



## Return to the Summit

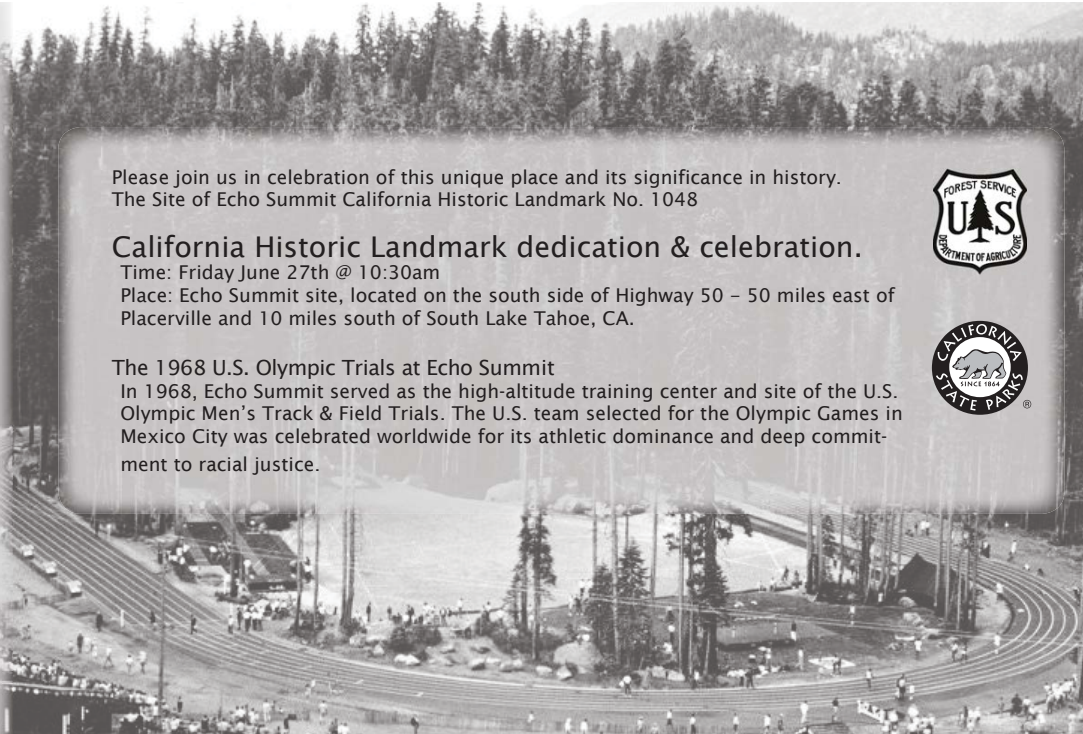


### Echo Summit designated a California Historical Landmark; 1968 U.S. Olympians to attend June 27 commemoration

Return to the Summit

Please join us in celebration of this unique place and its significance in history.  
The Site of Echo Summit California Historic Landmark No. 1048

**California Historic Landmark dedication & celebration.**  
Time: Friday June 27th @ 10:30am  
Place: Echo Summit site, located on the south side of Highway 50 – 50 miles east of Placerville and 10 miles south of South Lake Tahoe, CA.

**The 1968 U.S. Olympic Trials at Echo Summit**  
In 1968, Echo Summit served as the high-altitude training center and site of the U.S. Olympic Men's Track & Field Trials. The U.S. team selected for the Olympic Games in Mexico City was celebrated worldwide for its athletic dominance and deep commitment to racial justice.



Echo Summit, the ethereal site of the 1968 U.S. Olympic Track & Field Trials, will welcome back many of the men who made history there 46 years ago.

