Tahoe Heritage Foundation

...preserving a window to the past

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Ten Years of Projects and Programs at the Tallac Historic Site...

THF'S EFFORTS AT THE TALLAC HISTORIC SITE PRESERVE THE FACILITIES AND ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The Tallac Historic Site is a treasure at South Lake Tahoe owned by the United States Forest Service. In 1998 its future was bleak. The infrastructure was in disrepair and funds for operation were in doubt. The Tahoe Heritage Foundation was formed with the mission "to preserve and protect the cultural heritage and natural resources of the Lake Tahoe Basin through restoration, interpretation, and education," and THF has taken on several projects throughout the Tahoe Basin; however the heart and soul of the purpose was to save the Tallac Historic Site. Today the Site is protected and thriving. How did this happen?

At the beginning there was not much money for projects, and the Board members came out on weekends to rebuild the gazebo themselves. A volunteer program was developed and visitor programs emerged....Pope House Tours, Tea with Mrs. Tevis, Boat Buddies for the children, and the annual Gatsby Festival. THF developed the gift shop to raise funds specifically for Tallac Site projects and programs. More visitors came and an upward spiral began.

The projects have been varied in scope and funded in a variety of ways. The Baldwin Museum roof was replaced with historically accurate shingles provided by Tahoe Heritage Foundation and labor provided by the Nevada Air National Guard. The logs that make up the walls of the Anita and Dextra Baldwin cottages were rotting. Current repair methods would not meet the stringent restoration standards set by SHIPO (State Historic Preservation Office). The National Park Service sent in its trained restoration team, paid for partly by the USFS and partly by THF, to carefully replace the rotted logs with new ones collected locally by Forest Service employees. The garden restoration project was broader in scope. THF raised funds for a design to be developed by Lynnel Springer, UC Davis, to include a native plant garden. Partnerships were developed with two local garden clubs, Grape and Garden and South Lake Tahoe Garden Club to provide the labor. Discounts on soil and plant materials were sought from local suppliers, and funds were solicited by THF specifically for the Garden Project. Today volunteers maintain the restored gardens for all to enjoy. Fireplaces were crumbling, about five years ago specific grants were solicited for the repair of the fireplaces with the Dextra McGonagal Foundation making the lead gift, and local mason Ted Wendell was hired to return the fireplaces to their original splendor. Ted returned in 2006 to restore the rock patio at the Baldwin Museum and local volunteers made reproductions of vintage patio chairs where today visitors can be seen eating their lunches or studying their guide books. The development of the Women of Tahoe Exhibit received lots of help from the Tahoe Historical Society and the new Children and Families Exhibit was funded by THF annual giving. Restoration inside the Pope House is again different. Original wall cloth has been reproduced, and the Pope family has donated period furniture. Mr. Pope's office intrigues all who take the Pope House Tour.

Looking back over the past ten years the one can see the transformation from *quiet and-run-down* to *alive and well-preserved.* Daily during the summers teams of volunteers rebuild steps and fences, paint interiors, restore furniture, tend gardens, rebuild vintage cars and trucks, lead tours (in vintage costumes that they restore and maintain) and conduct classes for young and old alike. The shop carries period items that enhance the visitor experience. Thanks to the help of our many volunteers and donors, the Tallac Site is today the place that we all envisioned ten years ago.

Taylor Creek Visitor Center 2008... BY LINDSAY GUESS

Black bears have been a big attraction in Taylor Creek this October. For the first time in more than 19 years, we had bears within arms reach along the Rainbow Trail regularly feeding on Kokanee Salmon. In the past you could have heard any one of us say, "We don't usually see bears; they're really not interested in the rotten flesh of the spawning Kokanee Salmon."

We were proven wrong! At the beginning of the month a couple of yearlings were splashing around with the fish, acting very playful. These two young bears were really determined with big appetites. It took a few days, but they eventually figured out how to catch the Kokanee. Finding food is a learned behavior, so other local bears were watching these two of yearlings, picking up tips before trying to fish for themselves. Throughout the month, we had bear visits almost daily, from at least seven individuals.

