

Overbudget river project showing promise



The U.S. Forest Service is pleased with the restoration of the Upper Truckee River. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Rerouting the Upper Truckee River behind Lake Tahoe Airport is costing 50 percent more than planned and there is no way to know if less sediment will actually get carried into Lake Tahoe.

“It’s hard to make conclusions about the overall sediment reduction,” Theresa Cody, a hydrologist with the U.S. Forest Service, said while on a tour of the project site last week.

All along the USFS has said this is more of an ecosystem project than a water quality project. The California Tahoe Conservancy is a partner with the USFS.

In 2013, the feds said it would cost \$4 million. The price tag

is at \$7 million now. The money is coming from the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act.

CTC Executive Director Patrick Wright was quick to say the added dollars aren't because of cost overruns. Additional dollars were needed because it took longer than anticipated to reroute the 6,000-foot channel, then relocating the thousands of **Western pearlshell mussels** was not in the original budget, and a temporary construction bridge was erected and dismantled each season.



Dirt is excavated to subgrade, before the banks area revegetated, and riffle gravels are added to bring the river's floor to the desired elevation. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The 14,000 native mussels were relocated this season.

"There is no scientific evidence or theory that we are aware of to suggest that changes in mussel populations have a measurable impact one way or the other on fisheries or benthic macroinvertebrates," Cody said.

They do, however, filter out plankton, algae and small organic matter.

The overall fish habitat is expected to increase, especially with the riffle depth going from 9 feet to $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

It will take years before the Forest Service can say this is a successful project. Monitoring will be extensive to begin with and then scaled back.

“We need large floods to see how the channel behaves and how the floodplain behaves,” Cody said. It’s designed to overflow its banks, which will then help restore the meadow to a vibrant organism.



Water is being pumped into the new channel. Photo/Kathryn Reed

But already positive results are coming in along sections of the 1.2-mile river project. Vegetation is taking hold on the banks, including the willows that love a wet environment. And next year the sage is apt to be gone because the water table will have increased and that plant doesn’t like a ton of

water.

“There is no question that the existing condition of this reach was in a degraded and vulnerable condition, as evidenced by channel incision, bank erosion, ground water elevation, and riparian vegetation condition,” Cody told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The effects of long-term climate change, including prolonged periods of drought, is causing increased stress to the flora and fauna in these degraded systems. As evidenced by monitoring data we have documented in our monitoring reports on similar projects, the restoration of aquatic and riparian habitat is expected to be evident very quickly once the project is completed. The ecosystem benefits of the project are expected to last for generations, will increase resiliency of UTR habitat to climate change impacts, and require virtually no maintenance.”

The old channel saw the water rushing at 700 to 1,000 cubic feet per second. The new channel is designed to have a flow of 375 cfs.

Normally the Forest Service would leave the old channel to pond and become more habitat. But the FAA said no way, it must be filled in with dirt. This is because the project was not allowed to create more areas for waterfowl to congregate; after all birds and planes don't mix well.

This area is popular for hikers, dog walkers and mountain bikers. Before the snow really flies, all of the construction equipment will be gone and the fences will come down. Next spring non-motorized water enthusiasts may find a more challenging river because it will be narrower. The season may last longer, too, because the water will be deeper – assuming there is at least a normal snowfall.

“Within two years you will not be able to see this area was disturbed,” Cody said.

How trolls are ruining the Internet

By Joel Stein, Time

This story is not a good idea. Not for society and certainly not for me. Because what trolls feed on is attention. And this little bit—these several thousand words—is like leaving bears a pan of baklava.

It would be smarter to be cautious, because the Internet's personality has changed. Once it was a geek with lofty ideals about the free flow of information. Now, if you need help improving your upload speeds the web is eager to help with technical details, but if you tell it you're struggling with depression it will try to goad you into killing yourself. Psychologists call this the online disinhibition effect, in which factors like anonymity, invisibility, a lack of authority and not communicating in real time strip away the mores society spent millennia building. And it's seeping from our smartphones into every aspect of our lives.

The people who relish this online freedom are called trolls, a term that originally came from a fishing method online thieves use to find victims. It quickly morphed to refer to the monsters who hide in darkness and threaten people. Internet trolls have a manifesto of sorts, which states they are doing it for the "lulz," or laughs. What trolls do for the lulz ranges from clever pranks to harassment to violent threats. There's also doxxing—publishing personal data, such as Social Security numbers and bank accounts—and swatting, calling in an emergency to a victim's house so the SWAT team busts in. When victims do not experience lulz, trolls tell them they have no

sense of humor. Trolls are turning social media and comment boards into a giant locker room in a teen movie, with towel-snapping racial epithets and misogyny.

