

Opinion: Stracener's lies should keep him off the bench

To the community,

When a lawyer states, "I have appeared before the California and U.S. Supreme Courts," people reasonably interpret this statement as meaning that the attorney has argued cases in person before the justices of the Supreme Courts. Most people do not think that submitting a document for filing "technically" constitutes an appearance before the court.

Throughout his campaign Judge [Warren] Stracener has misled the public in boasting he has appeared before the California and U.S. Supreme Courts. He continues to assert this achievement in his campaign literature despite being publicly criticized for his "calculated misrepresentation."

According to all news articles I have read, Judge Stracener has never personally argued a case before the CA or US Supreme Courts but has "filed" legal documents.

Had Judge Stracener argued cases in person before these justices, it would be quite an achievement and honor. His "technical" appearances by merely filing legal documents is not all that remarkable, especially when one considers that thousands of inmates and lawyers have also "technically" appeared before the California and U.S. Supreme Courts as they too have filed writs or legal documents that were denied by the justices without a hearing.

When witnesses are sworn to testify, they take an oath to "tell the truth and nothing but the truth." It would seem to me that a judge should be held to the same if not a higher standard in stating the whole truth.

I have lived in El Dorado County for 45 years and have

attended sessions of our local court hundreds of times while previously serving our community as a police officer and then as a deputy probation officer. I have always been highly impressed with our local judiciary until recently. Judge Stracener's ongoing intentional misrepresentation sets a very poor example to the juveniles he presides over and the public he purports to serve.

Joe Hoffman has been an attorney in our community for the last 18 years, and has also served in the capacity as judge pro tem (a temporary judge). He is the only non-incumbent local judicial candidate that I can ever recall being endorsed by local judges. In addition, Joe Hoffman alone is endorsed by local prosecutors, deputy Sheriffs' and court clerks. Many members of the local bar association also support his candidacy.

Please join us in casting a vote for Joe Hoffman.

Sincerely,

Laurie Edwards, Cameron Park

Opinion: USFS clear-cutting in Tahoe National Forest is bad policy

By Chad Hanson

Many people believe that extensive commercial logging on our national forests, especially clear-cutting, is a thing of the past – something that ceased back in the 1980s. Unfortunately, the U.S. Forest Service is now clear-cutting old-growth

forests again on our public lands at taxpayer expense.

A current example is the Outback logging project north of Independence Lake in the Tahoe National Forest, where the agency is clear-cutting nearly 500 acres of old-growth forest. The Forest Service knows that public opposition to commercial logging on public lands has grown over the years, so the agency, with a wink and a nod, has creatively promoted the Outback project and others like it as “ecological restoration” and “forest health.”

Tens of millions of taxpayer dollars are spent every year subsidizing commercial logging on our public lands, and the Forest Service profits not only from these funds, but also from the timber sales revenue generated by selling trees on national forests to private logging corporations. The agency keeps most of the revenue for its own budget.

With such a perverse incentive for forest management abuse on public lands, it is no wonder the agency is increasingly finding creative ways to justify selling large trees, including old-growth trees, for its own profit. In order to do so, however, it must mislead the public and misrepresent the science.

In the environmental assessment for the Outback project, for example, the Forest Service claims that some logging of conifer trees is needed in order to promote growth and regeneration of aspen stands. However, the existing science simply does not support the notion that old-growth forest must be clear-cut in order to accomplish this. Far from it.

In fact, the Forest Service’s own study, conducted in the northern Sierra Nevada, found that thinning only smaller, younger trees within just 30 feet of aspen stands effectively encouraged aspen growth and regeneration. In stark contrast, in the Outback project the Forest Service is clear-cutting 150 feet or more from aspen trees in huge swaths, even removing

the great majority of the large conifers 8 feet around and bigger, which are 250 to 300 years old based upon my count of the tree rings. Some even larger, older trees are slated for logging if the agency completes the remaining 200 acres of the Outback project.

