McCloud River not an ordinary paddle



The Reed sisters – Jann, from left, Pam and Tami – paddle on the McCloud. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

McCLOUD – The Hearst Castle of the north is a little more difficult to get to than the one in San Simeon that is now part of the State Park system. But it's worth the paddle.

Going up the McCloud River the Wyntoon spread that is owned by the Hearst Corporation is not open to tours. Rumor has it Patty Hearst calls this castle in the North State home.



Tom and Pam approaching Wyntoon.

It was Phoebe Apperson Hearst who first purchased the land along the river. Her only son, media mogul William Randolph Hearst, took over the deed when she died. Now the corporation has title to the property, which is 67,000 acres in dense forest, with some of the structures right along the river.

The water is how the public can get a glimpse – via kayak or canoe. The roads leading into the compound are private.

Julia Morgan designed this estate, just like she did San Simeon.



Tami and Tom in clear waters.

Wyntoon got its name from the local Wintu Indian tribe that used to call this part of Northern California home.

This is the area where Hearst was going to re-create a 13th century monastery. Those stones instead ended up in Vina at the Abbey of New Clairvaux.

Last weekend eight of us set off to see what my sister, Pam,

and her boyfriend, Tom, have been talking about – water that changes colors, at times so clear it makes Lake Tahoe look cloudy, and a house that is beyond ordinary.

It takes us less than two hours to get to the estate. Sue and are in our canoe, while my three sisters and their significant others are in individual kayaks.



Much of this section of the McCloud is emerald in color.

The water is like glass. Pine trees come down to the water's edge. At times the embankment is extremely steep. There is little opportunity to beach, but that doesn't bother us.

The few motorboats that are out are full of people fishing for rainbow and brown trout. They are courteous as they pass, slowing so their wake is gentle.

As we paddle upstream the water begins to change. From the dock it started off as an emerald green. It becomes more teal. Then it's sparkling clear to a depth of at least 10 feet in some spots.

Normally it's the shore during a canoe voyage that captures my attention. This time it's the water. It's mesmerizing.

Soon we reach our destination – Wyntoon. Signs say don't trespass. Instead we take pictures of the rock and wood structures that in some ways do resemble a castle.

My brother-in-law, Mike, paddles up a bit farther to the

rapids where instead of getting anywhere he gets a workout.

We head back, taking our time, chatting among ourselves and wishing the headwind would go away.

A bald eagle swoops down and successfully plucks lunch from the lake. We aren’t the only ones enjoying the McCloud.

Bike group honors those who help the sport

The 2012 Lake Tahoe Bicycle Achievement and Service Awards are given out by the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition each year to an individual, business, organization and agency who have demonstrated their advancement of bicycling in the Lake Tahoe area.

This year’s achievement award recipients are:

Tom Wendell, Individual Category. Wendell is well known in the South Tahoe bicycle community as a committed and longstanding bicycle advocate. In the 1980s, he helped co-found and became president of one of the first bicycle organizations – the Tahoe Regional Advocates for Cycling (TRAC). Under his leadership, TRAC first championed the idea of the city of South Lake Tahoe becoming designated as a Bicycle-Friendly Community by the national bike advocacy organization, League of American Bicyclists.

Design Workshop, Business Category. Design Workshop is a leading community design and planning company that has and continues to be a key contributor to many of the regional community plans and bike path designs. They often help

graphically and strategy layout visions of future projects to help stakeholders and public visualize the future of their community.

Barton Health, Organization Category. Barton Health's family of doctors, nurses and supportive staff, including, Barton Center for Orthopedics, have taken a leadership role in providing bicycle education for the public.

Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park, Agency Category. Over the past several years, the Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park has been collaborating with Tahoe Rim Trail Association, and the recently revitalized Tahoe Area Mountain Bike Association for the building of new and maintenance of old single track trails throughout the Spooner Lake Park – the site of one of America's Top Ten Mountain Bike Trails – the Flume Trail.

2012 Lake Tahoe Bicycle Service Award Recipient: Rudy Pakes, South Tahoe resident.

Supermoon to dance across the sky Sunday

By Scott Neuman, NPR

The largest full moon of the year will grace the night sky Sunday as our nearest neighbor in space makes its closest approach.

The moon will reach its closest perigee of 2013, dominating the sky. For about a half-hour of the event, the moon will also turn full – a confluence of events that produces a so-

called supermoon. The full moon on Sunday will appear to be 14 percent to 30 percent brighter than it does when it’s at the other end of its orbit, known as apogee.

