

Happy 2021 to our Fallen Leaf Community. We hope our Winter 2020-2021 newsletter finds you and your family well.



Many people fled their hometowns to come to the Tahoe Basin during the Spring, Summer, and deep into the Fall of 2020. With air travel restricted and California beaches and parks closed, people descended upon the Tahoe Basin looking for places to go. The overflow in the entire Basin was tremendous. Many behaved as if rules and regulations were not for them and they could do whatever they wanted, wherever they pleased. Some went into the backcountry without permits, camped illegally overnight at Lily Lake and along Fallen Leaf Rd, started prohibited camp fires, and many, many left trash behind. What the coming summer will bring remains to be seen, but all sources expect the numbers of visitors in the Tahoe Basin to be greater than what we saw in 2021. Our vigilance regarding private property and public spaces within our community falls

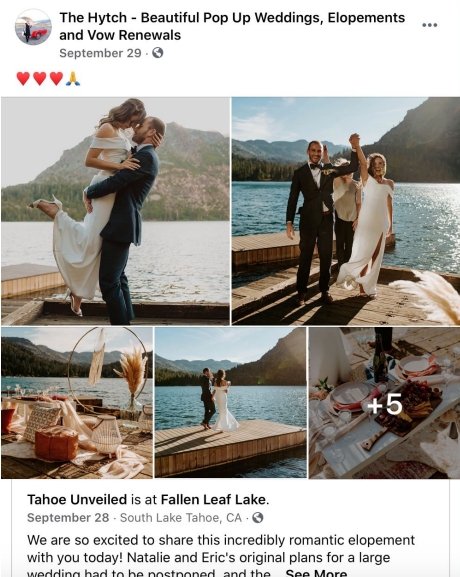
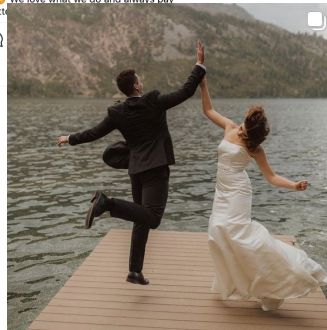
to all of us residents. As we brace for the future, we thank those of you who were diligent in picking up after others and for tolerating the inordinate traffic, poorly and/or illegally parked vehicles, and the unprecedented activity within the Fallen Leaf area last summer.

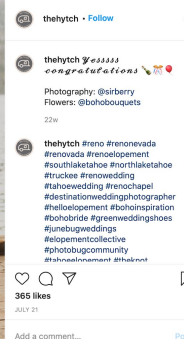
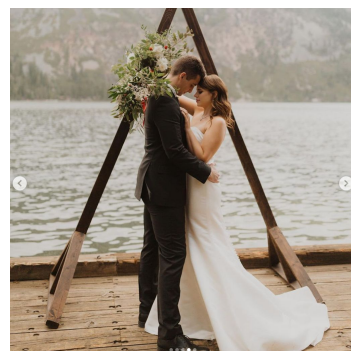
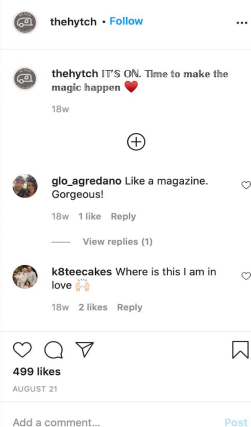
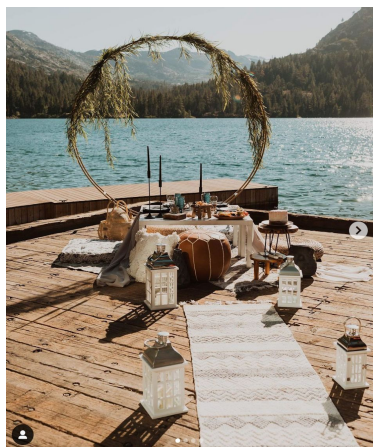
On that note, we have several important items to share with you on the pages of this newsletter...

