

1968 track training facility to be historical site



The track at Echo Summit was used for training for the 1968 Olympics. Photo/ Les Wright

Eldorado National Forest in cooperation with El Dorado County and the state will place a California State Historical Marker at the site of the 1968 Olympic training facility at Echo Summit on June 27.

A celebration entitled Return to the Summit will honor the site where U.S. Olympic men's track and field athletes broke four world records during the Olympic trials at a tumultuous time in our nation's history.

Tommie Smith and John Carlos, who finished with gold and bronze, respectively, in the 200-meter dash in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, are among the athletes scheduled to speak at the ceremony. Smith and Carlos famously bowed their heads and raised black-gloved fists on the victory stand in Mexico City, as a visible statement about the condition of human rights in this country.

The Echo Summit training site was an ideal high-altitude site to help athletes train for the thin air in Mexico City.

The facilities were disassembled and moved to South Lake Tahoe once the athletes left for Mexico City. They remained in use until 1992.

The Echo Summit site is on the south side of Highway 50, 10 miles west of South Lake Tahoe. The entrance is marked by a sign for the Adventure Mountain snow play area. The event will begin at 10:30am.