Lake Tahoe ski report, April 5



Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe, recommends the fat boards and skiing in-bounds today. Here is the ski report.

West Shore creek restoration project tops $3 mil.

By Kathryn Reed

More than $3 million has been allocated to help clean up the area that per acre dumps the most amount of sediment into Lake Tahoe.

Work on the West Shore's Lower Blackwood Creek will begin this summer with vegetation enhancements.

The California Tahoe Conservancy board approved funding in March and the state Public Works board will vote on the matter this month.

"Primarily it's an undeveloped watershed. Most of the sediment is from the stream channel," Adam Lewandowski with the CTC said. "Much of the watershed was heavily grazed and logged until the 1970s."

The upper part of the channel had been gravel mined at one

time. The U.S. Forest Service has restored the upper creek area.

When the CTC project is done it will mean the entire Blackwood Creek channel will have been restored.

“There’s a huge plume of sediment from the creek going to Lake Tahoe. That’s what we are trying to reduce,” Lewandowski said.

At the Conservancy meeting, pictures of steep, eroding banks were shown. Riparian vegetation is missing. The abundance of sunlight hitting the water is not good for aquatic species when it comes to nutrients.

Engineered logjams will help redirect the flow of water away from the banks. A new bend in the channel will be put in.

The work will be in two phases. The first will be upstream of Highway 89, the second downstream.

In September the final design for the channel restoration should be done; in October bids will be sought; and from June-October 2011 the channel will be restored and trails will be rerouted.

Tahoe Rim Trail Association events

Snowshoeing season is almost over but the trail hasn’t melted out enough yet for hiking. What should you do? Beat the shoulder-season blues with the Tahoe Rim Trail Association’s 2nd Annual April Speaker Series.

Find out about new backpacking and hiking gear, learn about

the Tahoe Basin's geology and get the inside scoop on hiking the trail from start to finish in these three presentations.

April 12: "Latest and Greatest in Gear" by Dave Hess from REI. Hess will bring new backpacking and hiking gear to do a show and tell of what to get and give this year.

April 19: "Geology of the Lake Tahoe Basin" by Mark Vollmer. Vollmer is a free-lance photographer and writer and will give a presentation of the geology of the basin as seen from the Tahoe Rim Trail.

April 26: "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Hiking and Backpacking the Tahoe Rim Trail" by Mark Kimbrough and Tim Hauserman. These two will team up to divulge the secrets of the trail from where to get water to the best wildflowers and the easiest way to shuttle for day hikes.

All presentations are at the DWR Non-Profit Center from 6-7pm at 948 Incline Way, Incline Village.

RSVP to programs@tahoerimtrail.org or call (775) 298.0012.

Foul weather dampens snowshoe trek to Round Lake

By Kathryn Reed

By April the word snow has taken on an unpleasant definition with me. The nice words for it are yuck and icky.

Still, I wasn't going to let the doldrums win. So out came the book "Snowshoe Routes Northern California" by Marc J. Soares. I didn't want to go any place I had been before and I didn't

want to drive far.



Sue Wood trudges through Big Meadow on a snowy Easter. Photos/Kathryn Reed

We ended up picking the Big Meadow and Round Lake route. Sue and I had done this plenty of times as a hike on dirt, but never in the snow.

Parking is a little sketchy along Highway 89 headed up Luther Pass from South Lake Tahoe because the Big Meadow lot is not accessible with snow on the ground. Caltrans plows a couple cut outs, so it is do-able without the threat of being towed.

Even though we are familiar with the route to Round Lake as well as Dardanelles Lake, we wouldn’t have done this had other people not already been there. In a different season everything looks unfamiliar. Plus, we were well aware of the forecasted storm for Easter Sunday. We didn’t really want to become the story.

Immediately I knew the route the earlier snowshoers were leading us on was a bit suspect. Still, it finally seemed to track the route I had been on sans snow.

Normally, it’s a bunch of switchbacks. This had sharp turns and then went straight up.



Scenery is stunning along this trail.

The book says you'll cross Big Meadow Creek. We never saw it or heard it. It's probably buried in all this snow or possibly frozen.

Boughs full of snow filled the looming conifers as though it were the middle of winter. Branches hung from the weight of the white stuff. A Tahoe Rim Trail marker barely peaked out at one point.

Trekking into the forest, the sun flitted in and out, casting shadows in a playful dance.

The trees protected us from the wind that whistled through the tight knit trees.

The worst part about the trail was the dog poop. As someone who used to hike with her dog, I understand the charm of an outing with the four-legged members of the family. But pick up after them in every season.



A bit of sun dots the trail

for Sue Wood.

We finally hit the expansive meadow. By then the snow had started to fly. And fly it did – in all directions except vertical. Waterhouse Peak was obscured by storm clouds settling in.

The start of the hike is at 7,237 feet. By the time we got back to the Jeep, it was snowing there as well.

At the edge of the meadow we lost the trail set by earlier shoers. Across we went, heads down as the wind whipped around us. Snow was picked up and spun like mini tornadoes. The sun was no longer anywhere to be found. The wind was howling, not whispering.

The book says to follow the edge of the meadow. The author says it can be wet as the snow begins to melt. I remember in summer walking straight across, so that's what we did. It was all good with so much snow.

With how exposed the meadow is, the sun is bound to dry this area out fast as the seasons change.



Big Meadow does not look inviting.

On the far side of the meadow there was no evidence anyone had been there before us. We called it a day. Foraging farther in search of a lake when a winter storm advisory for the afternoon had been issued was not something we were about to

do.

It’s definitely a route I’ll try again, but next time it will be on a sunny day. Even though most Lake Tahoe ski resorts will close this month, the snowshoe season will last much longer.

Lake Tahoe ski report, April 4



The snow is too deep in Tahoe to find any Easter eggs buried on the slopes. You may find wind this afternoon as a storm rolls into the Lake Tahoe Basin. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Lake Tahoe ski report, April 3



Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe, will be at Heavenly Mountain Resort today announcing the Glen Plake Gunbarrel 25. Here is the ski report.

Tahoe bears foraging for food early this year

By Barbara Barte Osborn, Sacramento Bee

The Lake Tahoe-area bears are up early, and they're ravenous.

"They feel the warmth and come out of their dens, but there's no natural food for them yet," said Ann Bryant, executive director of the BEAR League, a Tahoe-area group that educates residents on coexisting with bears.

"The grasses, herbs and roots they like are still covered with snow, and there will be more storms," she said. "So they're looking for garbage, pet food and bird food – those are the biggest lures – and empty cabins with food in them."

Read the whole story

Sierra-at-Tahoe sets closing date



Sierra-at-Tahoe is closing April 18. With the forecast for the next 16 days, it’s possible there will be more powder days than groomers.

Stricter rules for Lake Tahoe boaters

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

More than a decade after Lake Tahoe regulators banned polluting two-stroke Jet Skis and two years after boat inspections commenced to guard Tahoe from invading plants and animals, officials are poised to take the next step to protect the lake from boating impacts.

Last week, governors of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency took on a long-discussed “blue boating” program designed to offset the environmental effects of motorboats cruising the famous Sierra lake.



The Blue Boating Program on Lake Tahoe begins in April.

Photo/Kathryn
Reed

The program is designed to protect Tahoe from various problems associated with boating, including engine emissions and noise, dirty bilges and sewage discharge.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe ski report, April 1



The sun is out in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.