These surprise visitors required some adjustment to our regular routine. We were glad to have some great volunteer help to keep Taylor Creek operations running smoothly. One of our best assets has been our [Tahoe Heritage Foundation] intern Maddie. Volunteering since June, she has now completed her recreation degree requirements from Chico State University.

The local high school club Generation Green logged a total of ninety hours serving as docents for visitors at the creek side during the busy weekends throughout October. We also appreciated community volunteers conducting 3rd grade Kokanee Salmon Environmental Education Programs. Teachers loved our new Kamikazee Kokanee boardgame to play in the classroom after a field trip to Taylor Creek.

Despite some bad weather, we had another successful Kokanee Salmon Festival. Visitors were thrilled to see the black bears, and even Sammy Salmon got in some memorable photos. The festival set the tone for a busy October, which was really a reflection of a lively 2008 season.

The Visitor Center had a great staff with both new and returning rangers. We were happy to hire our intern from last year, Kelsey, and welcomed two new interns made possible through the Tahoe Heritage Foundation, Maddie and Hannah. Hannah came from Humboldt State University where she has just started a recreation program, with an interest in astronomy.

Our summer interpretive programs were very well attended, especially the Kids in the Creek adventure walk. Pat Winters, our guest Bat Expert drew in a crowd of 500 at the amphitheater, and visitors enjoyed our new guest astronomer Rich Combs stargazing from the beach.

With a full staff, we were really able to expand our programs and offer special nature hours to groups like the Boys & Girls Club Green Team, Stanford Sierra Camp Yahoos, and People to People student ambassadors from all over the country.

Returning visitors were pleased to see new titles in our booksales area including a few aimed at getting kids outdoors: Last Child in the Woods, I Love Dirt, and Daniel Beard's Field & Forest Handybook.

We worked hard to share our enthusiasm of nature and our love for Taylor Creek and Lake Tahoe with diverse visitors during the summer season. As we close up in the snow, we're looking forward to all the fun to come during our 5th grade Winter Trek Snowshoeing Programs. Maybe we'll see more than just tracks, and catch a black bear sauntering through the snow with a belly full of salmon.

Tallac Historic Site... BY JACKIE DUMIN

Another exciting year at the Tallac Historic Site has passed with many things changing, but much stayed the same as well. I started as the new Assistant Site Director and Allie Wenzl, the Site Director, took an exciting opportunity to work in Aspen, Colorado for four months over the summer. So as we all became used to new faces around the site, our many amazing volunteer groups continued to expand and enhance programs, preservation, and community outreach.

Many RV volunteers returned this year, but also a few new people joined the group and brought fresh ideas into the mix. During the four sessions we were able to accomplish some large projects; a circular rustic bench was created to fit around a tree in the arboretum, a digital archive project was started, the donation of a 1931 Model A Roadster was arranged, and a new children's program was created. This all occurred in addition to the daily running of the site! The Tallac Site also benefited from many local volunteers and two local garden clubs who donated their time. The visiting public often complimented the site on our friendly museum staff and beautiful gardens this year.

One last volunteer group to help the site this year was the Nevada Air National Guard. This group donated a weekend of their time in order to save the reproduction wall cloth in Mr. Pope's office. A leaky roof damaged a portion of the wall cloth last winter and it was a major goal of this year to stop this damage from continuing. The Air Guard patched the roof, and has agreed to commit their time in early 2009 to finish the job and replace the roof. This is only one of the great projects we have lined up for next year, come visit to see what else we have up our sleeves! With the continued support from our volunteer groups the site will only get better.

EXPLORE TAHOE an urban trailhead... BY LESLIE DETARR

You are missing out on a great experience if you haven't visited EXPLORE TAHOE, an interagency visitor center located in the Heavenly Village next to Cecil's Market. The mission of EXPLORE TAHOE is to encourage, inspire and educate visitors and residents of the many wonders of Lake Tahoe with an emphasis on preservation and protection of our pristine environment.

