

Opinion: Score 1 for the state, -13 for homeowner

By Kathryn Reed

Thirteen inches. That's how far our shed extends into the California Tahoe Conservancy lot. Altogether, it's about 9 square feet.

We have to remove it, or cut it back. That was the conclusion of what has now become more than a yearlong dispute with the state.



Shawn Butler with the California Tahoe Conservancy goes over the lot encroachment diagram. Photos/Kathryn Reed

A year ago this month, a rude CTC employee engaged me about the property line, which led to me to write a nasty column and to speak before the board.

At the time we had been here for more than 10 years and there had never been an issue. In fact, the shed in question came with the house. It looks a lot older than 11 years. Conservancy employees had been at their property multiple times. Not once was the property line mentioned.

In the past year a surveyor came out and marked the property line. No dispute now. The official boundary survey map we were given last week shows the stepping-stones going from the back gate to the shed are also on state property. (I removed those last weekend.)

While Shawn Butler, program supervisor of the land management program for CTC, was kind and professional, there was no way he was going to give us 13 inches.

“We want to be consistent with encroachments,” he said as he walked the property. Joining us was Tom Davis, the South Lake Tahoe city councilman who is on the CTC board.

Butler said the Conservancy wants to work with us and would help to remove the shed. We may take them up on that offer.

We’re researching whether it makes more sense to reconfigure the existing shed, buy a new one or some other option.



Wild wood rose abutting and taller than a 6-foot fence.

I need to start getting my wood split and stacked for next winter, so the decision will come soon.

What I’m left with, though, is feeling screwed. Where was our real estate agent? Shouldn’t he have known the property line?

Did the previous owners know they had gone over the property line and didn't disclose it? Why does the CTC care about this now?

It's not that the shed is great. In fact, it's pretty crappy. But it still does its job to keep our primary heat source dry until we need it.

Still to be resolved is who owns a large pine tree that seems to be in the middle of the property line. Butler said the forester from his agency would come take a look.

Another thing that needs to be done is cutting back all the wood rose that is growing against our fence. According to the South Lake Tahoe Fire Department, it's a fire hazard. Some of these wild roses are more than 6-feet-tall.

And instead of immediately saying CTC would remove it, Butler said the forester likes this plant and would have to look at it. Davis took a look around and couldn't believe how thick it is.

I'm not disputing the shed is on CTC property. But at the end of the day I'm still left scratching my head. It seems like that overgrown state lot that looks like a fire hazard should be more of a priority. But what do I know? Today, is only the seventh anniversary of the Angora Fire.