Vandals have CTC rethinking Upper Truckee Marsh access

By Kathryn Reed

Walking down Lily Avenue, the couple is asked if they know the entrance they are headed to is private and they aren't supposed to use it.

They both look quizzical and say no signs are up saying as much.

They continue on, saying the trek on this late Wednesday afternoon to the Upper Truckee Marsh is the second time they've accessed the property this way.



Vandals have created an opening in the gate at the end of Lily Avenue. Photos/Kathryn Reed

If the California Tahoe Conservancy has its way, it will be the last time they do. A new gate was supposed to go up June 23. Signs are coming to explain to people on both sides of the iron fence that the public access point is two blocks down at San Francisco Street.

Though it would seem like a natural gateway to this South Lake Tahoe outdoor splendor that leads to the meadow and Lake Tahoe, the CTC has its hands tied. When it acquired the property it was deed restricted to prevent the public from accessing the parcel from Lily.

This entrance is for administrative access only – CTC crews, Clean Tahoe, law enforcement and animal control. It's the closest entrance to the beach.

Vandalism has become the big problem – to public and private property – as well as safety and trespassing concerns.

The slats of the gate keep being bent so people can crawl through. Vandals have tried to pry the posts of the resident who lives next to the CTC property. A couple years ago a house was tagged with graffiti. Users have created a visible trail through a private lot that owners and CTC try to cover over at times.

"One thing people don't really get is the right of access doesn't come without responsibility," said Dana Dapolito, CTC associate environmental planner.

Yes, it's public land on both sides – the street belonging to South Lake Tahoe and Conservancy on the other side. As with any public parcel, there are rules to abide by. Vandalism and trespassing issues will not be tolerated.



Slats on a private fence have been

marred.

Dapolito said CTC crews are regularly repairing the fence.

“In times of severe fiscal constraints, this is not the best use of money,” Dapolito said. She did not have a dollar figure for how much money the CTC has spent on fixing the problem at this area or the personnel hours involved.

The City Council on Tuesday approved another contract for the police department to patrol this area. A no tolerance policy has been established.

Parking on Lily is no longer a problem because the city put up signs a few years ago banning parking on the street. People walk in, though.

Dapolito said a sense of lawlessness can pervade the area. The calm, tranquil meadow with its myriad calls of wildlife and lapping shore give way to parties, illegal fires and loud music. It’s party central.

The CTC is conducting a study today to count how many cigarette butts litter the beach. Blue flags will be inserted into the sand to signify where a butt was plucked from.



The entrance to the Upper Truckee Marsh off San Francisco Street is

welcoming and
well marked.

One only need look at the scar on Heavenly to know what an errant cigarette can do. And one only need remember to three years ago today when an illegal campfire became the Angora Fire in 2007 and destroyed 254 homes.

The CTC is going to clamp down on smokers. It’s a form of fire and no fires are allowed on its property anywhere in the basin.

With Fourth of July weekend a week away, policies will be enforced even more. Signs are posted at legal entrance points as well as on the beach about what is not permitted.

The Conservancy wants to keep allowing the public on these public lands, but it wants the rules adhered to ensure the natural state remains protected and people are safe as well. Without cooperation from users, one day the whole Upper Truckee Marsh could be off-limits.

Concerted effort to catch boaters under the influence

Recreational boaters may want to think twice before reaching for that cold beer this weekend. Marine law enforcement officers, as part of a national coordinated effort of stepped-up enforcement known as Operation Dry Water, will be out in force looking for boat operators whose blood alcohol content exceeds the state limit of 0.08 percent.

Operation Dry Water will include increased patrols,

breathalyzer tests, as well as boater education.

Alcohol use has become the leading contributing factor in fatal recreational boating accidents, according to law enforcement. Impaired boaters caught this weekend can expect to be arrested, go to jail and face severe penalties.

According to the most recent U.S. Coast Guard statistics, boating under the influence is still the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents, with 17 percent of boating fatalities a direct result of alcohol or drug use.

Operation Dry Water is a national campaign that was created to detect and remove impaired boaters from waters across the nation. It is organized by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and the U.S. Coast Guard.

More information about the June 25-27 operation is available at www.operationdrywater.org.

Bar bill at Mott Canyon helps fight cancer

Mott Canyon on Lower Kingsbury Grade in Stateline is serving up burgers, cold beer and more to raise money to fight cancer.

As this week’s featured restaurant in Taste of Tahoe, the restaurant it is donating a portion of the profits to the event. Taste of Tahoe is the foodies’ way of raising money for the South Shore’s Relay for Life, which is in early August. Eat at one of the participating restaurants, which changes weekly, and know part of your check goes to fight cancer.



A turkey burger and fries at Mott Canyon fuel a hungry reporter. Photo/Austin Fay

For more information about Taste of Tahoe, click here.

Lake Tahoe makes Forbes' list of lakes worth visiting

By Miriam Marcus, Forbes

Lifelong fisherman Jay Cassell, deputy editor of *Field & Stream* magazine, treasures lakeside vacations for the peace and tranquility only one can offer.

"There's nothing like sitting on a cabin deck and watching the sun set over a gorgeous lake," he says, "or getting in a canoe early in the morning and paddling off into the mist" to fish for the day's catch.



Lake Tahoe makes Forbes' list of lakes worth visiting. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Among his favorite locales: Maine’s Millinocket Lake, which he calls a canoer’s and hiker’s paradise, though he travels there to fish for large brook trout and rare landlocked salmon.