Like a time warp back to the 1980s, the Outback environmental assessment also suggests that this extreme commercial logging is somehow necessary in order to “reduce fuels” and prevent patches of higher-intensity wildland fire where most of the trees are killed. However, it has been well known and established scientifically for many years that aspen regenerates and grows most vigorously after wildland fire, especially where fire burns hotter.

It has also been known now for decades that such post-fire areas, called “snag forest habitat,” are a natural part of the mixed-intensity fire regimes in these forests and, unlike clear-cuts, comprise one of the most biodiverse and ecologically important forest habitat types in Western forests, due to standing dead trees. The snags, as they are called, are used for foraging and nesting by native woodpeckers, such as the rare and imperiled black-backed woodpecker, as well as native flowering shrubs and dense pockets of natural forest regeneration, which provide habitat for many small mammals, native species of flying insects and the flycatchers and other birds that feed upon them.

So, if you hike around on our national forests these days, prepare yourself. With projects like Outback, and the self-serving Orwellian doublespeak used to justify it, what you see may look and feel a lot like 1984.

Chad Hanson is the director of the John Muir Project of Earth Island Institute, based in Cedar Ridge in the northern Sierra Nevada.

Opinion: Advertising is more than a pretty design

By Megan Murray

In Lake Tahoe, September and October is a time when marketing departments at the ski resorts, lodging properties, casinos and rental companies start buying advertising media in preparation for their winter tourism advertising campaigns. At the bigger companies around Tahoe, it's likely that the people buying advertising media have a strong background in media buying so they are well equipped to make informed decisions about planning and buying media for their campaigns.

Unfortunately, for smaller companies and local small business owners, many people don't have an education or any background experience in advertising media buying. This leaves these business owners at a disadvantage when meeting with advertising sales reps and discussing their advertising needs .

We thought this would be a good time to provide an overview and description of common advertising media terminology and key strategies for buying various types of advertising media in Lake Tahoe. We'll start with defining the most common terms used by sales reps selling online advertising media buying.

This list covers the more basic terms one must understand when engaging in an online media buying discussion:

Display Ads – Display ads are the same as banner ads. The common box shaped ads seen on websites. Display ad is the official term used in the online media world. Display (banner) ads are usually sold in standardized sizes regardless of what

website you are advertising on. This includes: skyscrapers, leader boards, large boxes, etc.

Pop Up Ads – These ads are more intrusive online ads that appear to “pop up” in a new browser window. Flash based “floating ads” and “slide-in ads” are also considered other forms of pop-up ads.

Pre Roll Video Ads – Short form online video advertising targeted to relevant website content & audiences via a website video player or video websites like YouTube. An advertiser’s short video ad will play prior to, during or after the featured video content.

Video Ad Overlay – A video ad overlay is displayed on a video player on a given website. The ad overlay is seen as a semi-transparent banner, typically across the bottom of the video screen. The banners appear during the course of a video’s broadcast, displaying an ad unit to the viewer of the video content.

Above The Fold – This is in reference to the part of a computer screen visible to user before the user has to scroll down to see more of the screen on their monitor.

Landing Page – The designated web page on an advertisers website as the final destination of a click through from a banner ad in the advertisers online campaign. A unique landing page is usually designed for a specific promotion and directly correlate with the creative being served in the banner ads, typically with the intent of compelling the visitor to make a desired action.

Geo Targeting – Refers to serving up online ads to users based on their geographical location.

Behavioral Targeting – Is the practice of targeting users and serving up ads based on the user’s unique online web browsing activity, such as the pages they’ve already visited or their

keyword search histories. Behaviorally targeting allows for the serving up of ads that are more relevant to the interests of a person viewing a particular web page.

Contextual Targeting – Ads that are served based on the actual content of the particular webpage a viewer is visiting. Contextual ads scan the text of a Web site for keywords and then serves up ads to the Web page based on what the user is viewing,

IP targeting – Is the ability to serve online ads based on a user's IP address.

Impressions – The number of times an online advertisement is served by the website publisher. Most online publishers sell ad space according to the number of impressions served. Impression is a measure of the number of times an ad is displayed, whether it is clicked on or not. (Impressions are simply "ad views" by audience on a particular website.)