[Small Weddings Conducted Illegally on Private Property by a Reno Boutique Event Planner](#)

This past year, a number of small weddings were conducted on private properties along Fallen Leaf Road. Weddings were also orchestrated on the beachfront at the Store and Marina in the fall, as well as at Lower Glen Alpine Falls. As you can see these events were complete with props, blankets, flowers, chairs, tables and candles, meals and beverages, a small staff, and so on. Professional photographers were hired to document these events and pictures were posted at www.TheHytch.com, and on myriad social media pages. Service providers, including caterers, cake bakers, hairdressers, and photographers were tagged on social media, and some disclosed the Fallen Leaf location of the weddings. We notified these property owners and none of these business entities had permission for such use. The owners have seen these websites and photographs and have also communicated with these entrepreneurs. With the homeowners' permission and on behalf of our community, our Board has also written a letter notifying these entities that we are aware of their trespass and that their use and advertising of private property may be prosecuted by the owners if this behavior continues.

While we hope that these steps will put an end to this behavior, **PLEASE be aware and contact the Sheriff** if you witness anything out of the ordinary occurring on a community member's property -- at any time of the year





These are a sampling of the photos we found on social media.

USFS Multi-Use Trail Plans in the Fallen Leaf Basin

As many of you may know, the US Forest Service (USFS) continues to develop new multi-use trails throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin (LTB), including within the Fallen Leaf Basin (FLB). Since the USFS usually does not have the funds required to support their projects the agency relies upon help from Volunteer Service Agreements (VSAs) with local special interest organizations such as the Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association (TAMBA). Often with these projects, the required infrastructure elements are an afterthought. For example, the most recent USFS development project in the FLB is a “mixed use” trail, under construction by TAMBA, the trail traverses from Angora along the face of the mountains at the south end of Fallen Leaf Lake. The trail terminates at the Lily Lake parking lot. The trail is deemed very technical, for use by very experienced mountain bikers, mixing hikers with some aggressive mountain biking. This will be an end to the use by hikers who have enjoyed this beautiful trail for decades.

The next phase of USFS trail “improvement” in the FLB is to construct a multi-use trail around the lake. That trail begins at the back end of Stanford Sierra Camp, crosses the “Jumping Rocks”, and continues to (more or less) the Baldwin Cove area where it will pick up with new trails also planned for development between Fallen Leaf and Spring Creek Tract. Efforts are underway by small groups of residents around the lake to force the USFS to properly address the many serious problems their projects are generating such as illegal camping, garbage and graffiti, overwhelming automobile traffic, the lack of parking, the effect on emergency response, and, of course, the ever-present risk of wildfires.

Our basin is unique: It is already a mix of public uses (campground, trails, federal land open to the public) and private property and USFS leased land with family cabins on it. There are public services at the Store and Marina, a private enterprise at Stanford Sierra Camp, and, at the end of a five-mile road maintained by the county, one of the major gateways to Desolation Wilderness. **The Fallen Leaf Basin is already nearing its environmental capacity.** We residents and homeowners are the only stewards of the land and we desperately need to advocate for ways to manage the rapidly increasing human footprint.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) is the legal entity that provides environmental protection throughout the entire LTB. The USFS must comply with TRPA requirements just like anyone else who has applied to build a deck, dock, cabin, or to cut a large tree from their private property. The mission of the TRPA is to protect the environment and the clarity of the lakes in the entire Lake Tahoe Basin. Projects, even those proposed by the USFS on public lands, must comply with TRPA requirements. Alerting the TRPA that compliance and oversight appear to have been missing - and must be implemented in any trail and public access development

happening within the FLB - is critically important. You are encouraged to point out existing or anticipated concerns by writing to the TRPA directly to Executive Director Joanne Marchetta (jmarchetti@trpa.org), Compliance Officer Steve Sweet (ssweet@trpa.org), as well as to the members of the Governing Board of the TRPA: Shelley Aldean, shellyaldean@gmail.com; Mark Bruce, mbrucetpa@gmail.com; Belinda Faustino, bfaustinos@lanatureforall.org; John Friedrich, jfriedrich@cityofslt.org; AJ Hicks, ajhicjks@Mcdonaldcarano.com; Sue Novasel, hosfive@edcgov.us; Bill Yeats, jvytrpa@gmail.com

