



**TAHOE AREA
SIERRA CLUB**

Executive Committee *

Chair

David Kean

Vice Chair

Carla Ennis

Secretary

Brian Holzbauer

Treasurer

David Kean

North Shore Conservation Chair

Bryan von Lossberg

South Shore Conservation Chair

Michael Donahoe

Outings

Glenn Polochko

Membership

Elizabeth Brady

Nancy Carter

Webmaster

Bryan Holzbauer

Contact Information:

Tahoe Area Sierra Club

PO Box 16936

South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151

Website:

www.sierraclub.org/chapters/motherlode/tahoe

[motherlode/tahoe](http://motherlode.tahoe)

*Check the TASC website for changes.

The Tahoe Area Sierra Club
Newsletter

is available for download:

<http://motherlode.sierraclub.org/tahoe>

Send an e-mail to our webmaster (bryanbz@charter.net) with your name and physical address if you prefer the electronic version only.

You'll help save a tree!

MEMBERSHIP

Tahoe Area Sierra Club needs volunteers for a few hours every month to help with Membership.

If you are interested or would like more details, please contact:

Elizabeth Brady at
530-546-7530.

Together we can make a difference!

Chairman's Note *by David Kean*

Michael Donahoe, our generous South Shore Conservation Chair, bought several copies of Michael Moore's, *Dude, Where's My Country*, and gave them to friends with instructions to read as much as possible in seven days, then pass it on. The book is a very fun read and gives lots of great information on just how absurd (i.e. laughably inconsistent with what is judged to be true or reasonable) Dubya really is.

In this issue we'll explore a few of the parallels between the President's misguided policies and some conditions and attitudes that exist right here at Lake Tahoe.

In his report, Michael Donahoe observes that lots of people consider the Lake a profit center, and don't really care about its long-term health, mirroring Dubya's lack of regard for the long-term health of our environment.

Bryan von-Lossberg takes the long view on precipitation and drought, and reminds us that short-term time frames don't really show the true picture when it comes to drought. Likewise, Dubya really doesn't care about the long-term effects of global warming. Hey, the plants will just grow a little faster with all that extra CO². Who cares if the wheat belt moves to Canada and the Gulf Stream stops flowing?

Tom Ameika gives an update on the Martis Valley CEQA lawsuit, and unfortunately it's plain to see that Placer County's main concern is tax revenue and the Board of Supervisors main concern is quid pro quo for campaign contributions. Endangered Sierra species, affordable housing, and the health of Lake Tahoe can't be allowed to get in the way of profit. Very Dubya-like, don't you think?

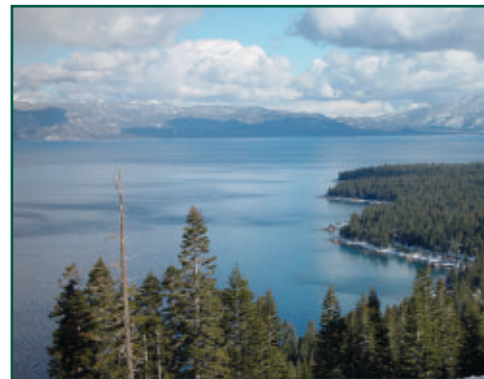
Though TASC does not usually get involved in national issues, Michael Moore has inspired me to highlight some of Dubya's many egregious assaults on

everyone's health and safety. So, for your consideration, the following:

Dubya consistently ignores the work of respected scientists and the data that supports their findings. His actions are so irresponsible that The Union of Concerned Scientists published a report signed by more than 60 leading scientists calling for regulatory and legislative action to restore scientific integrity to federal policy making. "Across a broad range of issues, the administration has undermined the quality of the scientific advisory system and the morale of the government's outstanding scientific personnel," wrote Dr. Kirt Gottfried, emeritus professor of physics at Cornell University and Chairman of the Union of Concerned Scientists. "Whether the issue is lead paint, clean air or climate change, this behavior has serious consequences for all Americans."

Even we ardent enviros of the Sierra Club realize that the environment is not the only factor that needs to be considered when public policy is made, it certainly deserves consideration. Dubya basically gives it none, or even worse, absolutely distorts the truth whenever possible. Dr. F. Sherwood Roland, a Nobel Laureate in chemistry, hit the nail on the head when he said, "The public deserves rational decision making based on the best scientific advice about what is

Cont. on Page 2



Sugar Pine Point *Bryan von Lossberg*

Chairman's Note

Cont. from Page 1

likely to happen, not what political entities might wish to happen.”

