

Opinion: The dos and don'ts for Fourth of July weekend

By Lisa Herron

With the busy Fourth of July weekend here, the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit asks residents and visitors to help protect public safety and our environment.

We ask that the public keep wildfire prevention in mind during Fourth of July celebrations. Despite the fact that snow remains abundant in the backcountry and stream and river flow is high, it only takes one out of control campfire or careless individual to ignite a wildfire. Possession of fireworks of any kind, including sparklers, is illegal in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Campfires and charcoal barbecue grills are not permitted on Forest Service beaches or in the general forest.



This year, an additional safety concern is the volume of runoff from snowmelt causing rivers, creeks and waterfalls to run high, fast and cold. Water that you may have crossed easily at one point in the day may not be crossable when you're ready to return.

The annual alcohol ban will be in effect on Nevada Beach, within Zephyr Cove Resort and Zephyr Shoals (the former Dreyfus Estate). These areas will be patrolled by law enforcement personnel from the Forest Service, and Douglas County and Carson County sheriff's deputies, and by private security staff. County and state laws also ban the possession or consumption of alcohol on the Truckee River from Tahoe City to Alpine Meadows over the holiday weekend.

If you're parking on the side of the road to access Forest Service facilities, make sure you're parked completely on gravel or dirt, not on vegetation. Parking on vegetation may

result in a citation for resource damage, plus there's a chance your car's catalytic converter could spark a fire. Even better, consider public transportation if you're going to the beach that day. The Nifty Fifty Trolley stops at Forest Service beaches along the South and West Shores.

Please keep in mind that in developed recreation sites, such as Kiva, Tallac and the Taylor Creek Visitor Center, parking is allowed only in designated parking spaces, not along the roadway. Do not park where you will block access or narrow lanes, which could impede response in an emergency.

Day-use fees for the Fourth of July at Pope, Baldwin, and Nevada beaches are again \$20 this year to cover increased security and facility maintenance costs on the holiday. The beaches have become increasingly popular for Tahoe visitors and locals on the Fourth of July. Please note beaches close when the firework display is over.

Finally, please respect the rules on where dogs are allowed. Dogs are not allowed at designated swim beaches, including Nevada, Pope, Baldwin, Meeks and William Kent. If you are looking for a place to take your leashed dog, try Kiva Picnic Area from Valhalla Boathouse/Pier to Tallac Point in South Lake Tahoe, Echo Lakes on Echo Summit, Zephyr Shoals on the East Shore (the old Dreyfus Estate located north of Zephyr Cove Resort), Hidden and Chimney beaches on the East Shore, Coon Street Beach (at the boat launch) in King's Beach, Kaspian and 64 Acres in Tahoe City.

For more information, visit the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit website or call (530) 543.2600.

Lisa Herron works for the USFS Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.