Senate Bill to Allow Human-Powered Vehicles in Wilderness Areas

Presently there is a Senate bill (S.1695) in Committee which proposes to lessen the protections of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The goal is to allow mountain biking (referred to as human-powered vehicles) on USFS lands. For us, this would mean human-powered vehicles on trails in Desolation Wilderness. Whether eBikes would also be included in this movement remains to be seen. This bill, proposed by Senator Lee of Utah, has been endorsed by both the Department of the Interior and the USFS. Alerting the TRPA, as well as our senators and state representatives to concerns about this bill is an important step for us as cabin owners and stewards of both the land and waterways in the Fallen Leaf Basin.

A similar bill was introduced previously, and it failed at that time, but we have seen incredible growth in the areas of mountain biking and eBiking, making S.1695 cause for concern today. Organizations such as The Tahoe Fund, Tahoe Rim Trail, TAMBA, and many others in the Tahoe Basin, some with very significant private interest funding behind them, are in collaboration and have made great strides to connect all 72 miles around Lake Tahoe by bike trails. This includes hiking trails, bike paths, and mixed-use trails - which means more bikes on trails. The altruistic notion of reducing traffic by making biking plentiful simply leads to more cars, not fewer. Look at the Highway 89 Corridor Development plan to see what is slated to happen along the Emerald Bay and Camp Richardson corridor, with impact on the North end of Fallen Leaf Lake. Follow the five (5) links below to learn more about these topics and become involved in trying to protect Fallen Leaf Lake from over-tourism and development. There are already plentiful trails suited to mountain biking without opening Desolation Wilderness to more traffic and new uses. **By clicking this link you will be taken to a [Response Form](#). Here you can easily modify a pre-populated response text in order to electronically send comments in opposition to this Senate Bill to your State Senators.** Please share this information with family members and friends that you think would be interested to learn about this proposed change to wilderness areas and who would be inclined to express their concerns.

[Senate Bill Proposing to Allow Bikes in the Wilderness](#)

[Forest Service and Interior Department Endorse Bikes in Wilderness](#)

[Link to Follow Senate Bill s.1695](#)

[Modifiable Response Form to Oppose Senate Bill s.1695](#)

[Highway 89 Corridor Plan Info](#)

Our community needs to become proactive in mitigating the effects of over-tourism - for today, tomorrow, and with our eyes fixed fifty years down the road. Becoming and staying informed is our responsibility. The USFS advises that people on social media should "Follow" the U.S. Forest Service - Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit at <https://www.facebook.com/LakeTahoeUSFS> and <https://twitter.com/LakeTahoeUSFS> to stay abreast of goings on specifically in our neck of the woods.

Other Updates and News....

COVID-19 The pandemic changed the pace of life at Fallen Leaf considerably last summer. Social interactions between residents became minimal, with many people meeting up outside in an attempt to find a new normal. The Fallen Leaf Store and Marina had rules, including requiring masks and only so many people in the store at any one time. We thank Mike and Cindy at the Store and Marina for making operations possible last summer under these very trying circumstances. There will be a new manager at the Store & Marina for the summer of 2021, as The Bassos have given their notice to California Land Management/Recreation Resort Management (CLM/RRM) that they will not be returning to their posts for the season ahead. We will watch and see what unfolds for the summer ahead, with the expectation of the same sort of requirements and operation.

