Nevada Parks initiates 75 Mile Club

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of Nevada State Parks, State Parks is partnering with the Recreational Trails Program to sponsor a 75 Mile Club.

Hike, bike, snowshoe, cross country ski or ride a horse on 75 miles of designated trails in Nevada state parks, complete and submit the tracking form and receive a Certificate of Completion and prize package.

Visitors can ride different trails or the same trail over and over again to reach a total of 75 miles traveled in the state parks. In turn, State Parks will post 75 Mile Club members' names and images on the 75 Mile Club page of State Parks' web site.

An informational brochure and mileage tracking form can be found on the following website.

Snowmobiling season extended at Zephyr Cove



New snow has extended Zephyr Cove Resorts' snowmobiling season.

They will have its encore snowmobiling excursions this Friday

and Saturday.

The tour schedule is 10am, noon and 2pm.

Single rider machines are $119 and double rider machines are $139.

Click here for more information.

Lake Tahoe ski report, April 22



Heavenly, Kirkwood and Sugar Bowl are wrapping up the season this weekend – and it has nothing to do with the amount of snow on the slopes. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Tahoe ski patrollers score high in nationwide competition

Ski patrollers went head to head last weekend at Squaw Valley during the first nationwide Professional Ski Patrol Olympics. Patrol teams from across the United States and Canada competed in sled races, bamboo throws, avalanche transceiver searches

and a giant slalom race down some of Squaw Valley's steepest terrain.

Spectators and patrollers took in the exhilarating competitions at a mid-mountain bar and barbecue area where they watched the country's best patrollers duke it out on the mountain.

After two days of close competition, the Mammoth Mountain/June patrol team claimed the gold medal and the title of the 2010 North American Patrol Champions.

Squaw Valley took the silver medal and Alpine Meadows claimed the bronze.

Marcus Waring of Whistler Blackcomb was awarded the gold in the individual male category after a randonee race and Squaw Valley's Lori Gunderson took home the gold in the women's category. Winners each took home healthy portions of the $1,500 Helly Hansen cash purse along with prizes from Alpha Explosives, Alpine Traverse, Helly Hansen and Squaw Valley.

Official Results:

Overall Team

1 Mammoth Mountain 31

2 Squaw Valley USA (B) 29

3 Alpine Meadows 24

Overall Individual – Men

1 Marcus Waring, Whistler Blackcomb

2 Zebulon Blais, Squaw Valley USA (B)

3 Chris Lizza, Mammoth

Overall Individual – Women

1 Lori Gunderson, Squaw Valley USA (B)

1 Michaela Adrien, Mammoth Mountain

3 Amanda Martin, Big Sky

Randonee Race

1 Marcus Waring, Whistler Blackcomb

2 Zebulon Blais, Squaw Valley USA (B)

3 Steve Keller, Alpine Meadows

Avalanche Transceiver Search

1 Lel Tone, Squaw Valley USA (B)

2 Chuck Megivern, Mammoth/June

3 Robert Wood, Big Sky

Big Mountain GS

1 Chris Lizza, Mammoth/June

2 Aaron Barnett, Squaw Valley USA (A)

3 Zebulon Blais, Squaw Valley USA (B)

Bomb Toss

1 Matt Calcutt, Squaw Valley USA (A)

2 Matt Shelton, Mountain High

3 Nick Dulemba, Squaw Valley USA (B)

Bamboo Toss

1 Eric Diem, Mammoth

2 Andy Peek, Squaw Valley USA (B)

3 Ben Leech, Squaw Valley USA (B)

Toboggan Race

1 Alpine Meadows (2)

2 Mammoth/June (2)

3 Alpine Meadows (1)

Rich memories linger after 165 miles of Tahoe Rim Trail

By Jim Mrazek

Lake Tahoe is a jewel sitting in Northern California, rich in views from lakeside to mountaintop, and over 1600 feet at its deepest. This depth produces the stunning blue waters that can be seen from afar. That and the clarity of the lake are something that all visitors come to see and remember.

The Tahoe Rim Trail goes around the entire lake up and down through the surrounding mountain ranges and was started in 1984 and finished in 2001. Every year the Tahoe Rim Trail Association takes two groups around the 165 miles of their trail. I had heard about this trip in 2008, and it sounded like what I was looking for because of the resupply system that I could not do on my own and guides, who knew the trail and environment, so I signed up.



