

# Opinion: Fed up with 40 years of hypocrisy in Tahoe

By David Triano

I moved to South Lake Tahoe as an 8-year-old in 1973. After college and eight years of professional pursuits, I chose my hometown of South Lake Tahoe as the place to raise my two sons. Simply put, I love Lake Tahoe.

Over the years, I have seen the many special interest groups clamoring for attention in our town. I was here when the TRPA initiated their building moratorium, when they fined us for cutting down trees on our own land, and other blunders. I was here to see our once-successful airport be run into the ground by a city council hungry for revenue.

Heck, I was even here to see a nascent “domestic terrorist” blow up Harveys.

I am probably one of the most “environmentally appreciative” and careful residents of this town. I do my best to be a good steward of this area when I am hiking with our Boy Scout troop (I am an assistant Scout master), mountain biking the ascent of Oneidas, or enjoying our beaches. As I said, I love Lake Tahoe.

And so it is that I am stepping out on a limb, so to speak, to alert our community to a situation of grave environmental impact that has continued since I was a boy. In 1974, my parents Ron and Carolyn purchased Lot 2, TK1 in the Tahoe Keys area. The lot is on Dover Drive, a tiny side road off of Tahoe Keys Boulevard. It backs up to a beautiful designated wildfowl refuge, the meadow on the west side of the Upper Truckee River. The whole area is also designated a 10-year flood plain, which means that when water levels are high from spring runoff, the meadow floods from the Truckee, and the contents

of the meadow empty directly into the lake.

The only downside to my parent's lot was that at the time (1974), Dover Drive was also the access road to a long dirt road leading to the Tahoe Keys Property Owners Maintenance Yard. My parents were assured that this was a temporary situation, and that the yard would be phased out "soon".

For almost 40 years now, our family has tolerated 100 passages of this dirt road each day, and many days quite a few more, I have counted over 250 passages in one day. The vehicles using this silt road range from passenger cars speeding along as high as 30 mph to huge semi-trucks pulling double trailers, full size loaders, and every type of utility truck. Each one of them trails a huge column of dust and silt. Are you beginning to see the issue here?

We are all encouraged to "do your BMPs", park on paved lots only so as not to disturb the dust, practice "leave no trace" ethics in virtually every aspect of our lives here in Lake Tahoe and so many other small things, all in the push to maintain a certain clarity level in the lake, while the Tahoe Keys Property Owners Maintenance Yard has produced massive dust and silt that goes directly into a designated 10-year flood plain, a wildfowl refuge. In the winter, all runoff from the dirt road goes directly into the meadow. Their yard contains a drainage culvert that drains right into this environmentally sensitive area, and for 40 years the TKPOA has "enlarged" their yard by dumping dirt, yard waste, and other detritus on the fringes of the yard. I remember what the yard was like when I was a kid, and to see how big it is it now is quite shocking. For 40 years, various general managers at the TKPOA have promised my parents that the road would be paved, that the yard would be closed, all statements that have proved to be lies.

Here's where some really distasteful hypocrisy comes into view: The land the yard and its silt access road are on are

owned by the California Tahoe Conservancy. They gave the TKPOA a 99-year lease, and for decades have turned a blind eye to the pollution occurring on their own property. What exactly are they conserving?

Also disgusting is the lack of attention to this yard by the TRPA and Lahontan. You see, the practices of the TKPOA yard grossly violate TRPA and Lahontan codes and regulations, and for decades both organizations have also ignored this fact and allowed the TKPOA yard to keep pumping pollution into our lake. My family has complained to all of the organizations I have listed for decades, with no substantive action. The issue always gets shuffled under the table, the workers in the yard are told to slow down, or (as they have done in the last day) they spread stone gravel on the silt road. I guess this is supposed to be their BMPs. In three weeks the gravel will have all sublimated into the silt and migrated into the meadow. The gravel does little to mitigate the billowing clouds of silt, and I have lots of video and still photography that document this fact. I will soon upload the videos to YouTube, so look for "Tahoe Gross Polluter" to judge for yourself.

CTC, TRPA, and Lahontan: You are the worst kind of hypocrites, and you are not enforcing the regulations that your existence mandates.

I would invite anyone in the community out to view this circus of environmental destruction. Come on by Dover Drive, have a lemonade with me (if you can tolerate the dust) and watch how our wonderful watchdog organizations ignore their mandates. They do this while claiming to be working for the health of the lake. Pure environmental hypocrisy is the result of their existence. My latest efforts to contact the TRPA have gone without a return call. The only organizations that have stepped forward to see this travesty for what it is are the Sierra Club and the League to Save Lake Tahoe, who I am now actively engaged with to fight for this wholesale pollution to finally end.

I am a resident of South Lake Tahoe who loves his community. I love the beauty that surrounds us. I am a man who believes that I can best determine my own fate and way in the world, without government intervention. I will not tolerate the blatant abuse of my childhood home by local agencies and the TKPOA any longer.