TRCD receives cash for watercraft inspection program

The Truckee River Fund has awarded $267,267 to the Tahoe Resource Conservation District to protect Truckee area water bodies from the growing threat posed by aquatic invasive species.

The funding will also be utilized to work toward the implementation of a mandatory watercraft inspection program and the establishment of a stakeholder collaborative to fund a long-term, sustainable aquatic invasive species prevention program for the Truckee area.

Entering its third year of managing the Truckee Regional Aquatic Invasive Species Protection Program, the Tahoe RCD will continue to conduct watercraft inspections and develop and refine a comprehensive AIS education and outreach plan for the Truckee River watershed. Funding will also be utilized for early detection monitoring of AIS, an essential component of prevention programs.

Tahoe RCD and the Truckee River Watershed Council will be meeting with decision-makers in the coming weeks to develop an ordinance for mandatory boat inspections in the Truckee area. Boaters may see changes to the inspection process at Donner Lake and Stampede, Boca and Prosser reservoirs.

Eager skiers flock to Boreal

on opening day

By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

Within 15 minutes of opening, a lift line had already formed.

Keeping up its tradition of being the first ski area in Northern California to open for the season, Boreal Mountain Resort fired up its lift on Friday afternoon and hosted hundreds of snowboarders and a few skiers.

Boreal took advantage of cold overnight temperatures this week and used its snow-making machines to cover enough ground to open its terrain park, complete with seven features, including rails, jumps and boxes.

“We knew it was a holiday on Friday, Nevada Day, and a lot of people would be off, so we worked hard to make sure we could open,” said Jon Slaughter, director of marketing.

Friday marked the third year in a row that Boreal opened Oct. 29, he said.

Read the whole story

Looking at Nevadans who had an impact on the outdoors

By Emerson Marcus, Reno Gazette-Journal

The theme of the 73rd annual Nevada Day Parade is “The Great Outdoors.” Nevada Department of Wildlife spokesperson Chris Healy will preside as the grand marshal for the event, which

is Saturday in Carson City.

We spoke with UNR history professor Bill Rowley and former state archivist Guy Rocha to determine five of the top outdoorsmen and women who contributed to Nevada's history.

5. Sarah Winnemucca

Although Winnemucca doesn't necessarily fit with the great explorers of the West, she leaves a legacy as of one of the most influential outdoorswomen in state history.

Winnemucca's speeches and writings brought the Paiute Indians and other tribes to the forefront of national discourse on Indian relations.

"She urged education among the Paiutes and worked to help them get along in a white-dominated world," Winnemucca biographer Sally Zanjani said.

Read the whole story

Boreal opens today with one lift

Keeping with tradition, Boreal will be the first Tahoe area ski resort to open.

It will be open today from 3-8pm and Oct. 29 from 9am-2pm.

Operations are on a day-to-day basis based on how conditions are.

Boreal will operate the Nugget chairlift. This provides access to one run that has a terrain park with a handful of features.

Lift tickets are $15.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

North Shore ski resorts putting Tahoe on the map

By Kathryn Reed

KINGS BEACH – "It is finally Lake Tahoe's time."

Those are the words of Squaw Valley CEO Andy Wirth. His peers Bill Rock, COO of Northstar, and Art Chapman, president and chairman of JMA Ventures, concur.

The three shared the stage Thursday during the 59th annual membership lunch for the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association. More than 100 people listened to the three executives talk about Squaw-Alpine, Northstar, and Homewood, respectively, and what it means in terms of Lake Tahoe competing with destinations in Utah and Colorado.



Andy Wirth of Squaw speaks Oct. 27 as Art Chapman of JMA and Bill Rock

of Northstar
listen.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

“What a great time to be in North Lake Tahoe,” Rock said. He said this is the most interesting place to be in all of North America when it comes to the ski industry.

Vail Resorts bought Northstar last year and this summer infused $30 million into the resort. When KSL Capital Partners bought Squaw last year it pledged $50 million in upgrades in five years.

Homewood Mountain Resort, which turns 50 next year, is ready to spend millions as well. JMA is awaiting the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency’s potential approval of its overhaul of the resort at the Dec. 14 meeting before it can go forward.

While the three consider each a friend and competitor, they recognize upgrades to one resort enhance the overall experience for visitors. They also know with the multitude of resorts in the greater Lake Tahoe area that skiers seldom stick to one property during a weeklong vacation. Even locals like to ski more than one place, as evidenced by the popularity of combo passes.

With Vail Resorts owning Northstar and Heavenly, it has the Tahoe Value Pass.

Wirth said sales of the Tahoe Super Pass – which gives riders access to Squaw and Alpine – are three times greater than what was anticipated.

Homewood and Kirkwood Mountain Resort also have a combo pass.

