

Recognition to locals making Tahoe a better place

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency on April 26 gave Lake Spirit Awards to four people who have shown exceptional commitment to protecting Lake Tahoe by fostering a spirit of collaboration in their work and volunteer time.

This year's winners are:

Exemplary Citizen North Shore: Karen Mullen-Ehly retired from a career with Washoe County Parks to bring her “get-it-done” attitude to numerous projects at Lake Tahoe, according to Tahoe Fund CEO Amy Berry, who nominated Mullen-Ehly.

South Shore: Karen Fink was a founding member of the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition, and continues to work on improving transportation and biking, as well as the amount of affordable housing at Lake Tahoe. She was the inspiration behind parents' group Small World to engage busy parents to create a more peaceful, sustainable planet for all children, according to Rebecca Bryson, who nominated Fink.

Agency Representative/Environmental Scientist North Shore: Forest Schafer has worked for the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District since 2003, working his way up from wildland firefighter to the district's forester. Among his many responsibilities, Schafer serves as the incident commander for the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, which coordinates fuel reduction, fire prevention, and community engagement for 18 local, state, and federal entities in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

South Shore: Nicole Cartwright has been a part of Lake Tahoe's Aquatic Invasive Species Program since it began in 2007 and has helped build it from a volunteer program into the “gold standard for prevention,” according to TRPA Aquatic Resources Program Manager Dennis Zabaglo, who nominated Cartwright.