



Newsletter: August/September 2016

Never forget to celebrate with friends and neighbors!

In our last few Newsletters, we discussed how public participation is key to influencing decision-makers - as reflected by recent hearings regarding large regional projects such as the Martis Valley West Parcel and Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plans (more below). We have also focused on the importance of having adequate evacuation and emergency access plans - something our current and proposed land use plans still generally fail to do. In other words, it has been a busy summer!



We had a wonderful evening celebrating West Shore communities at West Shore Pizza in Tahoma!

That said, we all need to take time to celebrate our efforts as well; to spend time together, relax, and honor victories large and small - and even better, to do so over delicious pizza! On August 17 FOWS held a Community party and fundraiser at [West Shore Pizza](#) where many old and new friends joined together for a fun and relaxing evening. We would like to thank West Shore Pizza for providing the space for our event as well as wonderful food and service, and all who attended and donated funds toward FOWS' efforts. We could not continue to represent the West Shore without your support!

On that note, we hope you have had a wonderful summer, and we look forward to continuing to provide a voice for Tahoe's West Shore communities. And while celebration is important, there is still much work to be done and we will continue to keep you informed regarding the plans and projects that will affect our area and how you can participate.

Sincerely,

Susan Gearhart
President, Friends of the West Shore

Regional and Local Planning Updates:

TRPA Regional Plan Update (RPU):

This year will mark the first four-year review of the TRPA Regional Plan Update (RPU) and status of TRPA's environmental threshold carrying capacities. We are concerned that the current trends to allow more large traffic-generating developments and to further weaken environmental protections will be encouraged by the review documents. The last threshold status report (2012) included several changes that [did not bode well for Tahoe's environment](#), including a 'reinterpretation' of how soil conservation standards were evaluated (resulting in more pavement and buildings closer to Lake Tahoe - bad for flooding, water clarity, and ecological health) and recommendations setting the stage for reduced environmental protection and agency accountability. However, these reviews also provide us with an opportunity to share our own thoughts and recommendations regarding the RPU and threshold status. We will keep you updated!

We are still waiting for a final decision from the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals regarding our lawsuit on TRPA's Regional Plan Update. [Learn more.](#)



The Tahoe Basin Area Plan will *increase* traffic.
(Image from Tahoe Transportation District)

Placer County - Tahoe Basin Area Plan (TBAP):

FOWS recently submitted [extensive comments](#) on the [draft Environmental Impact Report/Study \(DEIR/S\)](#) for the Tahoe Basin Area Plan (TBAP) and [Tahoe City Lodge](#) project. The Plan will determine zoning and the extent of development in the Placer County area of Lake Tahoe (for more information, [visit our website](#)). Main concerns include, but are not limited to:

- Potential traffic impacts and lack of sufficient measures to reduce new and existing traffic problems,
- Almost no analysis of how local pollution and activities will impact Lake Tahoe's nearshore areas (where algae and other debris have marred the once-clear waters along our shorelines), and
- The continued failure of TRPA and Placer County to plan for emergencies, including evacuations and access for emergency responders.

The TBAP provides an opportunity to responsibly plan to protect our area from the environmental and public health and safety impacts of traffic, to be more prepared to handle additional vehicles from out of Basin developments and population growth, and to examine how local land use decisions can better protect the nearshore areas of Lake Tahoe. Unfortunately, the proposed TBAP currently falls far short of these goals. The final EIR/S and response to comments [is anticipated in November with a potential vote in January 2017.](#)

Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan (MVWPSP):



Over 300 people attended the 7/9/2016 Planning Commission hearing. (Image from Sierra Watch)

Over 300 people attended the July 7th Placer County Planning Commission hearing for the MVWPSP ([1,2,3](#)). All public comments made expressed concerns about the project. [Emergency responders also spoke to the impacts of the project's traffics on our roadways](#). For example, a statement from the North Tahoe Fire Protection District's Chief stated they "share concern about the added challenges to evacuation," and California Highway Patrol Cpt. Ryan Stonebraker stated that there are limited areas of ingress/egress, and "the more population there is, the more tourists there are, the more things happen. I can tell you that personally just working the Fourth of July." The [California Attorney General also expressed concerns](#) about the project's impacts on Lake Tahoe.

After some detailed discussion, the Commissioners [voted 5-2](#) to recommend the Board of Supervisors deny the project. While this was an encouraging vote, Supervisors are not bound by the Commission's recommendation. **We must keep speaking up!**

The Board of Supervisors will vote on the project on September 13 at the North Lake Tahoe Events Center in Kings Beach starting at 9:45 a.m. ([see notice](#)) - please attend if you can!

