

SUIT WILL SHUT RESORT DOWN, OWNERS SAY

COUNTY HOPING TO FORCE PARTIES TO GET PERMITS

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SAN ANDREAS - Depending on how you look at it, Lake Tulloch Resort has either partied to death or been sentenced to death for partying.

The resort has been famed over the past four years for its series of "Bump" parties. The ski boat-oriented events held twice a summer in recent years at the resort in Copperopolis featured disc jockeys and urban music that drew a young crowd from cities across the region.

One advertisement for Bump V held in June boasted that the approximately 75 boats participating had "125,000 watts of power" feeding their amplification systems.

County officials say the events caused problems, including arrests for drunken behavior, and trash, noise and traffic congestion that prompted complaints from neighbors.

County officials also say that the resort should have obtained a conditional use permit. Now, the county is suing to force the resort to either get a permit or stop holding the events.

Bernadette Cattaneo, the managing board member for the resort, says the lawsuit is the final straw that will push the business under and cause it to cease operation next year.

"They are basically just telling us 'you might as well shut down your business,' " Cattaneo said of the message she's getting from the county's lawsuit. "The resort is for sale right now. Who is going to buy it with this going on?"

The lawsuit asks a judge to bar Tulloch Lake Resort from holding entertainment events for more than 1,000 people without getting a permit. The suit also asks that a judge allow the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office to shut down any future Tulloch Lake Resort events that violate county rules.

Cattaneo says that the county code requiring permits for entertainment with more than 1,000 people doesn't apply to her because she is offering a party with recorded music rather than live entertainment.

Meanwhile, she accuses county officials of ignoring for political reasons that Kautz Ironstone Vineyards in Murphys hosts much larger musical performances and has no conditional use permit.

Calaveras County Supervisor Tom Tryon, who formerly represented the Murphys area and currently represents the Lake Tulloch area, said Cattaneo is comparing apples and oranges.

"Ironstone has the infrastructure to appropriately handle their events without affecting their neighbors," Tryon said. "In the time Ironstone has been out there we have not had one complaint."

In contrast, Lake Tulloch Resort has such a small parking lot that parked cars end up lining O'Byrnes Ferry Road during the Bump festivals.

Tryon did say that the owners of Kautz Ironstone have now applied for a conditional use permit for concerts and other large events.

Meanwhile, the lawsuit between the county and Lake Tulloch Resort is due in court for a status conference on Jan. 14.

Cattaneo said that by then she anticipates the resort will no longer be operating, although it may reopen briefly for a wedding and a motorcycle club event that were already booked.

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