Advocates lobby for second boat wash at Fallen Leaf Lake, agencies in basin cry poor

By Jessie Marchesseau

Fallen Leaf Lake is clean. That is, it is still free of aquatic invasive species.

The Fallen Leaf Protection Association would like to keep it that way. Members of the Lake Tahoe Aquatic Invasive Species Program, made up of dozens of organizations including the TRPA, TRCD and USFS, would also like to keep it that way. However, coming to an agreement on the best way to go about it has proven to be a daunting task.

Aquatic invasive species, including Eurasian watermilfoil and Asian clams, have already been identified in Lake Tahoe and Donner Lake. Spooner, Martis, Bucks and Lilly Lake have also fallen victim to the watermilfoil. But other area lakes including Echo, Boca, Stampede, Prosser and Fallen Leaf have all managed to keep their free and clean status.



Some people would like it mandatory for non-motorized watercraft to be inspected before entering Fallen Leaf Lake. Photos/Jessie Marchesseau

Once infected, these species are nearly impossible to eradicate and are costly to control. The communities surrounding Lake Mead spend more than $20 million a year in an effort to control one of the worst AIS infestations in the U.S. These invasive creatures can affect water clarity, native plant and animal life, clog water intake pipes and, if the infestation is bad enough, even affect water potability.

In 2011, the roving non-motorized watercraft inspector at Fallen Leaf Lake logged 428 inspections. Of those, 18 were not clean, drained and dry (the most effective method for preventing transport of AIS). However, more than half came from infested waters or waters whose AIS status was unknown. Each one of these watercraft poses a threat to the waters of Fallen Leaf Lake. For this reason, members of the FLPA do not believe the current system of prevention is good enough.

Under the present plan, boat inspections are mandatory for motorized boats entering Lake Tahoe, Echo Lake and Fallen Leaf. Fallen Leaf also has a mandatory boat wash at its marina where every watercraft, motorized or not, is thoroughly washed with hot water by trained personnel.

“Everyone is real cooperative,” Jerry Giese, weekend harbor master at the Fallen Leaf Lake Marina, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Nobody wants to be the one to put something in the lake.”

In addition to the boat wash at the south end of the lake, USFS personnel screen everyone entering the campground at the north end of the lake with any type of watercraft. They ask how long it’s been since it was in the water, how long it has been dry and what water it has been in within the last month. The personnel write all this down, along with the license plate of the vehicle and check their list of infected waters. If the boat came from infected water, they call the AIS hotline set up by Tahoe Resource Conservation District and send the guest to the boat inspection station in Meyers.

The TRCD and Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District also share the cost of a full-time roving non-motorized watercraft inspector. She roams the campground, boat launches, and other areas inspecting watercraft and educating paddlers about AIS and the measures necessary to prevent infestation.

The FLPA has been pushing for years to install a second boat wash at the north end of the lake specifically for non-motorized watercraft. It is already mandatory for all motorized boats to be washed; they want to extend that mandate to non-motorized.

The U.S. Forest Service, which owns the campground, and other members of the non-motorized watercraft working group have been reluctant to approve the group’s proposal and have denied it a number of times, including this spring.

“No one in the working group was dead set against the idea or

thought it was a bad idea," said Ted Thayer, aquatic invasive species program manager for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

However, Thayer and other members of the working group stated that as a whole they believe adding the additional wash would not be the most effective use of limited public funds. They decided sticking with the current plan of education and outreach is a more effective strategy.

Mike Kraft said the community members had originally offered to foot the bill for the wash as well as provide personnel to run it when they first proposed the idea years ago. The money has since been put to other uses. But some members of the working group thought it might be just what they need to get their plan passed at this point.



Fallen Leaf Lake's boat wash is at the marina.

"It would be a great reason to revisit it, if the Protection District could provide funds, so there would be no burden to the group," said Patrick Stone, invasive species control project manager at the TRPA.

For now, paddlers will have to clean, drain and dry their own boats before heading to Fallen Leaf or drive to the south end of the lake where marina personnel are more than happy to do

it for free.

To learn more about preventing the spread of AIS and become a registered self-inspector, go online.

TRTA teaching Backpacking 101 for women

Tahoe Rim Trail Association is conducting Women’s Backpacking 101, an all female group event to learn skills and techniques for staying safe and comfortable in the backcountry.

