A walk in the woods without a defined end point



AJ and Cody with Red Lake Peak in the background. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

HOPE VALLEY – Sometimes it's not about where you go, but who you are with and being in the moment. Such was the case earlier this month on a hike out of Hope Valley.

A fresh dusting of snow covered the parking lot at Pickett's Junction, as well as along the trail. The temperature was so cold at the start Rosemary and I both guessed the other was going to cancel.

Nope. We just bundled up and looked a bit like we were on a winter excursion. Such is Tahoe in May – unpredictable.

While the original intent was to hike to Burnside Lake, we opted to set a time instead. We said two hours.

For runners out there, this is plenty of time to make it to the lake. Bri, Rosemary's daughter, made it to Burnside and back to the car in the two hours. Her 13-plus miles also included a few detours off the main route.

We, too, were lured off trail. There are a multitude of U.S. Forest Service roads. Even the main trail we are on is really a road. This road in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is closed about a quarter mile from the parking area in the winter – or when conditions are still wet and muddy.

The topo map – which we didn't have with us – shows Burnside Lake pretty much a straight line from the highway. In reality there are turns in the main trail with a ton of off-shoot options. Don't take them if you want to make it to the lake.



Remnants of the Burnside Fire from a few years ago are still visible.

I had my four-legged daughter, AJ, and Rosemary had her four-legged grandson, Cody. It was Mother's Day, after all. And this was AJ's first real hike since hiking in the Carson Valley that ended with several stitches after she splayed her hindquarters on something sharp.

She was running wild, like this could have been her first romp in the woods. With being part greyhound, I’m sure she is faster than California Chrome. At least it looked that way as I watched a sleek blonde streak through the forest.

The part of the trail we did was for the most part a gradual uphill climb. It’s a dirt road – plenty wide for all of us when the dogs chose to join us.

It didn’t matter that we didn’t reach the lake. The beauty captivated us – as did our conversation. Sometimes a hike in the woods is more about friendship and what is right there than what is at the end of the trail.

One of our forays off the main road led us to a wonderful meadow with a spectacular view of Red Lake Peak. At 10,061 feet, it’s hard not to notice it at various points.

The first people, outside of native Americans, to have talked of hiking the peak were John C. Fremont and Charles Preuss. They did so in February 1844. It was from Red Lake Peak that Fremont first saw Lake Tahoe.

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Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 west. Turn left in Meyers past the bug station onto Highway 89. At the T go straight into the parking lot. Start walking.

Adventure games at Squaw just

for kids

Registration is open for the Kids Adventure Games taking place at Squaw Valley on June 28.

Kids Adventure Games, designed for children ages 6 to 14, will feature teams of two competing in mountain biking, hiking, ziplines, a Tarzan rope swing, giant slope-n-slide, cargo nets, mud pits and more.

Squaw is one of eight mountain resorts to host the event.

The race is from 8am-6pm. The exact race course is kept a secret until race day. Kids will be given a map and must navigate their way through the course. Parents are encouraged to watch and cheer on their kids from the sidelines. The course is a parent-free zone.

To accommodate different racing abilities, younger or beginner racers will compete on a short course. Older racers will compete on a longer course with more challenging obstacles.

Cost for the race is $120 per team of two through June 1. After that date, the cost increases to $150 until registration ends on June 14 or the race is full. Online registration is available.

Class teaches how to make holiday arrangement

Lake Tahoe master gardeners are going to show people how to make a 4th of July Bowl.

Bring a 14- to 16-inch color bowl with fresh soil. The secret to healthy containers is good dirt. The gardeners will supply the plants. There will be ornamentals as well as edibles, all with a red-white-and-blue theme.

Advance registration is required and may be done online.

Each of the free classes is from 5:30-6:30pm.

- June 30 – Lake Tahoe Community College Demonstration Garden, 1 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe
- July 1 – TERC Tahoe City Field Station, aka Historic Fish Hatchery, 2400 Lake Forest Road, Tahoe City
- July 2 – North Lake Tahoe Demonstration Garden, Sierra Nevada College, 999 Tahoe Blvd., Incline Village.

Summer camps focus on science in Tahoe

Tahoe Institute for Natural Science is offering nature day camps for children aged 6-12 in South Lake Tahoe. Campers will spend time playing games, searching for wildlife, and reflecting on the day’s adventure, as well as bonding with fellow campers.

Junior Entomologists is for ages 6-8. The July 21-24 camp cost

$120.

Tahoe Explorers is for ages 9-12. The July 7-11 camp costs $265.

For more information, contact Amy at Amy@TINSweb.org or 775.298.0064.

Ultrarunner to lead trek at Squaw, give talk

Squaw Valley will host North Face ultrarunner and Tahoe local Rory Bosio for an afternoon that includes a trail run and motivational lecture on June 6.

Bosio, who has competed in ultramarathons for the past four years, will lead participants of all ages on a trail run up Squaw Valley's Shirley Canyon. The trail run begins at the North Face store in the village at at 3pm.

Following the run, Bosio will speak about her experiences as a competitor in ultramarathons and discuss what inspires her during a lecture in the village events plaza at 6pm.

The trail run and lecture are free to the public and open to participants of all ages and ability levels.

For more information on the trail run and lecture, go online.

Lake Powell loses Quagga mussel fight

By Emiley Morgan, Deseret News

PROVO, Utah – For 14 years, officials at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area focused on keeping Quagga mussels out of Lake Powell.

It was an undertaking, as National Park Service rangers tried to police about 2 million annual visitors and an estimated 400,000 boat launches at eight developed boat access points, and at least a half-dozen other access points along 2,000 miles of shoreline, said Todd Brindle, recreation area superintendent.

