

## **News from the Forest Service**

### **By Lisa Herron**

### **Spring is here!**

For the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, spring is a busy time of year. Forest Service staff are gearing up to begin work on projects we have lined up for this season.

### **Beaches, trailheads and campgrounds opening early**

Spring is a beautiful time of year in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The weather has been warm and folks are getting outside to enjoy the forest. The Forest Service is shifting resources to open gates and parking areas early in order to provide access to National Forest beaches and trails. As a reminder, we are not able to fully staff these sites until closer to our typical season, so we are asking for the public's help in keeping these sites clean and safe. Until facilities officially open, please remember to pack out trash and until parking lots open, please park vehicles off the roadway, avoid parking on vegetation, and do not block access gates. Where pets are allowed, always clean up after your animal.

Eagle Falls parking area, Inspiration Point, Kiva Picnic area, Tallac Point day-use area, Big Meadows Trailhead, Logan Shoals and Secret Harbor opened April 1, 2015. Baldwin and Nevada beaches open May 1. The McKinney Rubicon Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) area, Sawmill Pond, the Sandpit OHV area, Nevada Beach Campground and Chimney Beach open May 8. William Kent, Kaspian, Meeks Bay, Bayview and Fallen Leaf campgrounds and beaches open May 15, 2015. Luther Pass Campground and Pope Beach open May 22 and Blackwood Canyon and Watson Lake campgrounds open June 1.

The Taylor Creek Visitor Center parking area, grounds and restrooms open May 15. The Taylor Creek Visitor Center office and the Baldwin Museum at the Tallac Historic Site open Saturday, May 23, just in time for Memorial Day!

### **Fire Danger and Campfire Regulations**

Speaking of people getting out in the forest, it is very important for the public to remember to be aware of fire danger and campfire regulations. An early season wildfire started Tuesday, March 31, 2015, from an illegal campfire at Granite Lake in the Desolation Wilderness. Forest Service firefighters responded quickly and were able to keep the fire from spreading despite high winds.

Illegal and unattended campfires cause over 90 percent of wildfires in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Fire managers are concerned about the impact from illegal campfires as we are in our fourth year of drought and forest conditions are already as dry as they would be in June. We realize the warm weather, combined with lack of snow has given folks early access to recreation areas, but people need to remember that campfires are only allowed in designated campgrounds and are not allowed on National Forest beaches or in the Desolation Wilderness.

The public should be mindful of the current fire danger and help prevent human-caused wildfires by not building illegal campfires. More information about campfire safety is available at <http://www.preventwildfireca.org/Campfires/>.

## Proper Food Storage Order

Because bears are attracted to anything edible or scented, improper storage of human food and other scented items and improper disposal of trash is the leading cause of human-bear conflict. Requiring proper food storage and trash disposal reduces human-bear conflict by preventing bears from obtaining human food sources.



The Forest Service requires the use of food storage lockers on all National Forest System lands in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The Forest Service issued a final decision last fall for a Forest Order that requires campers to properly store food and trash in a manner that prevents access by bears. Campers must secure food in animal resistant food lockers and dispose of trash in locking dumpsters provided at Fallen Leaf and Meeks Bay campground and Meeks Bay Resort.

This summer, the Forest Order requiring the proper storage of food and disposal of trash will expand to include all National Forest System lands throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The Forest Service will work with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Nevada Division of Wildlife on an education campaign to inform the public of the expanded order.

People who elect not to comply with the Forest Order would be subject to a violation notice.

## Seneca Pond Removal

Restoring watersheds to improve terrestrial and aquatic habitat throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin is an important aspect of Forest Service restoration projects.

This June, the Forest Service will begin a project in the Angora Fire area that will restore man-made Seneca Pond to more closely resemble the meadow that existed in the area prior to the early 1960s.

The project will restore approximately two acres of wet meadow, improve the function of the stream above and below the pond, and enhance water quality in Angora Creek, which is a tributary of the Upper Truckee River.