The program will cover backpacking basics, including trip planning; how to pack; bear awareness; campsite selection and set up; meal preparation; and Leave No Trace principles. Attendees must be able to hike four or more miles per day at elevation with a 20-30 pound backpack. Participants must provide all of their own gear, food and clothing. Some gear can be rented for a small fee from the TRTA.

The trip is July 28-29 and is limited to 10 participants. The TRTA is holding a similar program open to both men and women on Aug. 25-26.

Register online. For more information, go to the TRTA website or call Ashley Vater at (775) 298.0012.

Bodybuilding show adds health-fitness expo

The National Physique Committee sanctioned amateur bodybuilding, figure, bikini, physique and fitness championship the Tahoe Show is Aug. 25 at MontBleu in Stateline.

The 2012 Tahoe Show adds a Health and Fitness Expo, new men's and women's physique divisions, live video web-stream, new stage design and a People's Choice Award where the audience will text their vote for the best athlete.

This will be the first time a live web-stream with a text message People's Choices Award has been included at a bodybuilding competition. The winners of this "American Idol" style voting will be in *Muscular Development* magazine.

The promoters of the Tahoe Show are bringing back a number features that made the show a success in 2011.

From the website the competitor can register to compete, as well as purchase show photos, tanning, event DVD, hair and makeup, a lakeside photo shoot the Sunday after the show and new this year, a posing clinic with IFBB pro bodybuilder Ben Pakulski and NPC nationals figure competitor Jesse Hilgenburg.

Expected at the show are about 200 competitors and more than 1,700 spectators.

For tickets, information, registration and a full event schedule go online, email Chris@TahoeShow.com or call (775) 267.7564.

Clock ticking for committee to recommend field upgrades

By Anne Knowles

In the end, it may come down to the difference between wish lists and must haves.

The Fields Advisory Committee of the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority meets today for the final time before making its recommendation on how to allocate money to fix up South Lake Tahoe fields used for baseball, softball and soccer.



Dugouts are just one issue with the softball field at South Tahoe High School. Photo/LTN file

The committee meets at 4pm at Lake Tahoe Airport, where members will discuss how to spend $500,000 of Measure R funds on all or some of the fields at South Tahoe Middle School, Al Tahoe, Sierra House School, Meyers Magnet School, and the South Tahoe High School softball field. The committee's

recommendation will be delivered to the JPA at its meeting on July 27.

On a public field trip to the various sites July 2, there seemed to be committee consensus that the priority should be finishing the high school softball field first, although there was a difference of opinion on how extensive the work should be there.

From $40,000 to $60,000 more is needed to complete construction of the field and to add permanent fencing, a flagpole and a public address system, said Sue Novasel, a Lake Tahoe Unified School District board member.

Those additions, Novasel believes, would bring the city into Title IX compliance.

“Those are the three things I think that are needed to put the field on par with the boys,” said Novasel.

So far, construction on the field, including dugouts, has cost about $154,000, said Novasel, and the school board at its last meeting approved up $160,000.

During the field trip, committee member Marilyn Breisacher and Steve Morales, facilities director for the district, locked horns over a “wish list” of additional items for the high school softball field.

Breisacher presented a rendering of the field that included shortening the dugout to give people sitting in the bleachers better visibility of the bases as well as a plan to raise the floor in the announcers’ booth.

“I couldn’t justify it,” said Morales, referring to the changes in the dugout. “I believe we created line of sight.”

The committee also visited several other fields and discussed plans for them that included overhauling the Al Tahoe Fields with a new, full-size baseball field, upgrades to the two

Little League fields, and a replacement T-ball field as well as a scorer's booth and bleachers at the South Tahoe Middle School softball field.

The fields committee will make its final recommendation at the JPA meeting on July 27 at 9am at Lake Tahoe Airport.

Celebs ready to waltz their way down Edgewood's greens

By Kathryn Reed

Agility, athleticism, funny clothes. Those are just some of the things dancing and golf have in common.

Jack Wagner, Donald Driver, Emmit Smith, Jerry Rice, John O'Hurley, and Jason Taylor are six other things the two activities have in common.

These six men will be at Edgewood Tahoe this week for the 23rd annual American Century Celebrity Championship Tournament in Stateline July 17-22. These six also have all participated in "Dancing with the Stars".



