Lake Tahoe's future clarity may come down to money

By Kathryn Reed

Money – that was an overriding theme of the eight people who spoke before the Lahontan Regional Water Control Board about the proposed amendment to the plan to reduce sediment into Lake Tahoe. How the plan will be implemented was another concern.

No one argued at the Sept. 8 meeting at Lake Tahoe Community College that reducing sediment into one of the world's most pristine lakes isn't a worthy endeavor. Even how to go about it wasn't met with much argument. But the jurisdictions responsible for the work wonder where the billions of dollars needed to do the work will come from.



Bob Larsen speaks to the Lahontan water board on Sept. 8. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Bob Larsen, environmental scientist with the water board, said it's estimated to take $100 million a year for 15 years to accomplish his agency's clarity goal. But he was quick to say the estimates are "very rough."

The goal is to reduce fine sediment flowing into Lake Tahoe by one-third in the next 15 years so people could see into the water 77 to 80 feet.

Of the more than $1 billion that has been spent in the last 10 years on the environmental improvement program, about half has gone to water quality projects.

Although Lahontan represents only the California side of the lake, the plan before the board has been a cooperative effort with the Nevada Environmental Protection Agency. This means the entire lake would be operating under this plan if it were approved.

Wednesday's meeting was a chance for the board to hear the proposed amendment to the Tahoe Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan and for the public to address the board. Comments on the proposal will be taken through Sept. 13.

Representatives from Placer and El Dorado counties, and South Lake Tahoe said in these economic times the dollars to do what is being asked of them aren't available. And with California mired in a $19 billion budget quagmire, local jurisdictions don't know how Sacramento might further cripple them when a budget is eventually passed. Even Lahontan employees know how legislators dink with others and not their own pay. It's a state furlough day – meaning no work, no pay for Lahontan and other state employees even though lawmakers keep getting paid for not doing their job. (The fiscal year began July 1.)

Steve Teshara, with Sustainable Community Advocates, spoke of the need to tap into private investments. He, along with others, wanted more detail about how the plan will be implemented.

Before the lunch break, Russ Nygaard with El Dorado County, said it's imperative flexibility be built into the plan when it comes to time lines.

“Without state and federal funding, this will be difficult,” Nygaard said of being able to meet the TMDL requirements.

Leslie Case with Caltrans expressed concerns with the various TMDL regulations being adopted throughout the state and how her agency will be able to comply with them all.

Jennifer Quashnick with the Tahoe Area Sierra Club spoke to the need for better monitoring of the projects to ensure they are working.

The Lahontan board is scheduled to vote on the amendment to the Tahoe TMDL at the Nov. 9-10 meeting. It is possible that meeting will be delayed a week so it does not fall in a holiday and furlough week.

‘The Storming’ snowboarding flick premieres on North Shore

The West Coast premiere of Standard Films’ “The Storming” presented by Monster Energy comes to the Resort at Squaw Creek on Sept. 18.

An institution in action sports, Standard Films has been capturing the essence of snowboarding since 1991, beginning with the iconic “TB” series that defined a genre of filmmaking. Standard Films’ legacy of portraying the progression of snowboarding through acclaimed film continues with “The Storming.”

The newest HD film by Mike Hatchett and Travis Robb, this marks the 19th annual release from Standard Films. Following

its Global Premiere at Red Rocks, Colo., the Standard crew comes home to Lake Tahoe for the West Coast Premiere.

Special guests attending the West Coast Premiere are Mike Hatchett and Travis Rob, with riders Torstein Horgmo, Lonnie Kauk, Sammy Luebke and more.

Doors open at 7:45pm and the show starts at 9pm. Tickets are on sale now at all Porter's locations (Tahoe City, Truckee, Incline Village). Tickets are $8 in advance and $10 at the door.

Following the showing special guest performers take the ballroom stage for the after-party. All premiere-goers who want to access the cash bar during the film and after-party must be 21 with valid I.D.

The teaser can be viewed here.