At closest approach, the moon will be 221,300 miles from Earth. A few days later, on July 6, it will be at its most distant apogee of the year at 252,583 miles.



Sunday will be a supermoon.
Photo/Huffington Post

Moonrise occurs at about 8:50pm on the East Coast and at about 8:29pm on the West Coast.

As Hoax Slayer, a Snopes-like website dedicated to “debunking email hoaxes and exposing Internet scams,” notes: “Some of the circulating messages tend to exaggerate how big the moon will actually appear. And, of course, it will not appear bright purple or blue as suggested by some circulating graphics. Nevertheless, June 23 should present a great opportunity to view and photograph the moon in all its splendor.”

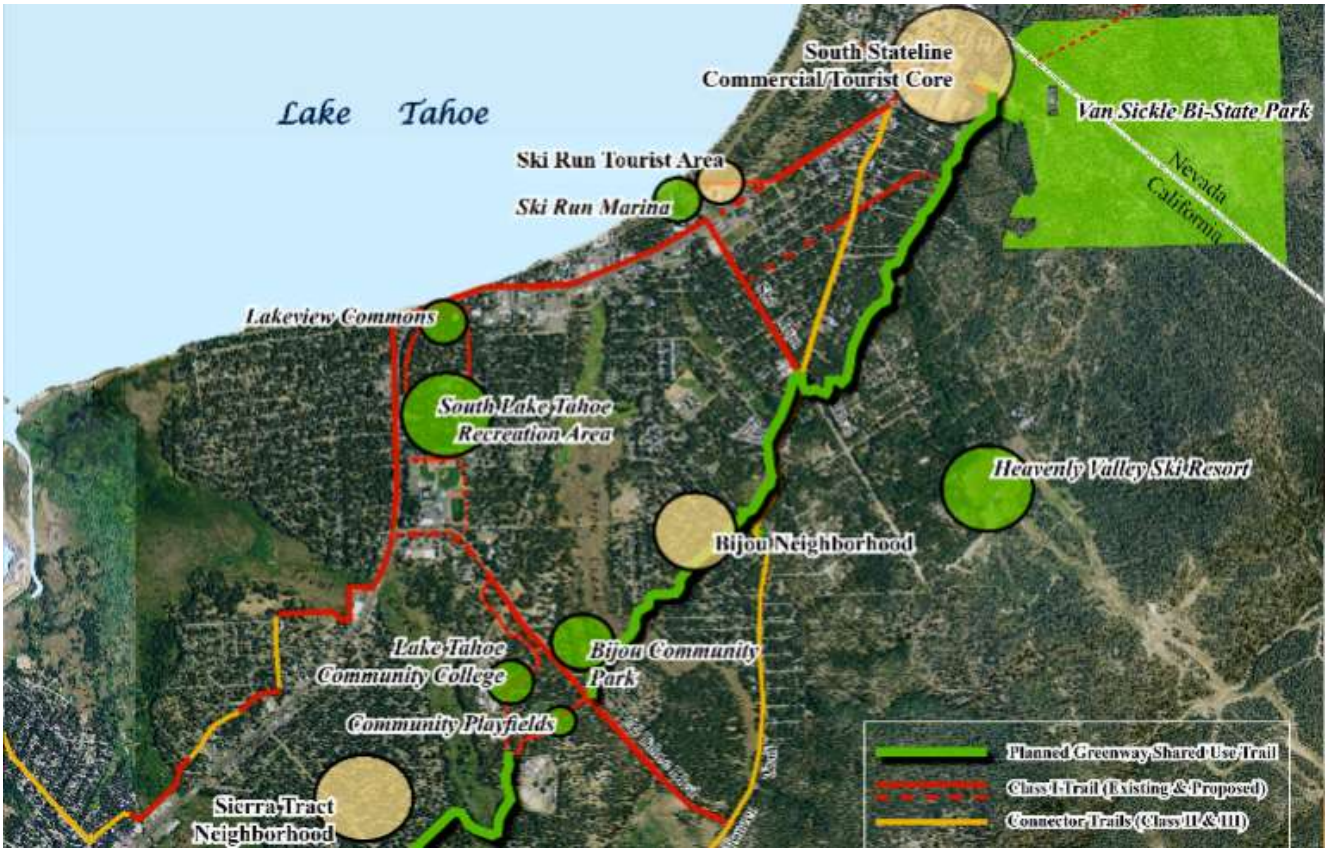
LiveScience also writes about the myth of the supermoon, which it says has been blamed for everything “from the sinking of the Titanic to Japan’s earthquake and tsunami of 2011.”

