Nevada Parks looking for recreation grant recipients

The Federal Highway Administration grant program administered by Nevada Division of State Parks is accepting pre-applications for the 2010 round of recreation trails projects until March 31.

The amount of funding for recreational trail construction and improvements is expected to be about $1.3 million. Federal, state, city and county governments, special governmental districts, organizations and private individuals are potentially eligible for match-based grants offered through the program.

Eligible projects include motorized and non-motorized trail projects for new construction, maintenance and trail-related facilities. Trail education projects are also eligible. The maximum amount available per project is $200,000 for non-motorized. There is no cap for motorized trail projects and the minimum amount awarded to projects is $4,000.

Non-motorized trail grants require an 80:20 match and motorized trail grants require a 95:5 match.

Pre-applications must be submitted and approved to be eligible to submit a grant application, but educational and training grants are exempt from the pre-application process.

Pre-application packages are available on the Recreational Trails website at http://parks.nv.gov/trails.htm. Hard copies are also available upon request by calling (775) 684.2775.

The due date for pre-applications is March 31 by 4:30pm at the division’s office located at 901 S. Stewart St., Ste. 5005, Carson City, NV 89701-5248. Faxed or emailed copies will not be accepted.

Contact Randy Moore, recreational trails coordinator, at (775) 684.2775 or via email rlmoore@parks.nv.gov for more information.

Feds supply Placer County with foreclosure relief funds

Placer County is set to launch a program that seeks to reduce the number of vacant, bank-owned houses in unincorporated neighborhoods while helping residents with low or moderate incomes purchase homes.

The initiative is part of a federally funded effort known nationwide as the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

Placer County has been awarded a $750,000 grant for its program.

The federal government designated which areas are eligible to participate in the program, using data on such factors as foreclosure rates and the numbers of sub-prime mortgages in each area.

In Placer County, unincorporated areas eligible for participation include North Auburn-Bowman, Foresthill, Kings Beach, Tahoe Vista and Sheridan.

The primary goal is stabilizing communities hard hit by foreclosures by acquiring vacant, bank-owned houses; renovating them if necessary; and helping residents with limited incomes purchase the houses. Loans also can be made directly to homebuyers to purchase houses already listed for sale directly from banks.

In Placer County, the home-purchase assistance will be available to residents with low or moderate incomes. To meet moderate-income limits, a four-person household must have annual income of no more than $87,350.

Each participating household will be required to make a 3 percent down payment and line up financing from a private lender for part of the home-purchase price.

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program will provide gap loans up to $150,000 to cover the rest of the purchase prices. The loans will be shared-equity, second deeds of trust that do not require monthly payments and generally will not be repaid until homes are sold.

Participants do not have to be first-time buyers.

To be eligible for acquisition, bank-owned homes must have been vacant at least 90 days.

More information is available by calling (530) 745.3150.

Polluted groundwater sites on all ends of South Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Chemicals polluting the groundwater throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin on the California side are keeping engineers working full time.

Most toxins are related to a chemical used in dry cleaning and the now banned fuel additive MTBE.



This building will house equipment to clean up a site. Photo/Kathryn Reed

A temporary structure has been erected behind the Y transit center in the Raley's shopping center in South Lake Tahoe to house a remediation system.

At this site tetrachloroethylene (PCE) has been found in the groundwater. It came from the laundry facility that used to have a self-serve dry cleaning machine. PCE is a chemical often used in dry cleaning. It has been in the soil at this location since the 1970s.

"As a result of that operation, leaks associated with PCE have contaminated the soil and groundwater," said Chuck Curtis, supervising engineer at Lahontan.

He said the nearest well belonging to South Tahoe Public Utility District has not operated for years because it was also contaminated by a nearby gas station with MTBE, a fuel additive that has since been banned from Lake Tahoe.

"We have no active wells in the South Y area. We have written that area off for now and the future," said Dennis Cocking, STPUD spokesman.

Insurance companies for the former property owner and current property owner will foot the bill – which is likely to hit

millions of dollars in attorney fees and cleanup costs.

Jim Meredith, who works for the property management firm contracted by property owner Seven Springs Ltd., said they are working with Lahontan to solve the problem.

The current owners of the laundry facility were not the ones who owned it when the leaks occurred.

Lisa Dernbach, senior engineering geologist for Lahontan who is overseeing this project, said, “The contaminated soil and groundwater is mostly outside the front door of the Laundromat. We believe it’s from when they filled up the machine. We think they let the liquid drain out of the hose into the parking lot.”

A new filter and drainage system will be constructed. Air will be injected into the groundwater and a vacuum system used to suck vapors out of the soil. It will take about two years to complete the process. Monitoring will be ongoing and continue one year after the cleanup work is done.

