

SIERRA OUTDOORS

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Trail

time

TRUCKEE ADDS LINK TO TAHOE-TO-PYRAMID ROUTE

By Benjamin Spillman
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A steady, Sierra Nevada downpour on a recent morning wasn't going to stop Becky Bucar from riding the newest bike path in Truckee.

For Bucar, an associate engineer for the Town of Truckee, the chance to ride the latest addition to the Truckee River Legacy Trail was a moment seven years in the making.

That's how long Bucar and others had been working to complete the 2.2-mile stretch of trail that connects the existing trail from downtown Truckee to the Glenshire subdivision and its approximately 1,400 homes.

Despite the rain during Bucar's ride, workers were putting finishing touches on the paved route that's scheduled to officially open on Friday. If the rain stops long enough for workers to put sealant on the pavement, the trail will be open for good. If not, they'll likely close it down for another day to complete the work.

It's significant because not only does it connect a major subdivision to downtown Truckee, it is another link in the growing Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway that aims to create a 116-mile hiking and biking route from Lake Tahoe to Pyramid Lake by way of the Truckee River.



There are good views from the overlook on a new section of the Truckee Legacy Trail even on gloomy days like Monday, days before the scheduled opening Friday. PHOTOS BY BENJAMIN SPILLMAN/RGJ

Becky Bucar, an associate engineer for the Town of Truckee, checks out the Truckee River from the Truckee Legacy Trail on Monday.

The new section of trail also is an opportunity for visitors to take a Truckee day trip that includes 10 miles of riding on smooth, scenic riding along the river from the east side of Truckee, through downtown and back. The budget for the new segment was \$3.7 million, although the final costs aren't in yet. Much of the funding, about \$2.9 million, came from California's River Parkways project. It's a grant program that's aimed at improving habitat, recreation flood control and access on riverfronts.

"I'm excited for it to open," said Bucar, who gamely agreed to ride the new portion of the route in the rain and point out the highlights along the way. "There is still a big chunk of the summer left for (riders, walkers and runners) to get on it."

From the Glenshire Drive trailhead, the trail goes slightly downhill to a fork. On the left is a short, slightly uphill spur that leads to an overview of the Truckee River and surrounding mountains.

The right side of the fork is the main trail, which continues downhill at about an 8-percent grade — the steepest section — for about one half of a mile until it



The paved surface of the Truckee Legacy Trail in Truckee means it's easy to ride even in wet weather, as Becky Bucar, associate engineer for the Town of Truckee, demonstrates during a ride Monday. The trail opens to the public Friday.

PHOTOS BY BENJAMIN SPILLMAN/RGJ

reaches a bridge over Martis Creek. There's an interpretive marker at the spot that explains the nearby remnants of the ice dam that once

blocked the creek. After the bridge the path goes across a long, mostly flat and clear area that overlooks the river before dipping into a

forested area and eventually reaching the connection to the previously opened segment of the Legacy Trail that continues to downtown

Truckee. There are plans to continue the Truckee portion of the route all the way to Donner Lake.

"This is a high-priority project in general, whether we are talking about trails or all other road projects," Bucar said.

The people in Truckee aren't the only ones celebrating the opening.

Janet Phillips, president of the Truckee River

Truckee segment is critical to completing the route from Lake Tahoe from Pyramid Lake. It's also part of a busy summer when it comes to progress on the longer route.

It's the second segment of the trail to open since June, and it's going to be followed later this month when a section opens between Floriston and Farad.

Phillips, who has been working on the bikeway project for 10 years, said segments typically have been opening at the pace of about one per year. So, three segments in one summer represents a burst of progress.

"It is huge; we've never had that happen before, and I would be surprised if it ever happens again," Phillips said.

Once the Floriston segments opens the route will be about 75 percent complete she said, with gaps remaining in the mountains between Verdi and Truckee and east of Reno near Sparks and near Fernley.

The mountain section could take years because it is an area that's steep and rocky. The eastern gaps are due to difficulty reaching agreements with landowners along the route.

Still, Phillips said she'll attend the opening of the latest segment of the Truckee River Legacy trail looking forward to making more progress in completing the entire route.

"If we can get this bikeway finished ... it really illustrates the potential for a unified message for our area about outdoor recreation."