

County Update August 20, 2020:

I have a few things I would like to share with you:

First it is very sad that most of the events on the trail were canceled. I have missed seeing many of you on the trail. With COVID our job in recreation has only increased with everyone wanting to get outside. Some of you may not know that the parks division also manages Whitewater Rafting on the South Fork of the American River and the four county parks, a skate park and over 30 miles of bike trails. We are also building a Bike Park and have two studies underway for park properties and we write grants. So you can see staff is limited. Justin is on the trail most days. Our office support is out on maternity leave until the end of the year. We have hired awesome seasonal staff, but I have been tied to the office more this year trying to keep everything going.

Justin and Johnathan have been busy pumping toilets twice a week with the trailer. They are exhausted but doing an amazing job. Rubicon Trail Foundation's Mid-Trail staff has been helping to stock and clean the restrooms and we appreciate all the help from Glen and Mike. About the reststops, I have to mention that one issue we have is the items put into the toilet units that clog the pumper. The main item we keep recovering is men's underwear. Some of you may remember years ago during the cleanup and abatement order a survey was done and the amount of men's underwear left on the trail was unbelievable. Well now you're putting them into the toilets. Please if you soil your shorts take them with you!!! I don't know what else to say on this subject. 😊

I was actually on the trail yesterday. Justin and Johnathan were pumping the toilets. It appears that use may have slowed down as the units were not even half full. They pumped 7 units yesterday and the holding tank is only 100 gallons. So you can do the math. Everyone at Buck Island thanked the boys for their work and complemented them on how wonderful they are. When it gets to this time of year I can't tell you how much I appreciate that. It's been a lot of work but well worth it. The truck will make a huge difference as they can all be pumped in a day instead of two days.

So update on the truck. We are about three weeks out. It looks amazing and WFO is doing an amazing job as always. I am working on the wrap with the logos from all the donors. I hope to get the hood wrapped before the truck is on the trail. I will do my best.

On our way to the Loon Lake kiosk yesterday at about 6:00 a.m. we came upon a fire at Loon Lake by the boat launch. It was a vegetation fire so we stopped and put it out, but while I was there I walked along the shore. OMG I can't believe the garbage and white flowers everywhere around the lake. I tell you this because I want to thank the OHV community for keeping the Rubicon so clean. I walked yesterday from Ellis to Buck and whereas I saw a few white flowers, it was so clean compared to Loon Lake. You have all done an amazing job keeping the trail clean. I realize that use has increased with COVID so I expected to see more. But you are amazing. Thank you so much for caring about your trail.

Our kiosk staff has been fortunate to meet many of you. Alan and Mackenzie have been a great addition at the kiosk. We have had staff at the kiosk every day of the week and hopefully you have been able to get your spill kit and supplies that you need for the trail. We have also had some pick them

up at our office in Placerville. We are working to get supplies and education started on the Tahoe side of the trail. I noticed how many users coming in from the Nevada side that have not been educated on proper use and expectations. So I am working with State Parks and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit to resolve this issue and get the items you need to that side of the trail.

It seems like use this year has increased due to COVID. Everyone wants to get out as you have all seen the campers everywhere as you drive to the trailheads. The impact to our resources has been incredible. I have heard from many that the trail is difficult this year. As you all know the trail moves daily. We are not dropping little rock on the trail as was done years ago. We have moved to larger rock and BFR's to fill in the holes. So to some it may be more difficult but we are looking at it from a maintenance perspective and larger rock will not move as easy so it makes sense. The small rock is lost on the trail and a waste of time in our opinion. The objective is not to make it too difficult but to make it the Rubicon Trail. It was rated a 10 for a reason. We are not catering to one type of vehicle over another just armoring the trail as we can.

We have had lots of meetings with the Tahoe National Forest on the Placer County side of the trail. There are issues over there like the mud hole. Many of you have seen the new bypass. Currently El Dorado County has not done any work on that side and we will not until we complete another agreement that is needed. We just have not had time to work on that agreement. I hope to soon. That side of the trail is being handled by the Tahoe National Forest working with the Basin on their portions.

We have been successful with grants this year. The Intent to Award for the State OHV Grants has been released. We applied for four grants and we have received four grants totaling \$1,192,566. They are as follows with match funds included:

Ground Operations -\$199,057

Education - \$111,324

Development -\$255,998, Maintenance yard for the county pumping equipment

Development Tahoma Staging -\$626,187, Paving and improvements to the staging area in Tahoma

We are moving into maintenance mode again as we do every August. We start thinking about what we need to do to button the trail up before winter. You will see staff cleaning energy dissipaters and fixing water bars. We will finish the helicopter project probably in October. We have several sections that are available for Adopt a trail, but with the COVID situation we have not been pushing that program. Any help is always appreciated but asking groups to volunteer on the trail with all the quarantine requirements and hardships people are experiencing at this time seemed insensitive. If an AAT group gets to their section awesome but we are not pressing this year. We thank everyone for all that they put into the trail but understand this is a crazy year. Everyone needs to take care of themselves and we will take care of your trail!