Conversions – A conversion is a pre-defined action on the advertisers website that will determine the success rate of a given online campaign. This predefined action could be a newsletter signup, completed sale, a click thru or a simple lead form.

CPC – CPC stands or Cost Per Click. This is pay rate based on the number of times clicks a display ad gets click on. The advertiser pays the web publisher the pre-negotiated CPC rate for al clicks generated over the course of the display campaign.

PPC – PPC stands for Pay Per Click –This is the same as CPC, the preferred terminology is CPC.

CPM – CPM stands for cost-per-thousand (mille) impressions. A pay rate based on CPM, means that the advertiser pays the web publisher a pre-negotiated rate every time the web publisher serves up a 1,000 impressions for the advertisers ad.

CTR – CTR stands for Click through Rate. The CTR is determined by taking the number of clicks a display ad receives and dividing that by the number of times the display ad was served (ie, # of total of impressions for that display ad.)

Marketers use the CTR as a metric for gauging and measuring the ability of an ad to generate interest and get people to learn more about the featured product or brand. *Note, many factors can effect CTRs. There is much more to measuring your online ad than simply measuring click though rates in a vacuum. We will discuss online measurement in another blog.

CPL (Cost Per Lead) – The rate paid per lead generated within a campaign.

Call To Action/CTA – The portion of an online ad's copy that directly appeals to the target audience and compels them to make an action.

Megan Murray works for Tahoe Production House in marketing and design.

Opinion: California's natural treasures are threatened

By Robert E. Doyle

Park agencies, park rangers and in particular the California state parks system always have enjoyed a high level of public trust and credibility. But the disclosure that state park managers hid funds from the taxpayers has damaged that trust and angered the public, especially park supporters.

Yes, hiding the funds was a breach of public trust, but the

revelation and the political fallout it caused have not changed the state parks' root problem – a decade of neglect. We must seize this moment as an opportunity to solicit new ideas and recommit ourselves to be wise stewards of our parklands. It is a time for tough choices.

Once the pride of California, the state parks have for more than a decade suffered deep cuts in funding for operations and maintenance while, at the same time, the public has approved bonds to add important lands to the park holdings. Since 1980, the state parks system has grown by more than 500,000 acres while the state's population has increased by more than 13.5 million. More than ever, the public seeks places of solace, beauty and recreation, and thus our parks are overflowing with visitors.

Yet state officials did not fund the parks to keep up with the increased use and added lands, or to maintain the aging infrastructure. In 1979, 91 percent of the parks' budget came from state taxes. Now it is 29 percent. While the conservation movement in California has been hugely successful, support for park maintenance and operations has taken a backseat. Many park facilities were built by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s. They need to be maintained to retain the value of the original investment.

Even worse, for the first time in the state's history, 70 of the parks we Californians own were "proposed" to be closed, with devastating potential effects on local communities. The response from citizens, donors and nonprofit organizations has been remarkable – volunteers and private foundations worked near-miracles to try to keep any state park from closing.

Read the whole story

Robert E. Doyle is the general manager of the East Bay Regional Park District. The district has managed state parks in the East Bay for 40 years.

Opinion: WHS Boosters thankful for donation

To the community,

On behalf of Whittell High School Boosters Club, we wanted to thank the Tahoe Douglas Fire District for their generous donation to the school of \$1,700.

Whittell Boosters

Publisher's note: *This article explains how the fire district had the money to donate.*

Opinion: Bread & Broth thanks special volunteers

To the community,

Bread & Broth is once again very appreciative of the response of members of the South Lake Tahoe community for their support in providing hot, nutritious meals to the neediest members of our community. From April 30 through July 3h, of the fourteen Monday meals servings, eight of the meals had sponsors who participated in Bread & Broth's Adopt a Day of Nourishment.

The donors sponsorship of \$250, covered the cost of the food, supplies and utilities needed in preparation of serving the meals. In addition to their generous donation, six of the AAD sponsors provided volunteer teams to work side by side with the B&B volunteer staff members in setting up, serving and cleaning up during their Monday sponsorship dinner.

