Fundraiser benefits trail system in Carson Valley

The Carson Valley Trails Association fundraiser for the Carson Valley Discovery Trail is June 19 from 5-8pm at the C.V.I.C. Hall in Minden.

The event will feature live and silent auctions, games, live music performed by Foothill Road, complimentary refreshments and no-host bar.

Tickets are $10 and may be purchased by calling (775) 265.3736.

This event will kick off CVTA's fundraising effort for the 100-mile Carson Valley Discovery Trail, a 100-mile loop trail system envisioned to eventually encircle the Carson Valley. This trail system, which is part of the CVTA's Strategic Plan, generally follows the Douglas County Trails Master Plan, and is on the way to becoming a "destination trail", with recognition as a National Recreation Trail.

Ball field advocates take convoluted approach to decision-making

By Kathryn Reed

Recommendations for how to spend $500,000 to improve ball fields on the California side of the South Shore are expected to be discussed in July by the board that oversees recreation

Measure R.

However, the committee that is tasked with coming up with the ideas in its last two meetings did not cover everything on its agenda, so a special meeting may need to be called for the seven to complete their job.



At this pace, no improvements will be made to South Tahoe ball fields this season. Photo/LTN file

About half of the May 21 meeting was devoted to discussing whether Assembly Bill 2404 is relevant. The committee said yes, though, no vote was taken.

South Lake Tahoe City Attorney Patrick Enright told them the California law is relevant.

“The statute doesn’t make a distinction of whose land it is, but how it’s used,” Enright said.

Entities have until 2015 to come into compliance.

But committee members also said it’s not up to them to determine if their recommendations comply with this California law that requires boys’ and girls’ athletic facilities be of equal quality.

Committee member Ken Riegal wondered if the money had to go to ball fields so then the whole boy-girl equity issued could be avoided.

“You are always going to have to deal with AB2404,” Enright informed the committee.

Chuck Leonard, who chairs the committee, said, “We are so bogged down with the male-female issue, we are not getting anything done.”

But that boy-girl, man-woman thing is relevant. They could be wasting their time, the public’s and potentially the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority board’s if they come up with ideas that cannot be implemented because of AB2404.

What the committee has not gotten is a legal opinion about whether inequity exists today based on the condition of the fields or even what the ruling would be when the girls’ varsity softball field is completed at South Tahoe High School.

If the area were deemed to be out of compliance, then an assessment of what needs to be done to right the wrong would be necessary.

If they are in compliance, then what’s needed is to know what would tip the scale either way to ensure improvements don’t inadvertently render the area out of compliance.

Instead of pursuing this course of action, the committee went over a wish list. A list that was not completed before the meeting was adjourned just after 6pm – after two hours of dialog.

Hal Cole, who is South Lake Tahoe City Council’s rep to the JPA board, was at the meeting. He told *Lake Tahoe News* the committee should figure out if it makes more sense to spend

the bulk of the money on one substantive upgrade or parcel it out in nickels and dimes.

Brett Long, a local landscape architect who designed South Tahoe High School's football field and the track-field at South Tahoe Middle School, spoke early about how the committee needs to have designs before a cost estimate can be relevant. He has contacted JPA staff member John Upton and board member Norma Santiago about providing some designs for free.

Steve Knoll, who is in the same profession as Long and is on the fields committee, bristled at this. At the meeting he told everyone the reason he joined the committee is because he has expertise in field design.

"The cost to do public works projects is staggering," Steve Morales, facilities director for Lake Tahoe Unified School District said. "I doubt any of the facilities are ADA compliant except for the South Tahoe Middle School and the college field."

Field improvements could trigger the need to bring dugouts, bleachers and restrooms into compliance for the disabled.

Besides Cole, the other elected official in attendance was LTUSD board member Sue Novasel. The school district is at the table because most of the fields are on land it owns. The city maintains most of the fields.

However, it was pointed out Monday that the last use agreement between the district and city expired about a dozen years ago.

If the committee were to pay for city staff time, the half million dollars might be spent before the JPA board ever had to weigh-in. At Monday's meeting Enright was there most of the time, the assistant city attorney popped in, the paid legal intern was in attendance most of the time, the parks supervisor was at the table the whole meeting, and his boss was there much of the time. From Lake Tahoe Unified School

District, Morales was the lone paid staff member sitting for two hours.

Upton does get paid. That’s out of the Measure R money.

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The next ball fields committee meeting is June 25, 4-6pm in the downstairs conference room at Lake Tahoe Airport.

U.S. Olympians getting used to foreign soil

By David Wharton, Los Angeles Times

When the 2012 London Olympics begin less than three months from now, it will mark an anniversary that Americans might not want to celebrate.

Ten years have passed since the Games last took place on U.S. soil. And with the bidding process extended years in advance, this country’s next opportunity will not come around until 2022.

“That’s a problem,” said Anita DeFrantz, an International Olympic Committee member from Los Angeles. “We like hosting this event. It’s important to the psyche of our people.”

Los Angeles, Atlanta and Salt Lake City proved to be successful host cities over the past three decades. DeFrantz is quick to point out that American broadcast deals and

corporate sponsorships account for 60 cents of every dollar that pours into the Olympic movement.

Yet the IOC flatly rejected bids by New York and Chicago in recent years.

Read the whole story

Volunteers needed to remove watermilfoil from Tahoe

Lake Tahoe residents and visitors are invited to help with the removal one of Tahoe's most prolific aquatic invasive weeds, Eurasian watermilfoil, during the inaugural Community Aquatic Weeds Removal Project at Baldwin Beach on June 3.

