

California Tahoe Conservancy
Agenda Item 8b
July 17, 2014

ANNUAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AUTHORIZATION

Summary: Staff recommends authorization of up to \$889,000 for direct property management, hazard abatement, and restoration activities on Conservancy properties during Fiscal Year 2014/2015.

Location: Throughout the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin

Fiscal Summary:

Source of Funds:

Conservancy Support Funds	\$466,000
Capital Outlay Funds (Lake Tahoe Conservancy Account)	<u>423,000</u>
Total Recommended Authorization:	\$889,000

Recommended Action: Adopt Resolution 14-07-03 (Attachment 1)

Background

This is the 28th annual authorization sought by staff for property management. Since its inception, the Conservancy has made significant progress developing and implementing a comprehensive Property Management Program.

The Conservancy manages nearly 4,700 parcels. It should be noted that this figure is slightly less than that reported in recent years due to the consolidation of 150 condo units and subsequent sale of the Tallac Vista property in late 2013.

The Property Management Program began in 1986 to address challenges such as fragmented public/private ownership patterns, varying parcel sizes, diverse management objectives and limited fiscal and staff resources.

The Conservancy's Property Management Program integrates short and long-term management considerations into all of its programs and projects. Specifically, the Conservancy has:

- Structured acquisitions to resolve management concerns prior to the close of escrow, including use of conservation easements;
- Entered into management agreements that reinforce existing management roles, utilize existing management resources, and facilitate the management of areas with ownership by two or more public entities;
- Maintained its capability to inspect sites, clean properties, remove hazardous conditions, and resolve various land use conflicts;
- Initiated restoration and resource enhancement activities, involving installation of erosion control measures, revegetation, stream environment zone (SEZ) restoration, forest resource management activities, biological and cultural resource protection, and maintenance and improvement of public access facilities;
- Coordinated the restoration and management of properties through the utilization of public and private sector expertise and resources, the coordination of resource planning, and management efforts with other public and private entities;
- Adopted and implemented special use guidelines encompassing lease, license, and stewardship land management activities that are designed to transfer certain management responsibilities to appropriate third parties;
- Provided site security;
- Adopted and implemented snow storage guidelines to meet water quality and management objectives;
- Increased the Conservancy's administrative capability to restore and manage properties through staff development, internships, and procurement of management services, including land surveying, from public agencies and private contractors; and
- Strengthened the Conservancy's Geographic Information System (GIS) capabilities, land ownership maps, and the procurement of management revenue sources (such as leases and the land coverage program) that support resource objectives.

2013 Field Season Accomplishments:

Annual lot inspections*	2944
Citizen reports and follow-up inspections	97
Fuels treatment (acres)	14.5
Maintenance work orders	119
Hazard tree removal	37
Smaller parcel restoration projects	27

* 93, 671 inspections to date

A comprehensive overview of the Conservancy's Property Management Program is provided in Attachment 2.

The Annual Forest Improvement Program Authorization, which has previously been included within the Land Management Authorization, is addressed in a separate staff recommendation. See Agenda Item 8c.

Program Description

Staff requests authority to continue to develop, implement, and expend funds for the Conservancy's Property Management Program in order to further the various efforts listed above and other property management efforts, including the accelerated restoration of land coverage and stream environment zones.

Property Management

This authorization will allow the Conservancy to:

- Inspect all Conservancy-owned parcels on a bi-annual basis to identify hazardous conditions, inappropriate uses (often by adjoining landowners), and resource restoration needs;
- Maintain and clean parcels as necessary;
- Respond to citizen complaints (most regarding fuels hazards, abandoned property, and trespass issues);
- Maintain previously completed fuels reduction work on forested urban lots;
- Address inappropriate uses and trespass issues;
- Identify and remove hazardous trees to protect life and property;
- Develop resource restoration prescriptions and contract for and supervise the seasonal Restoration Crew to implement restoration projects;

- Assist with restoration activities implemented under other Conservancy programs;
- Contract for heavy equipment services necessary to implement larger restoration activities;
- Contract for the Upper Truckee Marsh (UTM) Land Steward, Van Sickle Bi-State Park Site Hosts, and law enforcement services to protect resources on the Conservancy's UTM and Van Sickle properties;
- Contract for and supervise the seasonal Land Management Crew to perform fuels hazard reduction work, maintain past restoration projects, and maintain high-use properties such as the UTM; and
- Maintain the Conservancy's lakefront and public access facilities by contracting with other public agencies and entering into concession and management agreements with both public and private sectors.

