

American River Basin focus of federal study

In an effort to better understand the imbalances between water supply and demand, the Bureau of Reclamation is launching a study in the American River Basin.

This comprehensive water study will help inform water management in the Central Valley Project.

The basin encompasses 2,140 square miles from its headwaters near Lake Tahoe to Sacramento where it meets the Sacramento River. It is highly populated and the population is expected to grow 47 percent to nearly 3 million people by 2060. The basin supports salmon and steelhead listed under the Endangered Species Act and provides water to support the Bay-Delta ecosystem.

The American River Basin Study will include the development of detailed hydrologic analysis and models for the basin, which will include consideration of the impacts of climate change. It will also leverage existing stakeholder groups to identify and evaluate adaptation strategies specific to the American River Basin. To complete this study, Reclamation is partnering with the Placer County Water Agency, El Dorado County Water Agency, Sacramento, Roseville, Folsom and Regional Water Authority.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Mega-development in Martis Valley approved

By Kathryn Reed

KINGS BEACH – A 6.6-acre ridgeline parcel bordering the Lake Tahoe Basin is going to one day have 760 units built on it.

In approving the project on a 4-1 vote Tuesday, the Placer County Board of Supervisors did not take the recommendation of the **Planning Commission**, which in July denied the project on a 5-2 vote. Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery was the dissenting vote Sept. 13 on the multiple issues related to the project.

Mountainside Partners of Truckee, the developer, and landowner Sierra Pacific Industries have been working on this project for at least 10 years. Build out is expected to take 20 years.

Known as Martis Valley West, the project has been controversial because it takes undeveloped land in Truckee that borders Lake Tahoe and turns it into a subdivision for second homeowners. The proponents have said they expect 20 percent or less full-time occupancy.

Montgomery voted no because she said the project goes against all the policies the county has been adopting, which call for any new project to be next to existing development. She was also disappointed that the original plan to connect the project to Northstar ski resort has been scrapped.

She was not alone in her opposition. Of the 60 people who spoke, 43 were against the project, 16 for it and one didn't take a side. Hundreds of people filled the North Tahoe Events Center for the all-day meeting that ended at 5:30pm – it started at 9:45am.

“A vote today for this project would be a vote against Lake

Tahoe," Shannon Eckmeyer with the League to Save Lake Tahoe told the supervisors.

While the project is completely outside of the basin, it was acknowledged that it will impact the region at least in terms of traffic. Those vehicles in turn affect air quality and lake clarity.

Traffic congestion on Highway 267 is already problematic. People worry this project will make it even worse. And if the area needs to evacuate, residents wonder how that will happen without the loss of life if the roads are clogged and options to escape are limited.

Transportation consultant Gordon Shaw said the increase in time to get places because of the new residences would be negligible. What might help speed the flow is if Caltrans makes this a four-lane highway, which is on the books – but without funding or a timetable.

Opponents don't believe enough study was done on the cumulative effects of projects already approved. Proponents say there was plenty of review.

While the threat of a lawsuit was broached, it was acknowledged making decisions based on potential litigation is no way to run a county. County counsel has said the environmental document is sound and is not worried that the Attorney General's Office said otherwise. This was the same stance when the AG weighed in on the Squaw Valley plan and the county did the opposite of what the state's top lawyer said.

Placer supes believe the environmental gains will trump any flaws in the plans. They opted to trust staff and what's in the environmental document.

The community plan allows for 1,360 units, nothing allocated for conservation and no recreation trails. The developer's proposed 760 units – with another 600 being permanently

retired, 6,376 acres preserved and 40 acres of trails are what sold the electeds.

The proponents in the last few months also agreed to up their workforce housing contribution. Originally they wanted to pay a mitigation fee. They conceded to build 47 units on the property. This would represent the midpoint between the minimum and maximum number of people working there. They also agreed to pay for another five units at \$117,000 each as an additional mitigation fee. Placer County could use that money for housing elsewhere.

McLaughlin: Understands the meaning of team

Publisher's note: Lake Tahoe News asked candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council, Lake Tahoe Community College, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Douglas County School District, South Tahoe Public Utility District and Lake Valley Fire Protection District a series of questions. We are running the responses in the order received. All profiles may be found under the Special Projects listing and then the 2106 November Candidate Profiles category.



Dan McLaughlin is running
for one of two seats open on
the South Lake Tahoe City
Council.

Name: Dan McLaughlin

Age: 65

Job/profession: Salesman, volleyball coach

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: I was chairman of the South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Committee when Measure S was passed and as such attended many board meetings as both a speaker and a listener. I am a past president of the Optimist Club and was on the board for Silver State Youth Sports.

