

USFS cabin fees on the rise

By Kathryn Reed

People who own cabins on U.S. Forest Service land are getting a notice in the mail telling them to pay the government more money.

The use fee is going up based on appraisals of the property, which is done every 10 years. The fee is 5 percent of the appraised value of the lot – the vacant lot, not including the structure, according to the Forest Service.



The cost of owning a USFS cabin is going up.

The fees are actually 10 years overdue because of ongoing discussions since 1999 between cabin owners, the Forest Service and Congress.

Some fees are increasing by more than 100 percent because appraisals were not done between 1979 and 1999.

The irony is that with appraisals happening every 10 years, 2009 represents another appraisal year – so the increases are not likely to over for most people.

– For the most part, fee increases range from several hundred to several thousand, again depending on the value of the lot, – Cheva Heck, USFS spokeswoman based in South Lake

Tahoe, said of the increase now being doled out. “On the other hand, the value of some lots went down and their fees will decrease to reflect that.”

For the owners who are hit with a 100 percent increase or more, it will be phased in. Heck said about a half dozen cabin owners in Lake Tahoe will be see a substantial increase in fees.

Recreation residences have a value of \$150,000 to \$500,000. Those right on the shore of Echo and Fallen Leaf lakes are prime real estate.

“; fees go back to the U.S. Treasury and a quarter of the funding from these fees and other Forest Service fees comes back to the states through the Secure Rural Schools initiative, for road and school projects primarily,” Heck said.

The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit oversees 594 cabins, which were all just reissued 20-year permits. These cabins range in size from 200 to 1,400 square feet “ some with more than an acre of land.

Preserving 100,000 acres in the Sierra

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

TRUCKEE “ In the 1860s, Congress created a huge checkerboard of land ownership across California’s Sierra Nevada mountain range when it granted every other square mile to railroad barons along the route of the transcontinental railroad.

Now, nearly 150 years later, one of Silicon Valley's most high-profile couples is working to buy back the squares for nature.

Jim and Becky Morgan of Los Altos Hills " he, the retired CEO of Applied Materials and she, a former Santa Clara County supervisor and Republican state senator " have launched an ambitious project to raise \$100 million in the next five years to preserve land across the Sierra.

Read the whole story

CTC seeks Carnelian Bay concessionaire

The California Tahoe Conservancy is issuing a Prospectus/Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking an operator for the Patton Landing Concession at Carnelian Bay in North Lake Tahoe.

The objective of this RFP is to select someone who has a plan that will best enhance the visitors' beach related recreation experience at this lakefront facility. The concessionaire contract is likely to be five-10 years.

Interested parties should contact Lisa O'™Daly of the Public Access and Recreation Program at (530) 543.6037.

There will be a drop in open house at the facility on Nov. 10 from 10am to 2pm, 5166/5188 North Lake Blvd. in Carnelian Bay.

Proposals are due by 3pm on Dec. 9.

Schussing at Mt. Rose begins Oct. 30

Mount Rose ski resort is opening Friday with the Flying Jenny lift and Show-Off run. Show-Off will have park features set up and will be open Fri-Sun from 10am-4pm.

A base of 8-12 inches covers the run, thanks to snowmaking.

Reduced prices: \$20 ages 13 & over (flat rate), \$10 ages 6-12 (5 and under ski free).

Halloween Special: On Oct. 31st get a \$5 discount on a lift ticket if you show up in costume.

For current weather conditions at Mt. Rose- Ski Tahoe, visit www.skirose.com or call (775) 849.0704.

Colorado to honor skier who lived in the Sierra

Publisher's note: *Spider Sabich was born in Sacramento and raised in Kyburz along Highway 50. He is buried in Placerville.*

By John Meyer, Denver Post

For those who didn't know Spider Sabich or see him race, he usually is remembered for the way he died — shot by

girlfriend Claudine Longet at their home in Aspen, the tragedy then lampooned in a “Saturday Night Live” skit so insensitive the show had to offer an apology a week later.

But for those who knew and loved him, Sabich was an outstanding athlete, a fantastic racer, a charismatic personality and a great friend. Those are the qualities that will be recognized Nov. 7 when Sabich is inducted into the Colorado Ski Hall of Fame.

