Fire ops this week in much of Tahoe basin

Weather permitting, North Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Douglas fire protection districts, California State Parks, California Tahoe Conservancy, and the U.S. Forest Service plan to continue prescribed fire operations beginning May 15.

If conditions are favorable, operations may take place near Sugar Pine Point, Brockway Summit, Incline Village, Glenbrook, Lower Kingsbury Grade, Ski Run Boulevard, Lake Tahoe Airport, Fallen Leaf Lake and Meyers. Operations may continue over the next several weeks.

To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Before prescribed fire operations are conducted, agencies post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, send email notifications and update the local fire information line at 530.543.2816.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size and environmental conditions.

ESPN cuts = loss for independent sports journalism

By Bill Shaikin, Los Angeles Times

The headline news, and deservedly so: Massive layoffs at ESPN,

cost-cutting that cost the jobs of dozens of high-profile reporters and personalities.

Beneath the headline: ESPN is dropping “Baseball Tonight” except for Sundays and special events and adding MLB Network’s “Intentional Talk” to its daily ESPN2 lineup.

It’s another slippery step toward the loss of independent sports journalism: A league that ESPN ostensibly covers is now providing programming for ESPN.

Read the whole story

Tahoe bursting with iconic rock climbing terrain



Lover’s Leap is a popular destination for rock climbers.

Photo/LTN file

By Matthew Renda, Tahoe Quarterly

With Yosemite as its epicenter, the Sierra Nevada is unquestionably the mecca of rock climbing.

Some argue the sport was born in the Sierra when John Muir performed an on-sight free solo of Cathedral Peak in Tuolumne Meadows in 1869. Muir's climb, without the benefit of advanced planning or ropes, typifies the adventure, self-reliance, courage and hunger for glory inherent in the sport.

The Lake Tahoe area's role in the founding and development of modern rock climbing has traditionally been cast as a bit player—a practice facility for climbers looking to refine the skills needed for the daunting big-wall climbs in Yosemite and the High Sierra.

This traditional and dismissive view of the cliffs stretching from Calaveras Dome to Donner Summit has come under recent reconsideration, however, with more and more asserting the area is replete with an array of compelling climbs that factored heavily into the sport's advancement.

In fact, ask any Tahoe climber and they will agree, perhaps with a hint of annoyance—there is no shortage of climbers testing their mettle on the various routes in the greater Tahoe area.

Read the whole story

Grueling ascent up Kingsbury challenges cyclists



Cyclists weave their way up Kingsbury Grade on May 12. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

A yellow jersey may have figuratively brought Katie Hall warmth, but she was literally shivering after riding for more than three hours to win stage two of the Amgen Tour of California.

“It was definitely cold at the start. There were some flurries,” Ruth Winder, who earned the best young rider jersey, said at the press conference after the May 12 race.



Katie Hall, left, and Anna van der Breggen fight for the lead. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

It was 37 degrees when the 17 teams left Heavenly Mountain Resort’s California Lodge at about 10:30am, and 46 when they came back after the 67-mile grueling course. Heavenly had about an inch of fresh snow on the top of the mountain.



A Colavita-Bianchi rider pulls away from the crowd. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Hall, who rides for United Healthcare, finished first. On her heels was Anna van der Breggen. Van der Breggen, who rides for Boels-Dolmans, was second in both stages. Kristabel Doebel-Hickok with Cylance Pro Cycling was third.



The 8-mile climb up Kingsbury separates the cyclists. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

The overall standings have Hall in first with a time of 6.13.54, van der Breggen second at 6:13.54, and Megan Guarnier (Day 1’s top finisher) in third at 6:14.23.



The peloton as it comes down Pioneer Trail at the start of the race on May 12. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

After Hall and van der Breggen made the turn off Pioneer Trail onto Ski Run Boulevard it seemed like minutes before a group of 11 came through the intersection. Guarnier was in that bunch of riders.



A pack of cyclists endures the pain together. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Friday presented a new route for the tour; one with the most elevation gain for either the women or men. From the ski resort they went to Meyers, over Luther Pass (7,740 feet), through Diamond Valley and the Carson Valley, and then up and over Kingsbury Grade (7,375 feet). Going up Kingsbury is an 8-mile climb with a 2,700-foot elevation gain.

This part of the course was built for Hall.



Skylar Schneider, left, and Allison Arensman of the U.S. National Team grind their way up Kingsbury Grade. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

“For me, the longer hills are better,” she said. “I thought I would probably get second because I didn’t think I could shake Anna and I’m not much of a sprinter.”

She rightfully earned the Queen of the Mountain jersey, and van der Breggen the sprint jersey.



Shawn Peterson of Gardnerville encourages the women to ignore their leg pain. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

It was a sprint to the finish between the two of them.

In the valley, Lindsay Myers with the Tibco-Silicon Valley Bank crashed, but is reportedly fine.