Heavenly Mountain Resort continued their monthly support of B&B by sponsoring three Adopt a Days (May 21, June 25 and July 16) during this three-month period. Once again, the Heavenly volunteers enthusiastically worked side by side with B&B volunteers, with many of the Heavenly volunteers having served at previous Heavenly sponsorships.

On April 30, Hope Lutheran Church of the Sierra hosted the first of two sponsorships that they will be hosting this year. Hope Lutheran Church's volunteer crew consisted of members of their congregation of which many were regular B&B Team 5 (normally volunteering the fifth Monday of the month) members.

Two new sponsors for the Bread & Broth's Adopt A Day of Nourishment program were Zephyr Computer and Lake Tahoe Community College. Zephyr Computer owned by David and Judy Ratz sponsored July 2. They were delighted to be involved in helping their community and expressed an interest in sponsoring a future day. Lake Tahoe Community College hosted July 30 by having members of the LTCC administrative and instructional staff act as crew volunteers. Lake Tahoe Community College members are so committed to their support of the South Lake Tahoe community that they have already signed up to adopt Nov. 26.

In addition, anonymous donors sponsored the May 14 and July 23 Monday evening meals.

To find out how your family, business or club/organization can Adopt a Day of Nourishment or make any donation to Bread & Broth, contact Carol Gerard at carolsgerard@aol.com or (530)

542.2876.

The volunteers:

April 30 – Hope Lutheran Church – Kim Blanck, Arlene Wolfe, Mort Meiers, Carolyn Meiers, Juanita Brock, Linda Amundson, Bonnie Driscoll, Julia Martinez and Angie Peart.

May 21 – Heavenly – Frank Papandrea, Jolena Hearn, Nancy McCoy, Barbara Knapp.

June 25 – Heavenly – Barrett Burghard, Brandy Thomsen, Steve Turner, Tom Fortune.

July 16 – Heavenly – Frank Papandrea, Kelly Campbell, Cathie Rahbeck, Wren Buxton, Rick Buxton.

July 30 – Lake Tahoe Community College – Aaron McVean, Kurt Green, Kindred Murillo, Michelle Sower, Virginia Boyar.

Bread & Broth

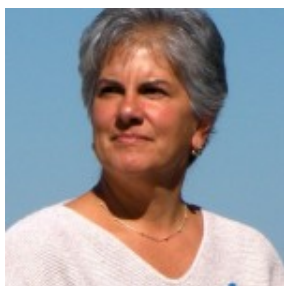
Opinion: TRPA's 21st century role is fostering regional cooperation

By Joanne Marchetta

The Lake Tahoe Regional Plan update has spurred many important discussions about the vision for Lake Tahoe and what future role the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency should play. As we consider changes to TRPA's goals and policies, we're taking a

hard look at how the agency can add the most value to our lake and community. TRPA's role is changing in the 21st century, and our history foretells the need for change.

Since its creation in 1969, TRPA's role has touched the spectrum of resource protection and land use planning, evolving as needs change. At first, TRPA's primary role was to stop subdivision sprawl in the Lake Tahoe Basin. However, without regulatory teeth, the agency's effectiveness was limited and some environmentally harmful developments were allowed in the 1970s. In 1980, the states redefined TRPA's role by revising the Bi-State Compact and assigning cutting-edge environmental targets called Threshold Carrying Capacities.



Joanne
Marchetta

Through the 1990s, TRPA implemented a development code that ensured new buildings and remodels helped move environmental goals forward. However, little was done to repair and restore past damage, nor was much done to apply modern environmental design to buildings that existed before TRPA was created – which make up the bulk of our development today.

With the initiation of the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program in 1997, TRPA took a leadership role to bring together more than 50 organizations to implement ecosystem restoration. That regional cooperation role continues to define the agency as competition for public funding increases and the need for strategic collaboration

across boundaries grows.