The project is a partnership of the League to Save Lake Tahoe, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, and U.S. Forest Service and will occur in conjunction with the Tahoe Native Species Festival.

Volunteers will be placing bottom barriers in a large swale that parallels Lake Tahoe, which is infected with Eurasian watermilfoil. Volunteers will be needed for numerous tasks that will not require entering the swale. Volunteers of all ages and abilities are welcome to participate.

Registration is required. For more information or to sign-up, contact Flavia Sordelet at (530) 541.5388 or events@keeptahoeblue.org.

Birding festival on South Shore

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and the Tahoe Institute for Natural Science are putting on the third annual Lake Tahoe Bird Festival on June 2 from 10am-4pm.

The free event is at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center, located three miles north of South Lake Tahoe on Highway 89.

The event includes guided bird walks every hour from 10:30am-1:30pm along the Rainbow Trail, information on bird feeding and landscaping, a talk on binocular and spotting scope use, a migration discussion by Will Richardson and a presentation by master falconer Marie Gaspari Crawford that includes live birds of prey.

For a schedule of activities, go online.

Red flag fire warning for Tahoe on Monday

Firefighters in the Lake Tahoe-Carson City-Reno area will be on high alert Monday afternoon as winds increase and humidity drops.

“The combination of gusty winds and low humidity will create critical fire weather conditions Monday afternoon and evening,” the National Weather Service in Reno said.



P.J. White, 14, of Carson City isn't likely to find calm water Monday on the canals of Tahoe Keys like he did May 20. Photo/Kathryn Reed

A red flag warning is in effect from 1-11pm on May 21. A red flag warning means that critical fire weather conditions will occur.

A fire weather watch is in effect from Tuesday morning through Tuesday evening.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Lake Tahoe prime spot to see

Sunday’s solar eclipse

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

Stargazing enthusiasts across Northern California are mobilizing for the biggest event of its kind to visit the region in two decades: a “Ring of Fire” solar eclipse visible across half the state Sunday evening.

The so-called “annular” eclipse means the moon will pass directly in front of the sun without obscuring it completely. As a result, the sun will appear as an orange ring in the sky.

The moon will be at one of its more distant points in its orbit around Earth, making it appear about 94 percent of the sun’s diameter. The effect will be visible across virtually all of Northern California in a 200-mile-wide diagonal swath from the Oregon border to Lake Tahoe.

Some of the best viewing locations will include Crescent City, Redding, Susanville and, in Nevada, Pyramid Lake. These areas lie along the central path of the moon’s alignment with the sun on Sunday evening, and the eclipse will be truly concentric along this path.

People in many other areas of Northern California and northern Nevada will be able to observe the annular effect, although not perfectly concentric.

The eclipse is expected to begin at about 5:13pm, when the moon starts its transit in front of the sun. The full annular effect will be visible for four and a half minutes starting at about 6:26pm Sunday, though the exact time and duration will vary slightly depending on location.

Read the whole story

North Shore boat launches opening

Boating season is about to begin on the North Shore.

The North Tahoe Public Utility District has set hours for the North Tahoe Regional Park, Tahoe Vista Recreation Area Boat Launch and Coon Street Boat Launch.

North Tahoe Regional Park

Current hours are 7am-7:30pm. Beginning June 1, park hours will be from 7am-9pm.

Parking fees for the North Tahoe Regional Park are $3 for non-North Tahoe Public Utility District residents and free for residents.

Tahoe Vista Recreation Area

The boat launch opens for the season May 21, seven days a week from 7am-8pm.

Construction on the new parking lot for Tahoe Vista Recreation Area, on the orthwest corner of National Avenue and Highway 28, will take place this summer. Due to construction there will most likely be limited parking around TVRA.

Coon Street Boat Launch

The boat launch is open from 7am-7pm Thursday through Monday, closed Tuesday and Wednesday. These hours may be adjusted as the summer progresses and usage trends are established

Boat launch and parking fees

Boat launch fees for Tahoe Vista Recreation Area and Coon Street Boat Launch are $5 for North Tahoe Public Utility District residents and $10 for non-residents. Season passes good for both launches are available for $50 for residents and $250 for non-residents. Parking fees for both areas are $5 for North Tahoe Public Utility District residents and $10 for non-residents. Season parking passes that include both parking areas are available for $100 for residents and $250 for non-residents.

A night to learn about birds; a field trip to find them

Two birding events are coming to the North Shore in June.

The first is June 14 at 5:30pm where people can learn about Tahoe's avian summer visitors. This will be at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences (291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village).

Kirk Hardie, co-executive director of the Tahoe Institute for Natural Science, will be conducting both events.

The second is a bird watching walk on June 16 starting at the UC Davis Tahoe City Field Station. This is from 8-10am.

A $5 donation is suggested.

For additional information, contact (775) 881.7566, tercinfo@ucdavis.edu.

Truckee area boat inspections about to begin

Tahoe Resource Conservation District will again manage the Truckee Area Watercraft Inspection Program for 2012. Entering its third season, Truckee area inspections and boater education on aquatic invasive species will take place at Donner Lake and Boca, Prosser, and Stampede reservoirs from late May through September.

Current funding for Truckee Area watercraft inspections and outreach has been provided by the Truckee River Fund.

Boat inspections are the front line to prevent the introduction of AIS, as boats and other motorized watercraft are the largest vectors for spreading AIS into new water bodies.

Free decontaminations will be available for high risk vessels wishing to launch at Truckee area water bodies. These will occur at Alpine Meadows Transportation Station parking lot, off Highway 89 and Northstar’s Castle Peak parking lot off Highway 267.