Why are you running for City Council?: I have always had a passion to serve my community and now that I no longer coach high school sports, I feel the time is right to pursue this passion.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: I have already proven I can work as a part of a team to get things done with my efforts to pass Measure S. I have been very involved in this community for over 40 years and seen the city grow and evolve. I have stayed abreast of the issues we face on a daily basis and I am a good listener. I have done a lot during my life in South Lake Tahoe: worked various jobs, owned businesses, worked in the media, owned a home, raised a family, volunteered my time and have spent 25 years working with youth as a high school coach.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: I have always been someone who gets things done. I find common ground and work to build alliances for the betterment of all sides of issues. I have no hidden agendas and will tackle each issue

from the perspective of what is best for the city of South Lake Tahoe today and in the future.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: As a high school coach, I have lived in a glass house for over 25 years. I have learned the best way to accomplish anything is to be honest and straightforward. The citizens of South Lake Tahoe have a right to know what their government is doing and why, and I will work from that premise.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: In looking over the 2015-2016 budget, there are a few areas I feel need to be addressed. We need to come with a long-term solution to road maintenance, we need to protect the senior center and we need to relocate the streets corporate yard from Rufus Allen to D Street. I also believe we need to look into forming a public/private partnership to build a field house, a structure that can accommodate year round recreation.

Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage? Please explain: The \$15 minimum wage will be the law by 2022 and to me it is far more important to be prepared for its impact than to debate its merits.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: I support Proposition 55. I am a strong advocate for education and believe this is a good way to ensure monies earmarked for education will not be diverted. I also believe in supporting the healthcare programs that this initiative is designed to fund.

Describe three attributes for a successful council: I believe a city councilperson must be a good listener, passionate and open minded: They must listen to their constituents and their arguments on all sides of issues and respect their positions;

they need to be passionate about serving their community and doing what is best for all regardless of political, social or personal pressures and they must be open minded enough to be able to change their minds once they have a better understand of all the facts regarding each issue.

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: Defined benefits and defined contributions both have their pros and cons. I believe that as an employer, the city should offer its employees a choice between the two and let them decide.

Please explain your position regarding contracting out work normally done by staff: I am not a big fan of contracted work because it costs the taxpayers more than it would if it were done by staff and the city does not have the essential controls in place, but there will be times when it is necessary to contract work so that projects are completed in a timely manner.

What is your 10-year vision for South Lake Tahoe?: In 2026, I would like to see the South Shore community as a having a more diverse economy with an increase in higher paying high tech jobs rather than being so dependent upon tourism. A community that is senior friendly, with numerous recreational opportunities, affordable housing, a solid infrastructure, a quality school system and that is a great place to raise a family.

What one vote in the last four years that the current council made do you disagree with and why?: The biggest mistake the Council made was when they stopped televising the comments by the citizens during the non-agenda portion of the City Council meeting. It made it easy to assume that the council lacked transparency and credibility and it lead to a disconnect that has plagued the council ever since.

How many City Council meetings have you attended this year?: I

haven't attended any this year because of my work schedule, but I have watched numerous ones on TV and stayed abreast of city issues by talking with several city employees including sitting council members.

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, and goals of the city?: I was very informed as to the city's strategic plan, finances, debt and goals when I was chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission when Measure S was passed. I am sure there have been some modifications since then, so I will have to catch up on the changes.

Being on the council means working as a team. How will you work with the sitting members for the greater good of the community?: As a coach, I have always taught my players that the best way to work as a team is to respect your teammates, even if you don't agree with them, and to follow the Golden Rule of being a good teammate: "Treat each teammate as you wish to be treated!" I intend to practice what I preach.

What should be the three main priorities for the council?: The main priority for any City Council member is to protect and enhance the quality of life for its residents. Having said that, the three current issues that have the most impact are 1) Work on finding a solution to the affordable housing issue; 2) Create new and maintain existing recreational facilities that include everything from walking to biking to organized sports activities; 3) Find ways to grow our economy in a more diverse manner so we are less reliant on tourism and have the ability to withstand economic downturns.

What have you done to make yourself ready to be a council member?: As chairman of the Parks and Rec Commission, I worked closely with City Council members on recreation issues and gained a great deal of respect and understand what it takes to be a city councilperson. As a member of the media, I have developed and maintained friendships from all walks of life in this community and constantly engage in discussion of the

various issues our community faces.

What role should government have in housing for residents?: I support [El Dorado County Supervisor] Sue Novasel's plan to create a public/private task force to look into the issue. Only through a partnership can anything be accomplished. One of the things the city can do is look for ways to grow the economy in a manner so we are less dependent on the tourism industry. The telecommuter can live anywhere, if we create an environment where they can succeed in South Lake Tahoe, perhaps we can get them to relocate their businesses here as well.

