

Tahoe company takes the mystery out of backpacking

By Kathryn Reed

Hiking is one thing, but staying overnight in the woods is a whole other experience. What to bring? How heavy should the pack be? Bring water or filter it? Sleeping pad or the ground? Tent or stars? Real food or that packaged stuff? Bear can or wing it? Permit or just go?

Backpacking can be a daunting experience even for an avid hiker or car camper. It's an experience Renee Gorevin wants to share with more women so they feel comfortable in the woods.



Renee Gorevin's company Tahoe Treks teaches women all about backpacking.
Photo/Provided

As someone who has been backpacking more than half her life (she started at age 23), Gorevin spent years in the woods with her husband, Mark. She came to realize she depended on him to take care of most things. Then about 15 years ago she started going on overnights with female friends. She had to rely on herself.

“This was a huge transformation for me as a woman,” Gorevin told *Lake Tahoe News*.

“Nature provides perspective in your life. It’s not all about me. There is this big thing out there. I feel like you can’t have too many women who have experienced that.”

That is how Tahoe Treks was born.

This is the first summer Gorevin and her posse are offering multi-day backpacking excursions for women 18 and older. For now, six rookies will be paired with two experienced backpackers from Tahoe Treks. (People who have backpacked before are welcome.)

“My desire and goal is to stay small and maintain quality. And the other part is the leave no trace – to not have an impact on the area,” Gorevin said of why group sizes are limited.

Even though three levels of excursions are offered, a certain amount of fitness is required – like being comfortable to walk five miles with a pack at elevations that could reach 9,000 feet.

While trekkers must provide their pack, tent and most everything but stove and cooking equipment, Tahoe Treks advises people what to bring so people are prepared.

In fact, the first couple hours of each trip are spent at the trailhead with everyone emptying their backpacks to assess the contents to decide if something should be left in a vehicle.

Gorevin has training for guiding through the Tahoe Rim Trail Association. As a longtime teacher in Lake Tahoe Unified School District, she knows how to educate.

Tahoe Treks is a nonprofit, which allows the company to offer the guided trips onto U.S. Forest Service land. However, Gorevin said the federal agency is still reluctant to have her charge for her services on public lands. That is why the

company's website says "donation" instead of "fee" for the trips.

Gorevin will be donating her services each year with one trip for young women ages 14-18 who might not otherwise have an opportunity to backpack.

She is also working on a volunteer component for Tahoe Treks, which may involve carrying out other people's trash or helping with campsite inventory.

This season's trips will be into the Desolation and Mokelumne wilderness areas.

Beyond teaching women the finer points of backpacking, the trekkers will also be taught about the principles of Leave No Trace, the differences in stoves, how to use a bear can (even though one is not required on any of the 2012 trips), how to filter water, and what wilderness areas are all about.

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Notes:

- Tahoe Treks is online
- Email: info@tahoetreks.org
- Telephone: (530) 318.0516.