

SLT bike park to be dedicated for Wendell



Tom Wendell

By Kathryn Reed

Tom Wendell left an indelible mark when it came to cycling on the South Shore.

To honor this man who died two years ago at the age of 62 the city of South Lake Tahoe is dedicating the Bijou Bike Park in his name. A sign will be unveiled when the park opens Sept. 19. The top will say the park is dedicated to Wendell, followed by a tribute written by his brother, Ted.

In the middle will be a list of people who helped bring the park to fruition, with the donor list next to it.

Wendell promoted recreation when no one was listening. He was relentless with his passion and desire to get the powers that be to understand this area was an outdoor playground that needed to be promoted, developed – in the sense of trails,

appreciated and maintained.



The following activities are planned for Sept. 19:

10am Parade starts at the Y; **11:30am** Parade ends at Bijou Community Park; **12:30pm** Ribbon cutting for bike park; **1pm** Bijou bike course open to public; **1:30pm** Bike rodeo for kids; **2-3pm** Jump Jam on slopestyle line with world-class athletes; **3:30pm** BMX race starts; **All day** 4th annual Deep Blue Derby Tournament hosted by the Sierra Regional Roller Derby.

"We know this would have been important to him. He talked about more bike parks all the time," City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. "When you have people who are true advocates for a cause, they champion it. They make sure city officials are listening. Tom did that for biking."

After Wendell died in August 2013 there was much talk by people of wanting to name something for him. The park dedication is the city's way of recognizing Wendell's contributions through the years to the cycling community.

In 2001 he helped form Tahoe Region Advocates for Cycling with Bob Kingman, Karen Fink, Pete Fink, Jeff Miner and Gary Bell. That was the predecessor to the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition, of which Wendell was part.

Wendell was seldom seen in his car – even in the winter. His hybrid bike was like an extension of him. The trails around Cold Creek and Powerline were his regular stomping grounds when he was mountain biking.

Wendell has many people who are carrying his torch for him now. Ben Fish spent hours to make the bike park a reality. Then there is Ty Polastri, Curtis Fong, Pete Fink and Gary Bell – just to name a few – who walked alongside Wendell in his endeavors and today do more than their share to make road and mountain biking a reason to live at and visit Lake Tahoe.