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March/April 2019 Newsletter

Friends of the West Shore works toward the preservation, protection, and conservation of the West Shore of Lake Tahoe, our watershed, wildlife, and rural quality of life, for today and future generations.

It has sure been a banner February (aka [#Februburied](#) , [#Februburied2019](#)) for snowfall! We hope you are enjoying the snow and staying warm and safe. If you don't spend your winters in the Basin, we encourage you to have someone check on your home. With heavy snow loading on roofs, flooding, and high wind gusts, our area has sure taken a beating.



Cartoon by Rex Norman

The federal government shutdown in January delayed multiple projects, however the government is back up and running and planning has resumed. We anticipate the environmental review documents and possible public hearings for several projects of interest to the West Shore, including but not limited to:

- Meeks Bay Marina and Resort
- Alpine Meadows to Squaw Valley Base-to-Base Gondola
- State Route 89 Corridor Plan (Tahoma to South Lake Tahoe)

In addition to participating in these planning processes, it will be important for the public to remain diligent and educated with regards to traffic issues, wildfire danger, and emergency access and evacuation planning. Plus, although we are inundated with snow right now, [climate change is upon us](#) and adapting to those impacts (i.e. increased wildfires, drought, flooding, etc.) will be imperative, especially in light of ongoing increases in visitation as millions more move to northern California and Nevada.

We look forward to your continued feedback and support, and encourage you to [contact us](#) with any additional ideas or questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Judith Tornese,
President

FOWS needs your help to continue!

FOWS has been privileged to represent the West Shore since 2007, and we appreciate the continued financial and moral support of our members. Unfortunately, **our ability to continue in this capacity is in jeopardy!** Most of our donations are used to fund our conservation consultant's time (Jennifer Quashnick) to follow planning activities in our area, submit scientific and legal comment letters, collaborate with other interested groups and members of the public, represent the West Shore on multiple government-led working groups, and help keep you informed.

In 2018 we had to reduce Jennifer's contracted time; again in 2019, we had to substantially reduce her time further due to a lack of adequate funding. While we will continue to do our best to monitor as many projects as possible, we want to reach out to you, our members and supporters, and ask for your help. **In order for FOWS to continue to be an active force at Lake Tahoe to monitor, investigate, and take affirmative steps to support environmental and community improvements in our area, our consultant will need sufficient time to remain actively involved in what's happening at Lake Tahoe.**

FOWS is the only non-profit community and conservation organization specifically representing the West Shore in land use planning matters.

Please consider donating to FOWS today! All donations are tax-deductible. [Click here to donate](#).

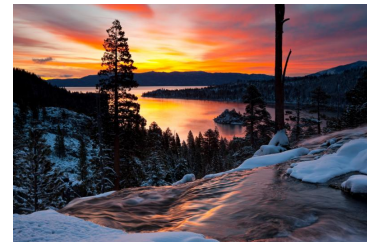
Project updates:

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. There are no new updates since our last report ([more information here](#)).

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

TRPA aims to release an Existing Conditions Report in March, which will include the results of broad public outreach efforts this past summer. At this time, a draft Corridor Plan is anticipated in July with final approval in September. Read details [here](#). FOWS will continue to participate in stakeholder meetings and keep you updated.



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

The federal government shutdown delayed the preparation of the final environmental impact report. Placer County and the U.S. Forest Service now anticipate release in mid- to late-April. Background information is available [here](#).

Other projects:

- [Alpine Sierra Subdivision \(Alpine Meadows\)](#) - In early January, the Placer County Planning Commission voted to recommend the 52-unit subdivision, however one Commissioner (Nader) dissented, citing concerns with fire danger and the lack of a secondary emergency access route. The project is anticipated to be heard by the Board of Supervisors in April for a final vote.
- [Fanny Bridge/SR 89 Realignment](#) - The replacement of Fanny Bridge is anticipated to be completed and open to the public by the end of this year, however due to significant snowfall and elevated water levels, the schedule is somewhat uncertain at this time.

- [Homewood Mountain Resort](#) - TRPA advises that the permit for Homewood Mountain Resort, originally set to expire in 2019, has been extended and the expiration date is now set for February 26, 2020.
- [Lake Tahoe West Restoration Partnership](#) - The Lake Tahoe West Restoration Partnership is developing a strategy to guide forest restoration activities along Lake Tahoe's West Shore with the goal of increasing the resilience of the landscape and to protect against prolonged drought, climate change, and extreme fire. Meetings were cancelled in January due to the government shutdown; efforts have since resumed and committee members continue to review modeling results and research and provide guidance on upcoming environmental review processes.
- [Martis Valley West Specific Plan](#) - In November 2018, 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. They are currently awaiting the response by Placer County and the project's owners.
- [Old Tahoe City Firehouse](#) - [The feasibility study](#) to examine two potential redevelopment options for the old Tahoe City firehouse is currently underway; results are expected to be presented to the Board of Supervisors this spring.
- [Tahoe City Lodge](#) - The lawsuit brought by a neighboring property owner has been settled. The Lodge's owner reports that they hope to break ground on the project this year or next.
- [Tahoe Keys Proposed Herbicide Use](#) - There are no new updates. However, [a report was just released](#) documenting the successful use of one of the non-chemical alternatives (ultraviolet light) at another marina in Lake Tahoe.
- [Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan](#) - Sierra Watch filed their notice to appeal in October. No legal briefs will be filed until the appeals court receives all relevant documents from the lower court.

Regional and local planning updates:

TRPA Threshold Update:

TRPA has proposed [additional process-related amendments](#) to the environmental threshold standards that protect Lake Tahoe. In other words, the amendments will not change the environmental standards that must be met (e.g. feet of water clarity); rather, they change how standards are listed and organized in TRPA documents in response to [input from expert peer-reviewers on the last two threshold evaluations](#) . At this time, TRPA will be preparing the 2019 Threshold Evaluation Report to document current environmental conditions and review trends over the past four years. FOWS will continue to follow this process to ensure changes do not lead to reduced environmental protection.

TRPA Regional Transportation Model Update:

FOWS is currently participating in a stakeholder process associated with the 2019 transportation model update. In January, the [California Attorney General](#) and [League to Save Lake Tahoe](#) submitted comments regarding data inputs and utilization of the model. FOWS shares many of their concerns and recommendations as the model results are used to assess whether TRPA traffic standards are being met as well as to provide the foundation for assessing the impacts of future projects and plans. If models use old or inaccurate information, the results may not sufficiently represent current roadway conditions. [At the most recent meeting](#) , stakeholders discussed priorities and budget/schedule constraints and potential short- and long-term improvements.



Are you looking for an opportunity to volunteer to help Lake Tahoe? The League to Save Lake Tahoe is seeking West Shore volunteers to assist with the "Pipe Keeper" program, where community members are trained to assess and monitor the condition of storm water infrastructure and collect storm water samples for analysis during storm and snow-melting events. FOWS was a founding partner of this program. Training events are held in both south and north shore locations. Learn more [here](#) .

Other ways to support FOWS:

Amazon Smile:

We've joined the Amazon Smile program; all you have to do is order from Amazon through smile.amazon.com and 0.5% of your purchase will be donated to FOWS at no additional cost to you!

eScrip SHARES:

The eScrip Shares program allows shoppers to designate FOWS to receive donations earned through their purchases; up to 5% of your purchase will be donated to FOWS at no cost to you. Sign up through [this link](#) .

*** Unfortunately, Save Mart discontinued its participation in the S.H.A.R.E.S. program last month. However, numerous stores throughout California and online retailers ([see list](#)) will continue to participate!**



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.

