

In The Loop

Gathering Steam!



The June Lake Advocates Newsletter

Volume 1, No. 2

September, 2004

Recent Significant Events:

Board of Supervisors Meeting, 8/16/04

The June Lake Chamber of Commerce (COC) presented a position paper to the Mono County Board of Supervisors stating that the COC supports development within the June Lake Area Plan 2010 guidelines. The document contains signatures representing 17 local business COC members. Several Members of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) have also stated publicly the same position. –

Intrawest Loses Bid to Expand Copper Mountain Ski Area

The Intrawest expansion of Copper Mountain, Colorado, which was to add 1,155 residential units and 150,000 sq ft of commercial space, was denied in July 2004, after three years of planning.

Sources: *Summit Daily News, Colorado 7/16/04*, <http://www.summitdaily.com/apps/pbcs.dll?article?Aid=/200407160/news/107160012&t...>

Snowmass Project Downsized, But is Going to Court

Aspen Times reported that Citizens for Responsible Growth (CRG) were able to obtain size compromises; however, they lost the initiative to restrict height and density variations by 54% to 46% vote. The CRG is now filing a referendum. Jeff Tippett, chairman of the CRG, which has opposed the project's size from the beginning, urged citizens to raise hell, speak at meetings, write letters, and use their right of recall, initiative, and referendum.

Source: *The Aspen Times*; by Steve Benson, August 12, 2004 <http://www.aspentimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20040812/news/108120032&te..>

Intrawest Selling Stake in 9 Resort Villages

Intrawest announced on August 16, 2004 the sale of a majority interest in its commercial properties at nine resorts to a real estate investment trust -- CNL of Florida. Affected properties are at Copper Mountain, Colorado, Whistler, B.C., Sandestin Golf, Fla., Squaw Valley, Cal., Mammoth Mountain, Cal.,

Lake Las Vegas, Nev., Blue Mountain, Ont., Snowshoe Mountain, Va. and Stratton, Vt.

According to the Mammoth Times, this sale does not affect the ownership of the Mammoth Mountain Ski area operations.

Normally when corporations are negotiating transactions of this nature, new ventures and significant expenditures are put on hold. Details of this business transaction are scheduled to be worked out in December 2004.

Rodeo Grounds Development Status

On June 3, 2004, the Mono Planning Department presented Intrawest with a list of approved consultants for preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and the amount of their bids. To date no response has been received.

Want to Get Involved?

Do you want to get involved? Help the community? Be informed about local issues? Contact us at jlamembers@cs.com. We also welcome any ideas that may help the JLA achieve their mission.

Membership/Fund Raising:

Our membership continues to increase as more people hear about our cause, which is an indication of how serious our community is concerning the potential Rodeo Grounds development. To date we have 374 members, which is an increase of 69 from our last newsletter.

June Lake Advocates' Mission Statement:

To ensure that the community of the June Lake Loop develops into a moderately-sized year-round community that preserves the existing natural environment, mountain lifestyle and ambience of the area. This will be accomplished in accordance with the wishes of the members, property owners, residents and businesses and in conformity with Mono County General Plan and June Lake Area Plan (JLAP) in existence at the time of the formation of the June Lake Advocates.

June Lake Advocates State Their Case?

“We don’t want to be like Mammoth!”

The following is reprinted here with the permission of the Mammoth Times:

Wednesday, August 11, 2004 11:12 AM

By Wally Hofmann, Managing Editor

It's a good thing the June Lake fire marshal stayed home from the Citizen's Advisory Council (CAC) meeting last week. If these anti-development meetings get any more people they're going to have to start building bigger places to meet.

“We don’t want to be like Mammoth,” was the chorus from the June Lake Community Center. The lyrics would have received a standing ovation, but that half the audience was already standing in the back.

“We’re not tree-huggers, NIMBYs, or anti-development whackos,” said Scott Davis, president and/or board member of the June Lake Advocates (JLA). “We want development done in an environmentally-sensitive manner and a development that is consistent with the General Plan and the community.”

