

Why ski resorts close when there's still snow



Even with plenty of snow, Heavenly will be closing this month.
Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

The end of ski season is always a bummer.

But it stings even more when the season ends while there's still tons of snow on your favorite ski area.

The West Coast winter of 2016-17 delivered historic levels of

snow throughout the Lake Tahoe area and the Sierra Nevada. And much of that snow is still slathered several feet deep over the slopes of west coast ski resorts from Mammoth to Truckee and between.

So that means we'll spend our mornings skiing and afternoons drinking beers on the deck of our favorite lodge well into the summer, right? Well, not exactly.

Read the whole story

Athletes-stars commit to Tahoe's celebrity golf event

There will be a mix of newbies and veterans at the 28th annual American Century Championship celebrity golf tournament at Edgewood Tahoe this summer.

Charles Woodson, Travis Kelce, Doug Pederson, Mike Zimmer and Adam Thielen will make up the NFL contingent of first time competitors. They will join regulars Marshall Faulk, Tim Brown, Marcus Allen, Herm Edwards, Sebastian Janikowski, Golden Tate, Carson Palmer, Patrick Peterson, Robbie Gould, Marvin Lewis, Sterling Sharpe, Brian Urlacher, Jared Allen, Terrell Davis, Trent Dilfer, Mark Rypien and A.J. Hawk

The competition is set for July 14-16 ,with celeb-am events and charity fundraising planned throughout the week.

Other athletes and stars who have committed to play include: Jeremy Roenick, Rob Riggle, Kevin Nealon, Alfonso Ribeiro, Oliver Hudson, Larry the Cable Guy, Jason Kidd, Bode Miller, Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine, Ozzie Smithm Ivan Rodriguez and

Brian Kelly.

Long time favorites Charles Barkley, Aaron Rodgers, John Elway and Jack Wagner are expected to announce their participation in the coming weeks.

Truckee Demonstration Garden activities in the works

Slow Food Lake Tahoe is planning to reopen the Truckee Demonstration Garden located at the Truckee Regional Park.

The mission of the Truckee Demonstration Garden is to create a vibrant community space that provides education about growing food at high altitude.

Two workshops are planned:

- Build-Your-Own Critter-proof Garden Bed in partnership with the Truckee Roundhouse –April 29 from 8am-noon at the Truckee Roundhouse. Participants may build:a covered lid for their 4 x 4 garden bed; or a bed and a covered lid; or a covered lid for their 4 x 8 garden bed; or a bed and a covered lid;. Attendees need no prior experience. Cost is \$75 for an individual or a team of two, which includes complete kits. Discounted lumber and supplies from Truckee Tahoe Lumber must be purchased in advance **online**. Space is limited.
- Grow-Your-Own Organic Gardening 101 – April 30 from 10am-noon. Soil scientist and SFLT board member Heather Cullen will cover the basics of soil, how to grow a

healthy soil food web, the high-altitude plant requirements, site selection, garden design and layout and more. The cost is based on a self-selecting sliding scale from \$10 to \$20 per person. Tickets are available **online**.

The Truckee Demonstration Garden needs the community's help on the third Saturday of each month for an hour or two to maintain the garden and accomplish this season's projects including: rebuilding beds, planting seedlings and refurbishing the Kids Corner. Community Dig-Ins are scheduled for May 20, June 17, July 15, Aug. 19 and Sept. 16 from 9am-1pm. For more information, email truckeegarden@gmail.com.

USFS ready to restore Emerald Fire scar

Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit officials want the public's input until April 28 about its plan to remove hazardous trees and plant seedlings in the Emerald Fire area.

The fire last fall off Highway 89 burned about 175 acres, with 96 of those acres on federal land.

The goal is to restore habitat for various animals and provide benefits to the watershed, while providing a more fire resilient landscape.

Few trees remain and given the large number of shrubs that existed prior to the fire, it is expected that the shrubs would grow quickly, posing a challenge for natural seedlings to survive the competition, according to the U.S. Forest Service. Planting seedlings early would increase the chance

that they will become established before the brush grows back, which would significantly increase the chance that trees will re-establish in this area.

The LTBMU proposes to plant native seedlings on approximately 10 acres as early as this May and 50 acres in 2018. Prior to the planting, removal of hazard trees would occur in all planting locations.