Ski Run situation

In the middle of South Lake is an ongoing cleanup site at the old Moss Chevron Station at Ski Run Boulevard and Highway 50 that is now Lake Tahoe Vacation Resort.

“This (cleanup) started a long time ago, in the ’90s. We were hoping the ozone sparging would be really effective,” Brian Grey, engineering geologist with Lahontan, said. “It’s still years away before we will be looking at closing the case due to the fact they will have to employ another remedial effort out there to reduce the concentrations.”

Because the ozone flushing treatment didn’t work, engineers recently switched to air sparge.

Flushing the system helped with chemicals associated with gasoline, but had no affect on the MTBE, Grey said.

The toxic plume is not near any wells that STPUD owns. The nearest drinking well is in the gated Tahoe Meadows community. Lake Tahoe is the closest body of water that could be affected by the toxic plume.

Grey said extensive monitoring is in place and he doesn't foresee the toxins reaching the lake.

He said there is a potential threat of vapors from the toxins reaching the hotel. The general manager of the hotel did not return a phone call.

Compounding the situation is contaminated soil excavated from the site was returned to the site.

The cleanup is partially being paid by Chevron, with the bulk being picked up by the state's underground storage cleanup fund. Money for that fund comes from taxes drivers pay at gas pumps in California.

Grey did not have a dollar amount on what has been spent or what the final cost is projected to be.

Stateline area issues

Several years ago residents in the Tahoe Meadows subdivision complained about the taste of their drinking water. Tests done by Lahontan revealed MTBE and PCE in the water.

Some homeowners are still on private wells, having opted out of the deal to hook into South Tahoe PUD. It is six private wells that are having problems.

Some MTBE in that area long ago was traced to Tahoe Tom's gas station, according to Cocking.

Grey said the MTBE source is unknown.

"Some think some of the former gas station up there (are responsible), but our samplings don't show that," Grey said.

Lahontan is in the process of figuring out where the PCE originated. A dry cleaner used to operate at the Village Center near Stateline.

Terry Hackett, managing general partner for the company that owns the Village Center, said a dry cleaners did not exist when he bought the property in 1980. He said they are working with Lahontan to find the source, but said his company and no lessee of theirs is responsible for the groundwater contamination.

Until the source of the leak is definitively identified and a remediation plan formulated, Tahoe Meadows homeowners with contaminated wells are advised not to drink the water, Grey said. PCE can cause cancer.

These houses are lakefront, which means PCE is also in Lake Tahoe. Even though the state water agency has not tested the lake for PCE in this area, Grey said he does not believe the amounts seeping in pose a problem to humans or fish that swim in the area.

“There are no plans for testing Lake Tahoe,” Grey said.

Other contaminated locations

Dernbach said the most polluted dry cleaning site around the lake is in Kings Beach. A Tahoe City site is also being worked on.

“The problem is there is no state or federal cleanup fund to help them out,” Dernbach said of dry cleaning sites. “We let them drag out a little longer because they can’t afford to pay the cleanup at once.”

MTBE settlement

The nearly $70 million a jury in San Francisco awarded the South Tahoe PUD in 2001 is almost gone. Cocking expects it to be used on MTBE related matters by 2012.

MTBE was first detected in 1996. STPUD sued dozens of oil companies, with Shell and a manufacturer of MTBE the last two to settle.

Cocking said the district's belief the whole time was, "We didn't put this in the water, it is going to cost millions of dollars and decades to cleanup, and the ratepayers should not shoulder the cost."

The board made the decision to not allow any trace of MTBE in drinking water, even though that is stricter than what the law requires.

Northen Italy exhibit to close

A five-day closing reception is planned for Feb. 12-16 from 11am-5pm (with Italian desserts) for the Northern Italy Photo Exhibition by Dirk Yuricich.

Dirk Yuricich Photography Gallery is at 171 Shady Lane, Stateline.



Dirk Yuricich

For more information, call (775) 588.5816 or visit www.dirkphotoz.com.

SLT Rotary selling tickets to win a vehicle

The Rotary Club of South Lake Tahoe is hosting its 12th annual car raffle. This fundraiser offers a chance to win one of three automobiles or $25,000 cash as the grand prize. Second prize is $1,000 cash.

The automobiles up for grabs include a Toyota Four-Runner, a Tacoma or a Prius, which are provided to the club by Cardinale Way of South Lake Tahoe.

Simply purchase one or more tickets from any Rotary Club of South Lake Tahoe member. A completed, numbered ticket stub will be entered in your name. The receipt portion, complete with valuable coupons for you to redeem whether you win a car or not, will be returned to you with your ticket numbers.