What's up at the EPA? Can't they put a halt to all this right wing political misinformation? Apparently not. Dubya has gone so far as to cover up two important reports by the agency. The first was the widely publicized deletion of a whole section of an EPA report on global warming. Dubya didn't like the contents, tried to edit it, and finally just cut the offending material. But then, no science for the public is good science, if you're Dubya.

Another example of the President's censorship was the suppression of an EPA study that showed that the bi-partisan Clean Air Bill would do more to reduce mercury contamination in fish than Dubya's CO²-bloated "Clear Skies Act." Hey, Dubya, people eat fish, and this is a real health issue. I'll take my salmon sans poison, if you please.

The lesson to be learned from all this federal mismanagement is that it's everyone's responsibility to get more involved on both a local and national level. Pick what you are most passionate about and make a difference! Michael Moore is helping by writing good books and by donating all of his Dubya tax cut to progressive causes. You can help by going to his web site, www.michaelmoore.com (see Spend Mike's Tax Cut) and nominating local candidates or groups that are working for progressive change.

If you have friends who are not registered to vote, get them the paperwork, have them fill it out and mail it in yourself. If you know people who don't vote because they don't think it matters, try to educate them, then organize an election day party to make sure they vote. With Dubya at the helm, everyone's health depends on it. After all, we don't want Michael Moore's next book to be "Dude, Why Did the Cancer Kill Me?"

DK

Take Action!

Call your senators and urge them not to support the regressive legislation of the proposed Bush Energy Bill. Tell them that President Bush's energy plan:

- Ignores energy-efficient solutions in favor of increased oil, gas, coal, and nuclear production.
- Attempts to open sensitive places like the Arctic Refuge and other special places in the West to destructive oil and gas development.
- Allows automakers to sell more gas guzzlers by failing to raise fuel economy standards.
- Disregards the property rights of farmers and ranchers and provides incentives for destructive coal-bed methane drilling.

Encourage your senators to support only a much-scaled-back bill (with only the electricity reliability measures intact), eliminate the worst provisions from the current bill, or to spark a filibuster of the bill when it returns to the Senate.

Call your senator at the Capitol Switchboard:(202) 224-3121.

To find out who your senator is, check out zoomer.sierraclub.org.

Read more information on the energy bill here:

www.sierraclub.org/energy/bush_bill.asp

Dude, Where's My Lake Level?

by Bryan von Lossberg, Conservation Co-Chair

Many people know that Lake Tahoe's natural rim lies at 6,223.00' above sea level. Tahoe dipped to that level briefly this winter, as it did for less than a day in late 2002, and in 1994, when water actually stopped flowing down the Truckee River at the Tahoe City dam. Similarly, during the 1930s Tahoe ceased to flow from its outlet for six consecutive years. As of March 3, 2004, however, the lake level was recorded at 6,223.73' at the U.S. Coast Guard Pier at Lake Forest, which is just a bit less than nine inches above the natural rim.

Spring runoff will raise Tahoe's level to near or above its average level of 6,225' above sea level over the coming months, but barring a dramatic spate of spring precipitation, Tahoe's summer surface will reside several feet below its highest recorded level of over 6,229'. The six-foot range from 6,223 to 6,229' is generally the variation in lake level that is considered normal for Tahoe. But far greater variations mark the lake's history, and mega-droughts have likely played a key role in record low water marks.

Though the lowest level recorded for Tahoe in the modern era is about 6,221', measured in October of 1994, organic evidence suggest that Tahoe's surface was even lower—about 6,220'—for a 150–350 year period about 4–6,000 years ago.

Cont. on Page 3



Zephyr Cove Isy

Dude, What's Up with Martis Valley? Club and Allies File CEQA Suit

By Tom Ameika

In mid-January the national Sierra Club joined Sierra Watch, The League to Save Lake Tahoe, the Mountain Area Preservation Foundation, and the Planning and Conservation League, in filing a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) suit against Placer County's Martis Valley Community Plan (MVCP). Our attorneys are Shute, Mihaly, and Weinberger LLP, one of the best and most experienced CEQA firms in California.

CEQA cases are based upon what is known as the administrative record, which is a history of the planning process and includes things like comments on the environmental impact report. The MVCP record is nearly 30,000 pages long. Our attorneys will make our case based on CEQA and the comments submitted during the planning process.

Though our day in court is not yet scheduled, our attorneys will submit a brief by May 15. Placer County will respond by July 1, and we will reply by August 1, all in preparation for a hearing to be held later that month. Since this is a normal lawsuit, there is the possibility that Placer County will want to settle. If the county presents the environmental groups with a legal plan that is reasonable, protects Lake Tahoe, follows basic smart growth principles, charges adequate mitigation fees for open space, and if a thousand other small details could be worked out, we would be open to a settlement. At this time no one feels this is likely.