Davis was making a 10-minute presentation that laid out the position of the local advocates who said they represented 400-plus June Lake residents who are demanding compliance with June Lake's Area Plan with Intrawest's “Rodeo Grounds Specific Plans” to build a 900-unit, 90-acre resort across from June Lake Mountain Area. The project includes single-family units, duplexes, fourplexes, and the option for secondary, or “mother-in-law” units. In addition, the project could include up to 50,000 square feet of commercial space and a gondola crossing Hwy 158. The most contentious topic is the potential of 90-foot structures and a claimed density of 2,610 people.

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Snowmaking

In Maine, Sunday River's snowmaking guns use up to 9,000 gallons of water per minute. That means that if snow blowers are used 8 hours per day, they will use 129,600,000 gallons per month or the equivalent of 12,960 home allotments at 10,000 gallons per month. According to the past several years of DWP reports, water content of average snow packs is less than 50%, which means that the majority of blown snow evaporates and does not go back into the water table.

Source: *Downhill Slide* by Hal Clifford

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***Our sign will read,
"JuneLakeAdvocates.org,
Preserving the Loop."***

June Lake Advocates Adopt A Highway!

CalTrans has approved the stretch of the June Lake Loop starting at the north junction and extending on Highway 158 for two miles.

Our sign will read, "JuneLakeAdvocates.org, Preserving the Loop."

Monthly Calendar of Mono County and June Lake Meetings

Body	Day/Time	Place
Mono County Board of Supervisors	First three Tuesdays, 10 a.m.	Courthouse, Bridgeport
Mono Co. Planning Commission	Second Thursday, 10 a.m.	Courthouse, Bridgeport
June Lake Citizens Advisory Comm.	First Tuesday, 7 p.m.	June Lake Community Building
June Lake Fire Commission	Second Tuesday, 7 p.m.	June Lake Fire Station
June Lake Public Utility District	Second Wednesday, 7 p.m.	June Lake Fire Station
June Lake Chamber of Commerce	Second Wednesday, 9 a.m.	Varies: call 648-7584

Outreach

We have recently written concerned letters to Congressman Buck McKeon, Senator Boxer and Governor Schwarzenegger, and if you have strong opinions, we encourage you to write public officials.

We are currently considering various methods of reaching the thousands of Southern Californians who visit the June Lake Loop and may have strong concerns about what may be happening to their vacation area.

WRITE YOUR COUNTY SUPERVISORS

Members wanting to write our county supervisors have requested their addresses. Handwritten letters are known to have the greatest impact on county officials, followed by typed letters, and then email. The addresses are (Hap Hazard is a supervisor-elect, and Vikki Magee-Bauer is our district supervisor-elect; Joann Ronci is our current district supervisor):

Last Name	First Name	Email Address	PO Box	City	State	ZIP
Cecil	John	jcecil@mono.ca.gov	PO Box 654	Bridgeport	CA	93517
Farnetti	Tom	tfarnetti@mono.ca.gov	PO Box 1237	Mammoth Lakes	CA	93546
Hunt	Byng	bhunt@mono.ca.gov	PO Box 2648	Mammoth Lakes	CA	93546
Pipersky	Mary	mpipersky@mono.ca.gov	PO Box 8474	Mammoth Lakes	CA	93546
Ronci	Joann	jronci@mono.ca.gov	PO Box 580	June Lake	CA	93529
Hazard	Hap	hhazard@mono.ca.gov	PO Box 554	Mammoth Lakes	CA	93546
Magee-Bauer	Vikki	vmageebauer@mono.ca.gov	PO Box 25	June Lake	CA	93529

Downhill Slide

By Hal Clifford is now available

The JLA obtained a number of copies of Hal Clifford's *Downhill Slide* at cost, and is offering them to members at the retail price of \$15.95. The difference between cost and retail, less shipping, will be a donation to the JLA. You can reserve a copy by contacting us at our email or PO Box address.

This is a great book that explains how the three largest resort developers operate including Intrawest. You will be shocked!