TRPA's collaboration brings a basinwide, coordinated approach to critical programs like transportation, stormwater infiltration, and the emergent threats of aquatic invasive species and catastrophic wildfire. With California's greenhouse gas reduction bill, SB375, TRPA is providing the coordinated framework for regional compliance. TRPA has secured substantial state and federal grant funds to assist local governments in meeting new mandates while at the same time advancing innovative policies proposed in the Regional Plan update.

Similarly, the Lake Tahoe Total Maximum Daily Load creates a framework for local improvements and the need for regional cooperation. The TMDL in itself is a quantum leap forward for Lake Tahoe. Adopted by the two states and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2011, the program better defines water quality goals by setting pollution reduction targets for each jurisdiction, but it also leaves implementation up to local governments.

TRPA plans to work with the states and local jurisdictions to secure the funds necessary to implement stormwater improvements. While the expense of continued water quality restoration is daunting in the face of shrinking government funds, by working together in this cooperative framework, we have a greater opportunity to position Tahoe as a national treasure worthy of additional government and private investment.

TRPA's updated land use policies in the proposed Regional Plan update are again moving TRPA's touch-point on the spectrum of resource protection. To restore the lake's clarity, our policy updates will help build the public-private partnerships needed to meet TMDL reduction targets. The draft plan provides economic incentives and an improved permitting system for property owners in order to encourage environmental

redevelopment of rundown properties. With more permitting responsibilities shifting to local governments, TRPA can focus on important regional environmental issues.

In the area of monitoring and research, TRPA's unique role is to apply the scientific findings of research institutions and others studying Lake Tahoe. For more than 40 years, TRPA has been using the best available science to shape policies. As new scientific information becomes available, that role has grown stronger. Researchers are monitoring socioeconomic impacts of redevelopment, studying the effects of climate change on Lake Tahoe, and uncovering the factors that affect clarity of near shore waters. TRPA will use scientific findings to update regional policies more frequently in a 4-year cycle in order to ensure regulations don't become stale.

If you'd like to learn more about TRPA's changing role in Lake Tahoe's future, come to our Community Appreciation Day event at our offices on Lower Kingsbury Grade on Sept. 27 from 4-7pm. This event is TRPA's way of showing our appreciation for the often unknown everyday efforts around the basin that help create a healthy, sustainable Lake Tahoe. For more information, go online.

Joanne Marchetta is executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Opinion: Hoffman only viable

candidate for judge

By Stephen W. Valentine

The day after the primary election I was contacted by representatives of each of the candidates slated for the run off in November each asking me to endorse their respective candidates. Having spent five months touring the county and meeting so many wonderful people and listening to my two opponents talk, I decided not to offer an endorsement at that time.

For the past three months I have been asked by almost everyone I see and talk to which candidate I recommend. I thought that was odd. When deciding how to vote before every election I read and watch everything related to the election. I read every proposition and the arguments for and against. I find it amazing that people will vote without being fully informed; it is important to be informed. Voting without information seems like a good way to really mess things up.

The other night I was listening to a speech on television with my wife and commented that there were a few errors in his statement. My wife looked at me and asked me how I came to that conclusion. I told her what I had read and what documents I had examined to come to my conclusions.

Then she asked me if I had decided to endorse anyone in the November election. I started to explain that I thought people should make up their own minds based on the facts available. She shook her head and said, how can you expect anyone to catch up with you when you have been listening to and watching them for the past nine months and most people will only know what they receive in the mail as the election approaches, obviously biased to one side or the other.

She was correct of course, she always is, it just takes me a little longer to realize it sometimes.

I have contacted both candidates and asked for any additional information that they would care to share. Both sides offered to meet and talk. I asked for specific information from each and was ready to jump into the facts and work my way through any material they provided.

(Curt) Stracener's representative indicated that they had some "good information" and would provide it to me. Hasn't happened. Based on the way things went in May I suspect that a revelation will come in early October or maybe even late September. It will be sensational and maybe even newsworthy and there will not be enough time for (Joe) Hoffman to explain the facts or even to address the issue.