El Dorado County supes to discuss revised budget

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County has more budget hearing scheduled for this month even though a budget was passed in June for the fiscal year that began July 1.

The first budget is a "recommended budget" while what the supervisors will vote on this month is the final budget. Even though state law requires all counties to have their budgets done before the start of the fiscal year, without a state budget in place it makes the process a bit of a guessing game.

“A lot of uncertainty exists when the state doesn’t have a budget, but we are required to have a final budget regardless of whether the state does or not,” Mike Applegarth, the county’s chief administrative analyst, said.

Applegarth said key factors that change from June to September that affect the budget are the impact of the state budget on county resources, the closure of the property tax role, and the close of the books for the previous fiscal year.

The Board of Supervisors will discuss the 2010-11 and 2011-12 budgets Sept. 13 at 9am at 330 Fair Lane, Placerville. If more meetings are needed, they will be Sept. 15 and Sept. 20, both at 9am and the same location.

Supervisors are expected to adopt the final 2010-11 budget Sept. 21.

Learn about the harvest at Lava Cap Winery

Lava Cap Winery is partnering with Rick Kushman of the Sacramento Bee to offer a series of classes on wine.

Kushman is an award winning journalist who’s been nationally syndicated and a weekly commentator on food and wine on Sacramento’s KFBK NewsTalk AM-1530. His popularity as a speaker comes in big part because he makes wine fun, which is surprisingly rare among wine educators and somewhat ironic since people drink wine to have fun.

In Harvest 101 Kushman will focus on the process of harvesting wine grapes. He will begin the class in the vineyard and then

move to the crush pad, where the grapes are harvested. Kushman will discuss how the winemaker improves the wine quality through particular harvesting techniques. The class will finish in the winery's barrel room with wine tastings.

Lava Cap's popular red and white wines will be featured and sampled, including new releases.

The class will last 90 minutes and begins at 1pm on Sept. 18th at Lava Cap Winery near Placerville. Contact Lava Cap Winery for tickets and information (530) 621.0175 or www.lavacap.com.

Tahoe Choir begins holiday rehearsals

The Tahoe Choir will begin rehearsals for the December Holiday program on Sept. 14 at 7pm in Room F120 at Lake Tahoe Community College. Everyone is invited to join the Tahoe Choir, or enroll in the College Chorus class at LTCC.

There are no auditions. All you need is the love of music and the desire to sing. We will be performing the

Gloria by Antonio Vivaldi along with some traditional holiday songs such as White Christmas, Sleigh ride and Chestnuts roasting on an Open Fire.

App makes gambling via phone legal

By Jason Hildago, Reno Gazette-Journal

A Las Vegas-based company is betting on apps as a solid platform for gambling.

American Wagering Inc. released a new sports betting app Wednesday for BlackBerry phones through its subsidiary Leroy's Sportsbooks.

The app is free to download and allows users in the state of Nevada to legally bet on sports. The Leroy's app was approved by the Nevada Gaming Control Board and is currently available to BlackBerry users on AT&T, Sprint and T-Mobile. The company is also in discussions with other wireless carriers.

"This is the first app of this nature to be approved (by the gaming control board)," said John English, senior vice president for American Wagering. "It really takes advantage of the technology out there today so we're really excited about it. I think this will make a big impact on the industry as a whole and I expect to see a lot of creativity in this sector soon."

Read the whole story

Share the road during

Sunday’s cycling event around Tahoe

Tour de Tahoe – Bike Big Blue participants will be riding clockwise around Lake Tahoe starting and finishing at the Horizon Casino Resort in Stateline on Sept. 12.

The roadways will be open and motorists are asked to share the roadway and plan a little more time to get to their destinations. Below are the highways, locations and times that bicyclists will be sharing the roadways.

