



Newsletter: April/May 2016

When will we start preparing for climate change?

Climate change will mean more rain and less snow, increased flooding, and greater danger from wildfires, avalanches, and other natural hazards (e.g. [1,2,3](#)). For years, scientists have alerted us of the need to plan how we'll adapt to these changes (e.g. [1,2](#)). For example, we can help reduce the threats from more intense flooding episodes through land use policies that require better stormwater systems.

Unfortunately, although TRPA continues to talk about adapting to climate change ([1,2](#)), the agency has done little to actually do so. In fact, many recent TRPA policies are likely to make problems worse. For example:

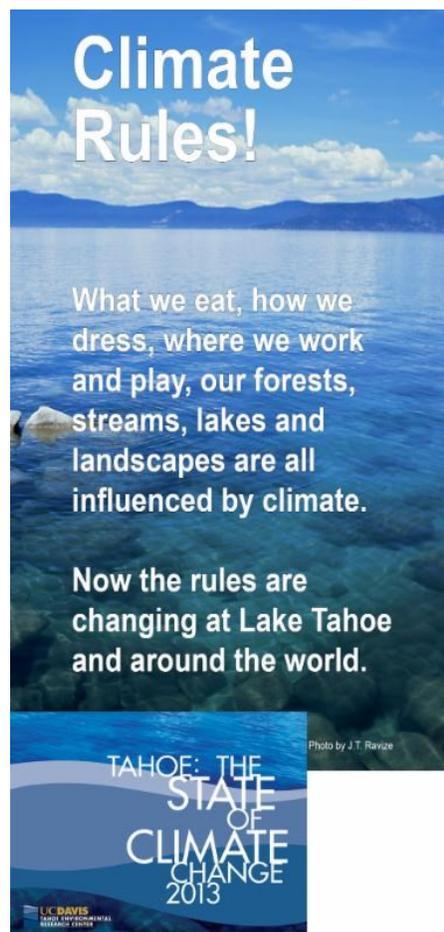
- The 2012 Regional Plan Update allows for more asphalt and buildings, reducing the natural land available to handle increased flooding.
- Recent Code amendments allow more conversions of uses, facilitating larger tourist units that draw more people and vehicles to Tahoe.

The good news is that we don't have to rethink the wheel - the 2013 [Lake Tahoe Sustainability Action Plan](#), released as part of a multi-agency effort (which included TRPA), includes a long list of recommendations to help prepare the Basin for climate change (see Chapter 5). In addition, Tahoe researchers are already [laying out ways we can address more stormwater runoff](#).

Last month, the TRPA Governing Board met for an annual "retreat" to prioritize the agency's future efforts. Despite the 2013 Action Plan, and FOWS [requests to the Board to implement Action Plan recommendations](#), the entire day was spent discussing other "priorities." *We have to wonder what is more important - ensuring corporate developers can get more 'incentives' to build massive resorts that cover natural land and further congest our roadways, or revising land use policies to ensure future development is more adaptive to flooding and protective of public safety?* We urge you to encourage TRPA to start taking real actions to make Tahoe more resilient ([email the TRPA Board via this link](#)).

FOWS will remain diligent in our efforts to influence projects and plans and keep you informed. In addition, if you belong to a Homeowners Association on the West Shore, we welcome the opportunity to speak with you and your neighbors as you gather for your annual HOA meetings this year. Please [contact us](#) for more information. In addition, beginning this year, FOWS will publish an Annual Report outlining our past accomplishments and future priorities - please check out our [2015 Annual Report!](#)

Sincerely,
Susan Gearhart
President, Friends of the West Shore



<http://terc.ucdavis.edu/research/climate-change/index.html>

Regional and Local Planning Updates:

TRPA Regional Plan Update (RPU):



Lake Tahoe's nearshore conditions are declining.

The [final hearing](#) for the FOWS and Sierra Club RPU lawsuit took place on April 12 (the full hearing can be viewed [online](#) and court documents are available on [FOWS website](#)). The legal process narrowed the focus to water quality and soil impacts, with emphasis on how RPU policies placing more asphalt and buildings (called "coverage") closer to Lake Tahoe do not protect Tahoe's nearshore areas from the increased algal growth, floating plants, and suspended soil that result as more polluted stormwater flows across covered areas into the Lake. Although TRPA told the courts that the environmental reviews for Area Plans would evaluate such impacts,

Area Plan documents to date have claimed no need to perform any additional scientific study because TRPA's RPU Environmental Impact Study (EIS) already did.

