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Newsletter: August/September 2017

It's never too late to prepare for the impacts of climate change!

Houston, TX is being drenched by an "[unprecedented](#)" storm [made worse by climate change](#). California is experiencing another major heat wave, wildfires this year are already [well above average](#), and extreme weather in the Basin last winter led to [significant flooding and damage](#). These dangerous extremes are expected to only get worse as climate change progresses, resulting in more damage to our environment and property and increased threats to public health and safety. While reducing greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change is important ([as has been a focus of land use agencies](#)), our decision-makers must also prioritize infrastructure and development that can better *adapt* to these impacts; unfortunately, they are often doing the opposite.

For years, scientists have predicted these impacts, while FOWS and other organizations have called on our land use authorities at Lake Tahoe to make sure their plans address these changes ([see examples](#)). Our recommendations include:

- Designing new and redevelopment projects so they can handle more flooding;
- Restoring and protecting natural land to help accommodate flood waters (and reduce pollution in the water) in those areas where it matters most, such as between developed areas and Lake Tahoe;
- Priority implementation of strategies to reduce peak hour visitor traffic, including [Basin entry/exit traffic](#); and
- Denying permits for projects that will generate more traffic unless adequate mitigation is included.



Climate change will mean more flooding in the Basin. [Image](#) from February 2017.

FOWS will continue to advocate for the adoption of adaptive strategies and more responsible land use planning.



It was a fun celebration at our community party!

FOWS would also like to extend our gratitude to our members and supporters for **ten years** of advocacy! We had a wonderful time at West Shore Pizza celebrating our anniversary with approx. 40 other friends at our 8/23 Community Pizza Party. FOWS would also like to thank the many groups (i.e. homeowner associations) who provided us the opportunity to speak with your members this summer. We look forward to continuing to represent our West Shore communities!

Sincerely,

Susan Gearhart
President, Friends of the West Shore

Regional and Local Planning Updates:

Measuring transportation impacts/benefits:

TRPA's final "Transportation Performance Measures [State of the Practice Report](#)" (released August 2017) provides information regarding over 200 variations of existing transportation-related metrics used by TRPA and other nationwide planning entities.

The report is intended to provide baseline information for [considering potential updates to TRPA's environmental standards](#), tracking project impacts/benefits, requesting funds, meeting annual monitoring requirements, and other planning activities. The report does not itself recommend any changes ([read here for additional details](#)). While FOWS is concerned that future changes to TRPA metrics could weaken protections, we are also encouraged by potential metrics that could help improve the assessment of Tahoe's transportation system.

New Shoreline Plan:

The proposed [TRPA Shoreline Plan](#) will update goals, policies, and regulations allowing more shoreline structures such as marinas, piers, buoys, ramps, and boat slips. On 8/14, FOWS submitted [comments on the "Notice of Preparation"](#) with recommendations regarding what the upcoming environmental impact statement should analyze. Despite the TRPA Compact requirement that the agency implement a regional plan that protects Tahoe's natural environment, and the federal Clean Water Act prohibition on degradation of Lake Tahoe's water quality (due to the lake's status as a [federally-designated "Outstanding National Resource Water"](#)), the additional structures in the proposed plan will draw *more* motorized boats, which negatively impact water quality. Other concerns include impacts to air quality, scenic resources, public access, and non-motorized recreation (e.g. relaxing on the beach, swimming, kayaking, etc.), and an increase in noise and hazardous conflicts between motorized and non-motorized recreation. The draft environmental impact study is anticipated this winter.



Project Updates:

Meeks Bay Marina:

In early August, the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board [approved](#) a [request by the U.S. Forest Service](#) to allow the submittal of an acceptable Best Management Practice (BMP) Management Plan, along with twice annual inspection and reporting, to satisfy [BMP compliance issues](#) at the site. As a result, a settlement agreement was not needed at this time. The U.S. Forest Service also anticipates releasing a Notice of Preparation this fall, which will outline potential future developments at the site.



Long-term West Shore road construction along SR 89:

According to Caltrans, [the road work to rebuild SR 89 along the West Shore from Tahoma to south of Tahoe City is now complete](#) ! While there are still other projects in the area, west shore residents and visitors can rejoice that at least this project, which has caused delays for years, is over!

Caltrans request for Emergency Hazard Tree Removal:

[There will be substantial tree removal along our highways in the near future.](#) [Extensive tree mortality](#) from drought, disease, and beetle infestation poses a threat to public health and safety. After evaluating all highways on the California side of the Basin for dead, dying, and diseased trees that pose a risk, Caltrans proposes to treat almost 68 acres within the Caltrans right-of-way (which extends 100 feet from the center line of the highway in both directions). Caltrans will work on state Route 89 immediately after Labor Day, and begin tree removal on the other highways next spring. [Read TRPA's press release](#) for additional details.

Tahoe Maritime Center:

The Tahoe Maritime Center has applied for a permit to expand into a larger "Museum campus." The applicant recently requested an extension to submit the environmental questionnaire, and states the purpose of the proposed project is "to celebrate the maritime history of the Lake Tahoe and to provide [an] experiential, educational campus for the community and tourist alike. Plans include remodeling the existing building as well as the addition of three new buildings. There will also be upgrades to gardens, public art displays, lawn/picnic areas, activity pond, interpretive exhibits, and a linkage of natural paths to development walkways." ([see page 23](#)). More information is also available [here](#).



Image from [Collection Highlights](#)

Other projects:

FOWS will continue to update you on the following projects as new information becomes available:

- [Alpine Meadows to Squaw Valley Base-to-Base Gondola](#)
- [Fanny Bridge/SR 89 Highway Realignment Project](#)
- [Homewood Mountain Resort](#)
- [Lake Tahoe West Forest Restoration Partnership](#)
- [Martis Valley West Specific Plan](#)
- [Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan](#)

Easy ways to help FOWS!

Save Mart:

Did you know that up to 3% of your purchase at Save Mart and [other stores](#) can be donated to FOWS at no extra cost to you? A program previously known as "SHARES" allows shoppers to designate FOWS to receive donations earned through their purchases. Sign up for a new account or register your existing account [through this link](#), then you simply provide your phone number at checkout and funds are donated to FOWS. It's easy and there is no cost to you!

Amazon Smile:

We've joined the Amazon Smile program; all you have to do is order from Amazon through [this link](#) and 0.5% of your purchase will be donated to FOWS at no additional cost to you!

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We invite you to contact us to learn more, ask questions, or simply get to know the FOWS Board.

Please contact Jennifer Quashnick, FOWS Conservation Consultant, at: jgtahoe@sbcglobal.net, or Susan Gearhart, FOWS President, at: susan@friendswestshore.org or (530) 525-0368.

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