

Opinion: Now what happens with the water bond?

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

It appears certain that the \$11.1 billion water bond, the centerpiece of a historic water policy agreement championed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, will be removed from the November ballot.

Concerned that the bond measure would be rejected by angry, recession-battered voters, Schwarzenegger and the Legislature's water policy leaders agreed last week that it should be postponed at least until the 2012 election – much as an earlier high-speed rail bond issue was postponed until it could win passage.

It is, however, not quite that simple. The effect of postponement would be to take Schwarzenegger out of the equation since his stint as governor will end in six months. And the water deal's critics are already demanding that postponement should include a rewrite, which could mean prolonged wrangling or utter collapse.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe Prosperity Plan draft to be unveiled

The North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce is a sponsor of the Lake Tahoe Basin Prosperity Plan Community Meeting on July 15 from 2-3:30pm at the North Tahoe Event Center, 8318 North Lake

Blvd. in Kings Beach.

Attendees will hear a presentation on the draft of the Lake Tahoe Prosperity Plan, a collaborative project undertaken by the five counties, South Lake Tahoe, the North Lake Tahoe and the Lake Tahoe South Shore chambers of commerce and education partners.

The plan provides a strategic road map for the future prosperity of the Lake Tahoe Basin, building upon the region's tourism assets and envisioning the region as a world-class center of innovation for a green and sustainable economy. The goal is to foster living wage jobs and opportunities for entrepreneurs, local businesses, and workers to thrive, while protecting and renewing the treasure of Lake Tahoe and the basin's precious natural assets.

For more information about the event, contact Trish Kelly of Applied Development Economics at (916) 448.2456, or Kelly@adeusa.com.

Unveiling of charity quilt is July 17

The 2010 Charity Raffle Quilt will be unveiled at the Fabrics Unlimited's 3rd Annual Open House and Quilt Show on July 17 from 10am-5pm.

The shop is located off Kingsbury Grade at 155 Shady Lane in Stateline.

Raffle proceeds benefit the Lake Tahoe Humane Society and S.P.C.A. The winning ticket will be drawn in September.

An original design by Sheri Lilienthal, the quilt is king size and features a happy plump cat in the center. The eight women of the Thursday Therapy Quilters group spent more than three months working on individual 12-inch blocks.

Information is available at (775) 588.3211.

Artist derives inspiration from Tahoe's charred trees

By Gina Kim, Sacramento Bee

The black and charred trees spoke silently on that winter day three years ago.

Gong Yuebin was driving with his family to a Lake Tahoe ski resort when he caught sight of the garishly angled trunks and burnt remains of tree after tree, strikingly black against the pure white snow.

He veered the Honda Pilot off the highway and knew he had found it – that elusive thing called inspiration after a years-long hiatus from art.

Read the whole story

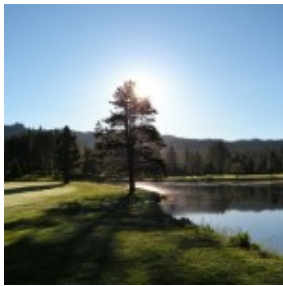
High maintenance takes on new

meaning at Edgewood

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – Coming off a wet winter and massive upgrades, Edgewood Tahoe stands to show off more than stars when the American Century golf championship swings into action this week.

The Stateline golf course has spruced up its grounds with a \$2 million overhaul on its 40-year-old irrigation system. Barely a few weeks into operation, the upgrade from grounds to pump house amounts to 20 and 30 miles of new pipes and wires, respectively.



Edgewood Tahoe
Golf Course is
ready to host
the annual
celebrity golf
tournament
July 13-18.
Photos/Kathryn
Reed

“It was time for a change. There was a desire from the company to improve the condition of the golf course,” Edgewood’s new Golf Course Superintendent Scott Schunter said in his office before touring the grounds. Golf shoes lie on the floor. A U.S. Open flag from the 1991 tournament’s sixth hole in Minnesota adorns his wall.

"From here, I have control of every single (sprinkler) head on the golf course," he said.

As a groundskeeper, Schunter is a pro. He came on board last August from Breezy Point, Minn., so he knows what big winters are like, such as the one Lake Tahoe experienced this past season. Since arriving, Schunter's vision was to bring Edgewood's eco-conscious grounds to a level equivalent to its world-class views.

Tahoe's roller-coaster winter prompted Schunter's crew to take the snowblower out in early March. The seventh hole's green had a 3.5 foot snowdrift on it that was settling into the ground with the melting and freezing of the bright sun and nighttime low temperatures.

"Water has to go somewhere. And that ice can be fatal to turf in as little as 75 days," he said. "With Mother Nature, you deal with what she gives you. Once you try to control her, she'll bite you in the butt."

Winter conditions on the grounds so late this year compressed the maintenance season.

"With the shortness of season – especially this year – it's imperative we come out and hit the ground running," he said.

Schunter must consider more than regular maintenance duties for his 22 seasonal and six full-time workers. To be an excellent groundskeeper means knowing your grass and knowing the way the ball rolls. A mix of grass covers the greens, which are flanked by a strip of Kentucky Blue to slow down a fast roller. A rougher grass that is cut higher covers most of the 250-acre course. The height of the grass and the water content affects the speed of the rolling ball. Edgewood mows at 0.145 of an inch. In comparison, Pebble Beach scraped its grass to less than 0.1 of an inch for this year's U.S. Open.

"This is something we look for," Schunter said, while rolling

a ball over the greens on the 14th hole. "It was bumping before we mowed. You can't have that. Consistency is the key."