If a sensational and negative story about Hoffman happens within six weeks of the election, I suspect it will be purely political and not about justice. Remember, Stracener has hired a political consultant that was part of the Schwarzenegger school of politics; it won't matter whether there is any truth in the story as long as it breaks before the election and close enough to sway voters without time to disclose the truth. That is what mudslinging is all about.

I have read the papers filed in the federal lawsuit against Mr. Hoffman. Anyone can file a lawsuit and make any allegation you can think of when filing. It is not the truth; it is an allegation.

The important factors that I consider in voting for a judicial candidate is their ethics, their knowledge, their compassion and the people with whom they associate. Do not forget, attorneys have clients, not every client is an associate nor should be tied to the attorney as though he was a friend. We would never have attorneys to defend accused criminals if we had to like them.

Mr. Hoffman has been practicing law in El Dorado County since 1995. I have had cases against him and he has appeared before

me on numerous cases while I was on the bench. I have always felt that I could trust him in his word and he has never been anything but ethical in his dealing with me and in my courtroom.

Mr. Stracener on the other hand seems to have an even greater lack of experience in practical law. Law that means something to El Dorado County residents. His lack of familiarity with the truth is also bothersome. A good attorney will always maintain the truth for his client's sake. If the facts do not support your client you argue the law. If the law is against your client you argue the facts. If the law and the facts are against your client you beg for mercy. A good attorney always states the truth, politicians not so much. I want a good judge that was an attorney, not a politician that wants to be a judge.

In Mr. Stracener's case I have seen him try to change the facts to fit the truth he wants the voters to learn.

1. Mr. Stracener stated that he appeared before the Supreme Court. He may have had his name listed on papers filed with the court, but there is no record of his actual appearance. A Superior Court judge should be above the mere appearance of impropriety.

2. Mr. Stracener signed up for a Tea Party Patriot's shooting event while at lunch with the Republican Women of El Dorado County. When appearing before the League of Women Voters a short time later he was asked about attending the event. Mr. Stracener stated that he did not think it appropriate to attend such an event and denied ever having signed up for the event.

So not only does he change his statements to make himself appear better for the group he is speaking to, but he thinks an event supporting the constitutional rights guaranteed by the Second Amendment is inappropriate for a Superior Court

judge to attend. The Bill of Rights is the most important part of the Constitution for a judge to know and defend.

3. When listing the number of cases Mr. Stracener claims to have heard since being appointed he erred by approximately 1,300 cases. His claim is that he counts the hearings and not the cases. All attorneys know the difference between a case and a hearing, so should a Superior Court judge.

4. While speaking to a Tea Party group in El Dorado Hills, Mr. Stracener stated it was inappropriate for a judicial candidate to accept support from attorneys that might practice in his courtroom yet his campaign disclosure and webpage lists attorneys that support his candidacy.

Honesty is not only the best policy; in a judge it is the only acceptable policy. While I expect mud to be thrown about, I suspect it will be mis-truths and lies. I suspect they will come out just in time for the election and too late for any real research or time to refute the allegations with the truth. That's politics. It's expected in Sacramento politics and Washington politics. It has no place in El Dorado County politics.

Mr. Hoffman has maintained the high ground, been honest and willing to discuss the real issues of El Dorado County's needs within the court. No politics, no dirty tricks, no slimy Sacramento mudslinging, just a desire to help our community and improve our court.

This November please join me in voting for Joe Hoffman for Superior Court judge.

Stephen W. Valentine was on the June ballot for El Dorado County judge.

Opinion: Revisiting Leopold could move NPS in the right direction

By James D. Nations

When a team of scientists and conservationists led by A. Starker Leopold wrote the Leopold Report in 1963, national park visitors were still feeding bears through their car windows, nocturnal wildlife still feasted on park garbage dumps, and park rangers still shot cougars and wolves to maximize the number of visitor-friendly elk and pronghorn.

Prompted by a population explosion of elk – and the subsequent need to cull them – Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall established a Special Advisory Board on Wildlife Management and asked it to examine wildlife management in America's national parks. The committee's response, the Leopold Report, became the first concrete plan for the use of scientific principles in managing national park visitors, wildlife, and habitats. The report prompted a revolution in wildlife and habitat management and set the National Park Service on a trajectory to utilize the best available science as a foundation for decision-making.

