



Newsletter: December 2013

Starting off the New Year with a Bang...

It looks like 2014 will be another challenging year for the environment at Lake Tahoe. Catapulted forward by TRPA's pro-development Regional Plan Update (RPU), **numerous new plans and projects are in the works that may forever transform Lake Tahoe and the West Shore.**

This new pro-growth movement has been promoted with catchy phrases like "environmental redevelopment" and "economic revitalization." In truth, large corporations and development interests have carefully woven themselves into the political fabric of Lake Tahoe, discreetly setting the stage for more resort development that will add traffic. Now, several of these projects have descended on the North Shore of Tahoe, and the relationships between them are no coincidence. For example:



- An electrical line upgrade is proposed to run through North Lake Tahoe that will increase capacity for the resorts to expand (i.e. Northstar, Squaw Valley, and Homewood) and worse yet - be paid for by all Liberty Energy customers;
- Squaw Valley and Northstar intend to expand, again, and it appears those new, expensive power lines are needed to make it possible;
- Developers are seeking new zoning for over 110 acres of undeveloped land in North Lake Tahoe to build luxury homes on Tahoe's ridgeline.
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Substantial projects at these resorts will result in more people and traffic along the West Shore. We'll see more visitors 'taking a drive' from North Lake Tahoe or Tahoe City to see Emerald Bay; more vehicle pollution and crowded roadways, and more algae in our nearshore areas.

This is why FOWS needs your help, support, and especially, your voice. We invite your thoughts on the West Shore you want to see in the future. In return, we promise you that we will continue to represent the interests of our West Shore communities and the beautiful, unique environment we all cherish.

Wishing all of our members, supporters, family, and friends a happy, healthy, and inspiring New Year,

Susan Gearhart,
President, Friends of the West Shore (FOWS)

[Just a little housekeeping...](#)

Have you visited our website lately?

One of our first chores for 2014 involves updating our website with current news and information. Although it remains a work in progress, we invite you to [view our website](#) for up-to-date information related to our top West Shore Issues, FOWS programs and Board members, and other recent news.

Is this your first FOWS Newsletter?

Along with improvements to our website, FOWS has also been working to update our Newsletter database and we've noticed a few names were missing. Please [contact us](#) with any concerns, requests, or other feedback related to our email distribution list.



[Current News](#)

[Update on Challenge against TRPA's 2012 Regional Plan Update \(RPU\):](#)

On October 25th, Earthjustice filed an "Opening Brief" on behalf of FOWS & the Sierra Club. Our brief, limited to 25 pages by the judge, focused on three key concerns with TRPA's environmental review of the Regional Plan Update:



The RPU means more buildings, pavement, and vehicles.

1) Although [scientists have said we need to reduce coverage to improve water quality](#), the RPU allows more coverage closer to the Lake, harming both mid-lake clarity and contributing to algae growth along our shorelines.

2) The RPU justifies more development by relying on water quality control measures wrought with uncertainty, including but not limited to whether the measures will be effective at removing pollution well enough to meet water quality standards - [a question Tahoe's most experienced water quality researchers have already raised](#).

3) [According to Desert Research Institute air quality scientists](#), ozone levels in the Basin have been getting worse, contrary to trends throughout the rest of the country. Ozone can cause significant human health impacts, yet the RPU means more cars, more people, and more fuel-powered recreation (i.e. boats and snowmobiles), which will create *more* ozone.

TRPA filed their response to our Opening Brief with the court on November 27th. Our reply is due on January 10th. Please [view our website](#) for additional information and updates on the RPU.

New Plans and Projects that will impact West Shore and North Lake Tahoe:

The RPU set in motion a series of interrelated plans and projects that are now moving full steam ahead. FOWS is concerned these projects may create significant environmental and economic impacts for our West Shore communities, and harm Lake Tahoe. As project proponents are riding TRPA's coattails to garner support for numerous new and expanded developments, comment deadlines are coming up fast as the public is inundated with 1,000's of pages to consider. Projects include:

Lake Tahoe Passenger Ferry Service:

