

Preventing “Monopine” Plastic & Microplastic Pollution at Lake Tahoe

May 11, 2022 presentation to
Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

 <https://tahoetimber.com> > pollution-in-tahoe-microplastics-a-growing-concern

Pollution in Tahoe: Microplastics, a growing concern

For the first time in history, **microplastics** are in **Lake Tahoe**. The Desert Research Institute in Reno recently completed a preliminary study of the **lake** screening for plastics. They are currently not sure how the water has become polluted, as **microplastics** are a relatively new problem.

 <https://www.epa.gov> > newsreleases > us-epa-awards-nearly-100000-address-microplastic-pollu...

U.S. EPA awards nearly \$100,000 to address microplastic pollution in ...

U.S. EPA awards nearly \$100,000 to address **microplastic** pollution in **Lake Tahoe** August 25, 2020

Contact Information Sonam Gill (gill.sonam@epa.gov) 415-972-3380 **LAKE TAHOE** - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has awarded \$97,000 in grants for projects to address **microplastic** pollution in **Lake Tahoe**.

Preventing “Monopine” Plastic & Microplastic Pollution at Lake Tahoe

Alan Miller, PE

HSU Env. Res. Engr.

WQ and Solid Waste Mngt. Emphasis

CA Civil Engineer

+25 yr w/Water Board

+18 yr Supervisor/Regulatory Unit Chief

Why I Am Here

- Retired 2018, for other things, not expecting Verizon Tower on Ski Run, now “approved”
- Still working on behalf of water quality and environment. I’d prefer not to, BUT:
- Felt Compelled to Use My Knowledge to Protect Others, Myself, and our Tahoe Region by holding the Agency personnel Accountable for Malfeasance
- Agency Decision Makers not doing their jobs, ignoring:
 - Laws & Regulations to Protect the Public Trust
 - Science, Water Quality Facts, other Facts
 - Public Interest and Fair Process, Steamrolling

Why We're Here

- I Represent private parties/env groups (Env. Health Trust, Tahoe for Safer Tech) at end of a long administrative Appeal process
- Significant Public Interest, Controversy, > 4000 Public Signatures in Protest
- Federal Lawsuit against TRPA and City SLT Doesn't Involve me or the Water Board as a Litigant; Irrelevant Except as Evidence to you
- Asking your Intervention on behalf of the Lake

Water Quality Issues

- Nov 2021 Discovery (unrecog. by TRPA), Gross Tons of Plastic Wastes from each Monopine Tower blown onto surrounding watershed
- TRPA's Inadequate Response: add Permit Condit. 11, "Best Management Practices" for plastics and twice annual plastic waste "cleanups," with no criteria for compliance or required reporting
- No Findings of Fact to Prevent Offsite Discharges to City drainages, SEZs, Lake Tahoe

Water Board Has Independent Authority with Regard to TRPA

- Must uphold CWC in all respects; Can't delegate authority to TRPA. Verizon has no waiver from you.
- TRPA is Irrelevant in this Matter, EXCEPT:
- TRPA HAS BROUGHT THE PROBLEM of Uncontrolled Plastic Waste Discharges
 - some 20 Approved Monopine Towers; no plastic waste controls; > two decades blighting Tahoe landscapes
 - No Environmental Analysis (repeated unchallenged "Findings Of No Significant Impacts," FONSIIs)
- Water Quality Standards Sacrificed for Scenic Purposes (to attempt to hide non-conforming wireless tower)

Basin Plan Prohibitions

- NO discharge of “Trash” to waters, and lands tributary thereto, Statewide Provisions (2015)
- NO discharge of garbage or other solid waste to lands in the Lake Tahoe Basin (ancient)
- NO discharge of industrial waste within the Lake Tahoe Basin, except in regulated storm water from manufacturing facilities. (ancient)

NO EXEMPTIONS ALLOWED! PREVENTION!

Evidence of Monopine Wastes

- Plastic Needle and Branch Wastes (PVC and toxic additives, incl. Lead, pthalates) Discharged without controls to Land from Existing Monopines Towers at Hepa Dr, Heavenly Ski Area (public lands) for examples, among others
- Evidence of Breakage into Microplastics (video)
- Our April 2022 comments to Water Board and TRPA Records from Appealing Verizon Wireless/Ski Run Approval Are a Sufficient Basis for Actions. Our Request re Verizon is Simple.

1857 Hekpa Dr, El Dorado County



1857 Hekpa Dr, El Dorado County



Heavenly Ski Area (USFS/Vail)



Enforce the California Water Code

Issue Orders to Comply:

- Section 13260: (a) Each of the following persons shall file with the appropriate regional board a report of the discharge, containing the information that may be required by the regional board:
 - (1) A person discharging waste, or proposing to discharge waste, within any region that could affect the quality of the waters of the state, other than into a community sewer system.

