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January/February 2019 Newsletter

We have long known that with climate change comes increased wildfire danger, flooding, and other impacts, as reiterated in [a recent assessment for the Sierra Nevada](#). Making matters worse, we have also experienced significant increases in peak traffic congestion in recent years.



As threats emerge, fast emergency access by responders is imperative and evacuations may be necessary. Congested roadways pose a significant threat to our safety. Caltrans' [2017 traffic counts](#) reveal peak traffic increases up to 25% along the West Shore, with most count locations experiencing [increases around 9-13%](#). **These increases occurred *without the construction of any new major developments in the region!*** Approved but not-yet-constructed projects, including Homewood Mountain Resort and projects in Squaw Valley and Martis Valley, will add even more traffic to our roadways.

The good news is that there are ways we can help better prepare our communities to handle impacts when emergency situations occur. In addition to preparing and practicing (note: the [Tahoe Living with Fire website](#) provides helpful information including [how to sign up for emergency notifications, prepare a To-Go bag, practice evacuation](#) , and other actions you can take), more changes at the policy level are needed and it is time for our land use agencies to be more directly involved in these kinds of discussions. *A good initial start would be to stop approving large new developments that will only make traffic worse.*

As we move into the new year, we look forward to your continued feedback and support, and encourage you to [contact us](#) with any additional ideas or questions you may have. FOWS will remain diligent in our efforts to positively influence projects and plans and keep you informed.

Wishing you a Happy New Year,

Judith Tornese,
President

Project updates:

Meeks Bay Marina:

The Meeks Bay Restoration Project proposes to remove the marina and restore the creek and lagoon, add a new public pier and boat ramp along the south end of the bay, and incorporate other changes to the campground, parking areas, and circulation. As reported

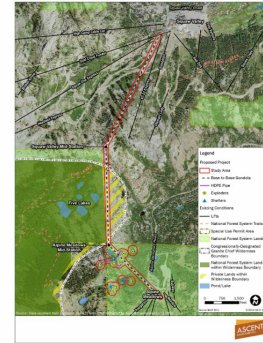
in our [previous newsletter](#) , public comments on the Notice of Preparation/Intent were gathered in October, and we are now awaiting the release of the draft environmental review, which is anticipated next summer, with the final document slated for February 2020 ([more information here](#)).

State Route 89 Corridor Planning (Tahoma to South Lake Tahoe):

TRPA aims to release a report in early 2019 documenting the results of broad public outreach efforts this past summer followed by a draft Corridor Plan in the spring. Read details [here](#) . FOWS will continue to participate in stakeholder meetings and keep you updated. Additional information can be viewed in [this winter's Tahoe in Depth](#) .

Alpine Meadows to Squaw Valley Base-to-Base Gondola:

Conservation groups, including FOWS, recently [requested recirculation](#) of the draft environmental impact report after it was discovered that the resorts' owners (KSL/Alterra) failed to disclose an agreement with the private property owner concerning a portion of land within the Congressionally-designated Granite Chief Wilderness Area that is proposed for gondola development. Background information is available [here](#) ; click on the map for a larger image.



Alpine Sierra Subdivision (Alpine Meadows):

The Alpine Sierra Subdivision project proposes to develop 47 single-family residential units and 5 secondary dwelling units in Alpine Meadows. In our [comments](#) on the draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), FOWS raised concerns regarding the traffic impacts from the project, especially in light of cumulative increases along SR 89 and the additional traffic this would add within the Tahoe Basin. The [final EIR](#) was released in November and public hearings by Placer County are anticipated this winter. This project is also near the proposed White Wolf Subdivision, which would add almost 40 new homes, and the proposed Alpine Meadows to Squaw Valley gondola, further contributing to cumulative traffic impacts.

Old Tahoe City Firehouse:

[Placer County has approved funding for a feasibility study](#) to examine two potential redevelopment options for the old Tahoe City firehouse: 1) "The Commonwell," which proposes a market hall, waterfront amphitheater, plaza deck, retail, and underground parking; and 2) "The Siren Arts at Tahoe City," which would include performance space, galleries, artist studios, classrooms, workforce housing, and other amenities.



Other projects:

- [Fanny Bridge/SR 89 Realignment](#) - Construction of the new bridge and bike path undercrossing took place last summer but will not be open until 2019. The replacement of Fanny Bridge will also occur in 2019.
- [Homewood Mountain Resort](#) - There are no new updates.
- [Lake Tahoe West \(LTW\) Restoration Partnership](#) - There are no new updates, however TRPA's [Tahoe In Depth](#) recently published [this article](#) reiterating the importance of managing our forests for improved ecological health and fire safety.
- [Martis Valley West Specific Plan](#) - In November, Sierra Watch, Mountain Area Preservation Foundation, and the League to Save Lake Tahoe [submitted the opening brief](#) in their appeal to the California Superior Court's previous ruling on the MVWSP lawsuit; the case will now continue through the appeals process.
- [Meeks Bay Bike Trail](#) - The bike trail construction is complete and the bike path is now open for public use.
- [Tahoe City Lodge](#) - There are no new updates.
- [Tahoe Keys Proposed Herbicide Use](#) - A collaborative process involving public agencies, local citizens, Tahoe Keys property owners, nonprofits and other stakeholders [has been organized to help inform the environmental impact statement](#),

which will examine various options for addressing aquatic invasive species in the Keys channels, including several non-chemical alternative methods. Due to Tahoe's special water quality protection under the Clean Water Act, current regulations prohibit the use of herbicides unless no alternative options are feasible.

- [Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan](#) - [The lawsuit](#) filed by Sierra Watch will now move into the appeals process.

The Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition now offers the first online bike map showing the Lake Tahoe region's regularly snow-plowed bike trails.

[Access the map here !](#)



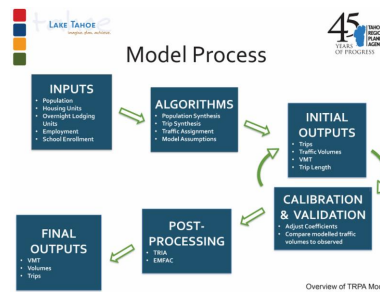
Regional and local planning updates:

TRPA Threshold Update:

The schedule for [updating TRPA's environmental threshold standards](#) has been delayed due in large part to the additional time needed to gather adequate scientific data; efforts will continue in 2019.

TRPA Regional Transportation Model Update:

The TRPA's Lake Tahoe Transportation Model is used to model traffic from year-round and part-time residents, commuters, and day-use and overnight visitors. Updated every four years, the model produces traffic projections for intersections and roadways during peak periods. TRPA and others rely on the model for planning future projects and regulatory changes and to assess whether the region is meeting its transportation-related standards. FOWS is currently participating in a stakeholder process supporting the 2019 model update.



FOWS is looking for a few good men and women to join our Board!

Please contact Judith Tornese at jmtornese@aol.com for more information.

Ways to support FOWS:

FOWS is always in need of funds to support the use of our consultant who reviews and makes scientific comments to the Tahoe agencies to improve local projects. **Please consider a tax-deductible donation soon!**

Save Mart:

The eScrip Shares program allows shoppers to designate FOWS to receive donations earned through their purchases; up to 3% of your purchase at Save Mart and [other stores](#) will be donated to FOWS at no cost to you. Sign up for a new account or register your existing account [through this link](#) , then simply provide your phone number at checkout and funds are donated to FOWS ([click here for a short instruction sheet to get you started](#)) .

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: jqtahoe@sbcglobal.net , or Judith Tornese, FOWS President, at: jmtornese@aol.com .

Friends of the West Shore | www.friendswestshore.org.

