

Prescribed burn in Tahoe Paradise

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will begin prescribed fire operations in the Baron Lake area, beginning Nov. 24 as weather and staffing allow.

Residents and travelers can expect to see smoke from prescribed fire project areas.

Other fire protection agencies, state and local, may also be conducting prescribed fire operations during this period.

This and other prescribed fire projects are designed to reduce wildfire risks to communities and critical resources. Smoke management is part of every prescribed fire burn plan, and efforts will be taken to reduce actual or potential smoke impacts on community areas.

To learn more about the efforts to reduce catastrophic wildfire risks in the Tahoe Basin, visit: http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu/documents/fuel-reduction-projects/10-year-plan/LTBCFP_Public_Presentation_8_3.pdf.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Nov. 24



It's another chilly morning in Tahoe, but the winds are calm and many ski resorts in the basin are operating. Click on the ski report to find out what is going on today. The report is from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Nov. 23



Curtis Fong, the Guy from Lake Tahoe, has been busy gathering all the stats for today's ski report. Dress warm – that's his advice.

Ice skating and music in one event

On Dec. 5 at 5pm the Tahoe Figure Skating Club will be performing to holiday music. The Lake Tahoe Elementary Choir will be performing also.

The free event is at the South Tahoe Ice Arena.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Nov. 22



It's 7:30am on Nov. 22 and the overcast ski on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe is spitting out a mix of light snow and rain. Conditions may not improve much, except that it's likely to be snow coming down on the

slopes. For all the particulars, check out today's ski report provided by Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Heavenly is on a wind hold – be sure to check with the resort to see if opens today.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Nov. 21



It's a bluebird day in Lake Tahoe – get out there and ski. Read the ski report to find out the conditions on the slopes of Lake Tahoe brought to readers by Curtis Fong, the Guy from Lake Tahoe.

1,000 acres added to Tahoe National Forest

By Ann Westling

NEVADA CITY – In four transactions, more than 1,000 acres of upper elevation land has been added to the Tahoe National Forest.

With contributions from private entities and funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) totaling \$3 million, these acquisitions have been finalized during the past two months.

"I would once again like to thank the Trust for Public Land, the Truckee Donner Land Trust, Northern Sierra Partnership and the Smith family," stated Tom Quinn, Tahoe National Forest supervisor. "These are very scenic lands along the Middle Yuba River, the Little Truckee River, Rubicon River and in Pierce Meadow. They are especially valuable for recreation and wildlife habitat."

Webber Falls (Sierra County) – 480 acres along the Little Truckee River incorporating the spectacular Webber Falls was purchased from Sierra Pacific Industries. The parcel is located along the Henness Pass Road approximately 15 miles northwest of Truckee. Approximately one-third of the funding for this parcel was donated by the Gene and Elaine Smith family with the remaining from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The falls have several terraced pools in late summer and spectacular iced canyon walls in the winter. The Trust for Public Land was instrumental in acquiring this property.

Pierce Meadows (Nevada County) – 160 acres near Eagle Lakes was purchased with funds from the Northern Sierra Partnership and LWCF. Pierce Meadow comprises a large portion of the parcel and is located north of Interstate 80 near Cisco Grove. The Truckee Donner Land Trust acquired the property and obliterated the roads into the parcel to protect the meadow before deeding it to the Forest Service.

Rubicon River/Granite Chief (Placer County) – 417 acres of land along the Rubicon River were added to the TNF with funding from LWCF; 270 acres of these are within the Granite Chief Wilderness. In this same purchase 406 acres were also added to the Eldorado National Forest. Both parcels provide high value recreation and wilderness land as well as habitat for black bears. The Trust for Public Land was instrumental in this acquisition from Sierra Pacific Industries.

English Mountain (Sierra County) – 160 acres south of Jackson

Meadows Reservoir and 11 miles north of Interstate 80 were purchased with LWCF by The Trust for Public Land from Sierra Pacific Industries. This parcel contains lovely meadows along the Middle Yuba River and French Creek and is near the Grouse Lakes Vehicle Closure Area.