Fires In the Spring Newsletter I mentioned that we expected a hot, dry summer, but I did not expect that we would experience the worst fire season ever. As of October, the Fallen Leaf Fire Department had 12 strike teams out in Northern and Southern California. At Fallen Leaf, we remained incredibly fortunate in spite of multiple arson-set fires and the occasional lightning strike induced spot fire. Thanks to the very quick response of the USFS fire service, CalFire, and, of course, our Fallen Leaf Fire Department, all of these incidents were resolved without significant incident, in spite of the ever-present tinder-dry conditions. Thankfully, the July 4th arsonist was apprehended in the Desolation Wilderness area, as he bounced between Fallen Leaf and Echo Lakes starting fires. It is important to note that with our relatively light winter and early spring thaw in 2020, the first fire detected in our Basin was started in May, making it very clear how dry the forest truly is.

These fires emphasize the importance of maintaining defensible space around your cabins at all times.

Security Though our organization has no security oversight responsibility during the summer months, due to the Pandemic and unusually high numbers of visitors to the Tahoe Basin and Fallen Leaf, in spite of Shelter-in-Place mandates, our Board determined that extending Ron Buck's contract through the month of June was a good investment for the entire community. Ron stayed busy asking day visitors to remove themselves from private docks and kept an eye out in remote locations for interlopers, garbage, and graffiti. He did his best to track activity throughout the areas accessible by Fallen Leaf Road, making this extension well worth our investment.

Once the traditional summer season was behind us and Ron was back on duty as of September 15, we experienced an unfortunate event of human-caused damage to a cabin on Emigrant Road. One afternoon, a Lakeview Corporation resident confronted a man and a woman who were on the Lakeview Corporation private docks and urged them to leave. They had a verbal altercation but did leave the area. Thankfully the homeowner had captured the couple's vehicle license plate information. Unfortunately, the couple returned late that night to locate the cabin of the resident, where they broke in and damaged several fixtures in the bathroom resulting in significant property and water damage. Upon waking the following morning, a neighbor heard running water coming from the uphill cabin and investigated the scene. Ron was contacted, as were the homeowner and the sheriff's office. With the information the property owner was able to provide, describing the individuals from the altercation and turning over their car identification, the perpetrators were easily located by the sheriff.

We need to remember this: Never, ever, get confrontational with strangers. Always be polite and assume that people do not understand they may be trespassing. Leave the situation and call the Sheriff's Department. It is their duty to keep order and control and if necessary arrest people for infractions of the law, and ours is to inform them when help is needed.

Bears and Garbage Issues The bear population has become massive in the Tahoe Basin over the past two decades. This growth does not match available natural food supply. Coupled with human behaviors, bears find plenty of food available outside of overflowing garbage receptacles everywhere, at cars parked at trailheads to wilderness areas, and, of course, in campgrounds, cars, and cabins. Last summer, and of their own volition, the South Tahoe Refuse Company (STRF) donated additional dumpsters in many locations in the Basin, including the Lily Lake parking lot, when the USFS was not responding to exponential garbage issues. As both the population of bears and over-tourism continue to grow, it is important to note that anyone with road access for weekly garbage pickup should consider installing a bear bin *at their cabin*. **Those who spend the summer at the lake, or who actively rent their property, are strongly encouraged to invest in a personal bear bin. STRF will stop their collection trucks on Thursdays at all residences with bear bins installed along Fallen Leaf Road, Price Lane, and the lower part of Emigrant Road.** With curbside pickup from a cabin location, you may also leave yard waste and non-food waste for pick up there (toasters, TVs, mattresses, furniture, lumber, and so on.) These items DO NOT BELONG in the large dumpsters placed around the community, *nor do those items belong left outside of those dumpsters*. Most of the large dumpsters at Fallen Leaf are located on *private property*, which has generously been made available for collection bins intended for use for the disposal of food garbage and general household waste from cabins that *do not* benefit from weekly curbside pickup (which means many Lodge property locations, and all of Glen Alpine, Lily Lake, Stanford Hill, and Upper Emigrant Road.)