"A passionately argued cry for skiers to take back their sport from the 'profit-is-everything' corporations and reunite ski towns with their souls." –Chicago Times •

Current Board of Directors/Officers:

Scott Davis – President/Chairman:
Retired; former Chief Financial Officer for four successful technology companies in Southern California.

Ricky Graham – Board Member:
Local contractor and long-time resident of June Lake

Craig Meinhard – Board Member:
Building contractor and June Lake resident

Blake Sibra – Board Member:
Local real estate broker, 25- year June Lake resident

Igor Vorobyoff – Board Member
29-year resident of June Lake with an advanced degree in ecology

Dorothy Burdette – Secretary

Jean Dillingham – Treasurer

Mary Meinhard – Legal

Lee Vorobyoff -- Membership

Mammoth Starts Advocate Group

A watchdog group called Advocates for Mammoth is being formed in Mammoth Lakes. This group, similar to June Lake Advocates, will monitor the dizzying pace of urban development in Mammoth. For more information contact Owen Maloy (760-934-9511, owen.maloy@verizon.net) or John Walter (760-934-1767, walter@qnet.com).

June Lake Public Utility District & Sewer Rate Increase/Water Meters

Sewer Rate Increase:

Playing catch-up after many years of no sewer rate increases, the PUD Board authorized a 14% increase in monthly rates. The PUD states that the increase is necessary to cover higher operating, maintenance and repair costs of the 1972 system. Higher standards, State legislation and the State's budget crisis have also depleted tax revenues. Rates are forecasted to increase for the next several years.

Water Meters:

The PUD started its 5-year process of installing water meters within the Loop. Users exceeding 10,000 gallons usage per month will pay charges above the base rate. Property owners are encouraged to conserve water whenever possible. The PUD stated that the level of June Lake is dropping 2/10 of an inch per day, and since meters have been installed, the PUD was able to wait until later in the summer to begin using the lake as a water source. The PUD is, however, still concerned about the rate and amount of water level decline. The water level is currently down five or six feet from normal. The causes for the drop in level are unknown to the PUD.

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"We don't want to be like Mammoth,"

The project is the vision of Intrawest, developers of The Village at Mammoth Lakes.

Representatives of JLA say they sent out 900 surveys asking June Lake homeowners, basically: Do you agree with Intrawest's plans for development in June Lake?

The JLA received back about 435 replies. About 400 rejected Intrawest's plans, although it's not clear what details the respondents were rejecting. Other than heights and densities, specifics of the plan were not provided to respondents. However, it was clear from the survey's numbers, and Davis' comments followed by rounds of supportive applause, that he represents a collection of concerns about how development in June Lake could change the face of life in an undesirable way.

Danny Roberts, the June Lake CAC chairman for more than a decade, reminded the audience that Intrawest's plan was only a wish list, and that it was much too early to be alarmed.

"All we want know," asked longtime resident and JLA board member Igor Vorobyoff, "is, Will you represent the wishes of a majority of June Lake residents?"

What's New?

June Lake Volunteer Fire Dept. BBQ

Thanks to members' contributions, the June Lake Advocates presented the June Lake Volunteer Fire Department with a \$1,525.00 donation at the annual BBQ at Gull Lake on August 14, 2004 as a gesture of support to the community. There was a tremendous turnout to support our local Fire Department.

New Down-Canyon Firehouse

U.S. Forest Service Deputy District Ranger Molly Brown announced at this July's Fire Commission meeting that the Forest Service has given approval to construction of a Down-Canyon fire station. Construction may begin as early as Spring, 2005. The station will be located on the south side of Highway 158, across from Los Angeles Street (near the Carson Peak Inn).

Support Your Community

Second home owners have recently been criticized for not contributing to the economy of the June Lake Loop and not participating in community affairs. You can help to dispel this perception by participating in local events, volunteering to assist various organizations like the Women's Club, library, thrift store etc. and making some of your grocery and gift purchases in the Loop.

At first, the answer was indirect, yet determined. "Of course, it is my job to be responsive," Roberts said.