“These parcels contain vital biological habitat, scenic and recreational values. Protecting them from dispersed second-home residential growth under private ownership is a boon to public resources and the successful management of the lands. We’re trying to prevent catastrophic fire, protect water resources and maintain needed wildlife habitat and corridors, all of which will give the area more resilience in adapting to climate changes,” said David Sutton, director of the Trust for Public Land’s Northern California and Nevada Program. “We’re very pleased to see the Tahoe and the Eldorado National Forests leading the way in prioritizing these parcels for protection.”

Northern Sierra Partnership – The Trust for Public Land, Truckee Donner Land Trust, Feather River Land Trust , The Nature Conservancy and Sierra Business Council formed a collaborative group called the Northern Sierra Partnership in conjunction with land management agencies to raise private, corporate and public funds to protect lands with high quality watershed, wildlife, and recreation values. In the north central Sierra, early day land grants to the railroad companies dating back to the 1860’s, created a checkerboard pattern of public and private ownership that exists today. Due to the increased complexity and cost of managing these checkerboard lands, the Northern Sierra Partnership has focused its efforts to acquire lands that may be at risk of development. The objectives of the Northern Sierra Partnership include protecting the area’s high-quality water supply and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – Funding is collected from off shore oil drilling and allocated to acquire private

land for conservation. In 2009, \$2.5 million was allocated for purchase of land in the Tahoe and Eldorado National Forest from the LWCF.

Ann Westling works for the USFS in the Tahoe National Forest office.

Nov. 20 LT ski report



Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe, brings us today's ski report. The big news is the high winds throughout the basin. They should calm down as the storm arrives this afternoon. But it is gusty enough for Heavenly Mountain Resort to delay its season opening to Saturday.

All guns firing at ritzy Northstar

By Susan Wood

It is only fitting that "æstar" is in its name.

As well as hosting the opening of the Lake Tahoe region's first 5-star resort with expanded lift access and more snowmaking, Northstar-at-Tahoe gets in on Olympic action by launching the 2009-10 season with a biathlon course and instruction by competitive athlete Glenn Jobe at its Nordic center.

Weather permitting, the season will start Saturday.

It may be a year to mark the return of the Olympics to the West Coast in Vancouver, but Tahoe's own Northstar brings the only permanent biathlon range to the West. Appropriately so, the sport of biathlon has returned to Tahoe where it was introduced in the 1960 Olympics hosted by nearby Squaw Valley.



Northstar is
ready to open.

Photo/Bill
Stevenson

One of the oldest winter sports, biathlon's roots come from the military when troops skied then shot at the enemy. Now the tracks range in distances from 7.5 to 20 kilometers, with points added depending on the scores of the shots. Cross country skiers glide to each target. Five targets have been installed near the caboose warming hut on Northstar's cross country trail network. Half are shot at lying down and the others standing up.

It's one of the most watched sports in the Olympics. It's huge in Europe, but it hasn't been popular in the United States because of the lack of permanent courses," said Jobe, who competed in the 1980 Olympic Games in Lake Placid, N.Y., before becoming a cross country ski coach and instructor. He will provide private, three-hour lessons Monday through Friday for ages 13 and older at \$199 per person. Two people may get lessons for \$249.

The Sierraville resident admits to being extremely excited

about Northstar installing a range and course, which will be on display for a mock race and demonstration at the resort on Jan. 10 for Olympic Heritage Week.

From gold to red

Stein who? Destination skiers who travel the globe to stop in the likes of places like Stein Eriksen's Lodge in Park City, Utah, may find more competition in luxury accommodations based on Northstar's mid-mountain. The Ritz-Carlton Highlands rolls out the red carpet next month, featuring its own Highlands Gondola to carry guests from the Village to mid-mountain where the ski-in, ski-out mountain valet experience awaits.

“The lodging pace for this winter is looking positive,” Northstar spokeswoman Jessica Van Pernis said of the Ritz inquiries.

The hotelier built the conglomerate with 170 guest rooms, 23 private residences and 25 fractional ownership units. When the guests aren't skiing or boarding, a 17,000-square-foot spa and fitness center and restaurant run by Executive Chef Traci Des Jardins is sure to keep most busy and satisfied.

