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January/February 2020 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.

In 2020, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) will be updating the transportation model that estimates the maximum Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in the Basin (based on an August mid-week day). The results are used by TRPA to regulate development and plan transportation projects. For example, new projects that will increase traffic such that the VMT standard will be violated cannot be permitted unless impacts can be mitigated.



Traffic counts have already shown significant increases in vehicles in recent years and it is likely the current VMT standard has already been exceeded.

TRPA is also considering changes to the existing [threshold standard](#) for VMT, which has been used to regulate both basin-wide VMT impacts and as an unofficial proxy for peak traffic in recent years. FOWS will be watching this process carefully; we believe improvements can and should be made (including adding standards related specifically to peak traffic), but **the existing VMT standard should not be weakened.**

Other transportation projects in the works include:

- SR 89 Corridor Plan (from Tahoma to South Lake Tahoe)
- One Tahoe initiative to fund transportation projects and transit
- New West Shore bike trail from Meeks Bay to Emerald Bay
- West Shore Pedestrian Crossings

Please continue reading below for more information on these projects and activities. As always, we look forward to your continued feedback and support, and encourage you to [contact us](#) with any additional ideas or questions you may have.

Wishing you a Happy New Year,

Judith Tornese,
President

Heads up! [Placer County is currently offering free transit](#) around the Tahoe/Truckee region! [Check it out](#) !

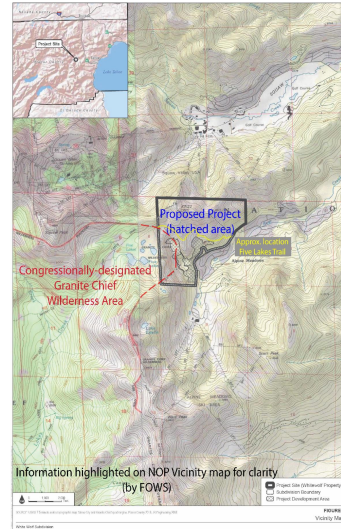
Project updates:

**** NEW ** White Wolf Subdivision (Alpine Meadows):**

Located in Alpine Meadows, the proposed White Wolf Subdivision Project would create an approximately 275-acre private resort subdivision consisting of 38 single-family custom home lots, 14 guest units and six employee lodging units; roads and onsite parking areas, common areas and amenities (e.g. equestrian facilities, pool, ice skating rink, and tennis courts), and two private ski lifts. A preliminary environmental document ([a Notice of Preparation](#) of an Environmental Impact Report) was issued in November; [read FOWS comments](#) .

Recent articles, including [this 12/27 story in the San Francisco Chronicle](#) , have touted the proposed gated community as one man's long term dream that would be " *more akin to that of a charming French ski village than a corporate resort* ." Notably, the project would require re-zoning for the development because the area is now [primarily zoned Open Space](#) (existing development includes one single family home and a partially-constructed ski lift). The proposal has raised concerns among FOWS and others about the environmental and public safety impacts of yet another new large development project in a region already struggling with wildfire and avalanche dangers, congested roadways, water and air quality issues, and other consequences of over-development.

In addition, the project would place development on a privately-owned portion of the Congressionally-designated Granite Chief Wilderness Area (GCWA) which would prevent the affected portion from being considered for future purchase by the U.S. Forest Service as was intended when the boundaries were originally drawn (click on map for larger view), as well as build homes and infrastructure adjacent to the popular Five Lakes hiking trail. FOWS will keep you informed as the review process moves forward.



Meeks Bay Resort and Marina:

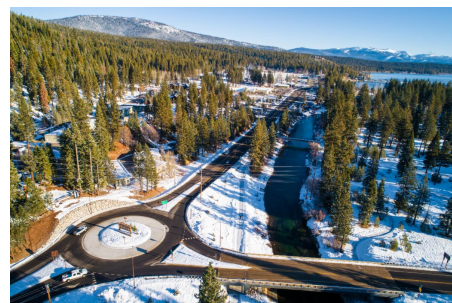
The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is developing alternative options for restoring/rehabilitating the resort and marina that will be analyzed in the upcoming environmental review process based on comments received during the public scoping process. Learn more [here](#) . At this time, the USFS anticipates release of the draft Environmental Impact Report/Study in the winter of 2021. There are no updates since our last newsletter.

