

Time to comment on Heavenly's development plans

By Kathryn Reed

Heavenly Mountain Resort will begin improving the ski area next month, days after this season ends April 24, if all the approvals from the U.S. Forest Service go through.

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is seeking comments until April 29 on proposed capital improvements at Heavenly. The resort wants to build of a permanent ski school structure and create of a Kids Adventure Zone near the top of the gondola, widen some ski trails in the Sky Express area and improve vehicle access to the top station of the tubing lift.



Six more days of this ski season, then Heavenly begins improvements for 2011-12.

Photo/LTN

These projects are part of the resort's master plan.

"The children's ski school building will be consistent in look and feel to the Tamarack Lodge, which our guests have really

enjoyed. While the temporary yurts have served us well over the years, this permanent structure will elevate the ski school facilities to the same world-class level as our ski school instruction," resort spokesman Russ Pecoraro told *Lake Tahoe News*.

With General Manager Pete Sonntag having risen from the ski school side of the industry, this is close to his heart – to have such a facility that complements the philosophy of parent company Vail Resorts – “experience of a lifetime”.

The improvements are part of a nearly \$90 million cash infusion by the Colorado-based company into its six ski resorts before the 2011-12 begins.

The ski school building will be nearly 3,000-square-feet, with a height between 25 and 30 feet.

Trails on the California side of the mountain that will be widened to increase capacity and ease congestion include: Ellie’s, Liz’s, Upper Ridge, Canyon, Jackpot and High Roller. Trees will be taken out via over-the-snow removal methods. Some boulder will be moved to the edge of the trails. The total cleared area is approximately 4.16 acres.

“The trails in upper California were originally built in the 1960s. We have chosen to widen these trails to accommodate the new ski and snowboard equipment and techniques, which will improve the overall ski and ride experience,” Pecoraro explained.

For more information on the proposals and how to comment, go online or call Jonathan Cook-Fisher at (530) 543.2741.

Although the last day to ski at Heavenly is Easter, the resort will be open May 13-15 and May 28-30 for sightseeing and tubing. Summer operations begin June 7.