

Backcountry patrollers train for wilderness rescues

More than 30 volunteers completed the annual training program to begin patrolling by bike, foot, or horseback on the backcountry trails around Lake Tahoe.

The training was conducted jointly by the Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park Backcountry Patrol and the Tahoe Rim Trail Association.



Volunteer
backcountry
patrollers
practice
loading a
patient into a
helicopter.
Photo/Provided

The training included multiple presentations on topics useful for patrol in the backcountry, including equestrian issues which included the opportunity for patrollers to safely handle and secure a loose horse; a bike repair session that covered basic repairs in a field environment; a medical scenario that included a CareFlight medical helicopter flying in and educating the group on helicopter safety and patient packaging; proper radio use, rapid medical assessments; and a presentation on “Verbal Judo”. Verbal Judo is described as the

gentle art of persuasion. It will assist the patrollers in handling difficult people and gain voluntary compliance from errant park users.

Now in its 10th year, the patrol is part of the International Mountain Bicycling Association's National Mountain Bike Patrol program. The 50-plus active patrollers are responsible for approximately 2,000 assists during the summer riding season. These are usually questions about the park history, trail recommendations, or riding etiquette; but the patrollers are also ready to fix a flat tire, bandage a wound, or assist with an emergency evacuation.

The patrol operates primarily out of Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park. The patrol also partners with the Tahoe Rim Trail Association to cover other areas.

For more information on the patrol, go online or email info@tahoebikepatrol.org.