

Back bowls of Vail

Blue Sky Basin at Vail offers incredible views. The bowls of Vail stretch for 7 miles.

Barton cardiology lecture

Dr. David Young with Barton Cardiology talks about apnea and heart issues on Feb. 6 at Lake Tahoe Community College.

Beaver Creek Food + Wine Weekend

Chef Alex Seidel talks about one of the courses he made for the Jan. 25 gourmet lunch at the Beaver Creek Food + Wine Festival.

2 groups sue to stop implementation of TRPA Regional Plan

By Kathryn Reed

The Sierra Club and Friends of the West Shore filed a lawsuit Monday in U.S. District Court in Sacramento to stop the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan from taking effect in its entirety.

"We hope to achieve a reconciliation with the TRPA over their plan and get it strengthened," Laurel Ames with the Tahoe Area Sierra Club told *Lake Tahoe News*. Feb. 11 was the deadline to file such a lawsuit.

Those two conservation groups had been vocal at most of the meetings leading up to the adoption of the Regional Plan in December. The new plan replaced the 1987 document.



Politics at Lake Tahoe can be as turbulent at the lake itself. Photo/LTN file

Water quality, air quality, local delegation, appeals process and coverage are some of the main issues the two groups have problems with in the latest Regional Plan.

“This lawsuit shows just how out of touch the Sierra Club is with the realities that face Lake Tahoe today,” TRPA Executive Director Joanne Marchetta said in a statement.

It will be up to the court to decide if an injunction is put in place, which the groups are seeking. For now, though, the bi-state regulatory agency is acting on the belief the 2-month-old plan is the law of the land.

“It is in effect until a judge or some other process tells us it is not,” Jeff Cowen, spokesman with the TRPA, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The League to Save Lake Tahoe, often a lead agency when comes to suing the TRPA, is not a party of the lawsuit. In a prepared statement Executive Director Darcie Goodman Collins condemned the suit.

“The League is disappointed that litigation has been filed on the Regional Plan. This is the wrong move for Lake Tahoe. While litigation is a useful tool of last resort, in this case, it will only delay the implementation of any positive

environmental benefits contained in Tahoe's new Regional Plan. While the plan is not perfect, it is a product of community collaboration and compromise, and is designed to be adaptive," Goodman said.

An unknown is what the state of Nevada will do in regards to Senate Bill 271. That remains in place with the threat of the Silver State pulling out of the bi-state Compact in 2015. Passage of a Regional Plan is part of what SB271 was about. But if the Regional Plan unravels, so might the plans of some Nevada lawmakers to repeal SB271.

"Any litigation will likely result in the dissolution of this Compact and no Compact means no regional environmental standards for Lake Tahoe. Preserving the Compact and implementing the (Regional Plan update) will provide the greatest long-term benefit to the lake and its communities," Goodman said.

SnowGlobe 2012 – an ensemble

Recap video of the SnowGlobe Music Festival 2012 by Bron Fong.

Songs:

Deadmau5 feat. Chris James – The Veldt

Benny Benassi – Satisfaction (RL Grime Remix)

Laidback Luke ft. Chuckie & Martin Solveig – 1234

Operation Sierra Storm Meteorologist Conference

Chris Field, a 2007 Nobel Prize team winner and lead author of the study on the effects of global climate change, speaks Jan. 10 at the Operation Sierra Storm Meteorologist Conference in Stateline.

SnowGlobe 2012

Gentleman Hall start the fun at SnowGlobe 2012 in South Lake Tahoe on Dec. 29.

Alyssa Byrne press conference

El Dorado County sheriff's Lt. Pete Van Arnum speaks Jan. 4 about conflicting accounts of the witnesses in the Alyssa Byrne case.

Snowshoe at Van Sickle Park

There will be a guided snowshoe at Van Sickle Bi-State Park on March 9 from 10am-1pm.



This snowshoe hike is being offered through a partnership between Explore Tahoe: An Urban Trailhead and the Tahoe Rim Trail Association. The distance of the snowshoe hike is 2-3 miles and is rated as moderate in terms of difficulty.

Meet at the Heavenly Village parking garage at 10am.

Refreshments will be served at the end of the program at Explore Tahoe.

All participants are expected to provide their own snowshoes, dress appropriately and bring plenty of water and food to last through the hike.

For more information, call (530) 542.4637.

S. Tahoe council votes to challenge property owner

By Kathryn Reed

The South Lake Tahoe City Council is ready to fight.

"I believe our rules have purpose and when they are broken knowingly, we should not settle," Councilwoman Brooke Laine said.

The four met Feb. 11 to continue last week's discussion of whether to take the City Attorney's Office recommendation to settle the dispute over the property at 1348 Wildwood Ave. or let the court decide. It was a 4-0 vote to litigate. (Councilman Hal Cole recused himself because he owns property in the vicinity.)



South Lake Tahoe is going to court to make the owner of the parcel at 1348 Wildwood Ave. adhere to the easement tied to the property.
Photo/LTN

Councilwoman Angela Swanson said she could not reward someone who started construction knowing there was an easement on the

property precluding such action.

Today the parcel has a foundation poured, and plywood up with openings for a garage, front door and windows. The court will decide if a full house is erected or if it returns to open space like the U.S. Forest Service lot next door.

A case management meeting will likely take place in March, with a trial beginning six months to a year from now.

Attorney Paul Gumina spoke on behalf of his client Thang Vu. Vu and his now ex-wife Jennifer Khuu bought the property in 2002, were issued a building permit in 2007, had that revoked in 2008 when the easement blocking the building surfaced, and sued the city in 2009. Khuu now owns the property, but Vu based on court records, is the plaintiff, according to Gumina.

"They knew they could not build on the lot," Gumina told the council Tuesday morning. "Then they embarked on the long process to turn it from unbuildable to buildable."

They did this, in their belief, by securing a building allocation and building permit. But the easement restricting developing the parcel was never altered. While Gumina told the council Vu had the allocation from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency before obtaining the building permit, the opposite is what happened.

In addition to that, Vu and Khuu falsified their application to the city, as noted at the meeting by City Attorney Patrick Enright.

"On the building application it says there are no restrictions," Enright said, in reference to what the applicants wrote.

But Gumina had already admitted to the council that his client was well aware of the easement.