Hwy 50 westbound Stateline – South Lake Tahoe 6:30-8:30am

Hwy 89 northbound South Y – Camp Rich – Emerald Bay 6:30-10.30am

Hwy 89 north bound Emerald Bay – West Shore – Homewood 7:30-11:30am

Hwy 89 north bound Homewood – Tahoe City 9:30am-1:30pm

Hwy 28 east bound Tahoe City – Kings Beach – Incline Village 9am-2:30pm

Hwy 28 east bound Incline Village – Spooner Junction 10am-4pm

Hwy 50 west bound Spooner Junction – Stateline 11am-5pm

Guy from Tahoe does more than

ski, put on bike events

By Mary Cook

Curtis Fong, best known for his television and radio personality The Guy from Tahoe, is not your typical guy from Tahoe. He seems to live two lives: that of a mountain goat and that of an on-the-go urbanite.

And he's much more than the guy putting on Sunday's 8th annual Tour de Tahoe – Bike Big Blue 72-mile ride around Lake Tahoe or the guy who writes the ski report for *Lake Tahoe News* and delivers it on KTHO FM-96.1.



Curtis Fong likes fast cars, bikes and skis. Photo/Provided

Fong fell in love with Tahoe as a teenager. He learned to ski at 12. At 18, while peers were pulled into the Vietnam War, Fong "got lucky" because he received a high lottery number in the draft and went to college. After four years studying photography at Sacramento State, Fong rented a cabin in Tahoe and ran a successful photo concession at Kirkwood the year it opened in 1971. Within two winters, Fong advanced to advertising and public relations director at Kirkwood.

In 1983, Fong left Kirkwood to work for KTHO AM-590 radio in sales. He presided as station manager for its FM counterpart,

K-Zephyr, until 1985. During this time, Fong took up cycling, loving it so much he and his buddies formed a club, known as the Alta Alpina Cycling Club.

The Death Ride was organized by Wayne Martin in 1980, and became the official ride in 1981. Fong functioned as the Death Ride manager for 11 years.

The Death Ride got Fong's wheels spinning – it was his guinea pig event. He formed TGFT (The Guy from Tahoe) Productions, a sports marketing company, in 1989. Then, in 1990, he christened his company with the Comstock Silver Century, a 100-mile, 9,000-vertical-foot historical ride out of Carson City and Virginia City.

"It was meant to be a training ride for the Death Ride," Fong stated.

As it turns out, this route was a training ride for three-time Tour de France winner Greg LeMond.

From there, Fong created America's Most Beautiful Bike Ride in 1991. He also started OATBRAN, which stands for One Awesome Tour Bike Ride Across Nevada.

Now, in its 19th year, the tour follows 420 miles of Nevada's loneliest highway, Highway 50.

Fong harbors a soft spot for untouched places, stretches of desert speckled with sagebrush, sliced by long, rolling highways. In addition to his homes in Gardnerville and Stateline, Fong owns a house with 3 acres "in the middle of nowhere," also known as Gilman Springs, Nev. During a recent weekend at this property, he witnessed a meteor shower, spent time at the local hot springs, and trekked to nearby ghost towns with the help of his H1 Hummer.

Fong's desire for wide-open spaces and miles of lonely highway predisposed him to a love affair with high-performance

vehicles. Inevitably, about 20 years ago, Fong sided with Porsches, believing them to be “works of art.” In the winter, he does road trips to Aspen, Sun Valley, and British Columbia in pursuit of his other passion – skiing.



Porsche drivers at Sand Mountain. Photo/Provided

(Fong also coordinates the Heavenly R.A.T.S. League Race Series and mogul freestyle events for Sierra-at-Tahoe.)

He doesn’t mind flying, but if he has the time, he loves the drive. “I like to see the country, discover new roads,” he says.

About 10 years ago, Fong became involved with the Porsche Club of America (PCA), and ever since he has been collecting Porsches. He owns everything from a 356 Speedster to a 911 Turbo, built for street and track. He attended driving school in Reno and obtained a test and tuner’s license, which allows him to buy track time at the Reno Fernley Raceway. Two years ago, Fong was the vice president of the Sierra Nevada PCA and in the same year he put on his first show-and-shine car show called Porsches in the Park.