USFS Winter Recreation and Over Snow Vehicle (Snowmobile) Travel Management Plan:

Last September, the USFS-Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) proposed the [Winter Recreation and Over the Snow Vehicle \(OSV\) Project](#) to designate areas and trails open to OSV (e.g. snowmobile) use. The project also encompasses various other winter recreational activities related to parking lots, access roads, snow play areas, and grooming for motorized and non-motorized trails. FOWS submitted comments on several localized aspects of the plan ([read here](#)). The next step in the process involves an environmental assessment, although the timing of the document's completion is not yet known.

Fanny Bridge/SR 89 Realignment:

The new highway segment, new Truckee River Bridge, and two roundabouts on either end of the realignment [are now open](#) . A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on 12/16. Pending funding, the next phase of the project (the replacement of Fanny Bridge and changes to the Tahoe City Wye intersection) may begin spring 2021 and be completed by fall 2022. Read background information [here](#) . (Image from the Tahoe Transportation District).



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

The draft SR 89 Corridor Plan, which will address options to improve traffic and pedestrian conditions in the future (especially at Emerald Bay), is now anticipated this winter. TRPA plans to hold another stakeholder workshop, public open house, and webinar on the project before the draft plan is released. Read details [here](#).

Other projects:

- [Alpine Meadows-Squaw Valley Base-to-Base Gondola](#) - The [lawsuit](#) filed by the Protect Granite Chief Initiative last August remains pending. There are no new updates since our last newsletter.
- [Homewood Mountain Resort](#) - There are no new updates.
- [Lake Tahoe West Restoration Partnership](#) - The Lake Tahoe West Restoration Partnership has completed 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. The Partnership is now working on a proposed action for upcoming environmental review. [Read press release](#).
- [Martis Valley West Specific Plan](#) - There are no new updates.
- [Tahoe Keys Proposed Herbicide Use](#) - TRPA staff recently provided an update regarding the environmental analysis process. [Learn more here](#). The draft EIS is anticipated in June 2020.
- [Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan](#) - In November, Sierra Watch submitted [the final legal brief](#) to the Third District Court of Appeals. In addition, numerous large news outlets, including the Associated Press, San Francisco Chronicle, Washington Post, Sacramento Bee, and others, ran [this article](#) discussing concerns about the project's impacts on fire safety and evacuations.
- [West Shore Water Treatment Plant](#) - Construction of the [West Shore Water Treatment Plant](#) on Lodge St. and SR 89 is expected in 2020.

Regional and local planning updates:

"ONE TAHOE" Transportation Funding Initiative:

[ONE TAHOE](#) is an initiative to develop new and additional funding on a long-awaited (and chronically underfunded) extensive transportation system that will enhance the traveling experience (e.g. choices of transit, bike/pedestrian trails, auto, water borne) throughout the greater Lake Tahoe Region while protecting Lake Tahoe's natural beauty. The process has involved gathering ideas from the public, analyzing funding options based on considerations such as amount of revenue generated, feasibility, fair distribution of costs between residents and visitors, political support, etc.

In early December, ONE TAHOE proponents released [a more refined list of options](#) (see Tier 3), which focuses on collecting road use/basin entry fees from residents and visitors (with a greater proportion coming from non-residents than residents to align with the greatest vehicle impacts). Recommendations are now under development based on these analyses. Public comments are encouraged; submit comments [here](#) !



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:

AmazonSmile:

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support the Friends of the West Shore every time you shop, **at no cost to you** . When you shop at smile.amazon.com , you'll find the same benefits and ease of shopping on Amazon.com with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to FOWS. [Click here](#) to learn more. When you set up AmazonSmile to support FOWS, simply type Friends of the West Shore into the search bar and FOWS should be top on the list. Hit "Select" and you're done - it's that easy!



eScrip (previously SHARES):



The eScrip 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 eScrip/S.H.A.R.E.S. program. 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 .

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