Upper Truckee River scenic designation hits snag

By Kathryn Reed

It's more about the fishing experience than anything else. That was the message delivered by proponents Tuesday to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors during a lengthy discussion about whether the Upper Truckee River – the Meiss Meadow area in particular – should have the designation of National Wild and Scenic River.

Meeting in South Lake Tahoe for their once a year venture from Placerville, the five electeds tend to have a Tahoe-centric agenda on these days. Oct. 11 was no different.

However, at the end of the day only Supervisors Norma Santiago and Ray Nutting thought going on a tour of the new facilities at South Tahoe High School was worth their time.



A Lahontan cutthroat trout near Meiss Meadow. Photo/Dick White

But the five did work through the normal lunch hour to come to the conclusion more information is needed before a vote on the river designation will be taken. However, no date was given

when it might resurface. It was already continued from September. The Oct. 11 continuance was done on a 4-1 vote, with Supervisor Jack Sweeney ready to vote no on the whole notion of the designation.

Meiss Meadow is where the Upper Truckee River begins. At 21.4 miles, it is the largest tributary to Lake Tahoe.

One thing that makes the area above the falls unique is this is where Lahontan cutthroat trout prosper.

While Jenny Hatch with CalTrout and David Lass with Trout Unlimited told the supervisors the Upper Truckee River is the only stream-based population of this fish, the U.S. Fish and Wild Service's website says otherwise.

It's 7.3 miles of the river that would be part of the larger 32 miles that would potentially receive the federal scenic designation. Included in the area are Round, Dardanelles, Showers, and Meiss Lakes, and other creeks in the watershed.

The U.S. Forest Service, which owns the land in El Dorado and Alpine counties that is being discussed, in 1999 determined the area met the criteria to be part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. However, it takes an act of Congress for the designation to become a reality.

It would also take an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement to be done before it's a done deal.

The Forest Service has done its part. Now it's up to another entity to carry the torch, so to speak, to get Congress to act. The two trout groups want to be the torchbearers, but need the backing of a public agency like the Board of Supervisors to have the clout. Thus the reason for the hearing.

"We manage the area as though that designation has come

through," Nancy Gibson, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit forest supervisor, told the board.

After the discussion, Santiago told *Lake Tahoe News*, "The protections are temporary at best (for the area). Someone could say, 'Let's dam up the river.'"

While that is not likely to happen, with the LTBMU this winter set to release its updated Forest Plan for a 90-day review, it's possible what is adopted could change how the Meiss Meadow area and Upper Truckee River are managed.

Four residents spoke at the meeting, with three against the designation.

Santiago, in the same post-discussion conversation with *LTN*, said she has more constituents than just those three who spoke.

Sue Novasel, who has a house on the river, is appalled the first she heard of the issue was at the meeting. She has experienced two fish kills on the river that no longer allow ample fishing from her back yard.

"I think less regulation is better," Novasel told the supervisors.

Shirley Taylor, whose family once ranched a large part of the acreage being talked about, is dead-set against the proposal. She went to the September Alpine County Board of Supervisors meeting to speak her piece. The body agreed to send their El Dorado County colleagues and CalTrout a letter not supporting the scenic designation.

The trout enthusiasts believe the designation would mean being able to attract more people to the area just for the thrill of reeling in the rare Lahontan cutthroat trout. The opportunity exists today as well. The scenic designation would ensure the area is kept as is for future generations.

Marie Colello Hanson 1956-2011

A memorial service for Marie Colello Hanson will be Oct. 15 at noon at Sierra Community Church in South Lake Tahoe. A reception at the church will follow.

Ms. Hanson was born Sept. 27, 1956. She was 54.

In July she went missing after attending the Rainbow Gathering in Washington.



Marie Hanson

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to the Marie Hanson Memorial Fund: El Dorado Savings Bank, 1036 Al Tahoe Blvd., S. Lake Tahoe, CA 96150. Donations will be used to offset expenses.

Photo exhibit all about

autumn

Dirk Yuricich is having a showing of fall photographs at his gallery at the Ski Run Marina Oct. 12-19.

The gallery will be open for the Celebrate Autumn Exhibit from 11am-5pm daily, with closing time at 8pm Wednesdays.



Dirk Yuricich is having a photo exhibit of fall colors. Photo/Provided

Parking is free at the Ski Run Marina.

For further information, call Dirk Yuricich Photography Gallery at (530) 542.2000 or go online.

N. Shore ski industry big-wigs to speak in Kings Beach

The North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce is hosting its annual chamber membership lunch Oct. 27 at noon, with registration beginning at 11:30am, at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings

Beach.

This year's presentation is titled "The Changing Face of the North Lake Tahoe Ski Industry" with a guest speaker panel that includes General Manager Bill Rock of Northstar, Chief Executive Officer Art Chapman of JMA (co-owner of Squaw-Alpine, and sole owner of Homewood Mountain Resort) and Chief Executive Office Andy Wirth of Squaw-Alpine.

Attendees will learn about the new ownership of the larger ski resorts, the future of skiing in North Lake Tahoe, what's new on the mountains and what does the merger of Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley mean for employees and guests.