Restoring the pond to its natural condition will provide improved habitat for alder, willow, aspen and wetland vegetation such as sedge grasses and wildflowers and the native amphibian species, the Western toad. The restoration will also eliminate a local population of non-native bullfrogs.

Work is expected to take two months to complete, with the pond reshaping taking place over two weeks in July.

## Fallen Leaf Lake Trail Access and Travel Management (ATM) Plan



Last summer, the Forest Service completed the Fallen Leaf Bike Path that connects Fallen Leaf Campground to the Pope-Baldwin National Recreation Trail and installed a crosswalk and signal on Highway 89. The path and crosswalk provide better safety to those seeking to cross the highway in order to access the refreshing waters of Fallen Leaf and Lake Tahoe.

Work this summer will include an upgrade to the trail that leads from the entrance to Fallen Leaf Campground to Fallen Leaf

Lake. The California Conservation Corp (CCC) will assist with this upgrade. The Forest Service will construct a new bike path from the existing Pope-Baldwin path to Tallac Point, and will finish the reroute the Mt. Tallac Trail near the upper bowl.

## **South Shore Fuels Reduction Continues**

Work on the South Shore Fuels Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration project will resume at the beginning of May and last through the summer and early fall. Now in its' fourth year, this project will improve forest health and reduce the risk of severe wildfire on 10,000 acres from Cascade Lake to Stateline, Nevada.

Forest Service crews will remove fuels in numerous locations around the South Shore including units near Spring Creek, Fallen Leaf Lake and Pope Beach.

The Spring Creek units will be thinned using cut-to-length (CTL) thinning method, which cuts the tree down, cuts the tree into sections in the cutting area, and then removes the tree and as much material (limbs, etc.) as possible. No piling or mastication will occur around homes.

Thinning near Fallen Leaf Lake will take place on the east side of Fallen Leaf Lake Road and behind Camp Richardson Stables. Thinning in this area will use the whole tree removal method. Whole tree removal involves cutting the tree moving it to the landing for processing. Work in this area will not begin until after Memorial Day.

CTL thinning in the Pope Beach units will take place on the north and south sides of Highway 89 beginning where the road narrows to two lanes and extending to Camp Richardson.

CTL and whole tree thinning requires closure of the area during operations due to the hazards posed by heavy equipment operation and falling trees. The Forest Service will post closure orders for mechanical work in the project areas and online at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/lbmu/ForestOrders>.

## **Visitor Center Programs**

Evening programs at the Lake of the Sky Amphitheater begin Friday, July 3 and continue every Friday evening in July and August. Programs this year include "Winged Flight at Night," Steve Hale presents local historic legends, MacAvoy Layne as Mark Twain, the Tahoe Institute of Natural Science and more. A complete schedule of programs will be posted on the Tahoe Heritage Foundation website at <http://tahoeheritage.org/>.

The Native Species Festival is Saturday, May 30, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Activities include educational booths, nature walks, food, music and more. As part of the volunteer program "Eyes on the Lake", the Forest Service will work with the League to Save Lake Tahoe to offer a free training on how to identify and remove invasive plants.

The Lake Tahoe Bird Festival is Saturday, June 13, from 10 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Activities include Bird walks, Master Falconer Marie Gaspari, a migratory bird obstacle course and more.

Other events on tap for this summer include the Renaissance Faire at Camp Richardson, the Great Gatsby Festival at Valhalla and the Fall Fish Festival at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center.

## **General Information**

To obtain recreation information or a wilderness or campfire permit, visit the Forest Supervisor's office at 35 College Drive in South Lake Tahoe or the Taylor Creek Visitor Center on Highway 89, three miles north of South Lake Tahoe.

The Forest Supervisor's office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. The telephone number is (530) 543-2694.

The Taylor Creek Visitor Center office is open weekends only beginning May 23 through mid-June, and seven days a week after that, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The telephone number is (530) 543-2674.