On Friday, June 27, a group of 1968 Olympians will attend a “Return to the Summit” celebration organized by the U.S. Forest Service. A plaque set in a large granite boulder will be displayed, marking Echo Summit as a California Historical Landmark. **The event begins at 10:30 a.m. and is open to the public.**

Tommie Smith and John Carlos, the record-setting sprinters best known for their gloved-fist protest on the victory stand at the Mexico City Olympics, will be joined at the June 27 reunion by Olympic teammates Ed Burke, Ron Whitney, Ed Caruthers, Norm Tate, Larry Young, Reynaldo Brown, Dave Maggard and Vince Matthews.

Representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, California Office of Historic Preservation, USA Track & Field, El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, and the City of South Lake Tahoe will also attend the event.

Following the 90-minute ceremony, the Olympians will head to Sacramento, where they will be introduced to the crowd that evening during the USA Outdoor Track & Field Championships at Sacramento State's Hornet Stadium.

California Historical Landmarks are buildings, structures, sites or places that have been determined to have statewide historical significance.

In presenting the nomination to the commission, William Burg, a state historian in the Office of Historic Preservation, cited the success of the 1968 U.S. men's Olympic team in Mexico City and its commitment to the civil-rights issues of that tumultuous time.

There are more than 1,000 state historical landmarks in California, and Echo Summit is just the fifth sports-related site.

The plaque reads:

IN 1968, ECHO SUMMIT SERVED AS A HIGH-ALTITUDE TRAINING CENTER AND SITE OF THE U.S. OLYMPIC MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD TRIALS. FOUR WORLD RECORDS WERE SHATTERED HERE ON THE TRACK CARVED OUT OF THE ELDORADO NATIONAL FOREST. THE U.S. TEAM SELECTED FOR THE 1968 OLYMPIC GAMES IN MEXICO CITY WAS CELEBRATED WORLDWIDE FOR ITS ATHLETIC DOMINANCE AND DEEP COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUALITY.

To replicate the high altitude of Mexico City, site of the 1968 Summer Olympics, officials from the United States Olympic Committee selected Echo Summit as the site of a high-altitude training camp as well as the 1968 U.S. Men's Final Olympic Track and Field Trials from Sept. 6-16.

Echo Summit's elevation of 7,377 feet is 28 feet higher than Mexico City's.

The man most responsible for convincing the USOC to choose Echo Summit was Walt Little Sr., South Lake Tahoe's Director of Recreation. Two of Little's sons – Walt Jr. and William – will speak at the June 27 event.

The Forest Service approved the construction of a 400-meter track in the middle of the forest atop Echo Summit. Hundreds of Ponderosa pine remained inside the oval.

Four world records were broken at the Echo Summit Trials – Carlos (19.7 seconds in the 200 meters), Lee Evans (44.0 in the 400 meters), Geoff Vanderstock (48.8 in the 400-meter hurdles) and Bob Seagren (17 feet, 9 inches in the pole vault).

The records set by Carlos and Smith at Echo Summit were never officially ratified because of the “brush” spikes on their shoes, though statisticians have always considered their marks legitimate. (In an odd twist, the 44.1 clocked by runner-up Larry James in the 400 meters was ratified as an official world record.)

The men’s team selected at Echo Summit was one of the strongest in Olympic track history. The U.S. men won 12 gold medals and broke six world records in Mexico City.

Despite the beautiful setting, Echo Summit wasn’t paradise. Black athletes were under tremendous pressure to participate in an Olympic boycott, and only the most single-minded athletes could have ignored the headlines of the day. The assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy were fresh wounds, and the rioting at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago took place less than two weeks before the Olympic Trials began.

The only other sports sites to be designated California Historical Landmarks are the Los Angeles Coliseum, Long Beach Marine Stadium, Squaw Valley Ski Area, and the Pioneer Ski Area in Johnsville.

Following the Olympic Trials, the Echo Summit track was disassembled and transported to South Lake Tahoe Intermediate School, where it served the community for several decades. The outline of the long-removed track can still be seen at Echo Summit, which is now the site of Adventure Mountain, a winter recreation park.

For more information, contact:  
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