



Fallen Leaf Lake Security Newsletter

Spring 2020

**Extended Security Season:** As some of you probably know, much of the South Lake Tahoe recreational areas were closed for part of the last month or two for reasons related to the possible spread of the Coronavirus. This led to increased traffic and use of the Fallen Leaf Lake area, including private docks and parking areas. Ron Buck, who patrols our cabins from October through May reported on this increased activity at our last FLL Winter Security Association Board meeting. At this meeting, the Board made the unanimous decision to continue Ron Buck's employment through the end of June and then to evaluate again whether this extended security patrol should be continued. We all felt that this unprecedented situation called for a longer than normal security patrol period. The benefit far outweighs the cost. If you see Ron when you are at the Lake, please give him a friendly socially-distanced wave as we are all grateful to him for watching out for our cabins!

**News, and words of wisdom from President Emeritus, Karl Stauffer:**

First of all, let me start with a calming note. Whether we have a robust economy with a healthy human population or a depression with a world wide pandemic reminiscent of the plagues of the Middle Ages, the natural forces of the Earth will continue. We will have rain and snow, winds, tides and storms, earthquakes and floods and fires, which will all affect humans and all other species to a greater or lesser degree as they have for the past millennia. The human population has yet another chance to realize their position in the world and try to appreciate it for what it is.

**Fallen Leaf Winter:** The winter at Fallen Leaf Lake was relatively quiet with about average rain and snow in the basin through January. February then was completely dry, which brought out speculations of another drought, but then March and April saw normal precipitation. We ended with an average year with the level of Fallen Leaf Lake just about where we hope it is in the spring. The extra rains of last year kept the reservoirs at about normal levels, but the snowpack is less than 50% of normal. While all is well with the weather in the short term, we will be facing a long, hot, dry summer.

A study recently published in the journal *Science* suggests that the area of the western U.S. is on the cusp of another mega-drought. The study is based on soil moisture as documented in Dendrology, the scientific study of tree ring growth, and suggests that starting in about the year 2,000 we have been developing another mega-drought, such as the four we have recorded over the last 1,200 years. The major causes are natural, such as the *El Niño—La Niña* ocean temperature oscillations, but this time we have added the effects of human behavior on climate change. The average temperature in the Western U.S. has increased two degrees Fahrenheit since the year 2000. Also recently, federal fuel efficiencies have been reduced adding about 1.5 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. There is

evidence that Native American Societies of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries were dislocated and collapsed in large part because of such droughts.

**Brad Wait:** Brad Wait, one of the original owners of the newer houses at the south end of the lake died this winter. He was a long time fixture at Fallen Leaf and lived through the long and complicated process of getting permission for and then building the newer housing complex. Brad was generally quiet, but persuasive, and always tried to be helpful to others at the lake. He will long be missed by the Fallen Leaf Lake community.

**Ava Jean Brumbaum:** Having grown up on Fallen Leaf Lake, her family extends to branches including the Barbers, Elliotts, Lauers, and Pischels. She was a lover of the Arts, particularly the symphony, an avid traveler, and the glue for her large family. She leaves behind a legacy of love for Fallen Leaf and will be sorely missed.

**Coronavirus (CoViD-19) Pandemic:** As I am writing this, the death toll of the Corona virus in the U.S. is in over 98,000, far more than the number of Americans who died in the Vietnam war, and still increasing at a rate that may reach around 150,000 dead later this year. None of us has lived through such a pandemic, and the news is full of information on the status and complications of the disease and the economic effects it is having on the U.S. There are endless analyses of what local, state, and federal entities are, or are not, doing to try to control the disease.

There have been many other pandemics in history, which have caused great harm and taken many lives and from which we have been able to learn some ways of controlling them. The flu of 1918-1921 is estimated to have killed 50,000,000 people world wide. And in the Middle Ages several bubonic plagues, especially that of 1347-1351, killed somewhere between one third to one half of the human population of Europe. Additional plagues occurred in Italy in 1629-1631, in London in 1665-1666, Marseille 1720-1722, and in Yunnan in China in 1853. Those plagues may have been worse psychologically because their cause was unknown, and speculation was rampant and commonly involved religion and guilt and sin among the causes.

The Tahoe Basin has been largely spared of the Coronavirus because of early restrictions of the movement of visitors and relative close checking of the movement of people in the Tahoe Basin. As of this writing I've heard of about 50 positive tests in the basin and no deaths. This may, of course, change rapidly.

The Coronavirus pandemic has affected the Fallen Leaf Area in many ways, which I will try to list here. As the situation may change quickly, my statements may change quickly, too — so please update yourself to remain current.

1. As of May 25, the California side of South Lake Tahoe has had 27 positive CoViD-19 tests; five (5) of those positives presented over the past two weeks; the other 22 positives represent the cumulative number over the two-moth period of shelter-in-place.
2. Per the orders of the Governor Newsom, non-essential access to Lake Tahoe, for tourists and people who do not have a residence or business here, is still not technically permissible. Tourism, however, is in swing here, with hotels on the Nevada side of Lake

Tahoe now open. Hotels and motels are not yet open on the California side of Lake Tahoe.