Our Basic Requests

- Issue CWC Section 13260 Orders to Guillian Nel (property owner) and Verizon Wireless (lessee) for Ski Run Blvd. monopine tower for proposed plastic waste discharges
- Require investigations and reports at existing Monopine Tower sites in the Tahoe Hydrologic Unit for evidence of source contamination by plastics and microplastics, and plastics additives, in soil, ground water, and surface waters.

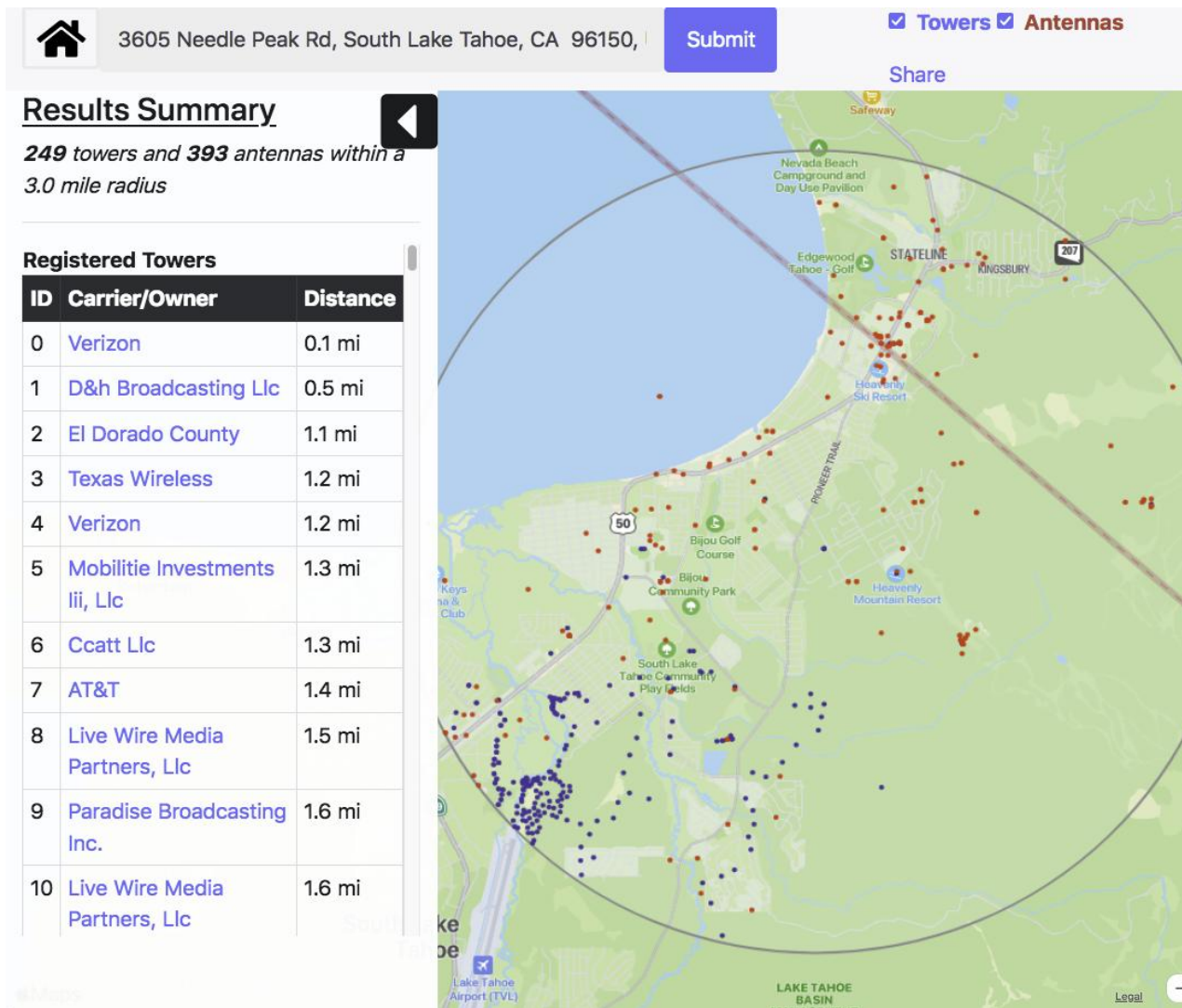
Water Board has Taken No Action

- Requested April 5, April 12, April 29, 2022, each time with more info, and latter with Notice of Intent to petition inaction of Regional Water Board to State Water Board in accordance with applicable timelines.
- We don't want to be adversaries but the Verizon Ski Run monopine is Urgent and other Monopine Sites are Important to address.

