

Environmental docs out for Heavenly expansion



Heavenly Mountain Resort wants to expand its summer offering beyond the ropes courses that opened this season. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Heavenly Mountain Resort is taking the next step to expand its on-mountain summer offerings.

Comments are being taken on the draft environmental documents for the Epic Discovery project.

The project includes:

- Mid-Station Zipline Canopy Tour: An interpretive zipline canopy tour in the area between the gondola mid-station and the top station to the east of the gondola alignment.
- East Peak Zipline Canopy Tour: A multi-stage guided zipline canopy tour will begin near the top of Big Easy chairlift and end with a zip over East Peak Lake, near the base of Dipper Express chairlift.
- Sky Meadows Zipline Canopy Tour: It will begin near the top of Tamarack Express chairlift and end near the base of Sky Express chairlift.

- Sky Cycle Canopy Tour: Located in the area between the gondola top station and the Mid-Station Observation Deck, the Sky Cycle Canopy Tour will allow visitors to traverse the area by pedaling individual bicycle-like devices that are suspended from a cable in the air.
- Sky Meadows Ropes Course: A self-guided ropes course consisting of a series of platforms and rope walkway-bridges will be located between Sky Deck and the base of Sky Express chairlift.
- Forest Flyer: The Forest Flyer allows guests on individual sleds to descend on a raised track through the forest and natural rock formations. Located north and west of the existing tubing hill, the Forest Flyer will utilize gravity for the descent while giving riders full control of their speed.
- East Peak Lake Water Activities: Water-oriented activities on and around the existing East Peak reservoir will include kayaking, canoeing and fishing.
- Hiking Trails: New hiking trails will connect the top of Tamarack Express chairlift to the top of the gondola and Tamarack Lodge, continuing down to East Peak Lodge, approximately 3 miles.
- Ridge Run Lookout Tower and Observation Deck: A new observation tower will be developed near the existing Ridge Run Overlook. Resembling a historic Forest Service Fire Lookout Tower, it will offer views of High Meadows and Freel Peak, as well as Lake Tahoe. The existing picnic deck adjacent to the top of Sky Express chairlift will be rebuilt.
- Mountain Bike Park: Dipper Express, Comet Express and Tamarack Express will serve as access points to the Mountain Bike Park in the East Peak Basin area, offering eight to 10 total miles of trails ranging in difficulty from beginner through expert.
- Mountain Excursion Tour: A Mountain Excursion Tour will connect all three activity centers via motorized 4×4 vehicles, at the top of the Gondola, East Peak Lodge, and Sky Meadows, and will offer guided tours to various locations around the

upper mountain.

- Interpretive Learning: Interpretive Discovery Zones will be integrated throughout the experience, sharing the area's rich natural environment and cultural history with guests using fun and informative learning techniques.

The draft environmental impact report and draft environmental impact statement may be found online.

Here is the public hearings schedule for the project:

- Sept. 10, 9:30am, TRPA Advisory Planning Commission, TRPA board room, 128 Market St., Stateline.
- Sept. 24, 9:30am, TRPA Governing Board, 128 Market St., Stateline.
- Oct. 8, 4pm, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, 971 Silver Dollar Ave., South Lake Tahoe.

Comments may be emailed to dlandry@trpa.org before Oct. 21.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Plastic bag ban opponents up the ante

By Jessica Calefati, San Jose Mercury News

SACRAMENTO – Lobbyists have launched a frenzied eleventh-hour effort to kill a bill that would make California the first state to outlaw flimsy plastic grocery bags, delaying a key vote and setting up one of the fiercest legislative battles of the year.

Last week, the bill seemed in the bag after it cleared a tough committee vote. But in recent days, industry lobbyists who

have squashed more than a dozen other proposed bag bans over the past few years have renewed their effort by targeting moderate Democrats.

“We’re going to do everything in our power to educate legislators on the facts,” said Mark Daniels, a senior vice president at Hilex Poly, an East Coast company that is the largest producer of single-use plastic grocery bags in North America.

Opponents led by the company have spent more than half a million dollars in lobbying fees and campaign donations, painting the proposal as a job killer.

But environmentalists are also expressing confidence as they dig in for an epic battle similar to their ultimately successful fight to pass California’s “bottle bill” in the 1980s. The stakes are even higher this year because the clout of environmental groups is on the line after a series of embarrassing legislative defeats last year.

Supporters say a statewide bag ban is needed to wipe out a particularly noxious form of litter that kills marine life in the Pacific Ocean and costs Californians \$25 million a year to collect and bury.