How can the city partner with the school district to improve high school graduation rates?: The graduation rate at both South Tahoe and Whittell high schools is above the national and state averages. But we can do more. South Tahoe High School was designed to attract that telecommuter and prepare students for life in the high tech world. If we can bring in more high tech businesses, it will help increase high school graduations.

How can local government support and expand job creation and small local businesses?: The city itself cannot create jobs except for city jobs, but it can create an environment that encourages job growth and small local business growth. I believe that environment needs to be less dependent on tourism.

If you believe in the one South Shore concept, what would you do to further make this a reality? If you don't believe in blurring the state line, why don't you?: We need to think of ourselves as the South Shore community and not California vs. Nevada. I was one of the first to bridge that gap by putting on events that required cooperation from both sides of the state line. It took patience, the need to swallow one's pride and a belief in the spirit of cooperation, so I know it can be done. The state line is blurry to most residents, so we need

to build on that fact and I have a history of doing just that.

What are your views on:

a: Vacation home rentals: There is a delicate balance between the economic importance of vacation home rentals and the need to protect the quality of life of our permanent residents. There needs to be some kind of restrictions in place that will minimize any negative impact vacation home rentals may have on their neighborhood but at the same time doesn't have a negative impact on this industry. We have an initiative in place that addresses one element of this issue and we need to give it the full 12 months to determine its impact.

b: Loop road: Traffic congestion on Highway 50 through Stateline is a major issue causing many people to use residential streets as an alternative. I used to live on Chonokis and I can tell you firsthand that these residential streets were never designed to handle this kind of traffic and how it negatively impacts these neighborhoods. Something needs to be done to get this traffic off our residential roads. The Tahoe Transportation District, the agency who has jurisdiction over any loop road project, has five plans that are at the environmental analysis stage that address this issue. I want to wait until all the analysis is complete and review them before deciding to support or oppose their loop road project.

c: City streets: Our streets take a beating between the amount of traffic they have to sustain and the wear and tear they receive being in this mountain environment. We need to develop a long-term plan to maintain our roads and in fact our entire infrastructure on an on-going basis.

d: Relationships with other public agencies: Every public agency has an agenda based on that agency's philosophies. The only way to work with them is to find common ground and build a relationship that fosters an environment of collaboration.

e: Recreation: We are in the business of recreation. We need to continue to create recreational opportunities, build more recreational facilities and maintain the ones we have. It should be one of our top priorities.

f. TRPA defined commodities: I support most of the elements in this definition, however, I also believe is room for exceptions, in this case regarding affordable housing. TRPA plays an important role in every decision made in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and I am hopeful they can find a way to ease the financial burden on developers of affordable housing.

g. Transient occupancy tax measure: The transient occupancy tax is designed to improve the city's recreational facilities. I wholeheartedly support this tax measure.

h. Sales tax measure: *[He deleted this question.]*

i. What do you want the additional sales tax money to go to?: I am a firm believer in creating affordable housing, but I am not sure any additional sales tax money spent on this would be enough to have much of an impact. I am leaning toward preferring that any additional money go toward roads, but I remain open-minded.

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: My ancestors were the first people of European descent to settle in what is now the town of Alturas, Calif., in 1870, just north of Lake Tahoe. They were among the first to build cabins in Lake Tahoe in the early 1900s, in fact my aunt used to tell me stories of her visits with Mrs. Knight in Vikingsholm.

As a coach you work with a lot of young people, how will you handle being surrounded by adults?: In order to be a successful coach, you have to work with adults in the school system in much the same way you do adults in city government. You must learn the art of transparency and diplomacy, I welcome the challenge. I love working with young people, it keeps me young of heart and I keep up with all the latest

trends in communication. I will continue to coach, just not in high school.

Opinion: Calif.'s growing education gap

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

The opening lyrics of a popular song during the 1940s advised listeners, "You've got to accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch on to the affirmative (and) don't mess with Mister In-Between."



Dan Walters

It may be state schools Superintendent Tom Torlakson's favorite ditty, because he certainly adopted its upbeat credo last week in announcing results of the state's latest series of academic achievement tests.

Torlakson trumpeted "significant progress" in the scores of the 3.2 million California students in grades three to eight and 11 who were tested on how well they are performing vis-à-vis the state's new Common Core standards.

[Read the whole story](#)

Shots only option for kids to prevent flu

By Associated Press

Kids may get more of a sting from flu vaccination this fall: Doctors are gearing up to give shots only, because U.S. health officials say the easy-to-use nasal spray version of the vaccine isn't working as well as a jab.