The national parks, their wildlife, and park visitors all benefited from this redirection.

Last month, almost 50 years after the release of the Leopold Report, the Science Committee of the National Park System Advisory Board presented a 21st century version of this important document and recommended a new basis for policy, planning, and management to confront new challenges to our

national parks as we approach their 2016 centennial.

After attending the committee's presentation of the new report to the Park Service in late August, I fully expect the agency will accept these recommendations – a move that would put our national parks on the right track for the future.

The new document, *Revisiting Leopold*, comes from a team of the nation's most accomplished scientists and conservationists, including a Nobel Laureate and two recipients of the Presidential Medal of Science. They revisited A. Starker Leopold's questions from 1963 and molded their answers with the realization that, "Environmental changes confronting the National Park Service are widespread, complex, accelerating, and volatile."

They specifically identified biodiversity loss; climate change; habitat fragmentation; groundwater removal; invasive species; overdevelopment; air, noise, and light pollution; and the erosion of cultural resources.

The committee noted that cultural and socioeconomic changes confronting the National Park Service in the 21st century "include an increasingly diversified, urbanized, and aging population, a transforming US economy, and constrained public funding for parks."

Given these constraints, the committee concluded, the overarching goal of park resource management should be, "to steward NPS resources for continuous change that is not yet fully understood, in order to preserve ecological integrity and cultural and historical authenticity, provide visitors with transformative experiences, and form the core of a national conservation land- and seascape."

Revisiting Leopold calls for new strategies that go beyond park boundaries and extend over longer periods of time. The authors note the need to expand representation of unique ecosystems and a special need to protect habitat that may help

wildlife survive and disperse in an era of rapid climate change.

Because ecological and cultural systems are continuously changing and not fully understood, the committee recommends that Park Service managers and decision-makers embrace “at all levels” the precautionary principle, which requires that stewardship decisions reflect science-informed prudence and restraint. When in doubt, the precautionary principle suggests, err on the side of protection.

To implement these policies, the authors of *Revisiting Leopold* recommend a systematic review of NPS policies to align them with the goals proposed in their study. But they warn against revising the Organic Act, altering the mission of NPS, or relaxing restrictions on impairment of park resources. They also call for a significant expansion of science within NPS by hiring a new and diverse cohort of scientists, supporting their research, and applying the results of their findings.

In conclusion, the committee warns against basing future park resource management on past practices and points to an urgent need for structural changes and long-term investment in preservation.

They urge the Park Service to “act immediately, boldly, and decisively,” noting that the 2016 centennial of the National Park Service provides an extraordinary opportunity for action and a critical benchmark for progress.

Some of the recommendations in *Revisiting Leopold* can be achieved through a change in perspective. Viewing national parks as anchors in greater landscapes, for example, costs nothing. To fully express this concept on the ground, however, requires financial investment: creating and maintaining a trained staff and establishing partnerships with owners and managers of adjoining lands. Here, *Revisiting Leopold* zeroes in on the most serious challenge facing NPS in 2012: the lack

of adequate funding. “The NPS has an excellent corps of resources managers,” the committee writes, “but these managers must be supported with the necessary funds and personnel, as well as with training and professional development.”

Just as the initial Leopold Report of 1963 revolutionized Park Service wildlife management, its new iteration, *Revisiting Leopold*, can ensure that America’s national parks thrive during their second century of existence, continuing to serve as lifeboats for our nation’s biological inheritance and as the cultural landscapes of our nation’s history.

The authors of *Revisiting Leopold* should be lauded for providing a brilliant vision for protecting our nation’s natural and cultural heritage. Assuming these recommendations officially guide scientific policy moving forward, the men and women of the National Park Service should be commended for taking the front line in helping us turn that vision into reality.

James D. Nations is vice president of National Parks Conservation Association’s Center for Park Research.

Opinion: California is hard to define

By Victor Davis Hanson

Driving across California is like going from Mississippi to Massachusetts without ever crossing a state line.