The proposed plan is **online**.

Bike trail expansion in Angora, Fallen Leaf region

By Jessie Marchesseau

Summertime in Tahoe is starting to become synonymous with the Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association building and upgrading yet another recreational bike trail in the basin.

Last year it was the Kingsbury Stinger Trail, the year before that it was the Bijou Bike Park, and before that, perhaps their best known project to date, the Corral Trail. This year's project, however, could turn out to be their most notable undertaking yet: the Fallen Leaf Lake/Angora Ridge trails project.

"It's not just a single trail like TAMBA has taken on in the past," said Ben Fish, president of TAMBA, "this is really a trail system."



There will soon be more mountain bike opportunities at Fallen Leaf Lake. Photo/Chris McNamara

This summer, TAMBA, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, plans to construct about six rideable miles of trails in the Angora Ridge, Angora Lakes and Fallen Leaf Lake areas. This is roughly half of the planned and approved trails for the area. The rest will be on next year's agenda.

Fish said it just seemed logical to take on this project right now. With 2017 being the 10th anniversary of the Angora Fire, it felt like an appropriate time to restore and reinvigorate the scarred landscape. Plus, its proximity to residential neighborhoods, camping, lakes and other activities creates potential for a highly used recreational area.

Once completed, this new trail system will give users access to spectacular views at the top of Angora Ridge, a trail to hike or bike to Angora Lakes from Tahoe Mountain, the ability to bike around Fallen Leaf Lake, and eventually, a connection to the highest used bike trail in the basin, the paved trail along Highway 89 connecting Pope and Baldwin beaches.

Fish described the new trails as more of a low-elevation rolling trail system, and as such, they will be conducive to riders of a variety of skill levels.

“There are just those days where you’re like: ‘Do I really want to climb 4,000 feet today?’” he said.

These will be the trails for that kind of day. Mike Gabor, forest engineer for the USFS, said he can see this becoming a trail people ride to unwind after a long day at work, taking in the views of Lake Tahoe, Fallen Leaf Lake and the surrounding ridgelines.

The trails system will also provide access to areas which have previously been inaccessible by hiking or biking paths. There is a handful of what the USFS calls “social trails” in this area, trails formed simply by people walking on them. They often start as wildlife trails and then get used more and more, but they are not maintained or sustainably built, often causing erosion issues and impacting wildlife. Some of these trails run parallel to each other and don’t always make logical connections. This summer’s plan involves rebuilding and improving some of those trails, decommissioning others and building new, sustainably-planned ones.

“You couldn’t even describe to people how to hike around Fallen Leaf Lake, because it was such a spaghetti bowl of trails,” Jacob Quinn, USFS trails engineer, told Lake Tahoe News.

Quinn has worked closely with TAMBA on nearly all its recent projects, including the Fallen Leaf Lake/Angora Ridge trails.

He explained how the Forest Service develops trail ideas, creates the plans and takes them through the necessary environmental approvals, but often lacks funding and manpower to make them happen. This is where the partnership with TAMBA has really paid off. Through their fundraising efforts and volunteer workers, TAMBA has been instrumental in bringing the Forest Services' trail visions to life.

Last summer, TAMBA set a fundraising goal of \$55,000 to make this trail project happen. They kicked off fundraising efforts in July and have since exceeded their goal, raising more than \$60,000. The extra funds mean TAMBA might be able to hire a paid trail builder to work on the trail consistently all summer, and it also opens the door to working on trails which weren't slated for construction until next year, like a bikeable trail to Lily Lake.

Even though this year's goal has been met, more funds mean more trails, so there are still more fundraising events on the horizon, like the TAMBA spring party next month. Training workshops are in April and May for crew leaders, sawyers and more. Construction on the trails is scheduled to begin in June with TAMBA hosting volunteer weekends throughout the summer.

"I'd like to stress how great this project is because of all the partnerships created to make it happen," Fish told Lake Tahoe News. "It'd be just lines on paper waiting to be built if it wasn't for the willingness of the USFS to work with partners like TAMBA and the community stepping up to help build and fund the construction."

For more information on workshops or becoming a volunteer, go **online**. Here is a map of the project area.