On the slopes, Northstar beefed up its snowmaking capacity at the beginner teaching area located in the Highlands region. Early season conditions will play less of a factor for those itching to slide or skate out of their room or even discover how to do it. The snow surface enhancement coincides with more teaching programs and beginner terrain about twice the size as last year to further the family-oriented experience the resort is known for.

And this year, young boarders ages 4 to 12 will no longer be bored with instruction from a family member because the Burton Snowboard Academy is opening. Plus, a special development program from the introductory Northstar Training Lab can get many a skier out of the rut of bad habits.

First timers will have more to cheer about when making turns with a package for ages 13+ that includes a 2½-hour lesson, lift ticket and rental equipment for \$99. A handful of programs for novices at bargain prices have been added to increase the number of people coming on board the snow sports and to keep the interest going amid challenging economic times.

“When the snow flew, people still came skiing, despite the economy. We saw a lot of (close by booking) and visits from our drive markets – Reno, Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area,” Van Pernis said, echoing many resorts’ observations.

Still considered a bargain at most standards, season pass rates held their own in sales last year into this season. Adult daily lift ticket prices remain the same this year at \$79.

Northstar is located off Highway 267. Information may be obtained via www.NorthstarAtTahoe.com or by calling 800-466-6784 or 800-GO-NORTH.

Mt. Rose opening \$4 million lodge



By Susan Wood

Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe slides into another season with a new lodge set to open next month that offers a panoramic view of Washoe Valley, a feature not likely to be lost on its most faithful

riders.

Skiers will be accommodated with signature food service and full bar inside the new 7,865-square-foot “Winters Creek” aka Slide Lodge that seats 150. Another 400 may take to the deck located 4,000 feet above Washoe Lake on the southeastern edge of the Slide Bowl near the Blazing Zephyr chairlift. This side of Mount Rose is known for its local following.

A mix of glass and steel materials marks a European architectural style for the \$4 million complex, a major investment in the ski industry today. Skiers and boarders who crave warmth as much as good deals, exciting events and various creature comforts will enjoy the sun’s full force against the glass panels that help to heat the lodge through solar energy.

If it’s energy one seeks out of a ski experience, Mt. Rose “which rises to 9,700 feet at its summit – plans to deliver again with some new thrills mixed in with the traditional variety. The resort is hosting a “Saturday in the Park” rail jam this Saturday in Ponderosa Park at 1pm.

When the ski area opened Halloween weekend, it was on a limited basis. On Thursday it began operations seven days a week.

On Thursdays through the winter, women on boards and two planks with season passes may take advantage of free ski clinics as part of an overall recognition of recession-busting measures most ski resorts are trying to make.

Daily lift ticket sales fell slightly last year, but resort officials discovered that most who partake in the sport want to seize on the financial benefit of purchasing a season pass for return visits.

“We were down a bit on daily lift ticket sales, but up on season pass sales, so that tells us that our season pass

holders were utilizing their passes more and sticking close to home," Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe spokeswoman Kayla Anderson said. "We've had daily specials for our guests for about 15 years, so that's nothing new. When people visit Reno or Lake Tahoe, we'd like them to check out Mt. Rose for at least one day of their vacation."

A whole lineup of daily specials minus holidays will mark the season with bonus Mondays – \$29 with a lift ticket purchase on Saturdays and Sundays, "Over the Hill" ticket sales on Wednesdays for those over 50 running \$35 (the student discount as well) and the weekender that gives you three days to ride for \$130. The same price can grant a family a package called "Runs and Roses" that includes two adult tickets and two children's. Youth programs have also been introduced.

The all-day adult lift ticket normally runs \$65. Half day is \$50. Season passes cost \$333.

The ski area known as Sky Tavern started operating a rope tow in 1941, and a dozen years later opened a resort named Reno Ski Bowl. During the 1960 Olympic Games at Squaw Valley the area's Slide Mountain hosted the women's downhill course.

Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe is located off its namesake highway, Highway 431, 11 miles from Lake Tahoe's North Shore. It can be contacted via www.skirose.com or 800-SKI-ROSE.