Tahoe mountain biking on national radar



Mountain biking in Lake Tahoe is getting national recognition. Photo/TAMBA

By Jessie Marchesseau

It’s no secret that Lake Tahoe is an outdoor recreation destination. Skiers and snowboarders flock here in the winter, and visitors come to hike and play on the lake during the summer. The local economy depends on people coming here to play. However, one user group it seems Tahoe has yet to really capture is mountain bikers.

With more than 300 miles of mountain bike trails in the basin, there could be room enough for everyone. So the Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association got together with *Bike* magazine in an effort to take steps toward bringing in more bikers.

Ben Fish, president of TAMBA, along with TAMBA member Paul

Tolme, spent six months discussing and planning with *Bike* magazine Managing Editor Nicole Formosa the possibility of *Bike* doing a feature story on mountain biking in Lake Tahoe. Formosa finally made the trip to check out some trails in June.

Bike magazine is an international publication with more than 200,000 subscribers. They are known for their pages of stellar photography and focus more on where to ride than how to. Formosa said *Bike* tries to get to the "soul of the sport, the adventure of it" and looks for diversity in the destinations they feature. The magazine encourages readers to escape to places with beautiful scenery, a variety of trails and a location they can realistically travel to without it being too cost prohibitive.



Armstrong Connector Trail Photo/TAMBA

"Someplace you can go and be for a few days and just explore right from your door," she told *Lake Tahoe News*, "and I think Tahoe has a lot of those things."

Fish said he believes one of the reasons Tahoe has not yet sought out mountain bikers as a valid tourist group is a

misconception that if they do come, they won't spend any money. On the contrary he says, they will stay in hotels, eat at restaurants and spend money in the community just like skiers do. Bike magazine's demographic research suggests he is right. *Bike*'s readers have an average annual household income of $100,000, more than half are willing to spend more than $2,000 on their next bike and 80 percent of them say they plan on taking a mountain bike trip in the next year.

Formosa said mountain bikers are just starting to be viewed as a valid user group that takes trips and spends money.

Some places such as Moab, Utah, and Whistler, B.C., have jumped on the bandwagon, marketing themselves as top mountain biking destinations. Tolme said with the quality of trails here along with all the other amenities Tahoe has to offer, he sees potential for Tahoe becoming a world-class mountain biking destination.

"We think if they know about it, they'll come," he said.

Formosa spent five days here in June riding and researching for the story. Fish, his wife, Amy, also a TAMBA board member, and other TAMBA members spent the week showing Formosa around and taking her on some of their favorite trails.

They rode the Tahoe Rim Trail from Mount Rose, then the Flume trail. They took her on Powerline and up Cold Creek to Star Lake and on the new Monument trail. They rode Armstrong Pass and the new and improved Corral just in time to catch the ribbon cutting ceremony on June 14, then later checked out Van Sickle trail, and, of course, Mr. Toad's Wild Ride.

"She left exhausted and impressed. At least, that was my impression," Tolme told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Some of the trails they rode are relatively new or recently improved. In fact, there is scarcely a trail in the basin which hasn't been somewhat improved in the last 10 years.



Features are being built into some of the Tahoe trails. Photo/Dave Clock

“[Tahoe] trails are amazing and the work that’s going on is really encouraging,” Formosa said. “Tahoe compared to other places has a really admirable partnership with the Forest Service. I haven’t seen that in a lot of places.”

The U.S. Forest Service was instrumental in helping with the construction and funding for the recent improvements on Corral and other area mountain bike trails. Fish said they have formed a great partnership with TAMBA in the last few years and are really beginning to understand mountain bikers as users of Forest Service lands.

One of Formosa’s favorite aspects of her visit to Tahoe was experiencing the community of mountain bikers here and the partnership they have formed with the Forest Service, something she hopes is indicative of the future of the sport. She also appreciated how they were able to start pedaling right at the Fish’s back door and within a couple hours be someplace that felt completely serene and remote.

Bike magazine has already posted one story from Formosa’s visit on their website. The full feature on Lake Tahoe will appear in print sometime next year.