KSL’s partnership with JMA, which had been the sole owner of Alpine Meadows, is expected to be finalized within two weeks so the new firm called Squaw Valley Ski Holdings Inc. will run

Squaw and Alpine. The last hurdles are for the California Tahoe Conservancy to approve a lease agreement today and the U.S. Forest Service to do the same in a matter of days.

Wirth pre-empted a likely question about what happens with White Wolf, the property owned by Troy Caldwell that separates (links?) Squaw and Alpine. Caldwell was at the lunch, but didn't speak.

"We are working on ways to accomplish great things on a long-term basis," Wirth said. He added that the resort has a good relationship with Caldwell. After all, Caldwell owns KT-22.

Wirth brushed by the fact Squaw is in talks with the U.S. Forest Service that might lead to access changes.

"There may be an announcement in the next three weeks," Wirth said without elaborating.

Wirth and Rock praised those who operated Northstar and Squaw until last year, recognizing they laid the foundation that allows the new owners to elevate the level of skiing beyond what it has been in Tahoe.

USFS has permits to cut down Christmas trees in basin

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will begin the sale of holiday tree permits Nov. 7. Permits cost $10 each (cash or check only, no credit cards) with a limit of two permits per family, valid for cutting on or before Dec. 25.

Permit holders may choose from a variety of pine, fir or cedar

in designated cutting areas and must abide by specific permit conditions for proper and responsible collection.

Permits will be available in two locations:

· On the South Shore, permits will be sold at the LTBMU Forest Supervisor's office, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe. This office is open Monday through Friday from 8am-4:30pm. For more information, call (530) 543.2694.

· On the North Shore, permits will be sold at the Incline Village Forest Service office, 855 Alder Ave., Incline Village, beginning Nov. 9. This office is open Wednesday through Friday from 8am-4:30pm. For more information, call (775) 831.0914. During winter weather driving conditions, call the Incline office to make sure it's open.

The last day to purchase a permit at either office is Dec. 16.

Individuals purchasing permits will receive information to help them make the best selection, as well as maps designating the tree cutting areas. Permit holders should respect private property by not trespassing when entering or leaving designated National Forest cutting areas. Harvesting smaller diameter trees offers residents and visitors a traditional holiday experience while helping to thin the forest.

Nothing common about S. Tahoe's lakeview project

By Kathryn Reed

While the hum of men and their machines permeate the air, so does the anticipation of what Lakeview Commons will be when

the work is completed in a month.

The $6 million project in South Lake Tahoe on the waterfront at El Dorado Beach is winding down. A TRPA extension is allowing dirt to be moved through Friday, though that may need to be extended into next week. (Usually dirt in the basin can't be moved past Oct. 15.)

The eyesore is gone and the dream of a team of community activists is nearly a reality.



Work on Lakeview Commons in South Lake Tahoe should be done in November. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Hand-cut rock quarried from the Carson City-Mound House area is still being placed. But most of the terraced area closest to Lake Tahoe is done. What was once a steep hill of unattractive dirt is now seating for those who want to stare into the emerald water.

While the beach was always popular with tourists, especially with Campground by the Lake being on the other side of Highway 50, it's likely locals will frequent this area in the future.

Even in its raw form, the beauty is evident. From the highway

the transformation is not obvious. The dirt that can be seen at street level will be covered with paving stones.

The 27 picnic tables and 20 barbecues still need to be installed. A double built-in barbecue with cooktop is near the boathouse. This will be open to the public.

In that area will be a stone gas fire pit with seating area. The city or its concessionaire will power up the pit.

While it has not been decided if the construction fence will come down for the winter (fine tuning needs to be done in the spring), it is from the water that the renewal of this area is most dramatic.

This has become a one-of-a-kind place on the South Shore.

“It takes a team,” Steve Jessop with Clark and Sullivan construction firm told *Lake Tahoe News* during a private tour Wednesday. “It’s been a fast-paced project.”

While the project is a year late because of legal issues, the city has been pleased with the company’s professionalism and speed (especially with winter lasting into June) to accomplish what it has to date.

Jim Marino, who is overseeing the project for the city, is a bit like a kid showing off a new toy. And he’s a bit like a proud father showing off his adopted baby. After all, he has not been part of the project since Day 1.

Walking through the site Marino talks about how he envisions events being staged at Lakeview Commons – concerts, kids programs – he sees no limit to the possibilities.

Not in the original design was power at the beach. This was added so if events were to be staged there, electricity is in place.

While the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency allowed overhead

lights at Sand Harbor and Tahoe City Commons, the bi-state regulatory agency nixed that from Lakeview Commons. So, instead, the lights are built into walls.

Other lights will be installed in the railing at the east end of the project. A stainless steel railing that is part of the structural wall still needs its cedar cap. Under that cap will be LED lights.

Native plants, under the direction of landscape architect Brett Long, are still being put into the ground. Part of the landscaping is designed to help stabilize the slope.