A maximum of 1,500 tickets will be sold and of those, 25 lucky tickets will be drawn on April 27. The finalists will be invited to a Rotary sponsored dinner on May 5. At the dinner, 25 keys will be drawn and only one key will open the vehicle. The other 24 finalists will be put into a drawing for a second prize of $1,000 cash.

You do not need to attend the dinner to win, as a proxy can attend for you or one will be appointed.

Visit the clubâ€™s website at www.sltrotary.org for more information.

Last year, this raffle raised about $45,000 which the club used to fund South Lake Tahoe Rotary scholarship programs and Rotary community projects such as Coats for Kids, Christmas

Cheer, Kidâ€™s College, Sober Grad Night, student speech and music contests, CASA and the Drug Store Project, among many others.

For more information, contact Dick Derby at (530)543.5841 or dderby@bartonhealth.org

---

Opening Ceremony fundraiser for Reno-Tahoe 2022 Games



The Reno-Tahoe Winter Games Coalition is having an Opening Ceremony fund-raising party on Feb. 12 beginning at 6:30pm. The Vancouver Games begin at 7:30pm. They will be shown on three large screens.

Proceeds will benefit the coalition which is trying to bring the Games to Reno-Tahoe in 2022, as well as the Sky Tavern Junior Ski Program.

The event is at The Grove, 95 Foothill Road in Reno.

Ticket are $50 for adults, $25 for ages 5-12, free for 4 and younger. Tickets are available by going to www.skytavern.com or calling (775) 342.3444 or (775) 323.5125.

Several former Olympians are expected to be at the fundraising buffet-ceremony.

Friends of Washoe Meadows ski-snowshoe tour

Friends of Washoe Meadows snowshoe-cross country ski tour is Feb. 27 from 10am-noon.

Meet at 758 Little Bear Lane, South Tahoe.

For more information, call Krissi at (530) 307.1357.

Washoe Meadows State Park meeting

Want to keep Washoe Meadows wild? Want to help preserve the California state park and the wildlife corridors?

Find out how you can help on Feb. 25 from 6-8pm at Lake Tahoe Pizza Company, 1168 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Feb. 8



It was snowing at the higher elevations on Sunday, just not at the lake. This means there may be some powder this morning on the slopes. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Local ingredients inspire Fairmont Whistler chef



By Kathryn Reed

WHISTLER, British Columbia – “Bring on the Games” is Vincent Stufano’s approach to the Olympics, which begin this week in his native country.

Stufano, who hails from Montreal, is the executive chef at the Fairmont Chateau Whistler.

Fortunate for him, his favorite Olympic sport, the luge, can almost be seen from where he works. The course is up the mountain a short ways just outside of the Blackcomb side of the mega-resort.

Here is what the chef has to say:

LTN: What are some of the locally grown-raised ingredients used in your dishes? How does using these items make your food better?

Stufano: Some of my favorite locally grown ingredients from neighboring Pemberton area are pumpkins, potatoes, sunchokes, quince, crones, cherries, white peaches, poultry, beef, hazelnuts and chestnuts; fresh seafood from the coast. Using the locally grown ingredients is great because it allows for us to receive the products at the optimal time of freshness

and ripeness.

LTN: Food seems to be a bigger component for people as they travel, no matter the destination. As people's food tastes have become more developed-sophisticated through the years, do you notice having to change the menu or be more innovative? Do you try to keep up with other resorts-restaurants?

Stufano: People seem to be looking for comfort food that is to a higher standard and incorporates flavors they recognize. I don't try to keep up with others. They try to keep up with me. (*He smiles.*)

LTN: In the era of celebrity chefs, do you see destinations like Whistler buying into this? The Ritz-Carlton at Northstar-at-Tahoe has Traci des Jardines. Does a well-known chef bring people to the table?

Stufano: I think people like the "celebrity" aspect but I simply do not know if Whistler will follow in this trend. We will have to wait and see.

LTN: When you aren't cooking for others, what do you fix for yourself, your family?

Stufano: We enjoy comfort foods and simple meals. We try to use organic local ingredients from the farmers market and the area, and be health conscious.

LTN: Do you have plans to create dishes specifically for any of the athletes? Who and what? Or any special dishes for people coming for the Olympics?

Stufano: At this time there are no special requests coming in, however, we are very excited for when the Games arrive and those special requests start coming in. We are pretty equipped to make anything happen and we are looking forward to the challenges ahead. We thrive on the busy and chaotic times and love the challenges, the more the better. There will be a

nightly buffet in The Wildflower and I will be designing it to meet the needs of all the different cultures and nationalities that will be staying with us with a variety of dishes and different themes each night.

