

Forest Service opens Angora burn area

The U.S. Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit lifted the area closures put in place for public safety

during the hazard tree removal project in the Angora Fire area.

Large numbers of standing dead trees and damaged live trees are present inside and outside the project area. Storms and high winds can cause standing dead trees to fall or snap. Several dead trees along with damaged live trees came down in the October storm. The USFS warns hikers, bikers and winter recreationists to use caution within the fire area and avoid areas with large concentrations of dead standing trees.

When conditions are favorable next year, felled dead trees between Angora Creek and Lake Tahoe Boulevard will be removed.

For more information, call (530) 543.2694.

Girls camping – all about mud and water

By Kathryn Reed

BIG BEND – Stuck Jeep. Bucket boy. Naked boy. Tarp woman. Burney Falls. Hot springs. Fall foliage. Rain. Rainbow. Friends.



It's good to
be with
friends at
times like
this.

Photo/Pamala
Valentine

Just another typical girls' camping weekend.

With our annual camping trip being pushed from September to November, we moved the sleeping to indoors at my sister's in Redding. Roughing-it it was not. Comfy bed, long hot showers, full size kitchen, real food, a fire at the flick of a switch – I could get used to this type of camping.

Day 1 started with rain, so we nixed the idea of hiking. Instead, the four of us piled into my Wrangler in search of natural hot springs.

Heading east on Highway 299 from Redding I was reminded of the drive to Sierraville from Truckee – pines and oaks intermixed, open space, natural beauty.

Fall is clearly in the air on this first Friday of November. As the rain descends, it delivers a freshness – almost infusing life into the dying oak leaves that are long past their vibrant yellow and now much closer to brown.

A series of small towns I've never heard of roll by on this two-lane road.

We opt to pass our turnoff and head for Burney Falls – a place

only Pam had been to.

What a sight.

Water tumbles 129-feet from multiple crevices in the volcanic rock. It's hard to know where to look because it's not just one waterfall. One hundred million gallons cascade down the falls each day.

All of this beauty is part of McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park in the Cascade Mountains. It's on Highway 89, just off Highway 299.

Burney Creek is formed by underground springs. It gets larger as the falls approach. The creek empties into Britton Lake, which is partly inside the state park.

We check out the campground, which is empty except for the deer, just in case we return to real camping one year.

A rainbow appears as we drive, with one end being at a major logging operation – a different pot of gold I suppose.

We continue down Highway 299 toward the town of Big Bend. Our guidebook leads us to a hot springs resort that isn't open. We go to the next one. Turning onto the dirt road, we descend a bit. I'm hoping no one is coming in the other direction.

Zigzagging between rocks and washed out ruts we hit a plateau. I steer us into a pit of mud. We're not moving. The Jeep is in 4-low. Time to pile out – all but the driver.

It moves.

Back in go Pam, Darla and Sue. We carry on a little farther until we reach the edge of Kosk Creek.

We toast to having made it. We chat about the tarp next to us that we presume is where naked boy (the guy in the hot spring) is calling home. That was until we heard rustling and

eventually saw tarp woman.

Bucket boy beat us to the springs once naked boy and his friend left. We learned to like bucket boy because as a regular he knew to bring a bucket to cool off the springs with creek water.

Sitting on the edge of the creek that leads to the Pit River, the hot springs and surrounding area have a fascinating history that we learn from bucket boy. We learn how the Indians lived on the land. (We passed a Native American cemetery on the way down.)

We learn about the excellent fly fishing, the popularity of this remote hot springs, the planned development of the closed resort, how high school students are bused to Redding.

We soak in the information as our muscles relax.

Soon it is time to leave. We want to test my 4-wheeling prowess, such as it is, in daylight. I bypass the hole I created coming down and was making good progress until the back end started sliding uphill and the front end spun like a stationary bike.

Finally, the Jeep just didn't move.

Out went the passengers.

This time it took a bit more maneuvering to make it through all of the muck. The slick incline tested me as I jostled to solid ground. The steely look in my eyes proved to my passengers this wasn't the type of mud bath I wanted to stay overnight in.