“But Earth science experts say linking geological events to the full moon is foolish. The gravitational changes created by a few tens of thousands of miles of difference in distance between the moon and Earth aren’t enough to alter tectonic

forces in any meaningful way. …

“Nor have studies turned up evidence that the moon affects human health and behavior. A 1985 review of research published in the journal Psychological Bulletin found no convincing evidence that full moons spur mental hospital admission uptakes, psychiatric disturbances, homicides or other crimes. A 2010 study similarly found a lack of excess criminal lunacy on full-moon days.”

Initial Greenway Bike Path phase coming in ’14



Planned and existing bike trails on the South Shore. Map/CTC

By Kathryn Reed

The significance of a stretch of bike trail cannot be measured in its length.

Such is the case with the initial phase of the South Tahoe Greenway Trail that is slated to be built next summer. It will be less than a half-mile and comes with a construction price tag of about $500,000.

The money to build what is being called Phase 1A is in hand and was allocated at Thursday's California Tahoe Conservancy board meeting.

In 2008, the CTC was projecting the entire 9.2-mile trail would cost $20 million to build.

While that entire project that has been on the books since 2002 is still on the drawing board, it is now being cobbled together, but in a way that is designed to attract future funding.

"We strategized how we were going to phase this carefully so we could attract additional funding," Sue Rae Irelan, with the CTC, told *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting. "If you can make transportation an argument, there will be bike funding available."

This initial phase is in a heart of a community that relies heavily on walking and biking as its modes of transportation.

Today, grant dollars go to entities that also have a proven track record. The CTC has built numerous bike trails on the California side of the basin.

The Greenway Trail has been Irelan's baby since the get-go.

"It's just going to feel so wonderful to ride this first section of trail," Irelan said.

It will be 10-feet wide, with 2-foot shoulders, meet ADA requirements and have a grade of less than 5 percent.

The entire project is now three phases. And within phase 1 are three phases. Phase 1A is 0.47 miles linking the Bijou neighborhood to the edge of Bijou Meadow. It will be ready to ride at the end of the 2014 construction season.

Phase 1B hooks up at the meadow and connects to Bijou Community Park and crosses Al Tahoe Boulevard to connect to Lake Tahoe Community College and the community ball field.

Phase 1C connects on the other side of 1A and goes to Ski Run Boulevard.

All of Phase 1 is 3.62 miles. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has issued a permit for the entire phase.

Phases 2 and 3 include going to Meyers in one direction and Van Sickle Bi-state Park in the other.

Phases 1B and 1C may cost more because they involve boardwalks to cross stream environmental zones. But the extent of those crossings is up in the air with the TRPA Regional Plan update not classifying all SEZ areas the same. And with coverage for bike trails not part of the equation, that, too, could drop the price.

This will be a CTC owned trail. Usually the state agency is a funding pass-through of sorts to other entities. This means the CTC also needs to figure out how to pay for maintenance and operation costs.

Irelan at the June 20 meeting told the board because CTC is not eligible for voter approved Measure R funds for bike trail maintenance it’s possible an agreement with the city will be worked out so the local government could use Measure R dollars for the Greenway.

That topic has not been discussed by the Measure R board, which consists of a city rep, El Dorado County member and Tahoe Paradise Park person.

Also at the Thursday board meeting, the board allocated up to $350,000 for the remainder of the Sawmill bike path to be finished in 2014.

Eldorado Forest leadership to change in July

Laurence Crabtree will take over as forest supervisor of the Eldorado National Forest on July 29.

Kathy Hardy’s last day was June 14. Jayne Handley is the interim acting forest supervisor.

Crabtree comes from the Plumas National Forest, where he has been the No. 2 position.

Crabtree graduated from the University of Idaho where he studied forestry and entomology. He was born in Susanville.

“I am pleased and humbled to be the Eldorado National Forest supervisor,” Crabtree said in a statement. “In my new role I intend to be a part of the community and to ensure that the Eldorado continues to move forward with the challenges and opportunities that come from caring for the land and serving people.”

Laurence and his wife Denice have three grown children and four grandchildren.

Weekend rain to bring prescribed fires

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews may resume prescribed fire operations on the South Shore June 23.

