

Event all about birds in Lake Tahoe

As part of the Wild Tahoe Weekend, the Tahoe Institute for Natural Science in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will host the seventh annual Lake Tahoe Bird Festival on June 25.

Located at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center on Highway 89, this is a free family event from 10am-3:30pm.

The event includes hourly guided bird walks along the Rainbow Trail, information and presentations on migratory birds, bird crafts and games, bird house building, live birds, and more.

Various local agencies will be participating, including California State Parks, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care and more.

Kings Beach set to celebrate Independence holiday

Kings Beach will start the Independence Day holiday on July 3 with the annual fireworks show.s Beach.

The firework and beach party are from 4-10pm at North Tahoe Event Center, hosted by the North Tahoe Business Association. The event is open to all ages and features preferred fireworks seating, food vendors, a beer/wine and mixed drink garden, free watermelon eating and sand castle building contests, music provided by the San Diego Marine's Double Time Brass Band, a raffle to win a standup paddleboard, patriotic and

glow items, face painting and more.

The event is capped off by fireworks at 9:30pm.

Entrance into the beach party is free.

Preferred fireworks seating is available for \$20/person. Ticket holders can secure their seats starting at 4pm and will also have access to indoor restrooms at the North Tahoe Event Center. There are a limited number of tickets available; purchase them **online**.

All proceeds go to pay for the fireworks. They cost approximately \$1,000 per minute.

Film, discussion about plastic in waterways

“The Smog of the Sea” short film chronicles a one-week journey through the remote waters of the Sargasso Sea to assess the fate of plastics in the world’s oceans. As the crew sieves the water they find a fog of microplastics permeating the world’s oceans.

Following the movie screening in Inline Village on July 13, Will Richardson of the Tahoe Institute for Natural Science will briefly discuss how excess light and sound can affect people and wildlife. This is an opportunity to learn about the impacts of these less-considered forms of pollution on animal species and what can be done to prevent them.

Attendees will also be told how they can help monitor pollution, local species, and water quality at Tahoe beaches using the Citizen Science Tahoe app.

Registration for this event is required. The program will begin at 6pm with refreshments and no-host bar from 5:30-6pm at the Tahoe Environmental Research Center on the campus of Sierra Nevada College. A \$5 suggested donation will be collected at the door.

Trump budget would crush weather data program

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

A trove of nationwide weather data that keeps wildland firefighters safe and helps farmers plant crops is in jeopardy under the budget proposed by President Trump.

Regional Climate Centers, a little-known network of weather data gathering and processing centers, face an existential threat in the form of a recommended 82 percent budget cut in Trump's proposed budget.

Centers manage weather information that helps fire managers battle wild land fires, helps farmers decide where and when to plant crops and helps engineers design dams and bridges that can stand up to extremes.

Operators of the climate centers, including the Western Regional Climate Center in Reno, say if Trump's vision becomes reality the centers would run out of money in March.

Read the whole story

ZCTC upping players' games with clinics

Playing tennis in Lake Tahoe can be challenging because it's not a year-round sport in the basin. This means taking lessons – private or group– is the best way to get the rust off from winter. Instruction is also going to help those who want to advance their game.

Dave Nostrant, who has been teaching for decades, is in his first year as the head pro at Zephyr Cove Tennis Club. He is filling up the calendar with an array of clinics for various levels.

Also giving lessons at ZCTC is Ginny Unger.

Here are highlights on what is being offered at Zephyr Cove:

- Mondays – 9-10:30am, women's 3.0-3.5 drill clinic – Ginny Unger
- Mondays – 10:30am-noon, women's 3.5+ drill clinic – Unger
- Tuesdays – 9-10:30am, 3.0-3.5 women's and men's drill clinic – Nostrant
- Wednesdays – 10-11am, 4.0 and up, women's and men's super drills – Nostrant
- Thursdays – 9-10:30am, all levels women and men, cardio tennis – Nostrant
- Saturdays – 9-10:30am, men's clinic, all levels – Nostrant.

For more info, go **online**.

Private lessons also are available from Nostrant (970.496.6277 or davenostrant@yahoo.com) or Unger (775.901.6713 or ginnyunger@yahoo.com). Nostrant also offers video analysis, same-day stringing, and multi-day camps. For camp information, go **online**. For youth schedule, check **this link**.

Membership to ZCTC is \$85 for the year. For more information, go **online**.

Dogs and beer – a fundraiser for ACT

Beer with your Best Friend at South Lake Brewing Company is a fundraiser for the Animal Coalition of Tahoe.

Leashed dogs are welcome at the brewery on Lake Tahoe Boulevard on June 20 from 6-9pm.