Needle-phobic adults still have some less painful options. But FluMist, with its squirt into each nostril, was the only non-injected alternative for children, and has accounted for about a third of pediatric flu vaccinations in recent years.

The problem: Studies from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found in the past few years, FluMist hasn't protected against certain influenza strains as well as regular flu shots. Baffled scientists can't explain why.

The CDC says FluMist should not be used in the U.S. this year. Last week the American Academy of Pediatrics agreed and urged youngsters to roll up their sleeves for a shot.

"We're saying, 'Shoot, now we've got to do the poke again'," said Wendy Sue Swanson, a doctor at Seattle Children's Hospital and the AAP. But, "we know the flu vaccine is the best shot at prevention and protecting those who are vulnerable from serious and even life-threatening infections from influenza."

Swanson has tricks to help ease tears and anxiety, like numbing the skin or distraction techniques like telling the youngster to cough on the count of three, coinciding with the poke. Sometimes the youngest feel braver by going first to show up older siblings. Swanson makes her own vaccination a family affair, parents and kids getting the shot together.

But her top advice: Parents, don't lie and tell your kids the shot won't hurt. Instead, tell them "it might hurt a bit but it doesn't last long and you can do this."

Outside groups spent \$4M more on Nev. races

By Ben Botkin, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Outside political groups reported last week putting another \$4 million into Nevada's U.S. Senate and congressional races, according to Federal Election Commission data available Friday.

The majority of the spending went into the competitive Senate race between U.S. Rep. Joe Heck, R-Nev., and Democratic candidate Catherine Cortez Masto, a former Nevada attorney general.

Read the whole story

El Nino helped Nev. bears avoid urban hazards

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

El Nino is long gone for now but its legacy remains, at least when it comes to Nevada bears.

So far this year the rate at which bears are being struck by cars or otherwise handled by wildlife officials is lower than in previous years with drier winters.

According to the Nevada Department of Wildlife there have been just five bears struck by cars in 2016, compared to 19 last year and 18 in 2014. So far this year NDOW has handled 48 bears, compared to 114 last year and 140 in 2014.

[Read the whole story](#)

USFS South Shore tree thinning to resume

Thinning of trees for fuels reduction and forest health is scheduled to resume this week between Fallen Leaf Road and Camp Richardson Corral and in the Spring Creek Homeowners Tract on the South Shore.

Whole tree and mechanical cut-to-length tree removal will take place in these areas over the next several months, weather permitting and some areas will be closed for public safety.

These types of mechanical operations require closure of the

area during operations due to the hazards posed by heavy equipment and falling trees. The U.S. Forest Service will close the area across from Fallen Leaf Campground (Unit 148) to pedestrians from 7am-6pm daily for the next several months.

The forest thinning is part of the South Shore Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration Project, which will treat approximately 10,000 acres on the South Shore to reduce the risk of severe wildfire, improve forest health, and provide defensible space to neighboring communities.

Actors needed for LTCC's 'A Christmas Carol'

Auditions for Charles Dickens' classic play "A Christmas Carol" will be at Lake Tahoe Community College's Duke Theatre on Sept. 20 at 7pm.

Performances will place Nov. 12-22.

Actors of all ages and ethnic backgrounds are needed, from age 10 to 65. All actors will play multiple characters, except for the actor playing Ebenezer Scrooge. There are several roles available for boys and girls, including the role of Tiny Tim.

Scripts will be available on reserve at LTCC's Roberta Mason Library. Audition sides will also be available in the Duke Theatre lobby, and listed on the Theatre Arts Department's Facebook page one week prior to auditions.

In addition to acting roles, LTCC is also seeking light and soundboard operators, a stage manager, backstage crew, and construction workers.

For more info, call 530.541.4660, ext. 240.

Battle to save Sierra frogs involves fungus



Scientists are trying to save the mountain yellow-tree frog. Photo/USFWS/Rick Kuyper

By Lauren Sommer, KNPR

A deadly fungus that's been devastating frog populations is spreading across the globe – it's helped drive the extinction of 200 species so far. In California, the chytrid fungus has moved inexorably across the Sierra Nevada, leaving thousands of frogs dead.

But scientists are trying to turn the tide against the fungus with an experimental treatment, one that could matter to frogs worldwide.

They're making a last-ditch effort to save the endangered mountain yellow-legged frog by immunizing it against the

fungus.

Mountain yellow-legged frogs, found only in California's alpine lakes, have been in steep decline due to the fungus while also falling prey to non-native trout. More than 90 percent of the population has disappeared.