3. In keeping with (2), vacation rental activity (privately- or agency-managed, VRBO, etc) is not condoned. Fines of \$1,000/day are being levied on both the renter and the owner of any property occupied as a non-essential rental, in both the City and County areas of South Lake Tahoe. There is no information as to when this restriction will be removed, so we recommend that you inquire on this before you rent your cabin at Fallen Leaf.
4. Stanford Sierra Camp cancelled it's 12-week Summer Camp program.
5. The Old Store (Community Building) at Fallen Leaf will remain closed this summer.
6. **The California Land Management (CLM) plans to open the Marina and Store on a delayed schedule, with Mike Basso returning again this season. Be prepared for many changes within the Community Area and know that masks must be worn inside the facility. The CLM plan includes that beach areas will be delineated for social distancing and maximum safety, no one other than boat owners will be permitted on floating docks; an employee will pump all boat gas, which will sometimes entail him or her entering your boat, so please be patient and aware of the considerations requires in order for us to have services at the Lake. To whatever degree they are able to operate safely, the Store will open in the week of June 5-12, and food service may commence in July. Boats with Fallen Leaf tags going to private docks may launch now, in coordination with Mike; all other boats with FL tags can be launched and moored beginning May 29. This is a very fluid situation, and compliance with social distancing and mask-wearing is essential in order for the operation to remain open.**
7. The Fire Department is staffed and will be operational this summer, and assistance through them will be available. Fire Chief Gary Gerren will be at Fallen Leaf this summer and the 911 emergency number will be functioning.
8. As mentioned above, Ron Buck will continue to patrol through June 30, 2020, a date that may be extended again, if the value in this is deemed worthwhile. Ron will return for another full season as our patrolman, with the annual start date of September 15, 2020.
9. **The St. Francis of the Mountains Chapel will not be open this season.** Social distancing in such an intimate space and the identification of volunteers willing and able to perform required cleaning to ensure sanitization pose logistical challenges. There will be ministers in residence at the Manse throughout the summer, which will help to safeguard the Chapel.

**Security Summary:** The winter was relatively calm with little wind and snow damage, although, as usual, a few shutters were blown off. As always, Ron Buck made temporary repairs and notified owners of the condition of their cabins as relevant. Bears have been sighted on Tahoe Mountain Road, but have not caused any damage to property probably because not enough food has been brought in by residents,

There was one human disruption during the late winter. Two males, friends of the owner of a recently purchased cabin on Emigrant Road, brought in guns to that property and practiced target-shooting for several hours. Ron Buck checked on them and did a partial clean-up by collecting several

hundred casings. When notified of the incident the new owner apologized profusely, and promised it would not happen again.

With increasing numbers of homeless migrating to South Lake Tahoe, the incidence of homeless camping, squatting in empty campgrounds, and other displacement solutions has grown significantly. Multiple cooking fires have been extinguished in the woods over this past two months. USFS and local law enforcement are very busy tracking down illegal campsites and responding to small fires, attempting to manage this problem. There have been a number of such illegal campsites found within the closed campground site at Fallen Leaf.

In late April, local students who were arriving to the old Taggart Property, to do a photo shoot for school, encountered two men starting a fire. Two of the students extinguished the fire with dirt while the others chased two men up to a car parked on Fallen Leaf Road. The students provided a description of the car and the men to local authorities. This was not a homeless encampment.

With fire danger expected to be very high this summer, all are asked to be vigilant and aware, and to report anything out of the ordinary. Dispersed camping is not allowed in our area of the Lake Tahoe Basin. All camping is to take place inside a recognized campground, which means that camping and campfires are not allowed outside of dedicated campgrounds.

The function of the Fallen Leaf Lake Security Association is to provide winter security 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. The Fallen Leaf Lake Security Association Board, all of whom are volunteers, is:

Ruth Rich, Stanford Hill and South End:	President
Alexandra Kingzett, Lodge Association	Vice President
Bob Boyd, Stanford Hill:	Secretary
Susie Little, Lily Lake:	Treasurer
Karl Stauffer, Fallen Leaf Road	President Emeritus
Dave Bunnett, Stanford Camp and Stanford Hill	
Lori Harrenstien, Fallen Leaf Road	
Amy Isenhardt, Stanford Hill	
Phil Jordan, Fallen Leaf Road	
Wanda Kownacki, Fallen Leaf Road	
Steve Malley, Fallen Leaf Road	

Ron Buck, our patrolman, resides in the Security House at 1036 Fallen Leaf Road, and can be reached at (530) 541-1222. Please contact any one of us with your comments and suggestions. We appreciate positive comments and will try to improve in accordance with any constructive feedback. Contact Information is on our web site [www.fllha.org](http://www.fllha.org)

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