

100+ pounds trash plucked from SLT bike trails



Catherine Cecchi with Clean Tahoe moves a heavy pallet out of the way for her crew to retrieve. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

How long has it been since there was a Burger King in South Lake Tahoe or even on the South Shore?

The answer is years. The question is relevant because a wrapper from that fast food restaurant was picked up this week along a bike trail here. It's either been there a long time or someone brought it in from outside of the area and instead of

tossing it in a garbage bin, discarded outside as litter.

About 50 people volunteered an hour or so of their time on June 12 to help clean up sections of the bike paths, all under the guidance of Clean Tahoe and League to Save Lake Tahoe leaders, with support from Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Bike Coalition.



A pile of household trash just off the bike trail near the Y in South Lake Tahoe.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

**Items collected
June 12:**

- Band-Aids – 2
- Grocery bags – 22
- Other bags – 47
- Balloons – 2
- Batteries – 2
- Bottles – 32
- Bottle caps – 171
- Cans – 34
- Car parts – 15
- Cigarette butts – 1,117
- Cigarette

lighters – 3

- Clothing – 19
- Construction material – 26
- Cups – 41
- Dog poop bags – 19
 - Dog poop without bags – 5
- Fishing line/net – 5
- Food waste – 20
- Food wrappers – 120
- Glass bottles – 20
- Glass oil lamp – 1
- Glass pieces – 187
- Gum – 31
- Historic metal – 2
- Lids – 71
- Metal pieces – 55
- Paper pieces – 346
- Plastic pieces – 420
- Plates – 22
- Pull tabs – 12
- Q-Tip – 3
- Receipts – 35
- Reflectors – 3
- Rope – 20
- Rubber

- bands/hair ties – 6
- Six-pack holder – 4
- Straws/stirrers – 76
- Syringes – 1
- Styrofoam cups – 22
- Styrofoam pieces – 130
- Styrofoam plates – 3
- Styrofoam take-out containers – 5
- Take-out containers – 6
- Tampons – 2
- Tobacco packing – 22
- Toys – 4
- Utensils – 28
- Zip ties – 10

In the short amount of time the crew collected 101.5 pounds or 73 gallons of debris.

Fortunately gloves were handed out to those who did not bring them, and grabbers were provided to those who didn't want to get that close. When you are picking up people's hygiene products and sex prevention devices, it's best to have your own protection.

There were three starting locations: 1. Clean Tahoe office near the Tahoe Valley Pharmacy, with people then going to the trail from Helen Avenue to behind the Crossing center; 2.

behind Motel 6; and 3. Highway 50-Los Angeles Avenue. The latter two met up in the Rubicon area.



Volunteer Rosemary Manning picks debris. Photo/Kathryn Reed

This cleanup has been going on for several years, with most being on a Saturday. This was the first to be on a Tuesday night. The hope was to get a different group.

Catherine Cecchi, who runs Clean Tahoe, told *Lake Tahoe News* the trash found along the bike trails and in neighborhoods is different than what is found on beach cleanup days.

“There are a lot more food wrappers and a lot more to-go cups,” she said of the bike path as she filled her large orange bag that had “Don’t Trash California” written on it. “At the beach there is more recreation stuff; alcohol and cigarette butts.”

Still, there were plenty of cigarette butts picked between the three groups – 1,117. So many were found embedded in dry pine needles.



Volunteers with their full bags.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

A pile of household trash was found across the path not far from a residence. A guess is that it was brought there by a critter. An envelope was still part of the mess; something Cecchi took a photo of with the hope of tracking down the owner of the contents. Leaving trash out for animals – intentional or otherwise – can come with a fine.

Someone's unexpired permanent residence card was salvaged. A plastic pallet was left to be picked up by the Clean Tahoe crew later in the week. Christmas decorations had seen better days.

It was the itty-bitty pieces of Styrofoam that were so annoying to pick up. Some looked like they may have once been bigger pieces of packing material.

One thing veteran volunteers have noticed is the decline of plastic bags. An assumption could be the bag ban in the city limits means there aren't as many out there.