As with any project, surprises and changes were part of the process. Concrete footing were buried – and had to be removed. Marino said they could have been there since the 1940s or ’50s.

The boathouse

Finishing touches are being put on the bi-level building that will provide food up top and house non-motorized boats below. Cooking apparatuses will not be installed so the concessionaire does not compete against local businesses, Marino said.

It’s expected the city this winter will put out a request for proposal seeking a concessionaire to run the whole operation. There is still some question as to what the original deed that gave the property to El Dorado County says is an allowable use in terms of for-profit entities. Recreation and open space are what the original group of property owners from the 1920s wanted the land to always be used for.

In the beginning when Lakeview Commons was just a concept the idea was for the boathouse to store boats for the public. It may be that boats could also be rented from there – canoes, kayaks, paddleboards – nothing with a motor.

It has been built to LEED gold standards. Solar panels should help generate enough electricity that it will be self-sustaining.

Bathrooms are part of the facility.

Across Lakeview Avenue the existing restrooms will be demolished next year and new ones built with a Department of Boating and Waterways grant.

What's next?

The steel railing is the end point of phase one. Phase two goes to Rufus Allen Boulevard and will include a cantilever bridge. While TRPA is OK with that, it will be Caltrans that needs to be convinced an encroachment permit should be granted and that the bridge is a good idea.

A grant from the California Tahoe Conservancy supplied the funding for phase one. But the $2.4 million to $2.7 million needed for phase two remains elusive.

Nor is there money to complete the improvement on the campground side of the highway. All of this at one time was called the 56-acre project – because it is 56 acres. El Dorado County owns 40 of those acres, which is leased by South Lake Tahoe. The city owns the remainder.

Peter Eichar with the Conservancy said the ball is the city and county's court in terms of how things proceed. With the state agency without dollars, it is not in a position to help at this point.

A dilapidated pier is swimming distance from shore. One day the city wants to replace it. While safety and aesthetic reasons call for its removal, TRPA rules are such that if a pier is removed, the owner has two years to replace it or they lose the right to do so. The city doesn't want to take that chance.

It’s possible as the city plots out its list of capital improvement projects each year, that phase two of Lakeview Commons will become a priority. Some of the council members will be touring the site today.

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Train to become a basketball referee

Kahle Community Center in Stateline is hosting its annual basketball referee-training clinic in November for this season’s youth and adult basketball leagues.

Cost is $40 for instruction and rule book.

Ages 16 and older may participate. No experience necessary.

Participants must attend all trainings sessions.

The class trainings are from 9am-noon on Nov. 5, Nov. 6, Nov. 11, Nov. 12, Nov. 19 and Nov. 20.

Game scrimmage training is 5-8pm on Nov. 28 and Nov. 29.

People successfully completing Referee School will be assigned games at Kahle Community Center and/or Gardnerville.

For more information, contact Anthony Davis at (775) 586.7271. Pre-registration is required.

Decline in habitat reducing number of martens in Sierra

By Science Daily

The reclusive American marten is getting even harder to find in the Sierra Nevada, according to a study by a team of researchers from the U.S. Forest Service and Oregon State University. A new study at the Sagehen Experimental Forest found that marten detections have dropped 60 percent since the 1980s – a decrease that may be caused by a degradation of the wooded areas in which they live, researchers say.

Their findings appeared in the current issue of the Journal of Wildlife Management.

“Previous work had revealed that marten populations in the northern Sierra and southern Cascades in California have become more fragmented since the early 1900s, but the current work at Sagehen may help explain the mechanism for this pattern,” says co-author Bill Zielinski, research ecologist for the USDA Forest Service’s Pacific Southwest Research Station in Arcata.

In the early 1900s, American marten could be found in many continuous areas in the higher elevations of the northern Sierra Nevada. Today, populations of the small mammal, which is related to the weasel family and looks like a cross between a mink and a fox, are isolated and discontinuous. Causes for this phenomenon are unclear, but researchers believe that timber harvesting and thinning – the removal of downed woody material on the forest floor – may play a part in the population decline.

The Sagehen Experimental Forest is located in the Tahoe National Forest about 30 miles north of Lake Tahoe and is managed by the Pacific Southwest Research Station and the

University of California, Berkeley. Researchers recorded marten detections using track plates – long, baited rectangular boxes which martens enter and leave their tracks on contact paper. The data, which was collected in 2007 and 2008, was then compared to survey results from 1980 to 1993.

Read the whole story

Ski swap in Tahoe City

The 11th annual Tahoe Cross County Ski Swap is Nov. 12 form 10am to 3pm.

Skate ski equipment, classic, light touring, backcountry, snowshoes, kid's sleds, kid's ski gear, clothing and accessories will be available. Also for sale will be used rental gear, demos, samples, everything you need for the season.

Selling? Register your sale items Nov. 11th from 2-9pm. Commission on sold items is 15 percent.

For more information, call (530) 583.5475.