Longtime local resident and recreation enthusiast Lauren Thomaselli has been recently hired by the City of South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Department to manage the visitor center and expand outreach programs. New interpretive features slated for installation in November include: a 12ft x 5ft topographic map of the basin, a children's activity table with native wildlife features, and a public transportation display to help visitors navigate to points of interest on the South Shore. A retail section, operated in partnership with the Tahoe Heritage Foundation, is stocked with books on the natural environment, Lake Tahoe history, as well as maps and related gifts. The center provides daily showings of "Lake of the Sky – The Story of Lake Tahoe" free to the public. Lauren publishes a weekly "Schedule of Events" that highlights current events related to outdoor recreation, art, culture, wildlife, and history.

In mid December EXPLORE TAHOE will celebrate the winter solstice at the second annual "Snowflake Festival" that will include entertainment, snowflake arts and crafts for kids, and a chance to show off the new interpretive displays. For more information, please call Lauren at 530-542-4637, email lthomaselli@cityofslt.us or visit the EXPLORE TAHOE website at www.recreationintahoe.com

Letter from the President

Well, here we are again. Every year at this time we all say "where did the summer go"? We are all storing our hiking boots, tennis rackets, and boats, and breaking out the skis and snowshoes for the winter season. This season at Tahoe has been one of change and transition, just as you all have experienced in your communities. While we look forward to the future, as always, we have some trepidation because of the uncertainty that is affecting Tahoe as it affects the rest of the nation.

This year we continued our assistance to the U.S.F.S. and the Tahoe-Baikal Institute on the Fredericks Cabin project. As I have reported, the Foundation was approached by the California Tahoe Conservancy and requested to participate in monitoring a proposed program to rehabilitate the Fredericks Cabin on Fallen Leaf Lake. That property had been acquired by the Forest Service in the 1950s, and used thereafter for various purposes, most recently as the headquarters for the annual summer exchange program coordinated by the Tahoe-Baikal Institute. The Conservancy provided a grant for the planning of a rehabilitated facility, both to serve the Tahoe-Baikal Institute in the future as well as provide additional environmental educational opportunity for other groups. The working name for the site is the "Mountain Lake Environmental Center."

The Foundation undertook the project as the grantee, and has since been working with the Conservancy, the Forest Service, and the Tahoe-Baikal Institute on this exciting project. A recent refocusing resulted in the retention of the local well-known consulting firm, Design Workshop, which has been instrumental in pushing the project toward completion. The current status is the review of two alternative designs, one of which will be finalized and ready for presentation this summer. While this project does not directly impact the Foundation, it is a neighboring property owned by our U.S.F.S. partner, and serves many of the same constituents. We have been pleased to work with the Conservancy on this important Lake Tahoe project, which fits within the Foundation's educational mission.

I am pleased to report a new association with the Northern California/Lake Tahoe Antique and Classic Boat Society, which sponsored the South Tahoe Wooden Boat Classic in July. It selected the Foundation as a grantee of a significant donation from funds it received, to be applied to the restoration of the classic wooden boat "Quic-Chakidn," which is an ongoing project with the U.S.F.S. We look forward to working with this group this year and hopefully in the future. The wooden boat show is well worth attending—check our website for details.

While we know that the economy is still in turmoil, and that it will continue to be difficult for all nonprofits and worthy causes to raise funds this year, we hope you will not forget the Tahoe Heritage Foundation. We are not planning any new, significant prjects for the coming year; however, we hope to raise enough funds to preserve what we have been successful in building over the last ten years as outlined in this newsletter. We have a continuing need for funds to buy supplies to support the many volunteers who maintain the buildings and gardens. We have a continuing need for materials for the programs which are so popular at the Tallac Historic Site and the Visitor's Center. Finally, we have a continuing need to pay for our valuable interns, without whom the summer activities would not be possible.

As I am sure you will appreciate, the government has severely restricted the funds available for the U.S. Forest Service, and so our assistance and support of the U.S.F.S. at the Site, and within the Tahoe Basin, is even more critical in the future than it has been in the past. We should all realize this and rededicate ourselves to the extent possible to the Foundation's mission and tasks. Your Board and all of your volunteers will continue to donate their time and what resources they can afford, and we hope you will join us in doing the same. We know that times will change and the future will bring us new and increased opportunities to work on the Site, and we hope the Foundation will be in a strong position and able to carry on this important work.

President

Look for us on our web site: www.tahoeheritage.org which will be updated early next year.

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President