

Beach cleanup program launches; future of South Shore fireworks still on shaky ground

By Kathryn Reed

Whether the South Shore has fireworks after this summer remains to be seen. But what is known is the public beaches will be cleaned.

After a lawsuit was filed last year by a Marla Bay couple in regards to the debris that washed ashore following the July 4 and Labor Day shows and the potential degradation of Lake Tahoe's water, Adopt-a-Beach-Tahoe was created.

It won't be just about tending to the beaches after the fireworks. It's a seasonlong program that launches today with a party at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course from 5-6pm.

South Lake Tahoe, Douglas County, Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, League to Save Lake Tahoe, and U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit are spearheading the cleanup days that will run June 15-Sept. 15. The goal is to get service clubs, companies and individuals to sponsor a day – which means being responsible for regularly cleaning up one of the public beaches on the South Shore. Or it could be a group of friends taking the lead; or random volunteers showing up to help.

"It's up to the community to make this idea work," South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

After all, people said they would do anything to ensure the beaches are clean and the fireworks continue.

This was after the 30-plus year tradition was threatened. Part of the lawsuit settlement is that better cleanup needs to occur – which includes being more prompt.

While the LTVA has had a cleanup protocol in place, it either didn't work well enough last year, the winds were unique or non-commercial grade debris found its way onto beaches – mostly in Nevada that are downwind from the show that has been traditionally been shot off from a barge that is anchored in South Lake Tahoe waters.

“Joe and I think the beach cleanup is a super idea. It offers the opportunity for civic groups and individuals to give back to the community in a very meaningful way. It should result in cleaner beaches that will benefit tourism and our locals all year long,” Joan Truxler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The Truxlers filed the lawsuit that was settled earlier this year.

As a result of the lawsuit, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District will be issuing a permit for the fireworks. This also means they will be shot off in Nevada now, not California.

“As we navigate the requirements of the TDFD permit, which is somewhat based upon the settlement agreement, we are hitting brick walls with the clean up (regarding) access to USFS and private beaches, etc,” Carol Chaplin, LTVA executive director, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Suffice it to say that we are looking at the exposure going forward, and whether or not the LTVA will sponsor fireworks in the future is uncertain. We are, as we speak, looking for alternative ways to be supportive and yet not be in that lead role. The important thing is that the events continue, not who gets credit for them.”

There is nothing stopping someone else from filing another lawsuit against the LTVA or any other fireworks that occur within the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Notes:

- Beach cleanup kits are being put together by the LTVA. Supplies will include buckets and trash grabber tools, which will be available at Lake Tahoe Visitor Center in California (3066 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe) and Nevada (169 Highway 50, Stateline). Debris will be recorded by League officials who will share them with various agencies so people know what is being left on shore or washing up. For more info about volunteering, call 530.544.5050, ext. 223.