South Tahoe air show moving to September

The annual air show at Lake Tahoe Airport is going to be a month later than years past. The 25th annual Lake in the Sky Air Show is Sept. 20.

The show had to be canceled last year because smoke in the basin from fires outside the area made flying conditions hazardous.

This year's show which will include aerobatic performances by several top performers including Bill Cornick, Jon Melby and Spencer Suderman. There will be sky divers, kids' activities, war birds, classic car show, police K9 demonstration, bomb robot, helicopters, chili cook off, food court, beer and wine garden, fire trucks, fly bys, and more.

Gates open at 8am. Tickets are $10/adults, $5/kids, and free for those 5 and younger.

Fishing fees waived for one day in Calif.

July 5 is the first of two free fishing days in California in 2014.

All fishing regulations, such as bag and size limits, gear restrictions, report card requirements, fishing hours and

stream closures remain in effect. Every angler must have an appropriate report card if they are fishing for steelhead or sturgeon anywhere in the state, or salmon in the Smith and Klamath-Trinity river systems.

Free Fishing Days provide a low-cost way to give fishing a try. The next free day is Sept. 6.

Flowers create colorful path to Showers Lake



Showers Lake is a popular overnight spot for PCT hikers. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Showers Lake is so idyllic that it is one of the more sought after resting points for hikers on the Pacific Crest Trail.

The terrain is flat, which is ideal for pitching a tent. While the water is colder than Lake Tahoe, one guy said it felt warm to him because he had been swimming at lakes even higher in elevation. Showers Lake is at 8,560 feet.

Kim and Susan arrived before us. A woman asked them if they minded nudity. Nope. And off she went for a skinny dip.

We had hiked in with Lisa and Ken, whom we unexpectedly ran into at the trailhead. Lisa likes the start of the hike because it doesn't seem like the typical Tahoe trek because of the expansiveness, greenery and volcanic rock.

Sue and I had to agree with her impression.

There were plenty of wildflowers to gawk at on Saturday, though Lisa and Kim – two veterans of this hike – said what we were seeing was nothing compared to a non-drought year. After the last heavy snow year there were flowers reaching 6-feet into the air. Nothing was close to that this year.

It's bound to be a short wildflower season this year because of the lack of moisture for consecutive years. Plus, the temperatures are higher than normal in and around the Lake Tahoe Basin. It's supposed to remain into the 80s into next week, with the hottest day being Sunday at 89 degrees in South Lake Tahoe.

Still, Kim counted 23 flowers plus a puffball, which is a fungus. She said it's edible, but would only choose to eat it if she had to.

Already the unusual monument plant has flowered and what's left is a tall green stalk that looks out of place in the Sierra.

Some of the flowers along the way included: lupine, Indian

paintbrush, bluebells, phlox, sulphur buckwheat, scarlet gilia, Alpine daisy, groundsel flower and larkspur.

From the top of the ridge we turn around to see the runs at Kirkwood Mountain Resort.

In front of us and to the right is Meiss Meadow, which hasn't dried out yet. Meiss Lake is to the left and then Round Top Lake with its distinctive buttress. And then Lake Tahoe is to the far left.

Just below the ridge is a strip of snow that AJ laps at to quench her thirst.

The descent into Showers Lake is a little steep. The rocks on the soft dirt make paying attention necessary. It's the one spot where poles would have been nice.

Boulders around the lake are perfect lunch and lounging spots. A fisherman has waded out to one of the rock islands in hopes of catching a more substantive meal. He didn't seem to be having much luck.

And while we had the trail to ourselves, the lake became crowded by the afternoon. I'm guessing that midweek would be the most tranquil time to visit.

There are multiple ways to reach Showers Lake. Deciding which route to take will depend on how much time you have, how far you want to go, and if you want a one-way or round-trip excursion. Going in from Echo Summit you will be on the Tahoe Rim Trail part of the time. Starting at Big Meadow trailhead, the trek goes through Meiss Meadow. Carson Pass has a few connections that lead to Showers Lake.

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Historic Nevada County bridge to be restored

By Vanessa Ochavillo, Sacramento Bee

Nevada County's Bridgeport Covered Bridge – the longest surviving single-span covered bridge in the country – will be restored to survive at least another century.