Read the whole story

6.0 Bay Area quake felt in Lake Tahoe

Publisher’s note: *The 6.0 American Canyon earthquake was felt by a woman who lives in the Angora burn area. “At about 3:20am*

I felt my couch shake a bit. Cat freaked out," she emailed Lake Tahoe News.

By Napa Register

An earthquake measuring an estimated 6.0 struck southern Napa County early Sunday with widespread reports of damage throughout the area.

This was the largest Bay Area quake since the 1989 Loma Prieta quake, which measured about 6.9, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

The worst damage appeared to be at the Napa Valley Mobile Home Park in Napa, where at least four homes were destroyed by fire and up to eight more were damaged, according to Napa County Fire Capt. Steve Becker. No residents were injured, but three hours after the quake, the fires continued to burn.

"It's breaking my heart," said resident Linda Butler, as she surveyed the damage to her neighbor's house.

Elsewhere, homes and businesses suffered broken glass, overturned furniture, and some structural damage. City spokesman Barry Martin said there were about 50 known gas leaks and 30 known water leaks as of 7am. PG&E and city public works crews were dealing with those.

Downtown streets were littered with debris, particularly from older unreinforced masonry buildings. Martin said city inspectors would be checking on structures this week to determine if they are safe to occupy.

Read the whole story

Bear-feeding woman attacked in Tahoe

A Kings Beach woman who is known for feeding bears was attacked by one earlier this month.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Placer County District Attorney's Office officials are investigating the Aug. 5 incident.

"The victim reported getting hit from behind" and suffered bites to the rear of her left shoulder and scratches on a leg that required care at a hospital, Patrick Foy, with the CDFW told the *Reno Gazette-Journal*. "Our warden did find several areas with evidence to suggest somebody on that property was feeding a lot of wildlife."

The woman, whose name has not been released, could face six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine if charged and found guilty of feeding wildlife.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Placer sheriff's office

served with federal subpoena

By Mike TeSelle, KCRA-TV

The Placer County Sheriff's Department was served with a federal subpoena during the first week of August, according to a sheriff's spokesperson.

However, the department declined to comment on exactly what the warrant is seeking.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Sacramento also declined comment and did not even confirm if an investigation involving the sheriff's department existed.

"It is uncommon, very uncommon for a prosecutor to issue a subpoena on a law enforcement agency," said Johnny Griffin, a former federal prosecutor.

Griffin, a current defense attorney, did not want to speculate, but he did offer general perspective of why a local law enforcement agency would be served with a federal subpoena.

"If you serve a subpoena on an entity, say a sheriff's department, that doesn't necessarily mean the sheriff's department is under some type of investigation or target, but it does not exclude them," said Griffin. "Perhaps a member or someone connected to the department may be under some type of investigation. It could be a vendor, an employee or an inmate."

Read the whole story

Goldman: Climate change hurting Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

If treated wastewater weren't pumped out of the Lake Tahoe Basin, the clarity of the lake would be much different than it is today.

That was one of the messages delivered Aug. 21 by Charles Goldman during the South Lake Tahoe Public Utility District board meeting. The 83-year-old renowned limnologist has been studying Lake Tahoe for more than 50 years. While he has retired from teaching at UC Davis, he is still actively involved in what is going on with and at Lake Tahoe.

"This organization probably has had more to do with keeping Lake Tahoe blue than any other organization," Goldman said of the utility district.



Charles Goldman talks about climate change on Aug. 21 in South Lake Tahoe.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

He said helping to get sewage out of the basin may be his most important achievement.

Treated wastewater from STPUD is pumped over Luther Pass where it is then used as irrigation water for Carson Valley ranchers.

He is against any reclaimed water being used in the basin because of the energy it takes to make it useable, the air pollutants associated with the process and that phosphorous would reach the lake.

Goldman said if the wastewater stayed here the lake would likely be green by now.

This has a lot to do with climate change. The warming surface water of the lake and the increase in phosphorous are already altering how the lake looks and functions.

The fact that it doesn't get as cold at night as it used to in Tahoe contributes to a warmer lake, which in turn means the lake water is not mixing as often. Warm water is harder to mix than cold. All of this then can affect oxygen levels at the bottom of the lake. A warmer lake is contributing to more algae growing near the shoreline.

Algal growth increases at a rate of about $5\frac{1}{2}$ percent each year at Lake Tahoe, according to Goldman.

He said if the amount of nutrients reaching Lake Tahoe is not reduced, things will worsen. Nutrients can produce neurotoxins, which are known to kill people and cows.

"That is one reason to keep nutrients out of Tahoe," Goldman said.

A picture of the United States proved how much of the country has already sustained unprecedented increases in warming.

The carbon dioxide level acceleration is rising at a level that he called "dire."