CAC board member Vicki McGee-Bauer tried to add clarity, saying, "We come to these meetings day-in and day-out to listen to the community. Of course we'll represent you. And if the community's wishes and (Intrawest's) plan are compatible, there won't be a problem."

"The (June Lake 2010: June Lake Area) plan already represents the community after many hours of work over a long period of time," Roberts added. Indeed, the June Lake 2010 Plan represents more than 16 years of residents developing guidelines for future land use.

Scott Burns, Mono County Community Development Director, explained to the crowd that the planning process for this project could take more than a year. "First, Intrawest submits an application, then makes a sizable deposit, and then the County hires consultants to study the application," Burns said. "Then an Environmental Impact Report, Environmental Assessment, and a draft plan will be prepared, followed by a two-month public review. Written comments will be accepted and the consultants

June Lake Advocates Web Site

The June Lake Advocates maintain a website as a resource for information, links, and contact information about our organization. The purpose of the website is to identify the goals of the June Lake Advocates organization, communicate to our members, and provide a starting place for individuals seeking a variety of perspectives on Intrawest development projects. The JLA Web site may be found at:

<http://www.junelakeadvocates.com>

In addition to the Web site, we have started a Web journal, or "blog," to keep members up to date with current activities of the organization. Blogs are simply journals on the Web. The word is taken from "Web Log." Blogs are typically updated often, and the postings are organized in chronological order. Entries on the blog may also be commented upon by readers. As our group finds its proper voice in community affairs, we hope to use the blog to detail our efforts and keep our members informed. The JLA Blog may be found at:

<http://junelakeadvocates.blogspot.com>

We welcome suggestions that will make our communication tools effective.

*"...we are not saying NO;
...we are only saying HOW.*

-JLA.

will be asked to respond to these comments in writing. A final draft will be published, the CAC will function as a design review board to insure that the proposal complies with the June Lake Design Guidelines, and then the Planning Commission will make their recommendation to the (Mono County) Supervisors to either adopt, adopt with changes, or not adopt."

Burns added that the Supervisors will hold at least one public hearing, as well.

He also explained that the CAC is simply responsible for advising the Planning Commission. "They're job is to be sure that the proposed plans are, indeed, in compliance with the June Lake Area Plan."

Magee-Bauer echoed Burns' sentiments, saying, "It's all very early still. All we've done is to scope the plan."

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*...will you represent the wishes
of a majority of June Lake
residents?"*

-June Lake Advocates to the C.A.C.

As with other area plans, all of the policies are not spelled out definitively, there is room for variances. The height limit can be increased with a Use Permit, which in Mono County can, and has, allowed buildings up to 60-foot heights. Heights beyond the 35-foot limit will need to be mitigated, however, to reduce the visual impacts.

Pam Rake, a longtime June Lake resident, one of nearly 500 residents who didn’t return the Advocate’s survey, said she disagreed with it. Rake, who’s husband Don Rake is a former Supervisor, said, “I want to comment when Intrawest has a more specific plan of what they want to build, not a wish list.”

Down-canyon Double Eagle Resort owner and CAC board member Ron Black held up a copy of the June Lake Area Plan and said he too would study Intrawest’s proposals in the light of the plan. “But we haven’t heard all the evidence,” he said.

Dwight Hoelscher repeated those words as he left the standing-room-only building. Hoelscher, a 22-year June Lake second homeowner makes the trek to this sleepy “Diamond in the Sierra” resort about a dozen times a year for a cool respite from his Rancho Mirage residence near Palm Desert.

“It doesn’t look like much is going to be accomplished here tonight,” he said in the starlit parking lot. A Mono County sheriff officer recognized the part-time local. “What kinda trouble you causing, Dwight!” said the green clad officer. The good- natured ribbing and clear air outside were a welcome relief to the tensions and contentious air inside.

“There are lots of people moving here from Mammoth because they’re tired of the congestion,” Hoelscher added. “I think we should buy the land and give it back to the US Forest Service.”

Although some June Lake Advocates claimed that rejection of Intrawest’s plans (for a 90-foot limit and 2,610 density numbers) was a unanimous refrain, there were those at the meeting who, publicly and privately, voiced their concerns that the Advocates were getting too confrontational, too fast.