Julie Page, TRTA volunteer guide, and Jim Mrazek. Photo/Provided

In addition, my experience in overnight hiking in this area was limited to the Desolation Wilderness on the southwest side of the lake. I wanted to see the whole lake from different viewpoints, and this read like the trip to do that. And it did.

So, out-of-state, in-state, adventurers and wannabes, pay attention. This could be the trip for you.

TRTA sends you lots of pre-trip information, and you weed through it to see what your needs are and how you would like to setup your own backpack and resupply bag. They supply breakfast and dinners for you to pick up at the resupply points, however, you provide your own lunches and have to plan accordingly. Emails with any questions are answered promptly.

But let’s cut through to the trail and our three experienced guides: Tim, quiet, knowledgeable, and in the lead most of the time, always willing to share his extensive knowledge on places, trees and plants. His pace at first is seemingly too fast, but it readily becomes apparent that his purpose is to get you moving and yet show you everything; Ellen, experienced also and with a ready smile and pleasing manner that would make you a million dollars easy if you could bottle it, always enthusiastic and supportive; and Brett, a strong, supportive younger guy, who also has a great sense of humor coupled with

a dry wit. He can carry a heavy pack and jump from stone to stone, uphill on the trail, no small feat.

Our group was the first of two. We departed on Saturday; the next one left on Sunday. We were in ages from 29 to 70. From an accountant to schoolteacher to former military, we were a variety, yet bonded pretty well after only a couple of days.

At the start of the trip on the northeast side of Lake Tahoe near Incline Village, the guides were looking over their equipment and willing to answer questions about ours. I had used walking poles once but did not have much regard for them. I asked Tim what he thought. Never long on words, he said, “I use them.” I decided to take mine, and his wise counsel proved itself on the trail. Particularly after two of our group, several days into the hike, showed me the best way to use them.

After you get about one-third of the way around the lake, you can easily look back and see the mountain ranges you have been through. It’s amazing to see our progress, but hard to believe that we have done all that. Tim points this out at regular intervals, and it’s a great motivator for me.

The tranquility and beauty of the lake and its surroundings are apparent at so many places: Star Lake, where we take a welcome swim and enjoy the sunset fading into the mountainside; Showers Lake, again we take a swim and enjoy a meal brought in by horseback, one of the pleasant surprises the TRTA arranges; a boat ride across Upper and Lower Echo Lakes, a wonderful break in our hiking with cooling winds; the campsite at Aloha Lake, set starkly against the backdrop of Mount Price; seeing some of the runs and lifts of Heavenly and Squaw Valley and other ski resorts in a summertime perspective; and the early morning mist rising off Gray Lake. These scenes are Lake Tahoe at its finest.

All of us were in pretty good shape physically. You have to be

to start and you will be when you are done, at least for hiking. This is not a trip for the faint of heart. And yes, one of our group did make the decision and quit about four days out, and the other group had losses as well. If you fall behind because of blisters or exhaustion, you will get all the support you could ever want from the guides.

The one thing you have to supply for yourself is the determination and will. At one point about three days into the hike, I was running out of these, exhausted to the point that my pack became a lead weight. I was well behind the main group because Brett and I had just rebinded the two blisters on my heels. We came up on the group at a spring, where they had stopped to soak hats and bandanas in the cool water. Everyone told me to soak my hat in the cool water, but I knew if I bent over with my pack I would have great trouble standing up again and so did not. One of the younger women in our group looked at me, asked for my hat, soaked it entirely, and handed it back. It was a revival of my spirits and will, feeling the ice cold water. I will forever be in debt to her for that simple act.

But when you stumble into camp, feet blistered or sore, shoulders aching, back crying out, there’s a quick handshake from Brett with congrats on making it today. And you’ll get a quick smile and positive comment from Ellen. Tim, surveying his brood, will nod his approval. That will carry you through the next day and more.

The scenery starts off exciting and with every step gets better. There are so many spectacular views that it becomes hard to pick the best. I found myself continually awed by the beauty at different viewpoints. Lake Tahoe is a jewel with many facets that can be seen from the Tahoe Rim Trail only. Vertical ascent and descent add up to about 27,000 feet. So you see different terrain from sheer rocks to lush vegetation to deep forests. And critters, from marmots to frogs to little squirrels. Deer and bear also, although we didn’t see any

bear. But we did carry bear canisters so we didn't have to fight them over food.

