Washoe Indians knew how to pick idyllic locations

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – History and natural beauty come together in a magical way along the easy Lam Watah trail.

“This beautiful piece of land has many fascinating connections to the past. For centuries, the Washoe used it as a summer encampment. It has been logged, and grazed by cattle,” reads the interpretive sign. “Pony Express riders came through here, and it was home of Tahoe’s first airport. Most recently, two full-scale casinos were almost built here.”



Rabe Meadow in Stateline is worth visiting year-round. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Oddly, the trail today would not resemble what it looked like when I was last on it the first week of February. Then it was muddy. With the recent white stuff, snowshoes or cross country skis are going to work better.

Improvements to the area in the last few years by the U.S. Forest Service have made it an even more pleasurable trek. Mini walkways have been installed over the low areas. Signs

explain a bit about what is in this meadow.

The Forest Service has owned this plot of land on the South Shore since the 1980s.

More work is going on now to make facilities compliant with the American with Disabilities Act.

Rabe Meadow is a place to visit in every season. Like so much of Lake Tahoe, it has something special to share every month. The landscape seems to change as snow arrives and melts; the aspens regain their leaves and turn color; birds migrate – singing their arrival; other critters come and go.

Burke Creek meanders along the western edge, bringing lushness to some areas.

The main trail is completely flat, creating a meandering jaunt that ends at Nevada Beach, with a short jog through the campground.

The splendor of the beach competes against the meadow for which is most spectacular.

This particular Saturday a few others are strolling on the beach. It’s just cool enough to want to keep moving and not pause long at the snowcapped mountains ringing the lake.

Seldom do I venture here in the summer. Perhaps knowing the tranquility of the other seasons has me jaded about wanting to be among the masses. Just once, though, I want to get a campsite for Fourth of July. Rumor has it this beach is the best for watching the fireworks shot off from the barge sitting in Lake Tahoe.

This is one of those outings where it’s about the walk, the beauty, the solitude, as well as the company of the one you’re with. It’s not about endurance or speed or working up a sweat.

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, head east on Highway 50. Go past the casinos. Turn left on Kahle Drive. The parking area is immediately on the right.

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