Fortunately, we feel we have a very strong case and so does Bill Lockyer, California's Attorney General. In a very strongly worded four-page letter, his office scolded the Placer County Board of Supervisors for approving a plan that was in obvious violation of CEQA. Just as the environmental groups have said all along, the attorney general's letter indicated that impacts on Lake Tahoe, Martis Valley and Truckee have not been fully disclosed, and that the affordable housing measures are inadequate. The letter states, "The MVCP embodies the opposite of 'smart growth,' which requires that jobs and housing be located close together in a community that provides housing and services for all economic levels." We could not have said it better.

CEQA suits are very complicated and expensive, but we have confidence in our attorneys, in our case and in the belief that we are building a better plan for Lake Tahoe, Truckee, and Martis Valley. You can help by volunteering or making a contribution to ensure the success of our grass roots effort. Our coalition of environmental groups is working hard, and together we can replace the politics of sprawl and social inequity with the larger political processes of smart growth and economic justice for all.

Contact David Kean (530)587-7258 or
davidmkean@yahoo.com with comments or questions.

STANDING ROOM ONLY AT SINGLAUB MEETING LAST MONTH

We had a great turnout at our February Conservation meeting: 49 people showed up to meet and talk with TRPA's new Executive Director **John Singlaub** and new Public Affairs Director, **Julie Regan**. There was a lively discussion about the challenges facing TRPA and we look forward to further dialogue as to how we can work together to save Lake Tahoe. Many thanks to all who attended with special appreciation to Sierra Club Regional Staff Director **Carl Zichella** and Sierra Club Community Organizer **Terry Davis** who drove up from Sacramento to be with us.

Lake Level...

Cont. from Page 2

Dramatic evidence also indicates that the Tahoe region experienced two additional substantial droughts far more recently: a 300-year drought that occurred 800 to 1100 years ago, and a 200-year drought that occurred 500 to 700 years ago. Submerged tree stumps in surrounding Sierra lakes supply the principal evidence for these mega-droughts.

Dozens of submerged tree stumps are located up to 300 feet below Donner Lake's current surface level and carbon dating of one stump dates it to 570 years ago. Likewise, Dr. John Kleppe of the University of Nevada, Reno has discovered large trees over 200 years old rooted 120 feet below the current surface of Fallen Leaf Lake. Carbon dating indicates that those trees died simultaneously about 800 years ago. One of these trees is evidently a Jeffrey Pine that is over 90 feet tall with a 96 inch diameter at breast height.

A drought long enough to lower Fallen Leaf Lake's level by 120 feet or more and to enable a tree to root and grow to such a size is a drought of almost unimaginable severity. Similarly, it places the eight-year "droughts" of 1928-35 and 1987-94 in an entirely different perspective. In contrast, a period of near-record precipitation raised Lake Tahoe's surface nearly six feet in just nine months from October 1994 to July 1995, further evidence that the Sierra Nevada can be a habitat of extremes both wet and dry.

For more information please read
"Reconstructing Ancient Avalanches of the
Sierra Nevada Range" by P.R. Caterino at
www.avalanche.org

**Make your membership
count!** 

**Your vote can make the difference
in the Sierra Club Board of
Directors election. Check nominee
bios; if you have questions, e-mail:**
Michael Donahoe:
donahoe@charter.net
or Drusha Mayhue:
drusha_m@yahoo.com.

DUDE, WHERE'S MY LAKE?

By Michael Donahoe, Conservation Co-Chair

More than 50 years ago, my Grandmother used to take the bus from Oakland to South Shore to do a little gambling. Because I sometimes added to her stake from my paper route earnings, I was always keen to find out how she did.

Too often she said, "We didn't win," then she'd give me a little hug. Upon one such occasion, I remember asking her, "How was the lake?" thinking that at least that was some consolation for an empty pocketbook. Her response shocked me: "I don't know," she said. "I didn't see it."

I'm afraid that attitude persists to this day, for both for visitors and full time residents. Oh, I'm not just talking about folks who want to introduce helicopter tours, build new subdivisions or lakefront trophy homes, or bring thousands of motorcyclists into the Basin. Those people clearly don't consider the lake as much more than a profit center.

I'm also talking about you and me and our next door neighbors. We sometimes forget to look at and really see this treasure we are charged with preserving. Fulfilling our responsibility can take some fairly simple, pretty mundane forms that indicate that we do see the Lake and understand what it's going to take to save it. For instance, have you installed your Best Management Practices (BMPs) and checked to make sure they are functioning properly?