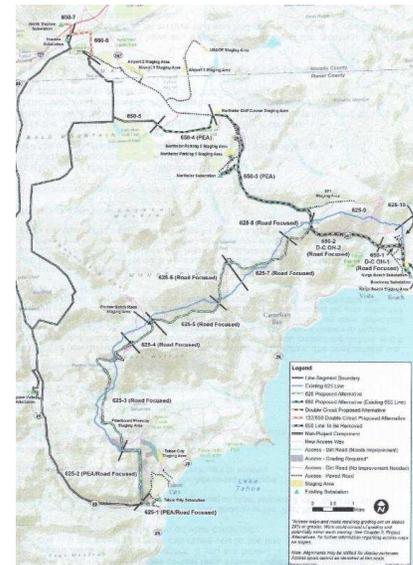
*Notice of Intent/Preparation for Environmental Impact Report/Study - **Comments due 1/3***

The proposed project includes an expensive, highly-polluting passenger ferry service across Lake Tahoe between Tahoe City and Ski Run Marinas. At an estimated **gasoline consumption of 2,000 gallons of gas per day**, this project will no doubt create significant air and water pollution along the West Shore, and throughout Lake Tahoe. Other concerns include the spread of aquatic invasive species and the economic impact to taxpayers for a project that is likely to require **millions in taxpayer subsidies** to operate. There are alternative, cleaner ways to improve our public transit in and around the Basin. [Read more about the proposed Ferry project](#) and help us tell the agencies that Lake Tahoe deserves a clean environment!

CalPeco Electrical Line Upgrade:

*Draft Environmental Report/Study Document - **Comments due 1/7***

This project, which would increase the capacity to supply power to areas of North Lake Tahoe, Northstar, Truckee, and Squaw Valley, lays the foundation for major resort expansions, including proposals to bring Disneyland-like theme parks to the mountains, cutting down trees for rollercoasters and building large luxury homes for guests. The CalPeco Electrical Line Upgrade - an expensive project that will benefit resort expansions at the expense of our environment and pocketbooks - **will be paid for by all Liberty Energy customers**. However, the agencies and project proponents are downplaying the project's objective, instead suggesting that this upgrade is necessary to maintain reliability for existing energy customers. The facts show otherwise. [Learn more about the CalPeco project](#) and help by telling the agencies what you think!



Proposed Alternative
(DEIS/DEIS/DEIR)

Northstar Mountain Master Plan Amendment:

*Draft Environmental Report/Study Document - **Comments due 1/13***

Northstar (owned by Vail Corp.) is aiming to expand - again. The Northstar Mountain Master Plan Amendment (NMMPA) proposes more growth for the resort. Northstar's additions will indirectly result in more traffic to the West Shore and North Lake Tahoe - an impact often ignored or underestimated by such environmental documents. It also appears Northstar will need the increased capacity provided by the proposed CalPeco project to grow. We encourage you to [review Northstar's environmental document](#) and see if you agree with Northstar's conclusions - then let them know what you think.



Proposed Martis Valley West Area Plan for Resort Recreation:

In preliminary/administrative planning stages

As noted in [FOWS information on the RPU](#), last minute changes were made by the agencies to set the stage for more areas to be rezoned to a "Resort Recreation District," which allows large resort hotels and other structures to be built on currently natural, undeveloped land owned (two new districts were already created by TRPA's RPU for Edgewood and Vail corporations on South Shore).

Now, developers are looking for another freebie from the agencies. According to the initial application, East-West Partners has proposed a zoning change now approximated at 112 acres by TRPA on the ridgeline of the Basin (termed the "Martis Valley West Area Plan"), for the stated purpose of building "single-family homes, townhomes, cabins, multi-family residences and condominiums." Check out our website for more information and the revised Area Plan map from the TRPA December 2013 Board packet.

We have included [additional information on our website](#), including where and how to send comments to the responsible agencies. We will keep you updated as these processes move forward.

[Area Plans for West Shore](#)

Placer County's Tahoe Basin Community/Area Plan:

Placer County's Area Plan development continues to move forward, with several upcoming public workshops. For highlights regarding FOWS concerns and comments on the Placer County Area Plan, please view the [updated information on our website](#).

Placer County will be hosting a Town Hall Meeting to gather public comment on the recently released Community Plan Policy Framework - a document that includes draft goals and guiding policies for the draft Tahoe Basin Area Plan (Community Plan).

Date: **January 29**

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Place: [North Tahoe Event Center](#), 8318 North Lake Blvd., in Kings Beach.

Please attend if you can!

El Dorado County's Community/Area Plan

We have been informed that the process to include the West Shore portions of the County in an Area Plan will not begin until sometime in 2014.

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

Please write to Jennifer Quashnick, FOWS Conservation Consultant, at: jqtahoe@sbcglobal.net, or Susan Gearhart, FOWS President, at: susan@friendswestshore.org.

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