

Vacation rental water leak allowed to flow



It took more than a week for South Tahoe PUD to shut the water off at a vacation rental in El Dorado County that had a leak. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

All weekend water ran from a South Shore vacation home rental into the gutter and down a storm drain – with the knowledge of the rental agency and water company.

South Tahoe PUD crews determined the leak at the Muskwaki Drive house in the unincorporated area of El Dorado County was on the customer's side of the meter – meaning it's the owner's responsibility to fix it, not the district's.

“Why we didn't turn the water off to the vacation rental is

what we understood from the rental company is they couldn't relocate the tenants," Richard Solbrig, general manager of STPUD, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We would be putting people out of town if we insisted on turning the water off. Based on the leak it wasn't going to affect our conservation target."

Solbrig described the leak as minor, not causing erosion issues, and not posing a health and safety concern.

When asked if a full-time resident would be allowed to let a leak go all weekend, Solbrig paused.

"It's a judgment call," he said.

The person would likely get a written warning for wasting water and might be allowed to wait until Monday to fix the problem to avoid the cost of a plumber on a weekend. STPUD has no written policy about when non-serious leaks merit the water being shut off.

However, the case in the county wasn't just about this weekend.

A neighbor said on July 19 he called the leak into the Tahoe Keys Resort – the rental agency. He said South Tahoe PUD crews came out various times during the week.

"So it has soaked through the slope, draining into the gutter and also has gone under the gutter and street and is coming up in the street in a crack," the neighbor, who didn't want to be identified, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

As of 5:20pm July 27, the neighbor said, "It looks like it has the last several afternoons, where the water in the street dries, but the water continues to flow in the gutter."

Tahoe Keys Resort said no one was available to talk about the issue and would not take a message for a manager to call back.

Solbrig said the water was turned off July 27 by his

employees. STPUD will be in the loop about when the leak is fixed because at some point the water company will be asked to restore service.