Fong’s experience with the OATBRAN bike ride spawned the idea of a car tour across Nevada. Now, four summers in counting, Fong has led a group of Porsches across Nevada on Highway 50, culminating in a three-day, two-night tour. Last year, in August, he also took a group of Porsches around Lake Tahoe,

with a lunch-stop at Northstar-at-Tahoe and dinner at Lakeside Beach Grill.

In the 1990s, Fong split time between radio and television. He started calling in to radio stations in the Bay Area to do Tahoe ski reports. One Monterey station disc jockey forgot Fong's name during his introduction and arbitrarily dubbed him "The Guy from Tahoe." Fong rolled with the mistake, cueing in with, "Hi, this is Curtis Fong, The Guy from Tahoe." The nickname stuck and he still uses it to this day with his mountain resort reports on K-Tahoe, his "What's Up Tahoe?" segments on Outside TV and with *Lake Tahoe News*.

After 39 years of living in Tahoe, the 60-year-old possesses top-notch credibility in the area's media and recreation industries. While the lure of other places (Hawaii; Park City; Bend, and Sedona) beckoned, he stayed true to Tahoe.

"With all the friendly people, with all the recreation that is here, there is no reason for me to go anywhere else," Fong says.

Every once in a while, his ambitious nature gets the best of him; he has to remind himself to pause and gawk at the flawless sapphire that is Lake Tahoe. He encourages all Tahoe residents to do the same: "We all need to stop and say, 'Wow, this is why I'm here.'"

On Sunday, thousands of others will say something similar as they participate in his annual Bike Big Blue cycling event.

Tahoe Sustainability Congress to congregate

More than 80 environmental leaders and advocates from a variety of local organizations and agencies will take a first step toward realizing a sustainable future for the Lake Tahoe Basin with a daylong summit at Sand Harbor Sept. 16. The summit will focus on planning a World Sustainability Expo at the Lake in 2011.

Guest speakers include: Charles Goldman, Sierra Nevada College President Richard Rubsamen, David Hansen of the Embassy Suites hotel in South Lake Tahoe, Mark Twain impersonator McAvoy Layne and Steven James, a Washoe elder presenting a Washoe prayer.

By arriving to the congress by water ferry, kayak, bus, bike, and electric cars, the action of the group, known as the Tahoe Sustainability Congress, will be to help realize the recently completed Tahoe Prosperity Plan, which seeks to position Lake Tahoe as a leader in geotourism, green technology and health.

Congress participants will brainstorm on how activities that motivate acts of conservation can become the cornerstone of Tahoe’s new economy and prosperity.

In the next 11 months, workshops like these will seek to evolve a geotourism menu in concert with green innovation from around the globe ready to showcase at a basin-wide 2011 Lake Tahoe Sustainability Expo.

This economic vitalization progression is being hosted by a Sustainable Tahoe, a nonprofit looking to promote positive collaboration among existing organizations, agencies and commerce, to make the Prosperity Plan a reality.

For a list of participating organizations and information on

this Congress and Sustainable Tahoe, click here.

For more information, call (775) 883.0831.

Sushi class in Truckee

In partnership with Sierra College, Dragonfly sushi chef Kris Phaivanh and chef and owner Billy McCullough will present a sushi making class at the Truckee restaurant on Sept. 18 from noon to 2pm.

Veteran sushi chef Phaivanh will lead the class, sharing his knowledge on the intricacies of sushi and sashimi creation. He will demonstrate traditional shaping and cutting methods, as well as providing modern twists on making sushi.

A strong supporter of the Slow Food movement, McCullough will discuss the importance of utilizing sustainable fish in the creation of sushi.

Cost is $32 for the class plus $25 for the materials. The maximum number of people allowed is 25.

Dragonfly Restaurant and Sushi Bar is located upstairs at 10118 Donner Pass Road, Truckee – (530) 587.0557.