Read the whole story

Heavenly begins to make snow

Heavenly Mountain Resort fired up its snowmaking guns on Tuesday – a sure sign ski season for most Lake Tahoe area resorts will be here soon. Boreal and Mammoth are already open on a limited basis.

Snow flurries have been coming down off and on at the lake today. The mountaintops are socked in with clouds, with natural white stuff coming down lightly.



Snowmaking
begins Oct. 27
at Heavenly
Mountain

Resort.

Photo/Heavenly

The high at the lake is supposed to be 39 in the basin today. The Weather Channel says with the wind chill, it feels like 8 degrees at South Lake Tahoe just before noon on Wednesday.

The mercury is expected to rise to the 50s on Thursday and be back to the mid-60s for the weekend.

However, overnight lows will be in the 20s for the next week. Those temps are good for the resorts that make snow.

Halloween is expected to be dry – something that seems to be rare in Tahoe.

Grover Hot Springs, Donner Museum hours cut



By Kathryn Reed

Winter operations at state parks in the Sierra are being cut back, with a more comprehensive plan for summer to be released in early 2010.

For the winter, Grover Hot Springs in Markleeville and Donner Museum in Truckee will be closed Mondays and Tuesdays. No winter camping will be allowed at Sugar Pine Point, though it's available at Grover.

The cuts are a result of the compromise Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger came up with when earlier this fall he decided not to close any of the 279 state parks. Instead, he told the

superintendents of the various districts to come up with a way to cut \$14.2 million from the state parks budget.

“The most obvious thing we would close is some loops in campgrounds,” Pam Armas, superintendent of the Sierra District, said about summer operations.

Most of the state campgrounds in her district “which runs from Mono Lake to Donner Lake” have three loops. By closing one, it means fewer bathrooms to clean and trash to haul away.

“We are not allowed to fill our vacancies and we are not allowed to hire right now,” Armas said. This means the manpower isn’t there to keep the parks fully operational.

Usually people can start reserving a campground spot for 2010 on Nov.1. While the plan is being finalized as what to do in the summer, campground reservations will not be taken.

Prescribed USFS burning begins Oct. 28

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will conduct prescribed fire operations in the Rubicon/Tahoe Hills area starting Oct. 28, and will likely continue through the week depending on weather conditions.

Residents and travelers can expect to see smoke from prescribed fire project areas.

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.

To view maps that describe current prescribed fire project locations, visit: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu/fire/map-index.shtml>.

Fish stocking to resume at Jenkinson Lake

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Regular fish stocking programs will resume at Jenkinson Lake near Pollock Pines.

El Dorado Irrigation District officials announced that the lake, the centerpiece of the district's popular Sly Park Recreation Area, has been removed from the state's list of lakes and streams where fish stocking was suspended last fall.

Read the whole story

Tahoe resorts ramp-up to

winter with Bay Area parties

For the second year in a row, the SnowBomb Ski & Board Festivals promise to be the biggest and best venue for finding not only the latest ski and snowboard gear for the upcoming winter, but also taste premiere wines and boutique beers.

More than 150 wineries and breweries will be attending and offering tastes of their newest flavors this year. All of the Lake Tahoe resorts will be there.

Because of the huge success of last year's event in San Francisco, SnowBomb has added a second event in Santa Clara at Santa Clara Convention Center. Both events will run from 10am until 8pm on Saturday, and from 10am until 6pm on Sunday. The SF event at Fort Mason is Nov. 7-8; while the South Bay event is Nov. 14-15.

Both festivals will have the same basic elements, the entertainment will feature resort booths from more than 20 of the top resorts in North America including Tahoe resorts, Whistler, Vail, Mammoth, Jackson Hole, Sun Valley, Big Sky and many more.

Tickets are online at sfSkiFest.com. General admission tickets are \$20 per day and include a free lift ticket to Bear Valley, Dodge Ridge, or Sierra Summit, a 2 for 1 lift ticket to Mammoth, a free burrito at Wahoos Fish Taco among others freebies. The \$40 VIP ticket includes all the General Admission perks, a commemorative glass and unlimited beer or wine tasting for four hours.

Kids can play in the snow area or watch professional BMX and skaters hitting the massive halfpipe in the Festival's "extreme scene". Both Festivals also feature a huge ski/snowboard sale with over 1 million dollars in goods being sold at up to 70 percent off.

For more information, go to snowbomb.com or sfskifest.com.