

# Weekly ReCAP for July 31, 2020

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Next CPC meeting August 3, 2020 now starting at 3:00 p.m. to 5 p.m. Until the COVID-19 is resolved in our community, the CPC meetings will be held remotely by ZOOM and/or conference calling. To participate please watch for connection information from Jenny. **New members are welcome, and members only will be able to participate in any closed session.**

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Some items of note for planning in Calaveras County:

- 1) San Andreas-Pope Street Safe Route to Schools/ Gap Plan-- recommended for approval by the Planning Commission on 7/23. Goes to BOS next.
- 2) Valley Springs Town Center Connectivity Plan--adopted by the Calaveras County BOS on 7/28. Goes to CCOG Board for final approval; will apply for funding in September. MVS.com 6/22 letter of support was included in the staff report.
- 3) CPC Letter to the Editor-- "Planning panel needs feedback" (with Planning Commission information and email addresses) published in The Valley Springs News 7/29. See attached. BTW, there is still no way to send documents to commissioners through the county web page, and no email addresses have been provided there.

Colleen

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## Trashed trails?

## Residents concerned by overcrowding at popular summer spots

- [by Dakota Morlan](#) / The Calaveras Enterprise
- Jul 22, 2020

Locals are getting fed up with the increasing traffic, crowds and trash at outdoor recreation areas during the pandemic.

“Overcrowding during summer months (has) been an increasing issue due to the growing popularity of Calaveras County,” Sgt. Greg Stark with the Calaveras County Sheriff’s Office told the Enterprise on Monday. “It is not uncommon for calls for service to rise in respect to the increase of people recreating in the county.”

This summer, out-of-towners appear to be flooding popular spots in the rural Mother Lode region with heightened vigor, with many lamenting a lack of available activities in the city.

Murphys resident Susan Robinson said the traffic, “misbehavior” and trash left at White Pines Lake, Natural Bridges and other public parks each weekend have become “unbearable” and are driving locals away.

“CCWD isn’t doing an adequate job of protecting those water resources,” Robinson said of the Calaveras County Water District, which owns White Pines Lake and its surrounding recreation facilities.

Michael Minkler, CCWD general manager, responded Tuesday that the district has received a few complaints about overcrowding at the lake, and that efforts are being made to improve signage at the location to uphold public health recommendations.

“We have consistently followed the lead of the public health agencies regarding closures of those facilities. The current guidance does not recommend closure of facilities such as those at White Pines Lake and we don’t want to increase concentrations of people at other facilities by independently closing down access to the lake,” Minkler stated. “We strongly encourage everyone to respect social distancing and other public health recommendations.”

Calaveras County Health Officer Dean Kelaita, MD, has not responded to inquiries regarding the potential hazards of crowded outdoor spaces and whether or not they should be reclosed.

Earlier this week, anxieties were amplified with the first COVID-19-related death in the county. There has been an accelerated increase of confirmed cases since late May, with total case numbers quickly approaching 100.

Yet Fourth of July weekend was one of the busiest in recent memory, according to some. The caves at Natural Bridges, near Vallecito, were packed with visitors, very few of whom were wearing masks. Cars spilled out of the parking lot and occupied narrow spaces on both sides of Parrotts Ferry Road. A sign at the park’s entrance advised social distancing, but no officials were present to enforce those recommendations.

New Melones Park Manager Cynthia Davenport, who oversees Natural Bridges, did not respond to requests for comment by press time but told the Enterprise in a previous interview it was difficult for staff to keep out visitors, even when the park was closed. During the stay-at-home order, someone reportedly cut a hole in a nearby fence to gain access.

At other outdoor public spaces, the absence of an authoritative presence has left the growing crowds to their own devices.

Park rangers at Pinecrest Lake in Tuolumne County, which sees an average of 15,000 visitors each weekend during the summer, have refrained from patrolling during the busiest hours for their own health and safety, Stanislaus National Forest spokesperson Diana Fredlund stated earlier this month.

Yet, some authorities are clamping down. Last week, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers cut off vehicle access to a recreation area at New Hogan Lake, which it owns, due to “misuse and overcrowding.”

