

Heavenly proposing changes for summer, winter guests

By Kathryn Reed

Riding four-wheelers on what are normally ski runs, more trails to hike on, an outdoor events center – those are just some of the offerings Heavenly Mountain Resort wants to provide guests in the coming years.

The U.S. Forest Service is taking comments until mid-June on the resort's proposed plans.

“A lot of the hiking is just on the roads, which is not the best. We think this will be a big improvement,” Matt Dickinson with Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Heavenly may put in a hiking trail that would eliminate the need to use Tamarack chairlift in the summer.

Photo/LTN file

He is overseeing the application process. The Forest Service, as owner of most of the land Heavenly operates on, must make sure proposals fit into the already approved master plan and that the public has time to voice its opinions.

The hiking trail that would go from the base of the Tamarack chairlift to the top where it would intersect with other routes has been in the master plan for years.

Exact alignment of the trail will be determined by Heavenly and Forest Service officials working in cooperation by surveying the land together.

Dickinson also said his agency will walk the route where Heavenly wants to install a surface tow lift so people can better access Player's Terrain Park on Upper Powderbowl run. This would keep skiers-boarders in the park without having to take a chairlift.

To do this means taking out about 60 trees, six of which are more than 24 inches in diameter.

"The Jeep tours will start from the Tamarack Lodge or the top of the lift and go on to the top of Sky chair and possibly down and continue a loop back to the gondola," Dickinson said.

With the passage in 2011 by Congress of an act that encourages more recreation on Forest Service land in the summer, this allows local land managers to approve more activities that had previously been frowned upon.

"More people visit Tahoe in the summer than the winter. We want to provide a more robust experience, have more attractions up there," Heavenly spokesman Russ Pecoraro said of the top of the gondola area.

He also said not to expect any of the changes for summer recreation to come this season.

Pecoraro told *Lake Tahoe News* the timing of the Forest Service decision along with when corporate offices determine the capital improvement budget will dictate what is put in the ground this summer. Plus, the short construction season will also play a role.

Concerts at the Tamarack Lodge are being talked about for the future.

A summer pass for the gondola is \$59. Still to be determined is if that will include a ride up Tamarack chairlift.

It's likely the tubing hill for the summer – which operates on a synthetic turf-like surface – will have two lanes instead of one like last summer. Just enough snow still exists that the hill will not be open Memorial Day weekend when the gondola starts spinning again. And there's not enough snow to tube on.

The gondola will be open next weekend from 10am-4pm each day and then everyday from 10am-5pm starting June 8 and until just past Labor Day.

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Info: For more information on the proposal or how to comment, contact Matt Dickinson at (530) 543.2769 or go online.