Last year, rangers learned they lost the battle against the invasive species in the vast lake.

“We did all we could,” Brindle said.

On Monday, Brindle announced at a meeting of local, state and federal representatives from various agencies at the U.S. Department of Interior’s Bureau of Reclamation office in Provo that the National Park Service is shifting its efforts from prevention to containment. The emphasis now will be on educating boaters and screening boats not as they enter the lake, as was done before, but as they exit.

Read the whole story

USFS work impacting Tahoe Rim Trail



The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit began a mastication project this week on the North Shore off of Fairway Drive near Tahoe City.

The project involves using a masticator, which is a large lawn-mower type of heavy equipment that runs over debris and chops it up into smaller pieces. Flying debris from equipment is common. Large chunks of woody material can be thrown up to 500 feet.

A short portion of the Tahoe Rim Trail crosses through the project area. There will be a one- to three-day period where the equipment will be working near the trail.

For public safety, hikers will be diverted to an alternate route along Mt. Watson Boulevard (Forest Road 73) during this phase.

Project work is expected to take approximately six weeks to complete and work will occur on weekends. No work will occur on Memorial Day.

Tahoe Rim Trail a continual work in progress

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – It's never done – the work, the hiking, the enjoyment.

That was the message of Mary Bennington. For the past four years she has been executive director of the Tahoe Rim Trail Association. The motto of the nonprofit is "A Trail Like No Other".

While it is 165 miles around, with the connectors there are more than 180 miles to the trail. It keeps growing to allow better access. And improvements are continually being made to existing sections.

In her talk May 21 to Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe at Harrah's Lake Tahoe, Bennington explained how last year the 3.4-mile connector trail from Van Sickle Bi-State Park to the Rim Trail was finished.



TRTA Executive Director Mary Bennington talks to volunteers on a National

Trails Day. Photo/LTN file

Another South Shore project that enhanced the hiking experience took 10 years to complete. That was the Kingsbury North and Kingsbury South sections. It used to be paved, go through a neighborhood, was steep and windy. There is also a loop for that section that has been rerouted out of Heavenly's Stagecoach Lodge.

Most of the work for the last two years has been focused on the 24½-mile Rim to Reno trail. The last mile to the summit of Mt. Houghton will be built this summer.

Most of the work to build and maintain the trail network has come from volunteers. About 500 volunteers put in nearly 15,000 hours of work each year.

It was Glen Hampton with the U.S. Forest Service who had the vision for a trail along the ridgetops. The TRTA was formed in 1981 and work began three years later. The 165-mile trail was finished in 2001.

"As you hike the whole trail you see different ecology," Bennington said. "Desolation is different than the East Shore. The West Shore is a lot rockier." This is because of the glaciers that formed the area.

Bennington said it's estimated 100,000 people are on the TRTA a year. A survey will be taken this summer to gather better data about TRT users.

While two weeks is the average time it takes someone to backpack the trail, many people divide it up into sections. The association says it can be hiked in eight sections, but those are often shortened by hikers, bikers and equestrians.

- Tahoe City to Brockway (20.2 miles) is often the best place to start in the spring because it has the lowest elevation. This means the snow is gone faster than at other

locations.

• Brockway to Mount Rose (20.2 miles) has the highest point – Relay Peak at 10,338 feet. “On a clear day you can see to Lassen,” Bennington said.

• Tahoe Meadows to Spooner (23.1 miles) has a 1.2 mile interpretive loop at the beginning that is wheelchair accessible. Farther along, this section looks down on Sand Harbor.

• Spooner to Kingsbury Grade (12.2 miles for the north, 18.5 miles for south route) has a wide panoramic view four miles in.

• Kingsbury Grade to Big Meadow (23.4 miles) includes Star Lake. Freel Peak would mean taking a side trip.

• Big Meadow to Echo Lake (17.5 miles) includes Showers Lake.

• Echo Lake to Barker Pass (32.7 miles) can be broken up by popping out at Bayview Campground.

• Barker Pass to Tahoe City (16.7 miles) has few views of Lake Tahoe, but includes Paige Meadow.

The TRTA has various memberships available, guided treks, and volunteer opportunities. More info is available online.

Lake Tahoe campgrounds opening for season

Emerald Bay Boat-in Campground opens May 23 on a first-come,

first-served basis.

Reservations will be needed starting June 13 through Labor Day. Call 800.444.7275 to book a site.

D.L. Bliss campground is first-come, first-served until June 11. To book a spot, call 530.525.7232.

U.S. Forest Service campgrounds in the Lake Tahoe Basin are all set to be open by June 1. Kaspian, Meeks Bay, Fallen Leaf, Nevada Beach and Zephyr Cove are already open.

Boat inspections required at Donner Lake

Watercraft inspections have begun at the Donner Lake public boat on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, with seven-day week inspections starting June 1.

In January, Truckee passed an ordinance requiring mandatory inspections on all motorized and/or trailered watercraft, and other watercraft having water ballast tanks, prior to launching at Donner Lake. Inspections are to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species into Donner Lake.

To help pay for the startup costs associated with the program, the town was awarded a $10,000 grant from the Truckee River Fund at the Community Foundation of Western Nevada.

Truckee Donner Recreation and Park District staff will be performing all inspections.

Watercraft identified as high risk will be required to be decontaminated before being able to launch in Donner Lake. Decontaminations will be available for a fee and will take place at Alpine Meadows off Highway 89, and Northstar off Highway 267.

More information on watercraft inspections at Donner Lake is online.