A three-year fight for funding, launched by members of a grass-roots campaign committee known as Save Our Bridge, ended June 20 when Gov. Jerry Brown approved $1.3 million for the bridge's restoration in the state's final budget. The funding effort included the submission of more than 500 letters and emails to the governor the week before the budget was signed.

The 208-foot wooden bridge stretching over the South Yuba River is warped. Years of wear and tear have caused a dangerous deformation: Joints have come undone, and tension rods have exceeded their capacity to hold the bridge together.

Read the whole story

Massive mackinaw caught at Lake Tahoe



Alan Steel has a whopper of fishing story to tell about Lake Tahoe. Photo/Joby Cefalu

Alan Steel of Greenwich, Conn., reeled in this 23-pound mackinaw from Lake Tahoe this morning.

He was out on the lake early July 2 with Mile High Fishing Charter. Capt. Joby Cefalu was at the helm.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Hazardous fire weather in the forecast



Beaches in Lake Tahoe are getting more crowded with temps rising and holiday crowds arriving. Photo/LTN

While it's sizzling in the Lake Tahoe Basin this week, no records are likely to be broken.

"Last year it was very hot this time of year as well," Zach Tolby, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Reno, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

July 1 is expected to be the hottest day of the week in South Lake Tahoe with a high of 88. The record of 92 was set in 2013. Going forward temps will drop a bit.

A red flag warning has been issued for Tuesday from 1-9pm for much of the Sierra – stretching from Mono County to Interstate 80 near Truckee. Isolated and scattered thunderstorms are in the forecast.

Tolby said rain wouldn't accompany all of the lightning, which poses a greater threat for fires to occur. Plus, wind gusts up to 60 mph are forecast; those are more likely in western Nevada.

Thunderstorms are also in the forecast for Wednesday, but not as wide spread.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

ZCTC to host patriotic doubles event

Zephyr Cove Tennis Club is getting into the Independence Day spirit with a Star Spangled Hump Day on July 2.

Players are encouraged to dress in patriotic colors, with a prize going to the best dressed. Play starts at 5:30pm. The doubles mixer is for adult players of all abilities.

The Hump Day Mixers are $10 for club members, $15 for non-members, and $5 for spectators (meal only). The fun includes a barbecue, raffle prizes and lots of tennis.

Participants are encouraged to bring a side dish or dessert, as well as beverage of choice that does not come in a glass container. No advance sign-up is required.

For more info, call 775.588.2229.

Zephyr Cove Tennis Club is on Warrior Way off Highway 50.

Class focuses on how worms help gardeners

In the Vermicomposting: Worms + Kitchen Scraps = Gold workshop will teach people how to create a simple and inexpensive worm bin, what to put in the bin, what to keep out, and how to keep worms happy.

Master gardeners in Lake Tahoe will also talk about the benefits of composting for the earth, landfills, and home gardens.

Worm composting is a great way to help Mother Earth, but it also offers children of all ages a fun way to learn about life cycles, the need to feed soil in the garden, and overall natural processes.

The free classes are from 5:30-6:30pm.

Dates are:

- July 28 – Lake Tahoe Community College Demonstration Garden, 1 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe
- July 29 – TERC Tahoe City Field Station, aka Historic Fish Hatchery, 2400 Lake Forest Road, Tahoe City
- July 30 – North Lake Tahoe Demonstration Garden, Sierra Nevada College, 999 Tahoe Blvd., Incline Village.

Kahle hosting soccer camp for kids

Douglas County Parks and Recreation and Steve Maltase of Whittell High School are hosting a youth soccer camp July 7-10 at Kahle Community Park in Stateline.

The camp is open to children ages 4-14, with the Lil-Kicks (ages 4-6) having their camp from 10am-1pm and the older kids camp runs 10am-3pm.

Every camper needs to bring a lunch and water bottle, have soccer cleats, shin guards and sunscrean.

The cost for the camp is $125 for ages 4-6 and $145 for ages 7 and older.

For more information and to register, call 775.586.7271.