for the public to find and get to any kind of open-space and recreational lands in the Golden State.

The FindRecreation website contains data on everything from federal wilderness areas to neighborhood tot lots, with interactive maps and searching.

“We designed FindRecreation to enable people to find parks near home,” Ruth Coleman, director of California State Parks, said in a press release. “We hope Californians will discover the natural wonders of this state, have fun, get some exercise and feel better.”

Here’s how it works. Click here. Enter a home address, city or ZIP code and the site will display a detailed street map or aerial image of every recreational opportunity in the area. By clicking on a particular site, the user can learn more, and get transit or driving directions directly to it.

View any site in an interactive 3D map, using Google Earth technology and high-resolution imagery from Microsoft Bing maps.

For many areas, the site will show available trails (a forthcoming version will also show parking sites, restrooms and viewpoint outlooks). After that, it is all up to the user to get packed and get going.

In addition to parks, Find Recreation also shows the detailed location of more than 1,300 public campgrounds in California.

Hikers and backpackers can combine FindRecreation's 3D map views with camp locations and trails to help plan simple walks or multi-day outings.

The park and open space areas shown in FindRecreation are part of the California Protected Areas Database (CPAD), a GIS inventory created by GreenInfo Network. CPAD has data on more than 15,000 named parks in the state, totaling more than 49 million acres and owned by 860 different public agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Mammoth hosts spring camp for U.S. Ski Team

By U.S. Ski Team

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN -– Despite heavy snow, the men's U.S. Alpine Ski Team wrapped up a dynamic spring camp as athletes at all levels of the program gathered at Mammoth Mountain.

"The camp was a total success on all levels," said nen's alpine head coach Sasha Rearick. "We had the Development Team, Europa Cup and World Cup guys in town all doing different things, but they were all pushing each other. It was a cool and super productive dynamic."



Marco

Sullivan

World Cup athletes on snow included Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley), Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah) and Erik Fisher (Middleton, Idaho) with a goal of getting in some laps and testing equipment. On hand were boot representatives from Atomic, Fischer and Rossignol, which according to Rearick, was a big boost.

“We have such amazing support from those guys and this spring camp is immensely productive with them on site,” Rearick said. “Nyman was packing in the miles and is starting to get things dialed. Then we had Marco and Fish come in mainly for testing, plus Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) was also doing some volume skiing.”

It was an end-of-the-season camp for the Development Team with Head Coach Randy Pelkey pushing his athletes as he prepares to invite athletes onto the 2011 squad, while the Europa Cup group worked on fundamentals with Head Coach Forest Carey.

The men’s World Cup group will all gather at the Center of Excellence in early June for their annual testing camp and then the entire men’s alpine program meets again in Park City in July for a conditioning camp focused on playing hockey.

Spaces available at Tahoe-Reno campgrounds



By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

To camp or not to camp?

It’s a question a lot of folks are likely weighing, balancing iffy spring weather with months of cabin fever.

But if they come, and many no doubt will, campground operators across the Reno-Tahoe area say they are ready for a Memorial Day holiday that is typically one of their busiest weekends.

“I think people are kind of tired of being cooped up,” said Eric Johnson, regional manager for Nevada State Parks.

The weekend weather – looking generally good after a marginal start – could make a significant difference, but Johnson said there should be plenty of campers anxious to pitch tents, roll out their RVs and otherwise usher in the summer season.

Read the whole story

Sawmill Pond fishing threatened by lack of cash

By Kathryn Reed

Fishing is a frustrating sport on a good day. But to know there is no way that talking about the one that got away is even possible, could make for a super bad fishing day.

That scenario may take place at Sawmill Pond on the edge of South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County if a funding source is not found to stock the tiny, albeit popular, fishing hole.



A family casts a line at Sawmill Pond on May 25. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Lawsuits filed in the past few years by the Center for Biological Diversity have made it so the county can't get fish from the California Department of Fish & Game. The other requirement is that fish put into Sawmill must have been fixed so they can't procreate.

This is one of two places in California where fishing is limited to youths 14 and younger. Really, no adults are allowed to cast a line there.

A meeting on May 26 at 5:30pm in the Aspen Room at Lake Tahoe Community College is being put on by the county's Fish and Game Commission to explain the financial situation and find more sponsors.

It costs $6,000 to $8,000 a year to put fish in the pond three or four times a year. The commission gets money from the county via fines it collects from hunters and fishermen, service clubs like Kiwanis and Optimists, and from Nevada Bighorns Unlimited. But the donations are falling short and don't amount to what's needed to have multiple stockings a year.

"If we don't have the money, we'll have to cut back on the stocking," said Karl Weiland, one of seven commissioners.

The other commissioners are Tom Pedersen, Victor Babbitt, Rich Platt, Larry Nelson, John Turner and Kurt Mikkola.

The idea is to have fish in the pond from before Memorial Day until Labor Day.

The annual fishing derby will be June 5 from 8am-noon at Sawmill Pond. For more information about the derby or the stocking issue, call Victor Babbitt at Tahoe Fly Fishing Outfitters at (530) 541.8208.

Gondola, tubing hill open at Heavenly for 3-day weekend



Heavenly Mountain Resort will operate the gondola Memorial Day Weekend from 10am-4pm for sightseeing, tubing and sledding.

Heavenly's super tubing hill at Adventure Peak at the top of the Gondola will be open all three days from 11am-3pm. Offering two lanes stretching 560 feet with a 65-foot vertical drop, it's the largest tubing operation at Lake Tahoe. The super tubing hill is priced at $30 per hour. Guests must be at least 40-inches tall to ride the super tubing hill.

For the tinier tykes, Heavenly will offer sledding for kids 6 and younger. Pricing is $10 per hour.

A ride on the Heavenly Gondola transports sightseers to The Deck, a 14,000-square-foot observation platform nestled among

massive granite boulders nearly 3,000 feet above the lake, offering views of Desolation Wilderness, Carson Valley and Lake Tahoe.

Heavenly Gondola costs $32 for adults (19 to 64), $26 for seniors (65+) and teens (13 to 18), and $20 for children (5 to 12). Kids 4 and under ride for free.