“Hiring lawyers already? Give me a break! Have we sat down with Intrawest and told them, specifically, what we even want?” asked one resident who spoke on the condition of anonymity. “I didn’t return the survey because I don’t want to create friction between my family and my neighbors. And more residents didn’t return the survey than those who did? What does that say? I love this town just as much as anyone here, but not everyone here has the same idea of what should happen in June Lake. We’re all different. I don’t like the idea of a

group going off like this? we should be more patient, learn what Intrawest is asking for, and then make our wishes known.”

At the end of the night, it became increasingly clear that both groups, or the many viewpoints represented, wanted the same thing: A community that maintained June Lake’s unique character.

Intrawest’s proposed Rodeo Grounds Specific Plan is available for review on the Mono County web site: www.MonoCounty.ca.gov (see Community Development Department/Planning Division). Larry K. Johnston and Burns of the Mono County Planning Department are both familiar with the project.

The June Lake Advocates web site is: www.JuneLakeAdvocates.org.
Copies of Intrawest’s proposal may also be purchased for \$12 at the Mono County Planning Division, 437 Old Mammoth Rd., Suite P, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546, or phone (760) 924-1800. -MT
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***June Lake Advocates
Respond to the Article:***

“Are they jumping the gun?”, reads the front-page teaser for Wally Hofmann’s article “June Lake Advocates State Their Case...” in the August 12-18 issue of the Mammoth Times.

The underlying question is, “In an open process, when is it appropriate for an advocacy group, representing a majority of the property owners in the June Lake Loop, to join the conversation about the impact of Intrawest development in the Loop?”

In fact, the issues raised in the June Lake Citizens Advisory Committee meeting of August 3 underscore just how important continuous, broad community participation is to development planning. Open communication and a transparent process are essential to consensus. Indeed, a certain county planning official was overheard saying that participation of the kind seen on August 3 “...was a planner’s dream.”

We recently received an e-mail message from former Snowmass Mayor Jeff Tippett, who has been fighting Intrawest for some time in his own

community. It is a chilling report of what we in the June Lake Loop can expect:

I am part of a small group that includes three former mayors and a former council member of Snowmass Village. We have been protesting at public meetings for three years to no avail. Intrawest has ... spent thousands to try convert the community to their grossly over-sized plan....

Intrawest is bad news. They have just one plan. They do not care what the community wants. They won’t hesitate to propose 2x the density and 3x the height in your master plan. When it comes down to mitigation of road impacts, employee housing they will attempt to avoid every expense they can.

I can’t figure out how they co-opted our elected officials. I’ve known some of these people for years and they have just caved. They agree to everything IW wants and have no shame. [For more information, go to snowmasscitizens.com. -- JLA]

Are we suspicious of Intrawest? You bet! It would be nice if we could deal with a community- and environment-friendly developer. But we are stuck with a corporation that, for all of its claims and promises, is in the business not of rescuing local economies, but of maximizing shareholder profit. We ourselves need to agree on what will improve the health of the Loop economy, submit our own wish list, and then see to it that we get the maximum out of Intrawest.

The objectives of the June Lake Advocates are, among others, to ensure responsible development in keeping with the wishes of the community, to develop a broader channel of communication for the community -- for JLA members, elected representatives, county officials, and the community at large -- and to use this channel to build consensus on local issues. It is our contention that had we organized earlier, years ago, we wouldn’t be in this mess. When Intrawest published its Specific Plan, we finally reacted to the whistles blown by Ricky Graham and the Meinhards (JLA founding board members). None too soon, and hopefully not too late.

Rather than reacting to events, shouldn’t we be driving them? We must come to the table not in disarray, but as a proactive, united, inclusive front. We think that this is the only way to build a healthy June Lake environment that benefits all stakeholders. We think that full inclusion means participation from start to finish by all players, especially by an advocacy group representing so many property owners.

So maybe “Are we jumping the gun?” is the wrong question. Perhaps we should be asking, “Why did we wait so long?” •