All loaded up, we headed back to our campsite with its indoor plumbing, easy to light fire and flannel sheets.

A perfect camping trip.

Climbing into a rocky wonderland

By Susan Wood

CASTELLA “Views, views and more views best describes the Castle Dome Trail, a hiking route tucked behind the Castle Crags Campground.



Mount Shasta
on Nov. 7 from
the Castle
Crags trail.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

This is Day 2 of our girls camping weekend anchored indoors in Redding.

Just like I remembered, this 5½ mile round-trip trail has everything going for it. The four of us climbed 2,200 feet through an amazing forest filled with birch, dogwood and Oregon ash trees. It crosses the Pacific Crest Trail before launching into a steep incline to a jagged, spire-laced ridge

that provides some of the best views Northern California has to offer. To the north, there's Mount Shasta. Lassen Peak peeks out of the horizon line to the southeast. In between, the sheer drops from the crags bring drama and majesty to the entire hike.

The Castle Crags were created in much the same manner as Shasta and other peaks of the Cascade Range. Volcanic activity millions of years ago along with wind, ice and rain helped to perfect the 6,000-foot granite formations above Interstate 5 south of the city of Mount Shasta.

This is one hike where cameras get as much action as water bottles. As the views open up near the ridge, I pondered how a ridge that is subject to such elements could support exposed, small trees growing from the crevices with no obvious soil to grip. The trees along the trail provided yet another plus for hiking in the offseason – foliage in colors ranging from yellow to pink.

The trail crosses Kettlebelly Ridge, part of the Oregon Toll Road used by early settlers.

At the top of the ridge, the whole world opens up and the main feature of the Castle Crags – Castle Dome, juts out of the landscape. At first glance, some would say it rivals Half Dome in Yosemite National Park. It has no cables to help a brave soul, but even the most experienced rock climber wouldn't dare go to the top without some sort of technical help like a rope, harness and protection.

State park workers strung a cable across the lookout at the end of the trail, near the base of the dome. But it's not going to stop anyone from tumbling off the sheer drop off. A fall there would be unforgiving and dramatic.

A safe, flat spot 180 degrees and steps away provides for a magnificent lunch spot with views of the spires, the dome, nearby peaks and Dunsmuir below. It may appear civilization is

a world away, but the occasional sound of vehicles rushing on I-5 and train whistles reminds me otherwise.

It seemed difficult to capture the grandeur through a camera lens, but up and down the trail Darla showed how tempting it is to frame the beauty “ which led to Kae and Pam getting out their cameras.

Our standard call of “pretty” could be heard all along the way.

Castle Crags State Park takes in 70,000 visitors a year. It features 28 miles of hiking trails, 76 developed campsites and six environmental sites at the campground off the Castella exist on I-5. In mid-October, the state park closes half the campground.

But just this week, the Castle Crags crew rejoiced at having fulfilled its 2-year-old order for seven interpretative signs dotting the region and going up the trail. The signs declare the unique flora, fauna, history, geology, hydrology and wildlife that can be found in Castle Crags. Even the seldom-seen fisher mammal, which resembles a cross between a weasel and fox, lives here.

ngg_shortcode_1_placeholder

CTC burning slash piles

Now through spring 2010, the California Tahoe Conservancy will be burning slash piles in or adjacent to several Lake Tahoe communities as part of the Conservancy’s ongoing program to reduce forest fuels and improve defensible space in the Tahoe Basin.

The communities include Fallen Leaf Lake, Rubicon Bay, Tahoma, and North Upper Truckee in El Dorado County, and Kingswood, Dollar Creek, Sunnyside, Carnelian Canyon in Placer County.

Pile burning is the last stage of the Conservancy's thinning projects in these areas. To reduce fire risk and impacts on air quality, burning will be conducted only if weather, fuel moisture, and air quality conditions are favorable, and only on designated days in accordance with California Air Resources Board regulations.

Residents and travelers to the area can expect to see smoke from the project areas.