Read the whole story

California bans drones near wildland fires

Multiple times this fire season firefighting aircraft had to be grounded because of drones.

It is now against the law in California to fly the unmanned aircraft near a wildland fire.

“Wildfires continue to ravage our state and we can’t have drones or anything else getting in the way of the first-class emergency response we get from all of our firefighters and public safety officers. These are life-and-death situations where a single delay can lead to tragedy,” state Sen. Ted Gaines, R-El Dorado, said in a statement.

Gaines sponsored the legislation that was signed this week by Gov. Jerry Brown.

Senate Bill 807 will grant civil immunity to an emergency responder who damages an unmanned aircraft in the course of firefighting, air ambulance, or search-and-rescue operations.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Letter: Ex-LTCC trustee backing Dalton

To the community,

When Nancy Dalton informed me she was running for the Lake Tahoe Community College board seat from trustee Area 4, I was extremely pleased. Since there is no incumbent in that area, it is important to have someone who understands both education and our community; Nancy fills these requirements extremely well.



Roberta Mason

She has been involved in education at many different levels, most recently being the chair of the math department at South Tahoe High School last year.

She has been involved, with her family, in our community for many years including in the construction business with her husband John. I first met Nancy when we were both members of Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe over 30 years ago. Since then Nancy has organized and participated in many community activities and events. She dedicates herself to any endeavor she undertakes. She has already been attending LTCC board meetings for eight months so she can be prepared to hit the ground running since the college has many projects and new programs in the works.

I whole-heartedly endorse Nancy Dalton for LTCC trustee Area 4

and urge those residing in Area 4 to vote for her on Nov. 8.

Roberta Mason, South Lake Tahoe

Advocating for legal sports betting nationwide

By Chris Kudialis, Las Vegas Sun

Legal betting nationwide on professional sports would help protect the integrity of American sports while cutting down substantially on black market wagering, former NBA Commissioner David Stern said this week.

Speaking at Las Vegas' Global Gaming Expo, Stern echoed the words of his successor and current NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, who has advocated for nationwide legalization of betting since taking over the position in 2014.

"There's a lot out there that's being bet illegally," Stern said during a 50-minute talk with American Gaming Association President Geoff Freeman in front of about 500 show attendees. "If we can fix this, it would be a big hit to organized crime."

Anywhere from \$100 billion to \$300 billion is spent annually on illegal sports wagering, according to estimates from scholars and the American Gaming Association.

Read the whole story

Nevada planning controlled burns

The Nevada Division of Forestry in cooperation with UNR will be conducting a prescribed burn in the Whittell Forest, located on the East Slope of the Sierra Nevada in Little Valley, about three miles west of Washoe Lake and 2½ miles east of Lake Tahoe.

The burn operation will begin Oct. 3 and is expected to continue for four or five days.

In addition to the Little Valley project (249 acres), burns are also planned at Spooner Meadow (49 acres), and York (294 acres). The division also has multiple slash pile burn projects statewide this fall/winter. These projects range from 5 to 100 acres in size.

Money Matters: Volunteering may be tax deductible

By Rick Gross

For many people, volunteerism is about more than simply doing something nice – it's about enriching peoples' lives and making the communities where we live and work a better place. But did you know your stewardship and goodwill may also help you reduce your taxes? Gifts given to charity and other expenses related to volunteering may be tax deductible. For the avid volunteer, the savings could be worth the effort to track expenses related to your charity work.

Transportation expenses



While you cannot deduct the time you spend on the road driving to and from volunteer events, you may be able to write-off related expenses, such as parking, tolls and gas directly used in your charity work. It's important to note that you cannot claim costs for car repairs, routine maintenance, registration fees, insurance or depreciation.

If your charity work requires you to travel, you may be able to write-off the amount you spent on public transportation, i.e., bus and subway tickets or taxi fare, airfare, meals and accommodations.

Generally for all travel and driving expenses, the primary purpose of the trip must be to perform services for the charitable organization. A deduction may not be allowed if the trip also includes a significant amount of personal, recreation or vacation activities.

If you'd like to include volunteerism as part of your tax strategy, keep reliable written records of your expenses, including the total amount incurred. With regard to driving expenses, keep track of the reason you drove and the date you used your car for the charitable activity.

Additional out-of-pocket expenses

If you need to make a purchase to perform your volunteer work, you may be able to claim the purchase as a tax deduction. For example, a committee member might deduct the cost of supplies needed to host an auction. Other expenses could be deductible depending on your situation. As a best practice, keep good records and review them with your tax advisor.

