

Mountain bikers solidifying voice in Tahoe region

By Kathryn Reed

Eight leaders emerged from a roomful of mountain bike enthusiasts to reignite the dormant cycling club TAMBA.

These eight are tasked with sifting through the bylaws of the Tahoe Area Mountain Bicycling Association; figuring out how to get the former board members off and new ones on documents; whether taxes have been filed and if not, then what; the structure of the organization; and where it goes from here.

More than 30 people met at Lake Tahoe Community College this month to talk about how to get the region's mountain bike community can have one voice. Their desire is to have mountain bikers evolve out of their second-class status.



John Drum leads the December TAMBA meeting.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

“We want to provide an organized, effective voice and one that represents all different riders,” said John Drum who has been facilitating the meetings.

Although nothing was decided this month, some discussion was on whether membership should come with a price – even if it's nominal; the importance of having someone with financial know-how be on the board; being responsive to U.S. Forest Service requests for written input on trails and physical labor when needed; the likelihood of having several committees to deal with various interests; having a website that can be a central location for what's going on; partnering with other groups when appropriate; and working on obtaining grants as well as funding from private companies.

Because this group isn't just South Shore specific, it was noted that besides the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit of the Forest Service, the group will need contact with forest managers for at least the Eldorado and Tahoe national forests, too.

State landowners will also have to be part of the process.

A representative at the meeting from Nevada State Parks said his relationship with TAMBA when it was more active about a decade ago was tremendous and he hopes for the same from those who were assembled that night.

Kevin Joell, who wants to be part of the inner workings of TAMBA, has been involved with cycling groups for 15 years. The Reno resident is interested in ensuring mountain bikers have access to trails. He has worked directly with Nevada parks in the past.

Pam Lefrancois of Kings Beach has been an advocate for cyclists for years through various clubs. She has worked on the North Shore trail management plan.

She said trails in her hometown were recently revamped and turned out great.

"We all share the same trails," Lefrancois said after the meeting. This is one reason she wants to be involved – to make

the region better for mountain bikers.

The eight individuals who will work to bring structure to TAMBA are: John Drum, Pete Fink, Ben Fish, Nils Miller, Lauren Lindley, Kevin Joell, Kevin Crifasi, and Mike Lefrancois.

They will meet in early January, with a public meeting scheduled for Jan. 26 at 6pm at LTCC in South Lake Tahoe.