FOWS extends a heartfelt thank you to our attorneys at Earthjustice for their hard work and diligence in representing Lake Tahoe. We were also pleased that the judges had clearly studied the extensive documents and raised several informed questions. We will let you know when their ruling is handed down.

Placer County - Tahoe Basin Area Plan (TBAP):

Placer County staff recently reported the draft environmental impact report/study is expected in mid-July. Recent changes to the last draft Area Plan have been provided by Placer County ([see April 2016 documents](#)).

Martis Valley West Specific Plan (MVWPSP):

The [Final EIR](#) was just released. At this point, a hearing will be set before the Planning Commission with final action by the Board of Supervisors occurring thereafter. Background information is available on our website (scroll to the last item [here](#)). FOWS will be carefully reviewing the response to comments regarding impacts to the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Project Updates:

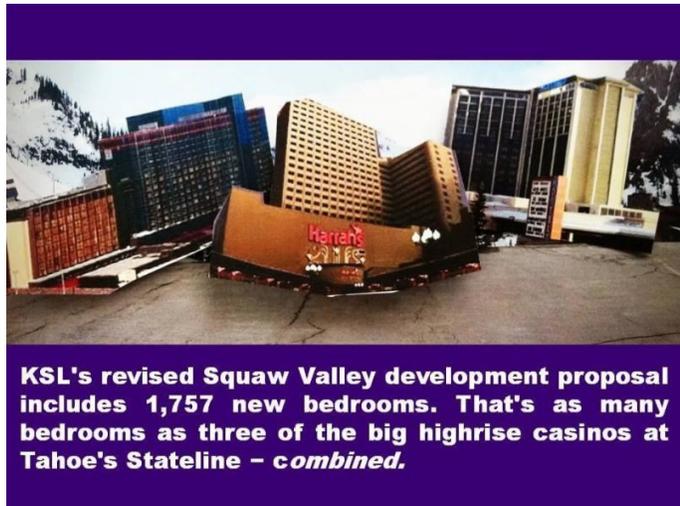
Brockway Campground:

The Notice of Preparation was temporarily put on hold while the developer, consultants, and agencies focus on responding to comments on the MVWPSP project. However, with the final EIR for MVWPSP released last week, we are likely to see the process for the Campground resume soon. Please continue to [send your concerns](#) to the TRPA Governing Board!

Squaw Valley Expansion:

The Final EIR for the massive Squaw Valley project is [now available](#). As FOWS delves into the lengthy Final EIR and response to public comments, the following themes are emerging:

- Impacts to the Tahoe Basin have still not been adequately analyzed;
- The developers are not considering any notable reduction in the number of units to reduce environmental impacts; and
- Additional mitigation for traffic is not being incorporated - rather, the developers have simply washed their hands of their responsibility and said the Board of Supervisors will have to decide if the "significant and unavoidable" traffic impacts are acceptable.



A little perspective from Sierra Watch (based on a 2014 proposal that has only been slightly reduced).

The Placer County Planning Commission hearing to consider a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) is tentatively scheduled for May 26th (time TBD), after which the project will go before the BOS for a vote. Both entities will have to consider whether the numerous significant and unavoidable impacts are acceptable. ***There is still time to encourage them to do the right thing and deny this project*** (as proposed). You may email the BOS and Planning Commission [from this link](#) (please note in your message that you are writing to both entities).

Fanny Bridge/SR 89 Realignment Project:

Construction on the Fanny Bridge/SR 89 Realignment Project is [expected to begin this summer](#). The first phase involves building the two-lane bypass through the 64 acres lot and the installation of roundabouts at either end, during which traffic will continue using the existing Highway 28 and 89 alignment.

Other Regional Projects:

Several other regional projects are in the works, including substantial developments in Alpine Meadows and the proposed Base-to-Base Gondola that will [cut through the Granite Chief Wilderness Area](#) (Placer County and the U.S. Forest Service will hold joint Scoping meetings for the Gondola project in the afternoon and evening on May 9, 2016 at the Resort at Squaw Creek; the Placer County [Notice of Preparation](#) was released on 4/22 and the USFS [Notice of Intent](#) was released on 4/29). View all area project updates [here](#).

Road Construction:



Image from *Sierra Sun* article

As the saying goes, we have two seasons in Lake Tahoe: winter and road construction. There are [several projects](#) that will soon be affecting our roadways around the Lake, including [continuation of projects along the West Shore](#). Please plan ahead and allow more time to travel.

A new way to help FOWS!

Want a quick and easy way to help FOWS? 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!

We invite you to contact us to learn more, ask questions, or simply get to know the FOWS Board. Also, don't forget to follow us on Facebook!

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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