A portion of the proceeds to will go to ACT so the nonprofit can continue its spay-neuter program for Tahoe locals.

There will also be a raffle. Order pizza to be delivered by Blue Dog with no delivery charge.

State senator's wife facing

fourth DUI charge



Sherese C.
Settelmeyer

The wife of the Nevada state senator who represents Lake Tahoe is scheduled to be arraigned June 26 on felony driving under the influence charges.

Sherese C. Settelmeyer, 52, is the wife of state Sen. James Settelmeyer, R-Minden.

She was arrested on Jan. 5 in Gardnerville with a blood alcohol level of 0.136. She faced the same charges in 1995, 2010 and 2013.

In 2013 she pleaded guilty to driving under the influence. At the time of her arrest her blood alcohol level was four times the legal limit. Her sentence was 20 days of house arrest and a \$1,200 fine.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Pro-union workers against SLT

Whole Foods

By Kathryn Reed

A labor union is trying to derail the Whole Foods project in South Lake Tahoe.

While the fight fizzled with the city, proponents are now taking their case to the California Tahoe Conservancy.

Local resident Donna Gilpin had filed an appeal challenging the Planning Commission's May 11 decision to approve what is locally known as the Whole Foods project. The project is formally called the Bijou Creek Watershed Project. It involves tearing down the Knights Inn on Highway 50.

Gilpin works for Safeway and is part of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union. Besides Safeway, UFCW represents employees at CVS, Rite-Aid, Kroger, Fred Meyer, Ralphs, King Soopers, Albertsons, Vons and other businesses. And like most unions, it tends to dislike non-union competitors.

Whole Foods workers are not unionized.

UFCW and other unions have a history of trying to block projects they don't want based on challenging aspects of the California Environmental Quality Act, while at no time stating the truth about the union issue.

"This is an abuse of the environmental process," City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

UFCW could not be reached for a comment, and Gilpin did not return multiple calls.

The union had people handing out anti-Whole Foods propaganda in residential areas.

In order to challenge a project a local person who could be affected by it has to file the paperwork. That's where Gilpin came in.

The city on June 12 received Gilpin's four-sentence letter addressed to Kevin Fabian in Development Services saying she was withdrawing her appeal: "As we discussed I am not opposed to the city's Whole Foods project. Therefore, I hereby withdraw and disclaim my appeal and the attached letter. I agree that the project will ... improve the environment and am satisfied that the reasons for the appeal have been adequately addressed by the mitigated negative declaration for the project. After reconsideration I do agree that the Planning Commission acted appropriately in approving the project."

This is an about-face to what she said in her appeal where she cited five reasons she disagrees with the Planning Commission's decision; most having to do with the mitigated negative declaration.

In other locales this deceptive union tactic has cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees. Even South Lake Tahoe sought outside legal counsel when the appeal was filed.

There is a group on Facebook called Keep Lake Tahoe Local which is opposed to the Whole Foods 365 being built near the corner of Ski Run and Highway 50. That page is wanting people to sign a petition and to go to Thursday's California Tahoe Conservancy meeting. That board is considering allowing the city to manage seven parcels that it owns in the Bijou watershed project area. Those parcels would be part of the stream environmental zone restoration process.

The mitigated negative declaration is also on the agenda.

Despite the roadblocks being presented, the project is moving forward. The now former owner of the Knights Inn and his family should be moving out next week. Demolition of the

asbestos-ridden hotel is expected in mid-July.

The city owns the property and by the end of the month should close escrow with Halferty Development to acquire the land. That company also owns the parcel at 50 and Ski Run and will be developing the two sites in unison.

Opinion: A state park's miracle and disappointment

By Joe Mathews

Riddle: When is a miracle also a disappointment?

Answer: When the miracle is a California state project.

Case in point: the miraculous recent opening of the Los Angeles State Historic Park.



Joe Mathews

Miracle one: It's a large (32 acres) park—with broad grassy fields large enough to fly kites or hold big concerts, and a signature bridge with selfie-ready views of the downtown skyline—in the densely crowded center of park-poor Los Angeles.

Miracle two: It was built on a historic railyard and industrial site that required costly soil decontamination and was originally planned for business redevelopment, before the state saved it for parkland.

Miracle three: The state's woefully underfunded parks department built this park with public funds, in an era when major parks require donations.

Miracle four: The park didn't die during a 16-year odyssey that coincided with a crippling recession, budget crises, and an accounting scandal inside the parks department.

So why do all these miracles add up to disappointment? Because in a state where it's so hard to do anything impactful, this park's story reminds how hard it is to do something world-class.