"It's strictly the result of burning fossil fuels of all

kinds,” Goldman said.

His idea of bringing a monorail to the basin has fallen on deaf years for 52 years. It would get people out of their cars and reduce air pollution – a significant contributor to problems with Lake Tahoe.

Predictions are that by mid-century 65 percent of China’s more than 46,000 glaciers will have disappeared, with all of them being gone at the next turn of the century.

The North Pole has already melted at times to where there is water standing on top of the ice. This in turn melts the ice faster because the water is warmer than ice, plus it doesn’t reflect back to the atmosphere.

Climate change, Goldman said, is the largest threat to humanity since the Black Plague.

Body found floating at Sand Harbor

The body of a man was found Friday morning floating near the boat ramp at Sand Harbor in Incline Village.

An autopsy has been scheduled to determine the cause of death and identity of the victim.

Bob Harmon, spokesman for Washoe County Sheriff’s Office, said people playing at the beach on Aug. 22 called the department at 10:49am. They found the body in the water.

Harmon did not know if the victim was wearing regular clothes or a swimsuit.

He did not have any other details.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Nev., N.J. casinos link progressive slots

By Wayne Parry, AP

ATLANTIC CITY – A long-planned initiative to create bigger jackpots by linking casino slot machines in New Jersey and Nevada is up and running.

The New Jersey Gaming Enforcement Division says the progressive slots system links 100 machines in Atlantic City with 600 in Nevada. The progressive jackpots grow in size as more gamblers play them.

“The division is pleased to have been at the forefront of passing regulations and reaching out to other jurisdictions to enable this expanded gaming opportunity for Atlantic City,” said director David Rebuck. “Much like multi-state lotteries, this new technology and cooperative regulatory agreements will allow combined progressive jackpots to grow, which should be very appealing to players looking for the opportunity to play for huge jackpots.”

The system quietly went live Wednesday afternoon, and was announced by regulators Thursday morning.

Slot machines account for about two-thirds of the revenue won

by Atlantic City's casinos.

It is the second multi-state system linking New Jersey slot machines with those in other states. Earlier this year, the state approved a compact with South Dakota. The two interstate slot systems are not connected with each other, though.

New Jersey casino regulators have been working on the plan for at least two years, and they are still looking for other states to participate in an expanded multi-state slots system.

It is one of many things the state is trying as it tries to reverse Atlantic City's eight-year casino revenue decline, brought on by increased competition in neighboring states. New Jersey also legalized Internet gambling and tried unsuccessfully to overturn a federal ban on sports betting, among other initiatives.

The interstate concept is also a key to New Jersey's plans for Internet gambling. The state plans currently limits Internet gambling to people physically present in New Jersey, but the law allows it to enter into compacts with other states or countries where Internet gambling is legal.

Division spokeswoman Kerry Langan says all 11 Atlantic City casinos are participating, including the three that are shutting down within the next few weeks: Revel, Showboat and Trump Plaza.

Arrest made in 2013 Incline Village murder

A Sonoma County man has been arrested in connection with the

December 2013 murder of an Incline Village resident.



Joseph John
Personeni

Washoe County sheriff's detectives arrested Joseph John Personeni, 20, of Santa Rosa on one count of murder on Aug. 21.

On Dec. 22, 2013, Christopher Elliott, 46, was found dead on his porch on Northwood Boulevard in Incline Village.

According to investigators, Elliott and Personeni had been arguing and it escalated into a physical confrontation. The cause of death was blunt force trauma.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

State OKs road projects in El Dorado, Nevada counties

El Dorado and Nevada counties this week were allocated millions of dollars from the California Transportation Commission for road projects.

In total, 148 projects in the state will receive more than \$430 million.

Last year, Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation creating the Active Transportation Program. The new program replaced a patchwork of small grant programs with a comprehensive program.

Here are some of the significant regional projects that received allocations:

- El Dorado County: \$7.8 million for a water-quality improvement project on Highway 89 from Cascade Road to north of Eagle Falls on the South Shore.
- El Dorado County: \$4.1 million for a water-quality improvement project on Highway 89 from Meeks Creek Bridge to Wilson Avenue near Tahoma.
- El Dorado County: \$6.7 million to rehabilitate 22 lane miles of Highway 49 from Coloma to Cool near Placerville.
- Nevada County: \$4.5 million to replace failed gutter and drains on Interstate 80 at the Kingvale undercrossing to west of the Soda Springs overcrossing near Kingvale.
- Nevada County: \$5 million to rehabilitate 22 lane miles of Highway 89 from the Nevada County line to the Sierra County line in and near Truckee.