The American Century Championship is July 17-22 at Edgewood Tahoe. Photos/LTN file

Think about how graceful a running back can be as he runs down the sidelines, flitting seemingly effortlessly between defenders. All that incredible foot movement proved beneficial for Driver, a Pro Bowl running back with the Green Bay Packers, who won the dancing event this season. Hall of Fame running back Smith was the top dancer the year he participated.

While Lawrence Taylor won't be at this year's celebrity golf tournament, the Hall of Fame linebacker has been a dancer and a golfer since retiring from the New York Giants.

A 2011 "Dancing with the Stars" contestant on the Australia version – Jan Stephenson – will be playing in Thursday's celebrity-am event. Stephenson was one of the top golfers in the 1970s and 1980s, having won the LPGA championship in 1982 and the U.S. Women's Open a year later.

Brandi Chastain, former soccer player, is returning as the lone female player of the 80-plus field of golfers.

Another noteworthy woman will be on the greens this year, but behind a microphone. Annika Sörenstam, who has a second home in Incline Village, is a guest analyst each Thursday on the Golf Channel. This week she will do commentary for the network during the tournament.

Sörenstam retired four years ago from professional golf as the best golfer of her generation, if not all time.



Tony Romo is the favored to win the tournament, not just the hearts of young women.

It’s possible she will have a driver in her hand Thursday and not the mic.

Considering Sörenstam has her signature wine label with Wente, she may not be on the 17th hole with the guys when they participate in the Korbel sponsored ace contest on Friday. Participants will vie for $250,000 from 155 yards out. If they sink it on one shot, they split the winnings with the Lake Tahoe Community College Foundation.

Quarterbacks are often a crowd favorite. Tony Romo of the Cowboys is the favored to win, according to the bookies.

First-time QBs this year include Christian Ponder with the Vikings, Ryan Fitzpatrick with the Bills and Alex Smith with the Niners.

The 49er quarterbacks are a mainstay at this event. In the past John Brodie, Steve Spurrier, Steve Young, Trent Dilfer, and Steve Bono have all participated in the ACC.

A QB with local appeal, Aaron Rodgers of Green Bay by way of Chico and Cal, will be returning.

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Facts:

• Practice rounds are Tuesday and Wednesday.

• Pro-am is Thursday.

• Actual tournament is Friday-Sunday.

• Tickets vary depending on the day and package. They may be bought online, at the gate or at Raley’s for a discount.

• NBC will cover it live Friday-Sunday.

• Parking is at the casinos.

City dwellers find wilderness closer to home

By Will Doig, Salon

Since 1979, Eddee Daniel has been hiking Milwaukee’s Cambridge Woods, part of an 800-acre swath of wilderness now called the Milwaukee River Greenway. Back then, the forest, which cuts straight through Wisconsin’s most crowded ZIP code, was largely shunned by the public. “There were vandals and drug dealers,” says Daniel. “It’s changed in a big way, and mostly in a healthy way.”

Today, on any given summer weekend, the Greenway teems with

hikers, canoers and mountain bikers. But it’s still more wilderness than anything, with few of the accouterments of an organized park. In it, you can see one of modern urbanism’s most unexpected traits unfolding: a renewed appreciation for wild space in cities – not just “green space,” but actual swamps, forests, wetlands and streams.

Part of this is the result of changing demographics – the growing number of “urbaneers” dragging kayaks into aqueducts, the same city dwellers who prompted REI to open a giant store in Manhattan. But it’s also part of a growing realization that the earth’s natural processes can be harnessed in ways that benefit even the most urbanized area.

Tim Carter, director of the Center for Urban Ecology at Butler University, talks about these benefits as “ecosystem services” – ways that mother nature can help cities by doing what she does anyway. For example: “We’ve typically used pipes to drain our urban lands of water,” says Carter. “But a more highly engineered wetland could do the same job as greener infrastructure.” Los Angeles has been experimenting with this. In February, it opened its second engineered wetland in South L.A., a boggy, weedy marsh on the site of a former MTA bus yard. Pools of rainwater filled with naturally occurring bacteria scrub storm water clean before it makes its way to city drains. The spot doubles as a park, even as it serves its practical purpose.