Project Updates:

Brockway Campground:

On September 7th, Sierra Pacific Industries and Mountainside Partners issued a press release [announcing the potential sale of the land](#) (where the Brockway Campground has been proposed) to the U.S. Forest Service for future management by the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. FOWS and others are very excited to hear this news. However, the sale is not expected to occur until the end of next year; in the meantime, the application for the Campground will remain active (notably the application for the first proposal on this land - 120 luxury homes - has also not been withdrawn) and several contingencies remain (e.g. an agreed-upon sale price). FOWS will continue to monitor activities related to this project area. Further, we encourage everyone to remain diligent and to continue to advocate for the protection of our ridgelines (which remains a concern with the MVWPSP) as well as call for finding real solutions to our traffic problems *in advance of* approving large projects that will make them worse.

Homewood Village Resort:

As reported previously, the [California Court of Appeals ruled](#) that the Homewood Project's environmental impact report/study analysis of wildfire evacuation risk was not consistent with California law. Homewood representatives have recently reported that a Settlement Agreement has been reached between Homewood Village Resort and the California Clean Energy Committee which will require additional action to address the wildfire threats in the project area, including an emergency evacuation report that must be made available to the public for review with at least one meeting for public comment. FOWS intends to follow the development and implementation of associated actions closely and will keep you updated. More information will be posted on our website as it becomes available.

Fanny Bridge/SR 89 Highway Realignment Project:

At this time, construction is expected to begin later this summer. More information regarding the phases of the project can be viewed [here](#). [Project updates](#) are also available from the Tahoe Transportation District.

Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan:

Unfortunately, the Placer County Planning Commission voted 4-2 to recommend approval of the massively-sized Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan ([1,2](#)). Commissioners Wayne Nader and Mickey Gray (the latter represents the district that includes Squaw Valley) voted against recommending the project and Lake Tahoe's representative, Larry Sevison, voted in favor even though the [California Attorney General expressed concerns](#) that impacts to Lake Tahoe had not been addressed. There was very little deliberation among Commissioners after over five hours of public comment. The project is now set to be heard by the Board of Supervisors sometime this fall.



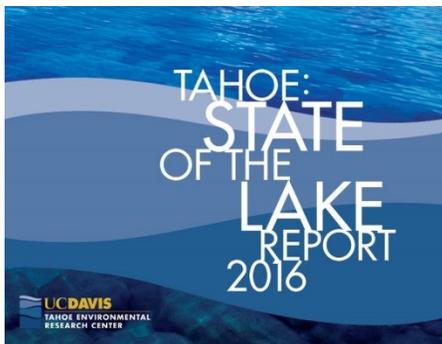
Attendance at the 8/11/2016 Planning Commission hearing.
(Image of posted by Sierra Watch)

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

Placer County and the U.S. Forest Service recently released an [updated Notice](#) to reflect the decision for the gondola proposal to go through a joint environmental review process. No project details have been changed since the original scoping documents, however [this revision is important](#). Comments are due 10/3/2016.

Other Regional Projects, Plans, and Reports:

The State of Lake Tahoe:



In July researchers from the Tahoe Environmental Research Center (TERC) released the [2016 State of the Lake Report](#). Unfortunately, it is not good news; [the lake's average surface temperature was the warmest ever recorded, and the lake's waters have been warming at 15 times their historic average](#). This not only affects the lake's ecological health, but it also further threatens the Lake's clarity from increased algae growth in the nearshore (which is fed by nutrient pollution in the Lake), making it more important that land use decisions aim to significantly reduce the input of these pollutants. FOWS and other organizations have continued to urge TRPA and Placer County to improve regulation of nutrient sources as well as consider local area impacts that can influence nearshore conditions. To date, proposed plans and projects do not adequately address these issues (details on impacts including local traffic and nearshore water clarity are included in our [recent comments](#) on the proposed Tahoe Basin Area Plan environmental document).

Meeks Bay Resort and Marina:

The marina was shut down after high pollution levels were detected in water samples. [Learn more here.](#)

West Shore road work:

Road construction along SR 89 will continue this fall; completion is expected next year. In addition, there will be [full daytime closures at Emerald Bay this September.](#) The full roadway closure is scheduled for two weeks beginning Monday, September 12, at 4 a.m. through Friday, September 16, at 4 p.m.; and from Monday, September 19, at 4 a.m. through Friday, September 23, at 4 p.m. Please plan your travel accordingly.

Easy ways to help FOWS!

Did you know that up to 3% of your purchase at Save Mart and [other stores](#) can be donated to FOWS at no extra cost to you? A program previously known as "SHARES" allows shoppers to designate FOWS to receive donations earned through their purchases. The original program was recently changed, and shoppers can now earn their own rewards *and* designate donations to FOWS (versus having to choose one or the other). The new program requires existing SHARES card users to register with the new company ("Escrip") or sign up for a new account [through this link](#), then you simply provide your phone number at checkout and funds are donated to FOWS. It's easy and there is no cost to you!

Also, don't forget that 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.

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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