Another favorite: California’s Lake Tahoe. This 22-mile-long expanse has attracted visitors to its shores since the Washoe Indians first gathered there centuries ago. Today travelers can view the lake from surrounding ski slopes or hike trails that wind through the surrounding Sierra Nevada mountain range. The view is immaculate from any vantage point, and the lake is a popular destination for travelers year-round.

Like Tahoe, many of the bodies of water on Forbes’ list of lovely lakes lie in a delicate space – their beauty draws admirers, but too many tourists can diminish the unspoiled quality that made the lakes so enchanting in the first place. At Lake Clark, a pristine turquoise-blue gem in southwestern Alaska, the national park service has found a way to ensure the lake doesn’t become overrun: Far from any roadway, it is accessible primarily by small aircraft.

Read the whole story

Nevada’s top court denies appeal of Incline wife killer

By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

Peter Bergna, a former Incline Village art appraiser convicted of staging a 1998 crash on Slide Mountain that killed his wife, failed to prove a long list of claims against his lawyers, the Nevada Supreme Court said in denying his appeal.

A Washoe District Court jury found Bergna guilty in 2002 of orchestrating the murder of his wife, Rinette Riella-Bergna, by sending his Ford truck plunging 700 feet down the mountain with her trapped inside. He has insisted on his innocence, saying the brakes failed.

Bergna was sentenced to life in prison with parole possible after 20 years. He lost his first appeal to the high court in 2004 and filed a motion in Washoe District Court claiming his lawyers did not defend him adequately.

Read the whole story

Learn to curl before league play begins

The South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena will be offering more curling events to prepare people for leagues this fall. Clinics are June 26, July 10, and July 2 from 1–3pm.

Curling is a great sport similar to shuffleboard played on ice. Although it is often played with significant strategy and skill, it can be enjoyed by all ages after a short lesson.

Prepare yourself by logging on to www.curlingbasics.com to learn the fundamentals of the game. Cost is $12 and enrollment is limited. Sign up by stopping by the arena at 1176 Rufus Allen Blvd. or calling (530) 542.6262.

KTHO – Ask the TRPA

Call in to KTHO FM 96.1/AM-590 (530.544.8255) Thursday morning starting at 10:15 when *Lake Tahoe News* Publisher Kathryn Reed moderates the Ask the TRPA radio show. Or listen online at www.kthoradio.com.

Mobile cat adoption

To celebrate Adopt-A-Cat Month there will be a mobile adoption at the Lake Tahoe Humane Society and S.P.C.A. Center from 11am-2pm June 26.

The center is located at 1221 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe.

Cats and kittens from the El Dorado County Animal Services Shelter will be showcased. Look for the Mobile Adoption trailer in the driveway.

For more information, call (530) 542.2857.

Tahoe-Baikal Institute celebrating 20th year

Born as the Cold War ended, the Tahoe-Baikal Institute celebrates its 20th year of bringing together young people dedicated to preserving two of the world’s greatest lakes, Tahoe and Baikal.

For the past two decades, this nonprofit organization has been promoting peace, international and cultural understanding, and scientific exchange between the Lake Tahoe region and the Lake Baikal region in Siberia, Russia.

The idea for a joint Russian-American organization focused on scientific exchange about ecological issues at these two unique lakes was first discussed at an international youth conference in Helsinki, Finland, in 1989. During the conference, Presidents Regan and Gorbachev encouraged youth leaders from around the world to find ways to work together on common issues.

Upon returning from the conference, youth delegates from California and Irkutsk took the idea to their regional governments.

The first Summer Environmental Exchange program was in 1990, and has run annually ever since. The participants, most who come from the United States and Russia, learn about the science, policy-making and management challenges at the two lakes.

Since the first exchange, more than 300 young leaders, scientists, policy-makers and other professional delegates have participated in the SEE and other educational or cultural exchange programs organized by the Tahoe-Baikal Institute. Each year, the Tahoe-Baikal Institute's exchange participants make significant contributions to the environmental conditions at Lake Tahoe and at Lake Baikal.

"The experience that participants gain through the Tahoe-Baikal Institute's interdisciplinary approach to conservation is exactly what it will take to solve the problems that these lakes, and the global environment, face," board member and TBI founder Charles Goldman said in a statement.

The 12 participants of the 20th Annual Summer Environmental Exchange arrived in Tahoe this month and are enjoying a rigorous curriculum of meetings with local agency representatives, scientists, and environmental advocates.

The Tahoe-Baikal Institute is inviting all community members to attend the 20th Anniversary Gala at Heavenly's Lakeview Lodge on July 2. The evening will include a buffet dinner, live music and dancing, a silent auction fundraiser to support our future programs, and an opportunity to meet our exchange participants from Russian, Mongolia, and the U.S.

To learn more this opportunity or about the Institute, www.tahoebaikal.org or contact Jennifer Smith-Lee at jsmith@tahoebaikal.org or (530) 542.5599.

Celtic music event at

Valhalla Boathouse

Anne Roos is joined on stage by eighth generation bagpiper Séan Cummings in their 5th annual Celtic Concert on July 28 from 7:30-9pm.

Enjoy watching this concert in the unique Boathouse Theatre on the Tallac Site off Highway 89 on the South Shore.

Call (530)541.4975 for more information.