Their equipment is based in a 12,000-square-foot facility tucked into the trees behind the course.

Ready for the celebs

The Edgewood crew has been working diligently to get the golf course up to par before its premier event – the American Century Championship, (<http://www.tahoecelebritygolf.com/>) a golf tournament that brings out a score of television celebrities and sports figures. They range from basketball great Michael Jordan to Ray Romano. One year soccer star Brandi Chastain started "extreme golfing" by running from hole to hole.

In its 21st year, the tournament – which runs today through July 18 – attracts thousands of spectators.

The event has such a reputation it's brought every day golfers like Jerry Thompson to the grounds. He's watched the tournament on television from his Atlanta home and decided it was time to try it out.

"I like this golf course. It has fast fairways," Thompson said, while hitting balls at the driving range. He noticed the altitude drives the ball farther.

"I can't wait to come back to try it for the first time in the morning. I'll be here first thing," he said last week. Tee times when the tournament isn't going start at 6:45am. About an hour later, Schunter's crew wraps up its maintenance rounds of mowing, fertilizing and watering.

Sprucing up the course

Improvement is the name of the game here.

By damming and pumping out its own, on-site water source,

Edgewood has reduced its water and electrical usage by at least 30 percent. That savings to the system within the Stateline Stormwater Association system equates to about \$15,000 a year.

With Schunter at the helm, Edgewood has also taken special measures to review the amount and type of fertilizer its uses under Tahoe Regional Planning Agency guidelines. The grounds are fertilized once a month – with the greens receiving the spray once every two weeks. None is used on more than 30 acres of the golf course.

The golf course crews have even gone to the effort of overseeing a goose roundup on the grounds in order for the Nevada Division of Wildlife to conduct tests for avian cholera and West Nile diseases. This is no light chore. Geese excrete about 4 pounds of fecal matter a day, according to Schunter.

It's a balancing act as the veteran groundskeeper weighs the environmental benefits of saving water and letting nature take its course, with the embedded desire to please golfers and spectators who live in a green grass world.

"As we've grown up, the only thing we've known are irrigated greens," he said. "We're obsessed with green. But it's easier to kill grass by overwatering it."

Despite the challenges, Schunter shows a genuine satisfaction of his job. Driving a golf cart on this lakefront golf course with his dog Nikki running alongside suits the man who has worked on Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus signature resorts.

"If I'm happy, any golfer coming here will be happy," he said.

To Steve Rennie, there must be something to that logic.

"It doesn't get any better than this," the Los Angeles golfer said on the putting green, while looking out at the lake on a picture-perfect day.

Rennie plays at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course every year. He plans his trips before the celebrity golf tournament to get more playing time in.

Beyond the view and the challenge of the tricky wind, he enjoys the conditions of the grounds.

“The grass is always in great shape,” he said.

Rennie has noticed the strip of Kentucky Blue Grass surrounding the greens. He likes how the grass slows the ball down around the greens.

“But you can still putt off it,” he said, while demonstrating a short putt. He smiled as the ball kissed the hole.

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Boy and Girls Club golf tourney

17th annual Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe Golf Tournament at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Couse.

To reserve a foursome or more information, contact Karen Houser at (530) 542.0838.

Climb Mount Rose

Summit Mount Rose using a ridge on the foot of Mt. Haughton to gain 200 feet in the first half mile; then cross that ridge to traverse for the next 2 miles with a zero elevation gain.

The final 2.5 miles to the summit is interrupted by only a few switchbacks along the way up the more than 1700ft to the top of this old volcano.

Register in advance for this hike as space is limited. No pets on this hike.

Date: Aug. 29

Distance: 10.2 miles.

Time: 8:30am–5pm.

Difficulty: Strenuous

Info/registration: (775) 298.0231 or jaimes@tahoerimtrail.org

Bird, views and falls hike

The Tahoe Institute for Natural Science, the Tahoe Rim Trail Association, and the Lahontan Audubon Society are sponsoring a moderately difficult hike from the Mount Rose Trailhead to Galena Falls in search of late summer birds and spectacular scenery. Possible avian participants are Green-tailed Towhee, Clark's Nutcracker, Mountain Bluebird, and MacGillivray's Warbler. Register in advance for this hike by calling the TRTA office. Space on this hike is limited.

Time: 7am–1pm.

Distance: 5 miles.

Difficulty: Moderate

Information/registration: (775) 298.0231 or
jaimes@tahoerimtrail.org

Appeal to Kirkwood's power plant to be heard July 16

The future of Kirkwood's diesel power plant may be decided this month.

The Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District will hear an appeal of the construction permit on July 16 at 10:30am in Markleeville.

SMART Energy Group contends the area that encompasses Alpine, El Dorado and Amador counties should be using natural gas.

The Great Basin district on May 24 approved a six-diesel generator plant to replace the portable ones that have been used since the beginning of the year when a fire destroyed the resort's power plant. The power fuels the residential and commercial areas of Kirkwood as well as the ski resort.

– Compiled by Kathryn Reed

TRT hike in Desolation Wilderness

Hike the Tahoe Rim Trail on the southern portion of Desolation Wilderness along Lower and Upper Echo Lakes. Climb toward Haypress Meadows to discover what wildflowers the heavy snows delivered. Dip down to Lake of the Woods for lunch before the return hike back. Space is limited, register in advance only and no dogs on this hike.

Date: July 28

Start time: 8am–2:pm.

Distance: 10 miles.

Difficulty: Moderate

Information: (775) 298.0231 or jaimes@tahoerimtrail.org