The Sheriff’s Office, however, does not shut down public spaces, according to Sgt. Stark.

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## Fairgrounds’ John Muir Building Changed To Honor Local Tribes

By [Tori James](#) Published Jul 27, 2020 02:40 pm

Me-Wuk Tribes of Tuolumne County Fairgrounds' Building renaming July 7 2020

[View Photos](#)

Sonora, CA – A popular building on the Mother Lode Fairgrounds has undergone a name change.

The facility, formerly known as the main John Muir Building has been rechristened in honor of the Chicken Ranch Rancheria Me–Wuk Indians of California and the Tuolumne Band of Me–Wuk Indians as part of their partnership in sponsoring the fairgrounds, home to many popular events including the Mother Lode Fair and Mother Lode Round-Up. As part of the partnership, the structure has been renamed the Me-Wuk Tribes of Tuolumne County Building.

Although the Tribes publicly shared the news this week, it is of interest that the renaming ceremony was held back on July 7 when members from both Tribal Councils met at the fairgrounds for the unveiling of the new signage. The Sierra Club came out with a statement five days ago publicly apologizing for belittling comments made well over a century ago by Muir, the club’s founder about people of color, including Native Americans and African Americans.

Both Tribal Chairmen stated that the renaming ceremony carried special significance and honor for their tribes. “Me-Wuk Tribes have resided in the Motherlode for time immemorial and were living in the Yosemite Valley up until the time it was designated as a National Park,” notes Kevin Day, Tribal Chairman of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians.

“If you research the history of the Tribes in the region, we were systematically removed from our ancestral lands, like Yosemite, so the renaming of the building to the Me-Wuk Tribes of Tuolumne County shows how positive the relationship has become between Tuolumne County and the Tribes. We encourage education to the plight of the Me-Wuk Tribes in Yosemite and the Motherlode.”

Chicken Ranch Rancheria Tribal Chairman, Lloyd Mathiesen, echoes the sentiment. “Our main goal for our continued sponsorship with the Mother Lode Fairgrounds is to not be a part of something that celebrates the name of a man who worked to tear down our people.”

The tribal chairs point out that although Muir is widely known as “the father of the national parks” and was pivotal in their establishment, he also supported the extraction of indigenous peoples from their native lands in the name of maintaining a “balance of nature,” an effort that eventually became a widespread practice stretching from Yosemite to Yellowstone and beyond.

Written by [Tori James](#)

<https://www.mymotherlode.com/news/local/1154872/fairgrounds-john-muir-building-changed-to-honor-local-tribes.html>

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## Two men in Tuolumne County die from the coronavirus

Alex MacLean

Jul 27, 2020 Updated 14 hrs ago

The first two deaths in Tuolumne County from COVID-19 were announced by the public health department in a news release Monday afternoon.

Both of the victims were men, one in his 60s with no known underlying health conditions and one in his 80s with some underlying health conditions.

“We want to share our heartfelt condolences with the families and loved ones in this difficult time,” said Dr. Liza Ortiz, interim Tuolumne County health officer. “These deaths are a sobering reminder of the severity of COVID-19. Our actions affect the lives of those around us and our whole community. Tuolumne County must act to slow the rate of transmission and protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our community.”

No other information was provided about the victims or the circumstances surrounding their deaths due to medical privacy laws, according to the department’s new release.

The deaths come more than four months since Gov. Gavin Newsom issued the nation’s first statewide stay-at-home order in California on March 19 and a little over two months since the state and county began to gradually reopen in mid-May.

Calaveras County that neighbors Tuolumne County to the north reported its first death from the disease one week earlier on July 20.

In addition to the two deaths, the Tuolumne County Public Health Department stated it identified five new coronavirus cases over the weekend that included one on Saturday, two on Sunday and two on Monday.

Three people who tested positive for the virus were being treated at Adventist Health Sonora as of Monday afternoon, including one of the five who tested positive between Saturday and Monday.

One of the four people who were in the hospital on Friday was released over the weekend and was isolating at home, the department stated.