But don't think this hike is all work and no play. At one camping spot near a hotel resort, about 11 days into the hike, Ellen and Tim returned with bath towels. In hushed tones we heard the words "permission to use the showers and pool!" You can only have been there to know what that did for our tired bodies and blistered feet!

And one in our group usually had "pain medication" of the liquid variety. So although we might be tired, sore, cold, or hot, we shared common miseries and made fun of them, and laughter was usually heard throughout the group on the trail and in campsites.

The weather was cooperative for the most part. But don't be fooled by Mother Nature, particularly in this part of the world. Although warm for most of the days and nights, the last two nights were a sudden cold snap, and down came fluffy little white stuff mixed with rain. We were pretty cold, and gloves and beanie caps came out quickly.

There were great times of much laughter and joking at each other. And on the trail, after many days, it was funny to pass day hikers. They certainly could smell us, and we advised them to talk to us from the upwind side. But on the other hand, you could smell them and the soap from their shower that morning.

At the end of our 15 days we were finishing the last miles from Relay Peak (10,338 feet) when other day hikers and overnighters passed us. They invariably asked how far we had come. Some understood and cheered us on. Others simply stared or did not believe. And some shook hands and congratulated us. At times, for me, it was emotional.

At the end, the TRTA put out a yellow finish line ribbon for us to pass through. Rather than the first of our party going through, we all waited, joined arms, and went through at the

same time.

On the entirety of the Tahoe Rim Trail, they have three-sided emblems marking the path. They are blue-edged with an outline of the Lake in the center. I had looked at them for 165 miles. When afterward we arrived in the TRTA offices to say our final farewells, where they have a small souvenir shop, I bought a hat which has that emblem on the front and "165 Mile Club" on the back. I will wear it proudly. I own a piece of that trail now.

If you have any questions or comments, send them to me at bananano te@aol.com. I will try to answer them or respond to comments. Or contact the TRTA at their website, www.tahoerimtrail.org.

Jim Mrazek is a former Air Force pilot. He has published several articles in his career and is co-author of a book on ultralights. He resides in El Dorado Hills.

Cost of Bay Area-run campground in Tahoe going up

By Jeanine Benca, Contra Costa Times

LIVERMORE – If you want to stay at Camp Shelly this summer, be prepared to pay s'more.

For wholesome family fun at dirt cheap prices, local residents always have been able to count on the campground – a no-frills site near the south shore of Lake Tahoe operated by the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District. Until recently, the cost to stay at Camp Shelly was $25 per night for

Livermore residents and $30 per night for nonresidents.

But the price of campfire songs and ghost stories is going up.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe ski report, April 19



Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Lake Tahoe ski report, April 17



Get some turns in because the season is winding down at many resorts. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Tahoe Rim Trail trail guide course

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association's three-day, regional Guide Training will be May 21-23. The training will be at Granlibakken Conference Center in Tahoe City, and the course cost includes food and dormitory style lodging. This training is designed for those who wish to guide for the TRTA, or for another organization.

Volunteers get the skills they need to be competent, responsible wilderness guides who know how to lead a group, whether in an urban or a remote setting. This comprehensive Guide Training, offered to the general public to give eager outdoors people the skills that they need to not only be successful in their outdoor pursuits, but also to be knowledgeable and excellent volunteer or paid guides.

New this year, is an Interpretive Skills track (Track B) in addition to the basic Track A. Track B is aimed toward those who have taken the first track (Track A), or those that specifically want to learn interpretive skills. This track will be instructed by USFS staff from the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit that specialize in interpretation and education.

If you are interested in being a guide for the Tahoe Rim Trail Association or another organization, this is the training for you. All participants over 18 years of age are welcome to attend, regardless of your background or level of ability.

Dates: May 21 at noon to May 23 at 1:30pm.

Cost: $165 per person for all three days of training.

The cost includes all meals from Friday dinner to Sunday lunch and dormitory style lodging.

Registration: The deadline for registration is April 30 at www.tahoerimtrail.org or call (775) 298.0012.

Lake Tahoe ski report, April 16



Go ski. Several resorts are calling it quits for the season after this weekend. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.