Do you make sure that all the water coming off your roof, driveway and decks seeps into the natural filtering process the earth provides so the runoff doesn't leave your property to carry nutrients into streams and the lake?

Have you landscaped your home with native plants that don't need much—or any—fertilizer once they are established?

When you do use fertilizer, are you willing to spend some extra money to buy lake friendly products (usually organic), to use them very sparingly and never near lakes and streams?

If you do use fertilizer, do you make the effort to use only the amount of water necessary to get the nutrients to the plant roots so those nutrients don't wash right off and end up in the lake?

Sometimes seeing the lake means getting involved in larger issues. Like how many buoys and piers there should be allowed, or whether we should have another winter Olympics here, or what targets we should set for Lake Tahoe for the next twenty year Regional Plan.

This kind of seeing might mean writing letters to the editor, or phoning people, or showing up at local and regional forums like County Commissioner meetings, and TRPA Governing Board meetings (held the fourth Wednesday of every month) and TRPA Advisory Planning Commission meetings (held the second Wednesday of every month).

By attending these meetings you are not only thanking those who are officially charged with saving this lake for their time and commitment, but also reminding them to take their job of protecting this national treasure seriously.

You are also invited to join a group of us who get together on the third Thursday of every month to educate ourselves about some of these larger issues and figure out what approaches to take.

For information on the TRPA Governing Board and Advisory Planning Commission meetings, go to www.trpa.org for meeting locations and agenda.

The South Shore Conservation Group meets monthly at 6:30 p.m. at the Fire Station on Elks Point Road Zephyr Cove, NV (Douglas County)

We hope to see you there.

Mark your calendar for our next meeting on April 15.

Contact Michael Donahoe at donahoe@charter.net for more information.

Will you help with LOCAL NEEDS?

Yes, I would like to donate directly to the Tahoe Area Sierra Club Group to help fund:
TASC Newsletters, Environmental Education Materials for the Lake Tahoe Basin,
Preservation of the Martis Valley Watershed

California Environmental Quality Act for Martis Valley Burke Creek Preservation

Other: _____

\$5 \$10 \$15 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$500

Please make checks payable to:
Tahoe Area Sierra Club
PO Box 16936 South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151

Thank You!

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____



by Glenn Polochko, Outings Chairman

Skylandia Hike/Snowshoe — March 28, Sunday

We'll hike Skylandia and Lake Tahoe's shore and experience a special surprise in Tahoe City. The route will take us over public lands, and we'll learn their history, see unusual land formations, birds, and neat vegetation. We may snowshoe, depending on weather. Dress in layers, carry water and a snack. A great family outing! Meet at 1:00 p.m., call leader for place (parking is limited). Skill level: Easy.

Leader: Kathie Hoxsie, 530 583 8115.

Saghen Hills Cross Country Ski — April 3, Saturday

We'll ski over rolling hills to the best lunch spot north of Lake Tahoe. From that site there are easy to moderate down-hills to play on or practice your tele turns. If time permits, we may continue to an overlook of Carpenter Valley or ski back down. Note: There's a full moon that night. Dogs OK with leader approval. Call leader for meeting time and place. Skill level: Intermediate.

Leader: Glenn Polochko (530-587-5906, gpolochko@yahoo.com).

Klondyke Meadows Cross Country Ski — April 10, Saturday

We'll see nice views of the Sierra crest then continue to a beautiful meadow. After lunch we'll explore the area and follow any trails we can find. Dogs OK with leader approval. Call leader for meeting time and place. Distance: 10 miles. Elevation gain: 1,000'. Skill level: Intermediate.

Leader: Glenn Polochko (530-587-5906, gpolochko@yahoo.com).

Martis Peak Cross Country Ski — April 17, Saturday

This trip will start from Brockway Summit and head Northeast through part of the Tahoe Rim Trail and up to Martis Peak. Participation is limited to 8 skiers; participants must be in good shape. Bring the 10 essentials, 3 quarts water, lunch, snacks, and a snow shovel. Call the leader for meeting time and place. Distance: 8 miles. Elevation gain: 1,800'. Skill level: Intermediate.

Leader: Ted Lenzie (916-985-6144 or Mon-Thurs at Clubted@Backpacker.com).