As you tabulate your costs, be aware that the amounts must be:

- Unreimbursed. (If the organization has repaid you for an item, you may not claim it on your tax return.);
- Directly connected with the volunteer services;
- Expenses incurred only because of the volunteer services you gave; and
- Unrelated to personal, living or family expenses (For example, childcare is not an eligible expense you can deduct.)

Financial contributions

Generally speaking, cash donations you make to a qualified charitable organization are deductible if you keep proper records and itemize deductions. Property you donate may be written off as well based on the fair market value of the asset at the time of the donation. Note: Special rules may apply to certain contributions.

If you receive something of value from a charity, such as a benefit dinner or an auction item, you need to subtract the value of the item from the total donation to determine the deductible amount.

As you prepare for tax season, there are a few important things to keep in mind. For you to write-off volunteer expenses or donations to charity, you must itemize deductions on your tax return and keep reliable written records of anything you intend to claim. Also note that you cannot claim a deduction on your tax return for the value of donated time or services. If you're considering deducting volunteer-related expenses or donations on your tax return, meet with a tax advisor to get his or her perspective on your financial situation. You may also refer to IRS publication 526 for guidance on charitable deductions.

Rick Gross is a financial advisor and private wealth advisor

with Ameriprise Financial Services Inc. in South Lake Tahoe.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Candidates for the 4th Congressional District – which includes the California side of Lake Tahoe – will debate Oct. 4 at 7am at the Auburn City Council chambers. Republican Tom McClintock is being challenged by Democrat Bob Derlet.
 - California's controller has updated the Government Compensation in California **website** to include 2015 self-reported data for community college districts, fairs and expositions, and First 5 commissions – a total of 142,209 positions and just more \$4.05 billion in wages.
 - Teresa McClung recently accepted the position of deputy forest supervisor of the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.
 - The League to Save Lake Tahoe is hosting A Dark and Stormy Lake Tahoe Trivia Night on Oct. 12. Trivia will start at 7:30pm at Sidellis Brewery, 3350 Shady Way, South Lake Tahoe. For more information and to RSVP, go **online**.
 - Zumba classes are now taught at the South Lake Tahoe Rec Center. Details are **online**.
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Lake Tahoe spills forth from atop Cave Rock



Stunning views are the reward for getting to the top of Cave Rock. Photo/Dale Roberts

By Dale Roberts

CAVE ROCK – Whenever I have out of town guests I get a lot of enjoyment and take great pride as a host to show them the best that Tahoe has to offer. No visit to my home is complete until I have taken them to the best spot to admire the beauty of Lake Tahoe.

Cave Rock's vista has always been somewhat under the radar for the best of Tahoe. As imposing as it is to drive through, most visitors and many residents are not aware of just how easy it is to summit.



This is the final rough approach to the summit. Photo/Dale Roberts

I did not learn about it until about eight years ago, 35 years after moving to Tahoe. Since discovering the view from the top of Cave Rock it has become my perennial favorite. No other vista point around the lake offers a 270-degree unobstructed view of the Tahoe basin.



Cave Rock from the Logan Shoals vista. Photo/Dale Roberts

Quick, easy to get to, less than one mile round trip, with the majority of the trail being an old utility easement road with a gentle gradient. Only the last couple of hundred feet does it do a small climb, scrambling up a rock stairway to the summit.

From your car to the summit is approximately a 20-minute effort at a very relaxed pace. Perfect for that quick unique sunset vista.



Looking toward the North Shore from the top of Cave Rock.
Photo/Dale Roberts

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Getting there:

From the South Shore go east on Highway 50. Just as you round the last bend before the boat launch and Cave Rock is in front of you, make a right turn up Cave Rock Drive. Follow it up until it makes a sharp right hand hairpin turn. Do not turn but proceed straight and you will see where the cul-de-sac has been paved over with four marked parking spots. Look just past the fire hydrant and you will see the trail.

Companies with ties to Tahoe developing Snowmass

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

Denver private equity firm KSL Partners, Vail's East West Partners and Aspen Skiing Co. are partnering to buy the Snowmass Base Village project from an affiliate of New York's Related Cos., reviving hope for the stalled project that has languished for nearly a decade.

East West, which developed Northstar Village, Ritz-Carlton at Lake Tahoe, Beaver Creek Village, and Bachelor Gulch has been eyeing Snowmass Village for more than 16 years. The company wanted to develop the base village in 2000, but then-owner Aspen Skiing Co. tapped Intrawest Corp. as village developer.

Then Related West Pac bought the base village from Intrawest

and Aspen Skiing Co. in 2007 for \$169 million.

KSL is the parent company of Squaw Valley.

Read the whole story