Consider the disconnects: California’s combined income and sales taxes are among the nation’s highest, but the state’s

deficit is still about \$16 billion. It's estimated that more than 2,000 upper-income Californians are leaving per week to flee high taxes and costly regulations, yet California wants to raise taxes even higher; its business climate already ranks near the bottom of most surveys. Its teachers are among the highest paid on average in the nation, but its public school students consistently test near the bottom of the nation in both math and science.

The state's public employees enjoy some of the nation's most generous pensions and benefits, but California's retirement systems are underfunded by about \$300 billion. The state's gas taxes – at over 49 cents per gallon – are among the highest in the nation, but its once unmatched freeways, like 101 and 99, for long stretches have degenerated into potholed, clogged nightmares unchanged since the early 1960s.



Victor Davis
Hanson

The state wishes to borrow billions of dollars to develop high-speed rail, beginning with a little-traveled link between Fresno and Corcoran – a corridor already served by money-losing Amtrak. Apparently, coastal residents like the idea of European high-speed rail – as long as noisy and dirty construction does not begin in their backyards.

As gasoline prices soar, California chooses not to develop millions of barrels of untapped oil and even more natural gas off its shores and beneath its interior. Home to bankrupt green companies like Solyndra, California has mandated that a

third of all the energy provided by state utilities soon must come from renewable energy sources – largely wind and solar, which presently provide about 11 percent of its electricity and almost none of its transportation fuel.

How to explain the seemingly inexplicable? There is no California, which is a misnomer. There is no such state. Instead there are two radically different cultures and landscapes with little in common, each equally dysfunctional in quite different ways. Apart they are unworldly, together a disaster.

A postmodern narrow coastal corridor runs from San Diego to Berkeley, where the weather is ideal, the gentrified affluent make good money, and values are green and left-wing. This Shangri-La is juxtaposed to a vast impoverished interior, from the southern desert to the northern Central Valley, where life is becoming premodern.

On the coast, blue-chip universities like Cal Tech, Berkeley, Stanford and UCLA in pastoral landscapes train the world's doctors, lawyers, engineers and businesspeople. In the hot interior of blue-collar Sacramento, Turlock, Fresno and Bakersfield, well over half the incoming freshman in the California State University system must take remedial math and science classes.

In postmodern Palo Alto or Santa Monica, a small cottage costs more than \$1 million. Two hours away, in premodern and now-bankrupt Stockton, a bungalow the same size goes for less than \$100,000.

In the interior, unemployment in many areas peaks at over 15 percent. The theft of copper wire is reaching epidemic proportions. Thousands of the shrinking middle class flee the interior for the coast or nearby no-income-tax states. To fathom the state's nearly unbelievable statistics – as the state population grew by 10 million from the mid-1980s to

2005, its number of Medicaid recipients increased by 7 million during that period; one-third of the nation's welfare recipients now reside in California – visit the state's hinterlands.

But in the Never-Never Land of Apple, Facebook, Google, Hollywood and the wine country, millions live in an idyllic paradise. Coastal Californians can afford to worry about the state's trivia – as their legislators seek to outlaw foie gras, shut down irrigation projects to save the 3-inch delta smelt, and allow children to have legally recognized multiple parents.

But in the less feel-good interior, crippling regulations curb timber, gas and oil, and farm production. For the most part, the rules are mandated by coastal utopians who have little idea where the gas for their imported cars comes from, or how the redwood is cut for their decks, or who grows the ingredients for their Mediterranean lunches of arugula, olive oil and pasta.

On the coast, it's politically incorrect to talk of illegal immigration. In the interior, residents see first-hand the bankrupting effects on schools, courts and health care when millions arrive illegally without English-language fluency or a high school diploma – and send back billions of dollars in remittances to Mexico and other Latin American countries.

The drive from Fresno to Palo Alto takes three hours, but you might as well be rocketing from Earth to the moon.

Victor Davis Hanson is a classicist and historian at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and a recipient of the 2007 National Humanities Medal.