Below is one of Stufano's signature dishes. Susan Wood was *LTN's* taste tester at the Wildflower last month. She is ready to go back just for the meal.

Vincent Stufano's Cedar Roast Salmon

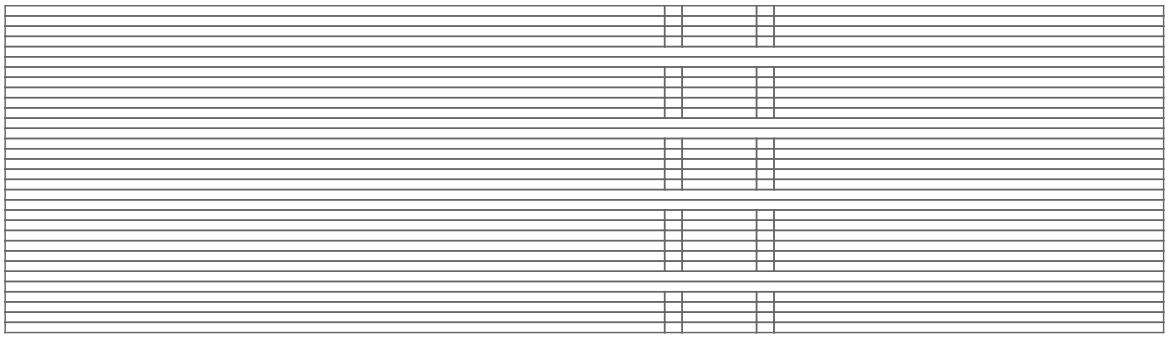


Cedar Roast Salmon

Serves 4 people

In the Wildflower restaurant, this salmon is glazed with Maple Syrup, which has been aged in our very own Canadian Oak Whiskey Barrels, served with roasted Pemberton Farm Fingerling potatoes and lightly steamed seasonal vegetables.

Qty	Size	Ingredient
4	6 oz	Salmon portion (We recommend Wild Sockeye)
4		Cedar Papers (soaked in warm water)
2	Tbsp	Olive oil
Cure for Salmon		
1	Cup	Kosher Salt
4	Oz	Maple syrup
1	Lemon	Zest only
1	Orange	Zest only
½	Tsp	Fresh cracked black pepper
Fingerling Potatoes		
1	Lbs	Fingerling potatoes (If available we recommend local Pemberton Farm)
2	Tbsp	Pommery Mustard
To Taste		Sea salt
To taste		Fresh cracked black pepper
2	Tbsp	Olive oil
Vegetables		
1	Lbs	Fresh seasonal vegetables
		(We recommend haricot verte & sugar snaps peas)
2	Tbsp	Extra virgin olive oil
		Fine herbs (flat leaf parsley, chervil & thyme leaves)
To Taste		Sea salt
To Taste		Fresh cracked black pepper
Red Onion Marmalade		
1	Medium	Red onion
4	Oz	Red wine vinegar
4	Oz	Honey
2	Sprig	Fresh thyme



For Maple Syrup:

First Chef Stufano purchases old Oak Whiskey 200 L barrels and soaks them in water until the wood has expanded enough to seal the barrel to prevent maple syrup from leaking out. A bottle of whiskey is then poured into each barrel. Four times daily, Chef checks the barrel stirring the whiskey and changes the angle in which the barrel sits. This process continues for two weeks. Maple syrup is then poured into the barrels along with a fresh bottle of whiskey and is left to sit for two months. When aging is completed Chef uses this maple syrup to glaze the Cedar Roast Salmon.

Salmon Method:

combine salmon cure ingredients in a large bowl

spread a thin layer of cure on a baking sheet

place salmon portions top side down on cure for one hour

remove from cure and wipe off excess cure

in large skillet heat olive oil and lightly sear bottom side of salmon

wrap soaked cedar paper and tie with butchers twine

place salmon in 350 degree oven and bake for 5-7 minutes

Pemberton Farm Fingerling Potatoes:

toss halved potatoes with seasoning and olive oil

roast in oven till tender and toss with pommery mustard

Seasonal Vegetables:

lightly steam vegetables and toss with olive oil, seasoning and fine herbs

Red Onion Marmalade:

julienne onion and place in small sauce pot

cover with honey, red wine vinegar and thyme sprigs

bring to simmer and reduce until liquid become a syrup like consistency

Plating:

evenly divide potatoes and vegetables between 4 plates

cut string and pull back paper topped with a spoon of red onion marmalade

garnish plate with a little garnish of some Maple Syrup and extra virgin olive oil