Mount Rose Cross Country Ski. — April 18, Sunday

This trip will start from around Tahoe Meadows and we'll head North through part of the Tahoe Rim Trail and up to Mount Rose summit. Participation is limited to 8 skiers; participants must be in good shape. Bring the 10 essentials, 3 quarts water, lunch, snacks, skis with metal edges, skins and a snow shovel. Call leader for meeting time and place. Participants must be in good shape. Distance: 8 miles. Elevation gain: 2,300'. Skill level: Intermediate

Leader: Ted Lenzie (916-985-6144 or Mon-Thurs Clubted@Backpacker.com).

Firestone & Dollar Hill Hike/Snowshoe — April 24, Saturday
Take a three-hour tour of 85 acres of publicly-owned open space that is currently targeted for development. Learn its history of low impact usage, enjoy lake views and unique features of this easily accessible, forested, mostly flat land, which is a gateway to Tahoe's backcountry. Possible birding. We'll walk, snowshoe or cross-country ski, depending on weather. A great family outing! Meet at 12:45 p.m. at the far end of parking lot at the Watermelon Patch. Elevation gain: None. Skill level: Easy.

Leader: Kathie Hoxsie (530-583-8115).

Point Reyes Hike — May 8, Saturday

This trip will start from Bear Valley, head up Mt Wittenberg, go down to Coast Camp, over to Wildcat Camp, up Fir Top, down into Five Brooks and back to Bear Valley. Participation is limited to 8 hikers; participants must be in excellent shape. Bring the 10 essentials, 3 quarts water, lunch, and snacks. Call leader for meeting time and place. Note: There are both poison oak and stinging nettles in the area. Distance: 22 miles. Elevation gain: 3,200'. Skill level: Very strenuous.

Leader: Ted Lenzie (916-985-6144) Mon-Thurs: Clubted@Backpacker.com).

Boca Lake Mountain Bike — May 15, Saturday

This is an advanced-beginner bike ride for people who are in fairly good shape and have been mountain biking before. We'll ride around Boca Lake and maybe Prosser Lake on dirt roads and some pavement. There are some hills, but nothing technical. We'll see nice views of mountains and lakes. Call leader for meeting time and place. Distance: 15 miles. Elevation gain: 900'. Skill level: Intermediate.

Leader: Glenn Polochko (530-587-5906, gpolochko@yahoo.com).

East Truckee Evening Hike — May 19, Wednesday

We'll hike somewhere in East Truckee, looking for Camis Lilies and other wild flowers. There will be a BBQ pot luck on Sally's porch afterwards. Dogs OK. Call leader for meeting time and place. Distance: 4-6 miles. Elevation gain: 600'. Skill level: Intermediate.

Leader: Glenn Polochko (530-587-5906, gpolochko@yahoo.com).

Co Leader: Sally Lyon (530-582-4943).

Hunter Falls Hike — May 22, Saturday

This is a great hike close to the Nevada border on RT 89. We'll see wildflowers, great rock formations and eat lunch at a nice waterfall, and we might see some beavers. We'll explore the area if time permits. Dogs OK with leader approval. Call leader for meeting time and place. Skill level: Intermediate.

Leader: Glenn Polochko (530-587-5906 gpolochko@yahoo.com).

Marlette Lake/Flume Trail Hike — May 22, Saturday

Hike the first part on the Tahoe Rim Trail to Marlette Lake and then down to the Flume Trail and out at Tunnel Creek above Hidden Beach. This is a somewhat historic hike with good views and easy hiking. Bring a big lunch and plenty of water. Call leader for meeting time and place. Distance: 12 miles. Elevation gain: 4000'. Skill level: Easy.

Leader: Jon Taylor (775-265 2496, jtmtnview@yahoo.com)

Freel Peak and Jobs Sister Hike — May 23, Sunday

Hike up Freel Peak (10881') from a backside Forest Service road and then over to Jobs Sister (10828') then out at High Meadows. Bring plenty of food and water and sturdy boots. Note: This is a required hike for the Traverse of Desolation hike later in the summer. Call leader for meeting time and place. Distance: 14 miles. Elevation gain: 8,000'. Skill level: Strenuous.

Leader: Jon Taylor (775 265 2496, jtmtnview@yahoo.com)





SIERRA
CLUB


FOUNDED 1892

Sierra Club
PO Box 16936
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT No. 121



TAHOE AREA
SIERRA CLUB

 Printed on recycled paper.

Be sure to check the TASC website frequently for updated information on Lake Tahoe Basin issues, outings, meetings, current committee chairs and activities.

Go to: <http://motherlode.sierraclub.org/tahoe>



Lake Tahoe Area Mountains

Hang with Us!

Call our membership chairman
Elizabeth Brady
530-546-7530

for information on activities
and how **YOU** can get involved!

