

USFS expands offerings at Lake Tahoe recreation sites

By Kathryn Reed

Hunger pangs in the outdoors are never a good thing, but especially when the cooler is empty or one was never packed.

Tahoe Treats, a division of California Land Management, is operating nine concessions throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin for the U.S. Forest Service.

“The limit is when you change the character of the National Forest,” Don Lane, UFSF recreation forester, said as to what will be offered. “We think there is so much demand in the basin for these kinds of little amenities.”



Tahoe Treats trailer at Pope Beach is steps from the sand.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

Lane said it's a careful balance between giving people what they want and not overdeveloping recreation sites, even if the structures are temporary.

“We want to make sure when people go (to the beaches) with

their families that they don't have an overwhelming sense of commercialism," Lane said.

Getting into the powerboat or personal watercraft business is not something Lane foresees happening; instead, letting the marinas around the lake handle that aspect of recreation.

Larry Chapman has his Tahoe Treats trailers at Pope Beach and Inspiration Point on the South Shore. He's working on getting one in at Nevada Beach, but is having to muddle through red taped because the state doesn't allow food trailers for extended periods of time. The plan is for it to be operating in mid-August.

Pizza is what people are ordering most often, though nachos are a big seller, too, Chapman said.

For people wanting to cool down, an array of drinks is available. So are ice cream bars and shaved ice.

One thing the Inspiration Point cart has that the other doesn't is chili cheese dogs because it has warmers inside. And with no other food options between Camp Richardson and Tahoma, this cart can often have a line in the parking lot.

Because it took so long for summer to arrive in Lake Tahoe, workers were selling coffee, hot chocolate and tea at the start of the season.

While these are called carts, they are really trailers that hook up to the back of a vehicle.

Besides food offerings that have cropped up in the last couple years and that are expanding, kayak rentals are another convenience on Forest Service beaches.

Chapman is having Steve Lannoy with Kayak Tahoe operate the water sport concessionaire. Rentals are available at Pope, Baldwin and Nevada beaches.

Lannoy pays Chapman a fee and Chapman pays the Forest Service a percentage of his sales.

Lane said it's easier to hire a concessionaire to operate facilities because they have the expertise as well as the manpower.

California Land Management has been working in the basin since 1985. The company has been running the Forest Service owned campsite at Fallen Leaf Lake for years. They also run the William Kent Campground in Tahoe City and Meeks Bay on the West Shore for the Forest Service.