Bella Affair will cater the luncheon. Cost is $35/per person for chamber members and $45/per person for non-chamber members before Oct. 24, and $40/members and $50/non-members after Oct. 24.

For more information about the lunch or to register, call Kym Fabel, North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce manager, at (530) 581.8764 or kym@puretahoenorth.com.

Moving may be required for lawmakers to run in 2012

By Torey Van Oot, Sacramento Bee

For some sitting legislators, preparing to run for re-election in 2012 includes packing up boxes and hunting for a new home.

California's new district lines, drawn for the first time by an independent redistricting commission, have shaken up the political landscape for next year's election. As a result,

candidates and incumbents across the state are “diving and dodging” into districts that will give them the best shot at victory, said Paul Mitchell, a Democratic consultant who has tracked the redistricting process.

By Mitchell’s count, the maps left at least 60 current elected officials either outside the district they were eyeing or in the same district with a competitor. “It’s happening all over the place,” he said.

Unlike members of Congress, state legislators are required to reside in the district they represent. That means physically relocating can be part of the equation as candidates scramble to settle on a seat before the nominating period starts next spring.

“After redistricting, Realtors will be among the most popular phone calls placed by legislators,” Justin Levitt, an election law expert at Loyola Law School, said of this year’s decennial map-drawing.

The Sacramento region is expected to see as many as five incumbent legislators move to run for re-election.

The new lines left Assemblywoman Beth Gaines in her current district, but put her husband, state Sen. Ted Gaines, in the same seat as Sen. Doug LaMalfa, R-Richvale. Now the Roseville couple are considering relocating just a few miles away, to a home in a vacant Senate district, so both can run for re-election and live under the same roof.

Read the whole story

Wine grapes take a pounding with latest rain

By Anne Gonzales, Sacramento Bee

Local wine grape growers were dealt a double whammy Monday when an unexpected rain doused harvest plans for the second time in days, lowering sugars in fruit and jamming area wineries. If rain continues this week, growers could lose grapes to deterioration in the vineyards.

The unseasonable showers also hurt regional tomato and rice growers.

Grape growers in the foothills and Delta area were hoping for sun and breezes this week to erase the effects of back-to-back, early rains. While much of the fruit for white wines has been picked and sent to the wineries, a rainstorm last Wednesday and Thursday stalled harvest of red varieties, including cabernet sauvignon, syrah and merlot.

The rain also lowered sugar content in grapes in the vineyards, the result of water dilution in fruit. Growers opted to leave fruit on the vines for a few days to build up sugar content, but were taken aback to see raindrops in their vineyards Monday morning.

Read the whole story

Stateline casinos post gains;

state goes in other direction

For the second consecutive month, Stateline casinos posted an increase in revenue compared to the same month a year ago.

The five South Shore casinos won $27 million in August, a 16.2 percent increase from 2010.



Stateline casinos do well in August. Photo/LTN file

With the weather being nice in Lake Tahoe and triple digits in the Central Valley, this often literally drives people to the basin.

The win, though, was an anomaly compared to the rest of state. Overall, Nevada casinos won $887 million for a 6.1 decrease compared to August 2010.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Big-rig collision closes I-80

By KCRA-TV

Westbound Interstate 80 is shut down Tuesday morning after two big rigs collided and caught fire, officials said.

It appears as though one big rig jackknifed and slammed into the other.

A second crash happened due to the backup, according to the California Highway Patrol.

Traffic is being diverted off I-80 onto Highway 20 between Colfax and Truckee, in the Gold Run area.

Officials aren't sure what time the road will reopen.

No additional details were released.

To know if the I-80 has reopened, click on the road icon from the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

Nonprofit established for Angora survivors lives on – just in case

While the last check for Angora Fire victims was cut a year ago, the nonprofit Community Disaster Resource Center still exists.

No physical presence exists in South Lake Tahoe anymore, but board members meet once a year – partly because of legal

reasons, partly to make sure they want to keep the group going.

“What we have done is we saved enough money in the fund to keep us operational for the near future, like 10 years, so we are still a nonprofit organization ready to go in action if there is any community need,” explained Dick Schwarte, president of CDRC.

Originally the group was called the Angora Relief Fund. It was set up to assist the 254 owners who lost their houses in the June 2007 inferno as well as renters.

The remaining landscaping vouchers were redeemed in summer 2010. That is the last any money was spent other than routine fees to maintain a nonprofit.

Schwarte said while the group hopes to never have to be called into action again, if that day does come, the CDRC is established and ready to help where needed.

– Kathryn Reed

Author brings Nevada ghost stories out of the dark

By Susan Skorupa, Reno Gazette-Journal

There’s nothing like a good ghost story to liven up the night.

Maybe because of its gaslight, ghost-town past or because of its Halloween statehood day – coming up in about three weeks on Oct. 31 – Nevada has supplied plenty of tales of lost mines, haunted history and ghost sightings.

Whether you believe in the paranormal or consider phantoms and the supernatural to be nothing more than fantasy, there’s some history and entertaining story-telling within the covers of these haunting Nevada-related books.

Reno author and ghost hunter Janice Oberding has made a career out of writing books about ghostly affairs.

Read the whole story