

Opinion: Don't forget lessons from Angora Fire

By Ted Gaines

This Sunday marks the 11th anniversary of the devastating Angora Fire.



Ted Gaines

I will never forget the severity of what I saw 11 years ago when I toured the wreckage left behind from this destructive fire. The community has done a remarkable job of picking up the pieces and rebuilding their homes and the Tahoe regional economy. But residents and visitors can never be too vigilant. Tahoe is still at extreme risk for catastrophic wildfire and we need to take every reasonable measure to keep this area safe.

The Angora Fire scorched about 3,100 acres and destroyed 254 homes, costing many tens of millions in damages and in emergency response costs. Tahoe's conditions in June 2007 – steep canyons, ample fuel, dry years when the area received only 29 percent of normal precipitation, high winds – were a recipe for forest fire disaster. While this year's conditions are different in that the area has received more precipitation, the new vegetation growth in combination with hot summer days can lead to a dangerous fire season.

We must continue to implement the recommendations made by the

bi-state Blue Ribbon Fire Commission, which was formed in the wake of the fire by the governors of California and Nevada, aimed at strengthening the region's ability to prevent and respond to fire catastrophes. I will continue to do everything in my power to help make the region safer.

I encourage residents to do their part for fire safety by exercising extreme caution with cigarettes, campfires, tools, engines or anything else that could possibly spark or otherwise cause a fire – which is how the Angora Fire began.

State Sen. Ted Gaines represents the 1st Senate District, which includes all or parts of Alpine, El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, Shasta, Sierra and Siskiyou counties.