Squaw may stay open throughout the summer

By Angela Fritz, Washington Post

Did you hear? It snowed a lot in the Sierra Nevada this winter. Unless you spent the cold months avoiding the news (we wouldn't blame you), then you already know it's a record-breaking season.

Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows, sister ski resorts, have tallied nearly 60 feet of snow this winter. At a slightly higher elevation, Sugar Bowl at Donner Summit hit 751 inches – 63 feet! – this month. Last week alone, Squaw reported three feet of snow.

"I'm actually considering staying open through the summer and fall so it becomes the 16-17-18 season," CEO Andy Wirth said. "We're taking a hard look at that. Maybe we spin Shirley [a back-side chair lift] through the summer. There's so much snow up there."

Read the whole story

Couple completes Tahoe Rim Trail with 11-month-old

By Sammy Caiola, Sacramento Bee

Matt and Kimberly Kinney always travel light when they head into the woods, leaving behind everything but the necessities and keeping their backpacks as slim as possible. Two summers

ago they decided to add one very heavy item to the packing list: their 22-pound infant.

In July 2015, the Sacramento parents took their son Thomas, then 11 months old, backpacking on the 165-mile Tahoe Rim Trail. The adventure was so successful that they plan to repeat it this summer, this time adding their second son James to the mix. Earlier this month, Kimberly, a speech pathologist, and Matt, a geologist, spoke at REI Sacramento about how to successfully backpack with little ones, sharing their trials and tribulations with about a dozen curious families.

Bringing an infant into the elements sounds bizarre to most people, Kimberly said, but it felt like a given for the young couple, who have been logging miles together for about six years.

Read the whole story

Ranking the world's toughest outdoor sports

By Dan Roe, Outside

You have no idea how tough [*insert sport*] is.

Whether we say it out loud or just repeat it to ourselves, many of us share this sentiment. As American novelist Mary McCarthy once said, “We are the hero of our own story.”

That said, some activities are legitimately harder than others, and in the realm of outdoor sports, a few are in a league of their own. Take rock climbing, for instance, which

requires explosive upper-body strength, problem solving, and crux-time focus. Downhill mountain bikers regularly risk shattered bones, while open-water swimmers push themselves to the limit in unforgiving conditions. Nordic skiers force their bodies deep into oxygen debt, and ultrarunners—well, you get the idea.

But how can we quantify which one is actually the toughest? Here's how: we chose five competitive sports that we feel are tough to learn, can be dangerous to perform, and require a high degree of skill and fitness.

Read the whole story

Battle over public lands rages on

By Kirk Johnson, New York Times

BURNS, Ore. — A year ago, this corner of rural Oregon became center stage in the drawn-out drama over public lands when armed militia leaders seized a national wildlife refuge, arguing that the government had too much control of land in the West.

Now that President Trump is in office, people here and in other parts of the 11 states where 47 percent of the landmass is publicly owned are watching to see what he will do on everything related to public lands, from coal mining and cattle grazing to national monuments and parks. In Burns, some ranchers and others are feeling emboldened, hopeful that regulatory rollbacks by the federal government will return lands to private use and shore up a long-struggling economy.

But the change in administration has also spawned a countermovement of conservatives and corporate executives who are speaking up alongside environmentalists in defense of public lands and now worry about losing access to hunting grounds and customers who prize national parks and wildlife.

In Idaho, for example, a deal to put thousands of acres into private ownership – exactly the sort of transaction that the militia leader brothers, Ammon and Ryan Bundy, had espoused in seizing the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge – was met with fierce opposition, by no less than a group of conservative outdoorsmen.

[Read the whole story](#)

Unsettled weather pattern for Lake Tahoe



The Upper Truckee River at Cove East in South Lake Tahoe has crested its bank. Photo/Kathryn Reed

If you are in search of spring, leave Lake Tahoe. Winter-like weather is in the forecast for much of next week.

Rain is likely to arrive late morning on Sunday, with it turning to snow overnight.

A mix of rain and snow is in the forecast for most of the week. The National Weather Service in Reno is not calling for much accumulation of rain or snow, though.

A concern will be the rising levels of creeks and rivers, especially if rain melts snow higher up.

Overnight lows will be near freezing.

Friday will be the best workday – sunny with a high near 57.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*