



Newsletter: October/November 2016

We need to plan responsibly to protect ourselves and Lake Tahoe!

"Explosive." That's how the recent 176-acre [Emerald Fire](#) near Cascade Lake was described. Due to ferocious winds, fires throughout the region required numerous evacuation orders and engulfed homes. Drought, added to climate change, decades of fire suppression, and other factors, means more wildfire. [Officials have warned](#) that "extreme fire behavior such as dangerous rates of spread...torching, crowning, and long range spotting can be expected." We should be planning how to protect human life and property, and Tahoe's fragile environment, as well as giving strong consideration to whether new large developments should be built in high fire danger areas. Not only does congested traffic prevent quick evacuation, but it also impedes the ability of first responders to access - and thus fight - fires quickly.



Assisted by significant rainfall, the Emerald Fire was 100% contained within 3 days with no structures lost or reported injuries.

Unfortunately, it does not appear our land use agencies are taking these dangers seriously. Placer County and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency continue to promote new projects and plans that make matters worse. The Martis Valley West Parcel and Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plans will dramatically increase traffic in our region. The draft proposed Tahoe Basin Area Plan environmental analysis concludes increased congestion. Rather than identifying ways to improve conditions, the document proposes to simply amend regulations to *allow even more congestion*. We do not believe this is responsible planning. It is past time to address the danger of our area's existing traffic *-before* we add to it. We will continue to advocate for smart planning which addresses these concerns.

We appreciate the opportunity to keep you informed of issues that affect our environment, communities, and quality of life, and we thank you for your support.

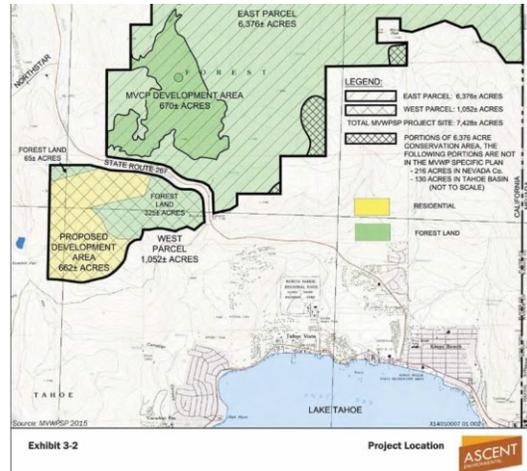
Sincerely,

Susan Gearhart
President, Friends of the West Shore

Regional and Local Planning Updates:

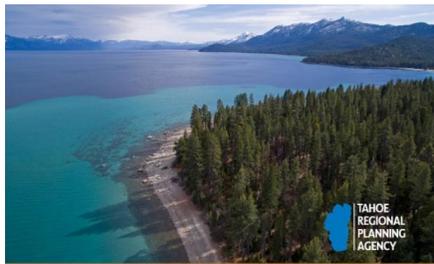
Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan (MVWPSP):

The Placer County Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved the MVWPSP on October 11. (Note: The [BOS voted for a tentative approval on September 13](#) after hours of extensive public comment). Jennifer Montgomery, representative for the Tahoe/Truckee area, voted against the project in large part because the purported "benefit" from conservation of the East Parcel - the reason other Supervisors stated for favoring the project even though it will result in several substantial impacts - was not guaranteed. Their minds were not changed even after an [October 3 letter](#) from the public land trust organizations stated there was no deal to purchase the East parcel. The fall-back option includes a conservation easement, but the [easement could be less protective](#) and there is no guarantee that public access will be provided. At this time, [those who may file a lawsuit have 30 days from October 11 to file](#).



(Image from draft Environmental Impact Report)

TRPA Regional Plan Update (RPU):



2015 THRESHOLD EVALUATION
TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY | Lake Tahoe



Every four years, TRPA assesses the status of the agency's "Environmental Threshold Carrying Capacities" (ETCCs) - environmental standards required by the [TRPA Compact](#) to protect Lake Tahoe's unique natural values.

(i) "Environmental threshold carrying capacity" means an environmental standard necessary to maintain a significant scenic, recreational, educational, scientific or natural value of the region or to maintain public health and safety within the region. Such standards shall include but not be limited to standards for air quality, water quality, soil conservation, vegetation preservation and noise.

On October 3, TRPA released the [draft 2015 Threshold Evaluation Report](#) (TER). Periodic TERs are used by the agency to evaluate the status of ETCCs and adjust the Regional Plan as necessary to achieve and maintain them. The 2015 TER provides the platform for a TRPA initiative to revise the ETCCs in 2017. While there is concern

regarding continued pressure to weaken environmental protections, there is also an opportunity to improve standards to address today's science. For example, the existing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) standard is currently a *regional* value - it does not consider the local environmental impacts (e.g. nearshore clarity, air quality, noise) of where such driving occurs. A VMT standard which can address local conditions will better protect these values.

Regarding the RPU lawsuit, we are still waiting for a final decision from the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. [Learn more.](#)

Placer County - Tahoe Basin Area Plan (TBAP):

In August, FOWS submitted extensive comments on the draft Environmental Impact Report/Study (EIR/S) for the [Tahoe Basin Area Plan](#) (TBAP). A schedule of meetings for the final EIR/S and Plan approval was just released (below). Unfortunately, Placer County and TRPA are moving full steam ahead, even though the final EIR/S documents are anticipated to be substantial (so much so that Placer County [had to amend their contract to add consultant time](#)), thereby providing the public little time to comprehensively review the final documents before they are considered and voted on at these public hearings.

Tentative Schedule of Upcoming Meetings for Final EIR/S:

11/10: North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council
11/16: TRPA Regional Plan Implementation Committee
11/17: Placer County Planning Commission
12/6: Placer County Board of Supervisors
12/7: TRPA Advisory Planning Commission
12/14: Regional Plan Implementation Committee
1/17/17: TRPA Governing Board

Project Updates:

Homewood Village Resort:

Per the recent [Settlement Agreement](#) between Homewood Village Resort (HVR) and the California Clean Energy Committee (CCEC), HVR was required to work with the North Tahoe Fire Protection District to prepare the "Homewood Evacuation and Life Safety Report" and schedule at least one public meeting to discuss it. The report, released in late September ([available here](#)), concludes the need for extensive upgrades to fire district equipment, infrastructure, staffing needs, and to HVR's proposed buildings to improve fire safety and implement a "shelter-in-place" concept since SR 89 cannot be relied upon to provide safe evacuation routes. No date for the public meeting has been provided.

Fanny Bridge/SR 89 Highway Realignment Project:

On October 3, the Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) [announced](#) the project's construction contract had been awarded. Construction was still slated to begin this fall. More information is available from the [Tahoe Transportation District](#).

Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan (VSVSP):

On September 29, the Keep Squaw True group hosted a [Town Hall meeting](#) in Tahoe City to inform the public of the project and next steps. The VSVSP is now set to be heard by the Board of Supervisors sometime this fall (a tentative date of November 15 has been suggested).

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

Comments on the revised Notice of Preparation were due earlier this month. No schedule for the draft Environmental Impact Report has been provided.

Easy ways to help FOWS!



#GivingTuesday:

Occurring this year on November 29, [#GivingTuesday](#) is held annually on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving and the widely recognized shopping events Black Friday and Cyber Monday to kick-off the holiday giving season and inspire people to collaborate in improving their local communities and to give back in impactful ways to the charities and causes they support. We ask you to consider a charitable, tax-deductible contribution to FOWS.

Save Mart:

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. Sign up for a new account or register your existing 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!

Amazon Smile:

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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