Read the whole story

White, Anderson take home

ESPY awards

Two-time Olympic gold medalist Shaun White, who rides for Northstar, took home his fifth straight ESPY for Best Male Action Sport athlete and three time X Games gold medalist Jamie Anderson, from South Lake Tahoe and who rides for Sierra, earned her first ESPY as Best Female Action Sport athlete Wednesday.

White produced the first perfect score when he won the X Games halfpipe last winter with a score of 100 for his fifth straight X Games halfpipe gold. White beat out surfer Kelly Slater, snowboarder Travis Rice and motocross athlete Ryan Villopoto for the ESPY, which is awarded based on public voting.

Anderson, who beat out Olympic gold medalist Kelly Clark, Canadian freeskier Kaya Turski and surfer Carissa Moore for the ESPY, won her third X Games slopestyle gold medal last season at Aspen. Her 2011/2012 season consisted of 10 podiums, including two X Games gold medals and second at the TTR World Snowboarding Championships.

The sport will make its Olympic debut in 2014 in Sochi, Russia.

Ski resorts offer summer fun

By Paul McHugh, Sacramento Bee

Each fall, California ski areas hop to a big list of tasks – bringing in supplies, hiring “lifties,” spraying a base of

manmade snow.

But many resorts become almost as busy as they prepare to devote resources to summer recreation.

They're also getting creative. The 2012 menu of summer activities goes past staples such as concerts or mountain biking on ski trails to include flat-water paddling, disc golf, star- gazing, skateboarding, zipline rides and even wacky pursuits such as obstacle races through mud.

"Summer programs for resorts have become vital to our business," said Bob Roberts, director of the California Ski Industry Association. "Fewer places are putting a chain across the road and closing up. Summer revenue helps a resort cover fixed costs and provides jobs for employees you want to keep."

It's true for resorts small or large. At the Bear Valley Cross Country ski area on Highway 4, founder Paul Petersen morphs his business into the Bear Valley Adventure Co. in late May. Summer activity today constitutes around 20 percent of his business.

Read the whole story

An overlooked alpine lake nestled in the Sierra

By Jill Oberly, Reno Gazette-Journal

There could have been ski lifts carved out of the mountainside, and crisscrossing trails leading the way down to a European-style village nestled on the edge of a clear blue mountain lake.

A picture of ski resort perfection.

Instead, reality is a different kind of perfection. Crisp, cold water laps against a rocky shore. And on a recent weekend hike, there is not a soul in sight.

Only 10 miles from Truckee, Calif., Independence Lake feels as if it is worlds away. The alpine lake has remained relatively untouched and unknown.

A partnership between NV Energy and The Nature Conservancy was formed to make sure it stays that way.

“When you see if from the air, it is hard to believe that it is only 10 miles from Truckee and Interstate 80. It is so close but relatively unknown,” said Jeff Ceccarelli, senior vice president of energy supply at NV Energy.

Read the whole story

Olympic hopefuls turn focus on attracting other ski events

By Anne Knowles

Members of groups working to attract the Olympics to Lake Tahoe said they will continue efforts to attract major ski events to the area even though the 2022 Winter Olympics is now off the table.

“It’s always been part of our original charter to attract national and international events in both alpine and cross

country," Andy Wirth, president and CEO of Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows and the chairman and president of the Lake Tahoe Winter Olympic Committee Board of Directors, told Lake Tahoe News. "We can try to do that as individual resorts but it we would accomplish more if we are organized."

Wirth said he wasn't surprised by the U.S. Olympic Committee's decision, announced this week, to not submit a bid for the 2022 Winter Olympics and instead focus on either the 2024 Summer Olympics or the 2026 Olympics.

"The USOC staff was in constant contact with us and we were very appreciative," said Wirth. "The decision was quite understandable, logical and rational."

Wirth said the board has assembled a lot of "engaged and passionate people," and would continue its efforts to bring sports tourism to the area.

"We'll capitalize on work done to date for any potential bid opportunities," he said.

"The decision is not one we had hoped for but one we understand," said Nevada Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki, who is chairman of the Reno Tahoe Winter Games Coalition. "We respect their decision. And I believe the Lake Tahoe region is a marvelous bid possibility going forward."

The USOC said it is now looking into whether to bid for the summer games to be held in a dozen years or the winter games in 2026, and will likely announce that decision in December.

If the USOC opts for the 2024 Summer Olympics, then the 2026 winter games will be again off the table.