

Ed center exposes public to importance of Tahoe wetlands

By Stephen Ward

TAHOE CITY – Each facet of the Eriksson Education Center seems meticulously designed to accompany a paramount theme of the project, which is the importance of wetlands in the Tahoe area. An example of this attention to detail is the ovate pathway that makes up the outdoor section of the exhibit, consisting of pavers resting on layers of rock and soil so the ground remains permeable and doesn't act as a blockade for stormwater.

The pathway isn't the only interesting aspect of the outdoor display. Six cedar wood-framed information tablets resting atop wrought iron legs highlight the emphasis of each section of the track, with facts and data about topics ranging from native plants and wildlife to how wetlands filter the water that eventually runs into Lake Tahoe.



People are eager to learn at the Eriksson Education Center.
Photo/Jim Markle

One of the information tablets explains the removal of the concrete weirs in the stream, a small section of Polaris Creek, and the use of the willow logs as check dams for grade control.

The UC Davis Tahoe City Field Station was filled Saturday with tables displaying information and soliciting activities meant to engage children in the more gripping sides of science, all the while showing minute traces of the lab work normally orchestrated in the facility, such as sediment traps pushed aside and closets containing scuba gear sharing a section of the space rife with traffic.

The most riveting spectacle of the day was the unveiling of the prestigious Eriksson Education Center. The UC Davis annual Children's Environmental Science Day dovetailed into the occasion.

While giving an extensive tour of the center, Heather Segale, education and outreach coordinator for the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center, described the overall message of the exhibit.

"In the end, our choices affect the environment," Segale said. "The wetlands are an important part of keeping Lake Tahoe blue."



Ericksson
Education
Center
Photo/Jim
Markle

The perimeter of the outside exhibit is decorated with painted cardboard fish cutouts made from old political signs, a joint effort between Tahoe Lake and Kings Beach elementary schools.

The remainder of the center is indoors, with the lineage of the Eriksson Education Center being told through a dark blue wave-shaped timeline that circles the room. The timeline includes information about the history of the Tahoe City Fish Hatchery that once occupied the facility, along with the vast species of fish that have inhabited the wetlands near the building.



Visitors
peruse the
information
booths at the
Ericksson
Center on July
10.
Photo/Stephen
Ward

Opening day marked the celebration of a project that has been in the works for many years. The building has been in the process of renovation since 2008 and took nearly 14 years to be completely funded.

The Eriksson Education Center at the UC Davis Tahoe City Field Station is open Saturdays from 1-5pm during summer months or by appointment. For more information, [click here](#).