One by one the women push to the top of the hill. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

In the morning the peloton was greeted by about 200 excited students from Bijou Community School who lined the course at the corner of Ski Run Boulevard and Pioneer Trail.



Bijou elementary student ring cowbells and shout support for

the cyclists. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Melissa Bornstein has brought her second-graders out the last three years. This year there were five second-grade classes, two first-grade and two fifth-grade.



Marie Soleil Blais struggles up the long climb. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

“It gives the kids an awareness of what fit women can do,” Bornstein told *Lake Tahoe News*. It is also a chance to see a high caliber event in their hometown. Some of the youngster were there both days.

“I like seeing the bikers. It’s very interesting and very cool,” Natahly Rodriguez, 10, told *Lake Tahoe News.*



Caitlin LaRouche has enough energy to smile near the top of Kingsbury Grade. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

For race officials, they were not worried to wake up to wet roads on Friday. And for the racers – just another day at the office.

“They are absolutely not concerned about rain or water on the roads, or even our crappy roads,” Mike Frye, events manager for the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, told *Lake Tahoe News.* He added how most of the roads in California are filled with imperfections, as is the case in Europe where the majority of the road bike races are contested.



The expanse of Carson Valley unfolds below the riders. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Before the start of stage two some well-known South Shore cyclists offered *Lake Tahoe News* their perspective of the route:

· *"The wind in the Carson Valley will be a factor. Luther-Kingsbury is a great loop and not overly challenging, but wind can make a ride much more difficult. The key is not to get dropped from the pack. You don't want to ride solo into a Carson Valley headwind."* ***—Nancy Harrison***

· *"It's obvious to me that the hardest part of stage 2 is the Kingsbury climb. There are a couple of sections with less percentage grade and if the teams were scouting the route, there could be multiple attacks from the middle section to the top."****— Curtis Fong***

· *“I think the climb up Kingsbury will be the hardest. Already one day in, the women will tackle Luther, the highest elevation yet, I believe. Kingsbury at 6 percent grade is after all of the Carson Valley mileage. And we don’t know how the wind will play into the entire route. This will be a very strategic stage I think!”* ***— Carol Chaplin***



Sofia Arreola Navarro concentrates on making it to the top of Daggett Summit. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

The next two days will be much different than riding at Lake Tahoe; climbing won’t be an issue, nor should near freezing temperatures. (**Day 1** was the loop around the lake.) The women will start in Elk Grove and go to Sacramento, with Day 4 all in the state capital where the 256.6-mile course concludes.

Lake Tahoe benefits from Antarctic research by UC Davis



UC Davis engineering Professor Alex Forrest with the recovered underwater glider. Photo/UC Davis

By Kat Kerlin, UC Davis News Service

To outer space and the deep ocean, add “beneath the ice” to the list of rarely charted frontiers of science exploration.

There have been very few expeditions where robots dived beneath polar ice shelves to characterize and measure them. UC Davis engineering Professor Alexander Forrest recently returned from one of them.

Their mission? Deploy two robots, or autonomous underwater vehicles (AUV) – one to dive beneath the sea ice to map the bottom of the Nansen ice shelf, from which two Manhattan-sized icebergs broke last year. The other, a glider with wings named Storm Petrel, to patrol the front of the ice shelf for 10 days, looking for evidence of fresh water and capturing change over time.

When not swimming alongside polar ice, the Storm Petrel glider trades the ocean for freshwater. It’s currently settling in to its new home at Lake Tahoe. The UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center plans to deploy it in the lake early this summer. The plan is for the glider to take continuous measurements, provide real-time information to TERC’s network of instrumented buoys, chase storm events, and ultimately help round out the picture of the processes and impacts affecting Lake Tahoe.

Read the whole story

Control burn today in Truckee area

The Truckee Ranger District plans to burn 80-120 acres of understory vegetation near Stampede Reservoir today.

Crews will be monitoring weather and fuel conditions throughout Friday. Winds are projected to be out of the southwest which should blow smoke away from communities.

The district said there are only a handful of days when weather, smoke dispersion and fuel conditions are favorable for prescribed fire so the goal is to take advantage of that window of opportunity.

Noise polluting large swath of protected U.S. lands

By Katie O’Reilly, Sierra

Noise pollution is typically considered an urban problem. However, new research shows that the invisible threat found in the din of human activity (also known as anthropogenic sound) is increasingly taking its toll on the natural world.

A first-of-its-kind study, released last week from scientists at Colorado State University and the National Park Service (NPS), shows that anthropogenic noise pollutes 63 percent of all U.S. protected lands—that includes city and county parks, state and national forests, and national parks, monuments, and refuges.

After culling more than a million hours of recorded data from 492 protected sites across the continental United States, researchers concluded that anthropogenic noise doubled background sound levels in most of these areas. They also detected elevated sounds in 14 percent of endangered species’ critical habits. Protected areas with the most stringent regulations, such as national parks and designated wilderness areas, suffered the least noise pollution.

