

Opinion: Developing raw land would harm North Shore

By Ann Nichols

East West Partners, you remember them, the Colorado developers that bought Truckee when no one was looking? Think Ritz Carlton, Old Greenwood and the Grey's Crossing bankruptcies filed in 2010.

Just when you thought it was safe, now in partnership with Sierra Pacific Industries who owns the land, they are back currently calling themselves Crew. An application has been filed with Placer County to begin the process to build clustered development (whatever that means) on top of the ridge on 112 acres inside the Lake Tahoe Basin. It's called the Martis Valley West project. You know Highway 267 at the top of Brockway Summit? Take a left on Mt. Watson Road (aka Fiberboard Freeway), go in about a mile and you are there. The development will spill over the ridge into Martis Valley with a total of 760 units and 6.6 acres of commercial.

Currently the acreage is zoned forest, but East West wants to change that zoning to allow residential development. They aren't saying how many units will be inside the basin. We've heard 200. How much land will be covered, how many trees will be cut down, how much commercial will be located there or how tall the buildings will be? East West says they will give us the details at a later date, but they want the zoning changed now. Wrong. Tahoe deserves a standalone detailed application first.

This expansion of the urban boundary at Tahoe could be allowed thanks to TRPA's Regional Plan update. Remember TRPA's no growth guarantees? The justification is a conservation easement on 6,000 acres outside the Lake Tahoe Basin on the

east side of Highway 267. I guess if you save land in New York City you get to build at Tahoe. Talk about a dangerous precedent?

In 2011, East West Partners announced a partnership with KSL Capital Partners, the owners of Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows. We can certainly look forward to more bad ideas in the future unless we stop this now. We only have until April 28 to comment on the Notice of Preparation for the environmental report. There will be other opportunities to comment and save an important North Shore recreation area between Kings Beach and Tahoe City. Save Mt. Watson Road. Let's get on it.

Check it out the project online.

Here is evidence of my previous statements.

Ann Nichols is president of the North Tahoe Preservation Alliance, a 44-year resident and California-Nevada Realtor.