The park represented, in the words of one state press release, a "once-in-a-century" opportunity for California to reshape a transit-connected parcel extending from Metro rail's Chinatown station to the L.A. River. But just getting the park opened in the face of obstacles required many compromises, not the least of which was a reduced \$18 million price tag for a park that was originally planned as a \$55 million facility. And so the Los Angeles State Historic Park still lacks the basics of a great park.

Like shade.

There are no shade structures, and small, newly planted trees provide little relief from the blistering sun. Many of the features of the original plan for the park, advanced a decade ago, haven't materialized—no elaborate gardens, no fountains, no children's playground. And the park, which is supposed to be a community asset, is open for limited hours—8am to sunset—and is cut off by fencing and trains from its two bordering thoroughfares, Broadway and Spring Street.

My first visit, with my three young (and quickly bored) sons, left me angry. Here again was the California disease: Our big ambitions aren't matched by dollars or management follow-through. If this park—with so many champions, from state politicians to local activists—can't be better, what hope is there for other California plans to create new, dynamic public spaces?

This is not merely about a state government with a dysfunctional budget system, and byzantine regulation and planning processes. Rich folks in New York ponied up millions in donations to make the High Line (a \$152 million project) brilliant. Chicago and its philanthropists devoted \$475 million to Millennium Park, which is of a similar size to the L.A. State Historic Park. Why haven't our rich people and corporate interests stepped up and done something grand here?

The answer to that is a very long story about a lack of cohesion, generosity and imagination. (I still carry a torch for architect Thom Mayne's 2006 idea for the park property: Move Dodger Stadium to the park space, and instead create an even grander park where the stadium now sits, paid for by selling some development rights.) Instead, the State Parks Department—with its constant budget troubles, and having barely survived efforts to close dozens of state parks in recent years—had to perform a cut-rate miracle. Couldn't billionaire Eli Broad have sold off a few pieces of his art collection to add more to this park?

Despite such frustrations, let's stay positive. What's not done is not done. And the good news is there's still time and opportunity to make this park truly great.

Already, developers are starting to transform the industrial space around the park into resident-friendly locations. There's a brand new nonprofit friends group that should support the park. An in-park restaurant and a new water wheel project from artist Lauren Bon and the Annenberg Foundation

are on their way. There's plenty of space to add a children's playground, shade structures, and a bridge over the Metro Gold Line tracks to connect the park with people who live along the Broadway corridor. Perhaps hours could be extended to something that matches the life of the neighborhood—6am to 10pm.

“Now that the park is open, you have the canvas from which to create the future,” says the tireless Sean Woods, superintendent for the Los Angeles sector of California State Parks, who has been working on the park since its 2001 beginnings.

All that will require is more money—and the miracle of Californians taking full advantage of an opportunity to do something great. Until that happens, enjoy the park—and bring lots of sunscreen.

Joe Mathews writes the Connecting California column for Zócalo Public Square.

Verbal fireworks at LTUSD meeting regarding coach

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Unified School District's board meeting got a little rowdy Tuesday night, so much so that audience members were told they had to leave the room for a bit.

There was no middle ground on what people think of Mark Salmon, South Tahoe High School girls' soccer coach. The love and the hate were clearly felt at the June 13 meeting as an

equal number of people spoke for and against him.

Parents and athletes were at the meeting to express their opinions about Salmon. This comes on the heels of **Lake Tahoe News' June 9** story about the disharmony within the soccer community.

As high school student Ahlyssa Gonzalez started to break down, someone from the audience shouted a profanity about Salmon. That is when board President Barbara Bannar insisted the room be cleared.

However, she let three high school staff members stay – Brian Hogan, Holly Greenough and Amy Jackson.

Gonzalez said Salmon has instigated bullying and gets the girls to harass her. Soccer, for her, is no longer fun. After the meeting, her mom, Victoria Gonzalez, told *Lake Tahoe News*, "You can't base anything off of two minutes when this has been going on for 10 years."

Hogan, who is the girls' assistant junior varsity coach, tried to refute what the younger Gonzalez was saying but was cut off by Bannar because he already had his two minutes to talk. During his time he said had never seen any drinking at away games, which had been mentioned earlier.

While parent Paul Palant mentioned an incident of marijuana laced brownies being consumed by players while out of town, Hogan said it wasn't brownies, but then added no one admitted guilt.

The district earlier told *LTN* it has investigated the allegations of bullying, inappropriate texts, drinking by players and Salmon, and academically ineligible players being allowed to play. The findings have not been made public. The end result, though, is Salmon would be allowed to keep coaching at STHS. A letter was supposed to go to those who brought the charges, but even as of June 13 not all had not

received one.

The board members were rather stoic as the drama played out.