The convenience and simplicity of having your own bear bin pays for itself in the very short run. It simplifies your life, saves you time, and it eliminates the need to travel Fallen Leaf Road only to find a full dumpster... Your financial investment is small relative to your benefit. If your cabin is eligible for curbside pickup, *please* research bear bin options. It is not difficult to have one installed, so get in the queue for next summer. **** Under no circumstances is it acceptable to leave garbage outside of a secured bin -- at any time of the year. If you are renting out your cabin this is an essential piece of information to be conveyed to your renters.**

Please dispose of all garbage in a proper manner to avoid unwanted bear activity, even if it means making a trip to the transfer station at 2140 Ruth Ave, near the Y. Our community can arrange for a Fallen Leaf dump weekend, where a larger dumpster would be brought in and yard waste/defensible space trimmings could be disposed of this coming summer. Please let us know if you would take advantage of such an event following a holiday weekend, or over the course of a week in July or early August. We welcome your input at iceturtles@gmail.com, where you will be emailing FLLWSA Board Secretary, Lori Harrenstien.

Other News The Environmental Protection Agency awarded a \$97,000 grant to the U.C. Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center to study microplastics, their movement and type in Lake Tahoe. A better understanding of micro-plastic sources, impacts, and controls will help keep Lake Tahoe a clean, healthy and vibrant ecosystem. Microplastics are ubiquitous in the oceans and pose their own problems and are difficult to eliminate.

Winter Gate Access Update Fallen Leaf Road is closed every winter, with gate access only to residents once the first significant snow falls. Those who use their cabins during the late fall or winter months must plan ahead for off-season access by contacting Ron Buck well in advance of heading to the lake to obtain information of the status of the road and gate. *This can include updated gate combination and/or key information.* Our website www.fllha.org is not “secure”, so we do not publish the gate combination there, though you can find road status and other information posted here. If you have been issued a key or combination and are a known winter user, we will send an email to inform you of changes of these tools for access.

Improvements have been made to the upper gate this winter. The daisy-chained chain link and locks system has been eliminated and replaced by an upgraded locking mechanism. The locks of seven entities sit in seven holes, including five non-resident locks representing the USFS, the El Dorado County Dep’t of Transportation, Liberty Utilities, AT&T, and STPUD, all who need access from time to time and use their own locks. Unlocking and removing any one of the locks will release the system so that the gate can be opened. The swing gate has been raised and fortified so that users no longer have to hoist and lift to open or close it. An instructional video has been posted to our website. Resident key and combination remain unchanged from this fall.

The Fallen Leaf Lake Winter Security Association The function of the Fallen Leaf Lake Winter Security Association is to provide winter surveillance for all cabins except those on the West Side, who have their own Caretaker System. We thank you for your contributions that make this service possible. We endeavor to have representation from the many areas to which we provided surveillance and would welcome a participant from both the Emigrant Road and the Lodge Areas.. At present, the Fallen Leaf Lake Winter Security Association Board, all of whom are volunteers, is:

Ruth Rich, Stanford Hill and South End	President
Lori Harrenstien, Fallen Leaf Road	Secretary
Susie Little, Lily Lake	Outgoing Treasurer
Karl Stauffer, Fallen Leaf Road	President Emeritus
Bob Boyd, Stanford Hill	
Dave Bunnett, Stanford Camp and Stanford Hill	
Amy Isenhardt, Stanford Hill	
Phil Jordan, Fallen Leaf Road	
Wanda Kownacki, Fallen Leaf Road	
Steve Malley, Fallen Leaf Road	
Chad Praul, Glen Alpine	

Ron Buck, our patrolman, resides in the Security House at 1036 Fallen Leaf Road, and can be reached at the landline phone number (530) 541-1222. Ron’s contact information, updates on the status of Fallen Leaf Road and the gates, our newsletters and other communication will also be available on our web site www.fllha.org as we begin to utilize it more fully.

**We and our community thank you for your continued support of
this contribution-based organization!**