There had been a total of 131 cases in the county since the pandemic began as of Monday, which was 58 more than exactly two weeks earlier on July 13.

The county must stay below 53 new cases over a two-week period to stay off the state's monitoring list that would require it to shut down additional types of businesses and activities, including gyms, hair and nail salons, indoor church services, weddings and funerals.

Contact Alex MacLean at [amaclean@uniondemocrat.net](mailto:amaclean@uniondemocrat.net) or (209) 768-5175.

[https://www.uniondemocrat.com/news/article\\_30a32894-d058-11ea-9bea-53d10bfa75bb.html](https://www.uniondemocrat.com/news/article_30a32894-d058-11ea-9bea-53d10bfa75bb.html)

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## Calaveras County Trying To Stay Off State's Monitoring List

By B.J. Hansen Published Jul 28, 2020 10:56 am Updated Jul 28, 2020 10:57 am

San Andreas, CA — An item that could soon be addressed in Calaveras County is enforcement against the fraction of the business community which is openly defying state COVID-19 regulations.

The issue came up during the discussion at today's board of supervisors meeting about the county's response to coronavirus. Calaveras County has had 99 cases, 54 are active, 44 are recovered, and there has been one death.

Calaveras is not on the state's monitoring list (as Tuolumne County is preparing to be placed) because it has reported only 54 cases per 100,000 residents over the past 14 days (100 per 100,000 is the limit). Public Health Officer Dr. Dean Kelaita noted that the positivity rate for local testing, however, has been increasing, which is another measure used by the state. Earlier it was at around two-percent, then up to four percent, and is now over five-percent. If it gets to eight-percent, the county could be added to the state's monitoring list. The additional state scrutiny would impact businesses like gyms, further limit the ability to hold church services, and impact schools.

To stay off the list, Dr. Kelaita stated that residents need to be diligent about wearing face coverings, wash hands regularly and practice social distancing.

He adds, "Cases have increased in Calaveras County 46-percent in the last 14 days, and the current rate of disease progression threatens to overwhelm our contact tracing capabilities, our local hospital care system, and places Calaveras County at risk for inclusion in the state's list.

The hardest hit areas in Calaveras have been near the borders with San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties, as many people travel out of the county for work, or shopping, and then spread the virus back in the county.

Supervisor Jack Garamendi stated that he has heard concerns from businesses who are following the state's regulations. Their issues is in regards to other businesses which are not.

Board Chair Merita Callaway stated, "To cut to the chase, it is up to the Board of Supervisors to put in place an enforcement protocol for the businesses who are thumbing their nose and having multiple complaints."

She added that she would like to see an enforcement plan come to the board either at the next meeting in August, or during a special meeting prior to it.

CAO Albert Alt indicated that the county is reviewing the issue and developing a potential plan to address bad actors.

Supervisor Benjamin Stopper expressed some caution and cited statistics from public health, noting that 33-percent of the cases originate outside of the area, 33-percent are cases transferred to families and friends of those impacted people, and 33-percent are from unknown sources. He questioned if businesses should be the focus of enforcement measures because 66-percent of the cases are coming from out of the area.

Supervisor Dennis Mills said the near future conversation also needs to look at mass gatherings, and how people behave when visiting the county. "We need to have a very holistic conversation about all of it, and not just the businesses," he stated.

Supervisor Mills has in the past brought up concerns about the high number of people utilizing recreational spots like Natural Bridges.

Dr. Kelaita added that the use of face coverings is a central issue that he hopes businesses will embrace and make sure that they are being utilized to help slow the spread and try to prevent the county from getting placed on the monitoring list.

Calaveras County earlier passed an urgency ordinance to give more flexibility and help businesses forced to operate outside, such as restaurants, due to to new state regulations.

Written by [BJ Hansen](#).

<https://www.mymotherlode.com/news/local/1156669/calaveras-county-trying-to-stay-off-states-monitoring-list.html>

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*From Susan Robinson – Thank you, Susan!*

<https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article244580717.html>

Please let people know about this otherwise somebody may plant something that's going to be very invasive in our county

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## Cannabis retailers get green light for adult use recreational sales

- [By Davis Harper](#) / The Calaveras Enterprise
- Jul 29, 2020

No longer will eager cannabis customers without medical cards be turned away from Calaveras County dispensaries.