The California Tahoe Conservancy is a state agency that protects and restores watersheds, provides recreational opportunities, and owns and manages nearly 5,000 urban lots and forested parcels on more than 6,400 acres in the Tahoe Basin.

For weekly updates and information on the Conservancy's prescribed burn activities, phone (530) 542.5580, ext. 3.

Prescribed burn in Christmas Valley

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will begin prescribed fire operations in the Meyers/Christmas Valley urban lot areas Nov. 12 as weather and staffing allows.

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.

Permits to cut holiday trees on USFS land

Beginning Nov. 23, the U.S. Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will offer permits for the public to select and cut holiday trees in the Tahoe Basin.

Permits cost \$10 each (cash or check only), and there will be a limit of two permits per family, valid through Dec. 24.

Permit holders may choose from varieties of pine, fir or cedar, in designated cutting areas, and must abide by specific permit conditions for proper and responsible collection.

Permit sales will be available at:

On the South Shore, the LTBMU Forest Supervisor's Office at 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, Monday-Saturday, 8am-4:30pm.

On the North Shore, at the Forest Service office at 3080 N.

Lake Blvd., Tahoe City, Wednesday-Saturday, 10am-3:30pm.

For more information, callÂ (530) 543.2694.

Roethlisberger talks about rape case to ESPN

By Scott Brown, Tribune-Review

Ben Roethlisberger will tell his side of the story â€” or at least what he has been through since being accused of rape in a civil lawsuit â€” tonight on the ESPN magazine program E:60.

The Steelers quarterback talks one-on-one with reporter Michael Smith at 7 p.m. about a subject on which he has said very little since being named in the highly publicized lawsuit. It was filed on behalf of a former employee of a Lake Tahoe resort who claims Roethlisberger sexually assaulted her in his hotel room in 2008.

[Read the whole story](#)

USASA events return to Sierra-at-Tahoe

The United States Amateur Snowboarding Association puts on a series of grassroots snowboarding competitions all over the nation and Sierra Resort is once again be the home base for

the South Shore Series.

Events include a Giant Slalom, Slalom, GS, Boardercross, Superpipe, and Slopestyle.

Locals Al and Donna Vano, together with the core of USASA volunteers and the Sierra Resort Competitions Department, host the South Shore Series beginning in January and continuing through March.

The competitions are open to snowboarders of all ages as well as skiers in the Superpipe and Slopestyle competitions. Registration for each event is \$30 per competitor in addition to USASA membership dues.

South Tahoe Series riders have won the most gold medals at the USASA National Competition for the past eight consecutive years. This year the Nationals will take place April 4-9 at Copper Mountain.

Open class Superpipe and Slopestyle competitions at Nationals are now ranked as 3-Star events on the Swatch Ticket To Ride World Snowboard Tour. So all competitors in these two events will also be competing on the TTR tour.

Here is the complete schedule of events for Sierra Resort:

Jan. 9: Giant Slalom

Jan. 10: Slalom

Jan. 16: Slalom & GS

Feb. 6: Boardercross

Feb. 27: Superpipe

Feb. 28: Superpipe

March 6: Slopestyle

Creek restoration benefits Lake Tahoe

Reno Gazette-Journal

Federal, state and local officials have completed a restoration project for a creek at north Lake Tahoe they say will improve fish habitat and reduce sediment flows into the lake while enhancing recreational opportunities.

One major component of the Third Creek project was removal of fish passage barriers that not only made it difficult for fish to get upstream, but caused bank erosion that allowed sediment to flow into Lake Tahoe.

Read the whole story

Celebrity, Reno PGA golf tournaments on same weekend

By Dan Hinxman, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Reno-Tahoe Open has a new date and renewed enthusiasm.

The American Century Championship celebrity golf tournament has new competition and is not happy about it.

The RT0, which has been held in August at Montreux Golf & Country Club since its inception in 1999, has been moved by

the PGA Tour to mid-July starting in 2010 where it will take the week vacated by Milwaukee's U.S. Bank Championship, which folded on Oct. 15.