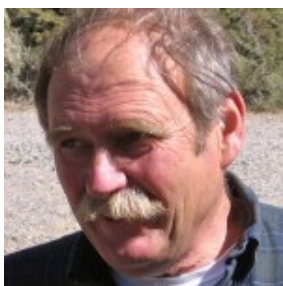


Opinion: Collaboration needed in Tahoe basin, not divisive letters

To the community,

Having been a volunteer firefighter (almost 30 years), EMT (four years) and reserve deputy sheriff (12 years) in Alpine County, been the Alpine County Board of Supervisor's rep on our Fire Safe Council, plus one or two other activities, I personally feel Mr. [Carl] Ribaud's letter was, although I'm sure heartfelt, just a cheap shot.

After this last Lahontan board meeting I had coffee with Nancy Gibson, USFS supervisor, and told her of our experience on the Alpine County Board of Supervisors. We have worked collaboratively with the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest on a NEPA-CEQA document regarding the Hawkins Peak Communications project, certainly not to the scale of the Lake Tahoe Fuels Project, the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest is from Region 4, out of Ogden, Utah, with the forest operated out of Sparks and the Carson Ranger District, out of Carson City, Nevada.



Don Jardine

There was a bit of a learning curve on each side, but working together, we both saw all issues addressed, each in its own manner and this project is basically completed.

On a personal note, if Region 4 can make it happen, collaboratively, can Region 5, out of San Francisco, do it?

As I talked with Nancy Gibson, I imparted that we each have a role to play, regarding NEPA-CEQA, particularly in the Lake Tahoe Basin. There is a higher standard. But working together, we can meet these standards. We may or may not have another Angora Fire, I pray not, but working together we can reduce the public safety issues.

This does not even bring up the perfectly valid points brought up by the U.S. EPA rep at our meeting.

I feel Mr. Ribaubo's letter was destructive and was no help as I talked with my friends at CalFire, Lake Valley Fire Protection District, our friends and cooperators with USFS, California State Parks and others about collaboration.

I feel all of the involved agencies and public have a continued opportunity to work together.

I'm sorry, his letter really burns me. We have many issues that we are required to address. Many thanks to all.

Don Jardine, chairman Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board