The three local retailers in the county received the go-ahead to make adult use sales July 24, and business is up.

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors rubber-stamped an update to the retail ordinance to legalize recreational sales June 9, joining several other counties across the state in doing so. It was approved on a 3-2 vote, with District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli and District 4 Supervisor Dennis Mills dissenting.

Under the ordinance, sales of adult use and medical cannabis are only permitted in the Professional Office, or CP, Zone upon approval of an administrative use permit.

Locals and out-of-towners poured into Calaveras Little Trees, a dispensary in Arnold, over the weekend following legalization, according to co-owner Jeremy Carlson. It helps that there's been a larger presence of tourists and second homeowners escaping more densely populated areas amid the COVID-19 crisis, Carlson said.

"We've got so many more people in this area," Carlson said. "A lot of people moved up temporarily, we haven't seen a downtick in tourism and people are going up camping, so (business has) generally gone up compared to what we did last year in the same time period."

Calaveras Little Trees doubled its staff weeks in advance of the first recreational sale. That was after COVID-19 had reduced hours and transitioned the business to delivery and take-out only.

“It’s been nice to turn everything back around. We got our old staff back up and running,” Carlson said. Dispensary employees are required to wear masks to slow the spread of COVID-19, and hand sanitizer stations are accessible for customers, Carlson said. The mask rule applies to customers “if you’re in the room with someone you don’t live with.”

Since state legalization of recreational sales in 2018, business declined for Calaveras Little Trees and other area dispensaries as customers stopped renewing their medical cards.

Former local customers would drive as far as Oakdale in Stanislaus County to buy cannabis, avoiding the average \$40 cost and hassle of buying a medical card, he added.

“If we had stayed medical-only, I don’t think the business would’ve survived much longer,” Carlson said. “We pretty much had to do adult use sales for it to continue and grow.”

Conrad Bonet, owner of Blue Mountain Collective in San Andreas, said he experienced the same impacts to his business following recreational legalization.

The dispensary was recently permitted for adult use sales as well, and Bonet said he is feeling more optimistic about the potential increase in clientele.

Over the past week, customers Bonet hadn’t seen in years have been coming in, likely because they didn’t want to pay the extra money to get a medical card, he said.

“I’m optimistic. Calaveras is my home, so I’ve got to make it work,” Bonet said. “I do anticipate more traffic from people passing through.”

Recreational sales are also legal in San Joaquin County, but the neighboring counties of Alpine, Amador and Tuolumne still have a ban on many cannabis activities, including manufacturing, cultivation and retail.

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## **County’s COVID-19 count surpasses 100**

**The Valley Springs News / July 31, 2020**

With the report Tuesday of nine new COVID-19 cases, Calaveras County has exceeded 100 since the outbreak began late last year in China.

According to Calaveras Public Health, the additional cases include one female and two males between 0 and 17 years of age, four females and one male between 18 to 49 years of age, and one male over the age of 65.

“We must continue to do our part to ensure that we are on a path to recovery,” said Dr. Dean Kelaita, county health officer. “As we wait for new treatments and a vaccine, there are actions people can do now that we know work. Recovery is something we all want to see happen as quickly as possible. We can achieve this when local businesses and our community work together to keep each other safe and



healthy. This means wearing a face covering, getting tested, washing your hands often, staying home if you are sick, and practicing physical distancing.”

As of Tuesday, Calaveras Public Health has reported 108 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Of those cases, 80 cases have since recovered while 27 cases remain active. There has been one reported death related to COVID-19 in the county and one person was hospitalized as of Tuesday.

Calaveras Public Health staff continues to investigate new cases to determine any possible persons who may have had close personal contact with the positive individuals. Close contacts may be contacted by the health department, assessed and monitored for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 illness.

In California, the 14 day average of new cases continues to increase despite Gov. Gavin Newsom’s mask-wearing directive two weeks ago. The 14-day rolling average of new cases was 7,927 on July 14 and was 9,253 on July 28.

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