If forecasted rain moves into the basin, crews expect to burn approximately 10 acres near the Cold Creek area. Operations are scheduled to last through Tuesday, weather and conditions permitting.

Residents and visitors can expect to see smoke from this prescribed fire project area. The Forest Service strives to minimize the impacts of smoke on local communities. Smoke-sensitive residents should consider staying indoors and keeping doors, windows and outside vents closed.

To directly receive prescribed fire updates, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Wildflower season beginning to blossom in Tahoe



A setting sun casts a spotlight on lupine among the aspens. Photos/Kathryn Reed

With a dry winter, wildflower season is bound to arrive early in the greater Lake Tahoe area.

Reports from the Carson Pass are that the flowers are not out yet.

However, at lake level, lupine, mules' ear and Indian paintbrush are creating a purple-yellow-red mosaic on the landscape.

With summer now here, temps are supposed to be in the 70s starting Saturday. This should help the wildflowers blossom even more. There is a slight chance of showers on Sunday.

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association, Sorensen's Resort and other entities organize wildflower hikes at various times for those who want to know where to look and what they are looking at.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

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Cycling event has something for all riding levels

The fifth annual Alta Alpina Challenge: Riding the Wild Sierra is June 29. It is for cyclists of all abilities.

How long is the ride? For those looking for some family fun with the kids there are 15- and 20-mile routes in scenic Diamond Valley. For those cyclist wanting more, there are other options, all starting in Turtle Rock Park in Markleeville.

The Wild Sierra Metric is 64 miles with 5,000 feet of climbing. Wild Sierra Century is 110 miles and 11,000 feet of climbing. The 5 Pass Challenge has 135 miles and 16,000 feet.

To really get your heart pumping, there is "The World's Toughest Double Century" with 198 miles and 20,300 feet of climbing.

There is also the option to "Build Your Own Ride" by selecting your own route.

Included in the ride are ample, well-stocked rest stops with lots of goodies. Sag support, lunch and a post-ride dinner are provided, along with a frame-ready rider number "bib" that documents your accomplishment with a colorful sticker for each pass completed.

Alta Alpina Cycling Club is sponsoring the event.

For more information, contact Mel Maalouf at (775) 450.3886, president@altaalpina.org or Michael Bayer at 877.845.2453 or challenge@altaalpina.org.

Foldable bike helmets may be a new trend

By John Metcalfe, Atlantic Cities

Normally, seeing a bike helmet squished down like a crumpled melon would invoke feelings of dread: It's a clear signal that somebody had a bad accident.

But with the Closca "Turtle" helmet, it just indicates an unusual design job. The helmet's three sections compact to less than one half of its full size, allowing it to slip into messenger bags already bulging with iPads, fancy-ass headphones and other accoutrements of the urban-style centurion.

The "Turtle" is being marketed on Kickstarter right now by Closca, an up-and-coming maker of helmets based in Valencia, Spain. (It's one prototype in a small field of folding helmets, like the Transformers-looking object from Overade and BioLogic's fencing mask.) The Closca guys conceived of the accordioning brain-guard a few years back during an argument about helmet usage: Why do some people still not wear them, they wondered, when they so clearly help save lives?

They decided the answer was twofold: It can be a chore to carry them around when not cycling, and they detract from the cool, hair-blowing-in-the-wind look that free-scalpers enjoy.

So they built this hardhat to address both issues. A rider can collapse the helmet in a second or less into an easy-to-store, book-like object.

And as for the fashion issue, the Closca team has conjured up "interchangeable textile covers" that they say "have been designed by experts following the latest trendy patterns".

The trendiness becomes obvious, maybe, once you see actual people wearing them.

Closca promises that its telescoping noggin-wrapper, if funded, will swiftly become "part of the urban cyclists' way of dressing and lifestyle." Seeing as how they were only $5,227 toward a $45,000 goal on Monday evening, that is a big

“if.”

Smoke in Tahoe from fires outside basin

The smoke that people on the South Shore are smelling is from fires outside of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

There are fires burning near Mariposa on Highway 140, one of the roads leading into Yosemite National Park. The 2.5-square-mile fire that started Sunday is 15 percent contained. More than 100 houses have been evacuated.

There is a red flag warning today for the entire Lake Tahoe Basin and much of western Nevada. The National Weather Service in Reno warns that “the combination of gusty winds and low humidity will create critical fire weather conditions.”

– Lake Tahoe News staff report