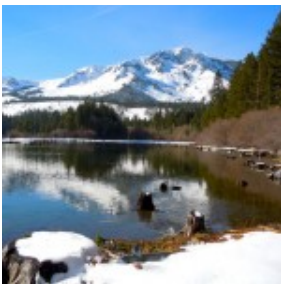


Fallen Leaf Lake contends with liquor, voter fraud issues

By Kathryn Reed

It may not be known for a while who will be operating the store at Fallen Leaf Lake, but it could be decided at the next board meeting if alcohol will be allowed to be consumed this summer.

Controversy swirled last summer that resulted in no alcohol being sold out of the store at the end of the South Shore lake. This is because some of the residents of the enclave believed sales of alcohol would create a dangerous scenario with potentially impaired people driving on the narrow, curvy road.



The politics of Fallen Leaf Lake are nowhere near as tranquil as the water. Photo/Kathryn Reed

In the past, the store operated with a liquor license much like a grocery store – no consumption on the premise. Rob and

Sandy Wirth, who had the concessionaire contract last season, wanted to get a license allowing people to drink beer or wine on site. Then the uproar started. Then they decided not to sell alcohol in any form.

There are those who contend the lack of liquor sales prevented the Wirths from making money. The Wirths have exercised their right to back out of the contract after one year. A settlement agreement has been tentatively reached, with the final details being worked out. Until it's completed, the document is not for public review.

The Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District is accepting applications until Feb. 28 from prospective concessionaires for the upcoming season.

At the March meeting it's likely an item for discussion and possible action regarding liquor licenses will be on the agenda.

At the board's Feb. 12 meeting, President Tom Bacchetti told those in attendance he has been told a handful of residents have hired an attorney to investigate voter fraud. This would affect most of the board members. Bacchetti said it was referred to the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office, which in turn referred it to the Secretary of State's Office.

Shannan Velayas with the fraud division of the Secretary of State's Office told *Lake Tahoe News* her department cannot reveal if an investigation is going on, much like police don't disclose when an entity is being investigated.

Velayas said anytime sufficient evidence of wrongdoing is found, that material is handed over to law enforcement, such as a district attorney. The DA has the ability to prosecute people, not the Secretary of State's office.

At issue at Fallen Leaf Lake is who is allowed to vote in elections and who can be elected.