

Mountain biking part of Heavenly's epic plans

Heavenly wants its summer activities to rival what it offers guests in the winter.

Beyond what the South Shore ski resort is already embarking on, it has submitted plans to the U.S. Forest Service and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency to create Epic Discovery – the same type of summer adventure Vail Resorts has planned for Vail and Breckenridge in Colorado.

Epic Discovery is designed to connect kids and families with the national forests. “Learning through play” is the theme, much like the philosophy of the ski and snowboard learning centers.



Heavenly's GM, Pete Sonntag, talks about changes coming to the resort for summer fun. Photo/LTN file

Heavenly will contribute 1 percent of all summer lift ticket and activity revenue to the Nature Conservancy for forest and watershed restoration projects.

Below are some of the plans in the works and new proposals for Epic Discovery:

- Mid-Station Zipline Canopy Tour: An interpretive zipline canopy tour in the area between the gondola mid-station and the top station to the east of the gondola alignment.
- East Peak Zipline Canopy Tour: A multi-stage guided zipline canopy tour will begin near the top of Big Easy chairlift and end with a zip over East Peak Lake, near the base of Dipper Express chairlift.
- Sky Meadows Zipline Canopy Tour: It will begin near the top of Tamarack Express chairlift and end near the base of Sky Express chairlift.
- Sky Cycle Canopy Tour: Located in the area between the gondola top station and the Mid-Station Observation Deck, the Sky Cycle Canopy Tour will allow visitors to traverse the area by pedaling individual bicycle-like devices that are suspended from a cable in the air.
- Sky Meadows Ropes Course: A self-guided ropes course consisting of a series of platforms and rope walkway-bridges will be located between Sky Deck and the base of Sky Express chairlift.
- Forest Flyer: The Forest Flyer allows guests on individual sleds to descend on a raised track through the forest and natural rock formations. Located north and west of the existing tubing hill, the Forest Flyer will utilize gravity for the descent while giving riders full control of their speed.
- East Peak Lake Water Activities: Water-oriented activities on and around the existing East Peak reservoir will include kayaking, canoeing and fishing.
- Hiking Trails: New hiking trails will connect the top of Tamarack Express chairlift to the top of the gondola and Tamarack Lodge, continuing down to East Peak Lodge, approximately 3 miles.

- Ridge Run Lookout Tower and Observation Deck: A new observation tower will be developed near the existing Ridge Run Overlook. Resembling a historic Forest Service Fire Lookout Tower, it will offer views of High Meadows and Freel Peak, as well as Lake Tahoe. The existing picnic deck adjacent to the top of Sky Express chairlift will be rebuilt.
- Mountain Bike Park: Dipper Express, Comet Express and Tamarack Express will serve as access points to the Mountain Bike Park in the East Peak Basin area, offering eight to 10 total miles of trails ranging in difficulty from beginner through expert.
- Mountain Excursion Tour: A Mountain Excursion Tour will connect all three activity centers via motorized 4x4 vehicles, at the top of the Gondola, East Peak Lodge, and Sky Meadows, and will offer guided tours to various locations around the upper mountain.
- Interpretive Learning: Interpretive Discovery Zones will be integrated throughout the experience, sharing the area's rich natural environment and cultural history with guests using fun and informative learning techniques.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*