TOWERS INCREASE FIRE THREATS

- WILDFIRE FROM TOWER FIRE THREATENS ALL PUBLIC TRUST VALUES (Not the wireless companies, who can absorb the costs, TRPA non-responsive)
- Wireless Densification increases fire threats, more small cell and macro towers and others, No Env. Analysis, everything a FONSI (no Water Board involvement), disallowed Project segmenting, “piecemealing” integrated tower networks
- Numerous Tower Fires reported, many causes & issues
- ALL towers, incl. those that BURN/COLLAPSE, built to Meet local structural /fire Code Requirements; lack of adequate safety factors sets the stage for disaster.
- TAKES ONE TOWER FIRE TO DESTROY WATER QUALITY

Tower Densification, S. Lake Tahoe



Tower Fires

By: Becca Mitchell

Posted at 1:00 PM, Jun 16, 2015 and last updated 1:13 PM, Jun 16, 2015



View Photo Gallery

Newport News, Va. – A cell phone tower in the 5800 block of Marshall Avenue caught on fire Monday around noon, according to the Newport News Fire Department.

Fire Chief Stephen Pincus says a company was working on the tower doing some welding when some insulation to the wires caught on fire.

Crews arrived to find a massive amount of fire at the base of the tower and wires burning along the full length of the tower.

Tower Fires



Evacuations were ordered this morning after a fire at a cell phone tower in Grandview Heights. *The Columbus Dispatch*

Tower Fires

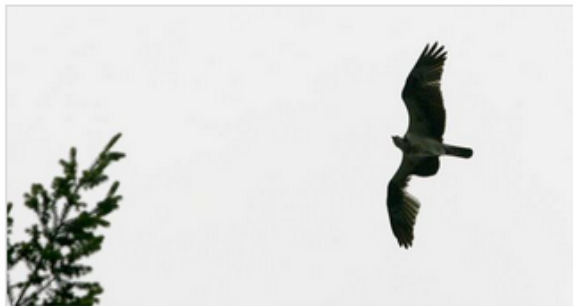


Credit: [Twitter.com/Mz_Erica7801](https://twitter.com/Mz_Erica7801)

Tower Fires

By Tad Sooter

Tuesday, June 21, 2011 9:22pm | NEWS NORTH KITSAP



An osprey

POULSBO — An osprey nest and an electrical malfunction ignited the cell phone tower fire that closed down State Route 305 for 12 hours Monday in the Lemolo area. Kitsap County Deputy Fire Marshal Tina Turner said an electrical malfunction at a lighted beacon on top of the 150-foot tower caught the bird's nest on fire before 4 a.m. Monday. Turner said the birds likely damaged the beacon or its 110-volt power wire while building their nest, contributing to the fire.

Tower Collapse and Fire

BREAKING NEWS: Cell Tower Catches Fire and Collapses at High School in Chula Vista, CA

"The light caught fire at about 7:30 p.m. outside of Otay Ranch High School. The tower collapsed onto the bleachers and rubberized track, damaging the facility but no injuries were reported, according to the Chula Vista Fire Department."

Read the full news story [here](#).



Monopine Tower Fires are Toxic

- Burned PVC plastic contaminates air, soil, groundwater, surface waters (Lake Tahoe and tributaries) with persistent organic pollutants (POPs), highly toxic PCBs, dioxins, etc.
- Burning PVC gives off Toxic Chlorine Gas and POPs (residues redeposit on land, in waters)
- Monopine Tower sites may become Hazardous Waste sites if burned; no site tracking by Water Board. (Another reason to request reports.)

I AM STANDING UP FOR LOVE

- Love for my friend and neighbor and her Family, threatened by the Verizon tower and the egregious approvals by City SLT and TRPA;
- Love for the Community I've made my Home;
- Love for the Region and its Natural Qualities;
- Love for the Law, Science, Truth and Justice;
- Love for the Planet's Natural Systems which we are Destroying with Wireless Radiation and Plastic Wastes, Computer and Cell Phone E-Waste, Especially. There are safer alternatives.

We Urge the Water Board to Act

Fulfill your Legislative charge with regard to unregulated monopine plastic wastes:

- Order compliance by Verizon without further delay. Prevent plastics pollution and nuisance.
- Investigate water quality impacts from existing monopine facilities, timely and methodically.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ATTENTION!

ANY QUESTIONS?