The issue does more than disrupt the natural serenity of protected places like parks, forests, and historical battlefields. According to George Wittemyer, a Colorado State University conservation biologist and one of the authors of the study, the impact of excessive noise—which has been steadily mounting since the Industrial Revolution—includes increased heart rate in humans, as well as disrupted sleep, irritability, negative cardiovascular and psychophysiological effects, and even shortened life spans. He’s not the only one to say so. The World Health Organization considers noise

pollution to be an environmental burden second in scope only to air pollution.

Read the whole story

Women pro cyclists breeze round Lake Tahoe



The peloton whizzes through Stateline on May 11. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

Those who were betting against Megan Guarnier lost in a big way on Thursday. The defending Amgen Tour of California women's champion collected three jerseys in the opening stage.

The 31-year-old’s voice cracked on May 11 when she spoke to the crowd at Heavenly Mountain Resort about what the day meant to her.

“It’s been a tough year,” Guarnier, the U.S. cyclist who races for Boels-Dolmans, said.

In February she sustained a concussion at Omloop Het van Hageland in Belgium, and then in March had to withdraw from Strade Bianche in Italy with concussion symptoms.



The pros don’t take the time to replace a tube; they change the whole wheel. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Now she would like a do-over, hoping this 72-mile ride around the lake will launch her quest to be the overall Women’s WorldTour winner this year like she was in 2016.

“I think (Friday) will be telling. There will be a hard 12K climb right near the finish,” Guarnier said.

On May 12 the race starts at Heavenly's Cal Lodge, goes over Luther Pass, through the Carson Valley, up Kingsbury Grade and back to Heavenly.



Amber Pierce, left, of the U.S. who rides for Colavita-Bianchi, said Kingsbury Grade on Friday will be a challenge. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

On Thursday, 94 racers set off around the lake, with 87 finishing.

With the sun out, weather-wise this was the best start of any Amgen race in Tahoe. The wind picked up just before the 10:40am start. The National Weather Service in Reno had issued an advisory for the basin, saying winds would be out of the southwest at 15 to 20 mph, with gusts up to 35 mph.



Mount Tallac looms large as the women start stage one from Heavenly on May 11. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

“It was more pleasant being a part of the Donner Party than what is going on here,” the announcer said as the women were making their final push to the end.

It was a sprint to the finish, with Guarnier crossing the line at 3 hours, 3 minutes and 48 seconds. Teammate Anna van der Breggen was four-hundredths of a second behind her. Arlenis Sierra, who rides for Astana Women’s Team, came in third at 3:03.55. Sierra earned the best young rider jersey.



The women on Thursday take over Highway 50 on the South Shore. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

In addition to the race leader jersey, Guarnier earned the Queen of the Mountain jersey for being the fastest climber and the jersey for faster sprinter.

This is the third year in a row the women have raced in Tahoe. There are four stages for the women, with two being in Tahoe.



Jack and Jen Powless of Roseville are in town supporting their daughter, Shayna, and her team. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

While there were not many people at the start, two people who have a vested interest are Jack and Jen Powless of Roseville. Their daughter, Shayna, races for team Twenty20. She finished 48th on Thursday. Their son, Neilson, finished the 2016 Amgen race in ninth place and was named the Tour of California's best young rider. He's not competing this year because his team was not chosen to participate.

The Powless children have athletic pedigree – a mother who was an Olympic runner in 1992 and father who was a top triathlete. Both kids started riding bikes when they were toddlers. A healthy lifestyle is what their parents wanted to provide them. They did that and then some.

Easement on Northstar land creates more public access

More than five years after Promised Land Express chairlift opened at Northstar the ski resort is now in compliance with conditions put it on by Placer County.

The resort donated a conservation easement on 56 acres to the Truckee Donner Land Trust. The resort first treated the 56 acres for fuels reduction and wildlife enhancement.

This acreage is located in the western portion of the Northstar in an area with high habitat conservation value. This easement complements the 233-acre easement on the east side of Highway 267 and the 37-acre easement near the Village at Northstar already operated by the Land Trust on Northstar land.

These easements provide access to public recreational lands and are important for water quality protection as they contain diverse riparian waterways.

This season the Elizabethtown Trail that connects Waddle Ranch Preserve to Northstar will be open.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

9-day outdoor festival on North Shore

Alpenglow Sports’ fifth annual summer edition of the Alpenglow Mountain Festival is June 17-25.

This is a nine-day mountain-lifestyle festival in North Lake Tahoe celebrating human-powered events, clinics, presentations and more. It is geared toward the beginner and intermediate mountain sports enthusiasts. It will include trail running, hiking, backpacking, lakeshore yoga, standup paddleboarding, rock climbing and natural history events.

There will be more than 50 individual events to choose from.

The majority of events are free, so space is limited and participants are encouraged to register **online**.