To complete these activities, staff may be assisted by others including the Tahoe Resource Conservation District (TRCD), the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office, Clean Tahoe Program, and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). Project implementation may be performed by public and private entities, including TRCD seasonal field crews, the California Conservation Corps, AmeriCorps, the Nevada Conservation Corps, and other private sector and non-profit work crews.

Priority Projects and Issues for 2014 Field Season

SEZ Restoration

Existing fill will be removed, and 11,000 square feet of SEZ will be restored on a Conservancy easement parcel on Panorama Drive in Christmas Valley. While planning started last field season, the project is scheduled for implementation in the fall. Staff has engaged the U.S. Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) in mutual planning efforts as there is a shared property and project boundary. This restoration project will increase SEZ function in the Upper Truckee Hydrologic Area and mitigate future public service projects that may impact SEZs.

Detention Basin Pilot Projects

In coordination with the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center (TERC), the Conservancy is embarking on a project which will provide locations identified by TERC for small natural depression basins for water quality improvements on Conservancy property. Staff anticipates beginning

implementation in summer 2014. TERC will assist the Conservancy with monitoring the improvements to determine their water quality benefit.

Demolition and Future Planning of New Acquisitions

Land Management staff will coordinate the demolition and initial site stabilization of the South Y Lodge and Smoke Shop properties. Staff will also assess the Alta Mira, Smoke Shop and South Y Lodge properties following demolition and stabilization efforts for additional site improvement needs and public safety concerns. Staff will work on all sites throughout the 2014 and 2015 field season.

Parcel Signage Program

Consistent with Strategic Plan direction, staff will begin implementing a property signage program during the 2014 field season which will effectively identify all Conservancy owned parcels with a 4x6 inch property tag placed on trees and posts. This program will assist the public and other agency staff to determine Conservancy parcel ownership and report issues.

Annual Seasonal Dog Closure at the Upper Truckee Marsh

In July 2010, the Board approved a seasonal closure prohibiting dogs on the Barton Meadow side of the Upper Truckee Marsh (UTM) given the unique qualities and management objectives of the UTM. The seasonal closure runs from May 1 through July 31 each year. Implementing a year-round, no dog policy, along with other potential management strategies, remains an option. Staff maintains a contract with the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office to provide law enforcement services within the UTM. The Lake Tahoe Humane Society - S.P.C.A has recently been engaged to assist with various public outreach efforts and events. Staff will report back to the Board as needed, regarding the efficacy of the seasonal closure, compliance with leash regulations subsequent to the closure period, and recommendations for future management options. See Attachment 2 for more details.

Exchange, Transfer, and Management of Conservancy Lands and Kings Beach State Recreation Area

Exchange and Transfer

In September 2012 the Board authorized an exchange and transfer of approximately 1,285 acres of Conservancy-owned public access and environmentally sensitive lands in El Dorado and Placer Counties with the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), in return for

approximately 9.3 acres of environmentally sensitive, subdivided parcels in El Dorado County.

The Conservancy is utilizing a retainer contract to determine boundaries which will assist in the resolution of various trespass and encroachment issues on numerous Conservancy parcels, including those scheduled for transfer to DPR.

Management

Pursuant to the provisions of the 2012/13 California Budget Act (Stats. 2012, Section 21; the "Budget Act") and Board direction, DPR and the Conservancy were directed to enter into an agreement for the management and operation of Kings Beach State Recreation Area (KBSRA) and the adjoining public lands in the best interest of the State.

To service the purposes of the Budget Act, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on March 11, 2014, and beginning on July 1, DPR and the Conservancy began partnering on the management and operations of KBSRA and nearby Conservancy properties. The Conservancy properties include: Kings Beach Plaza, Coon Street (asset lands parcel), Steamer's Beach, Sun and Sand (easement parcel), Secline Beach, Moon Dunes, and Sandy Beach.

Currently DPR and Conservancy staff are working through the details of a long-term operating agreement and have initiated a yearly interagency agreement (IA). The five year, longer-term agreement will implement the March 2014 MOU, while providing guidance for both DPR and the Conservancy as it relates to management and future development of the State's valuable north shore beach properties and recreation improvements. The IA addresses the day-to-day management and maintenance of the Conservancy properties as mentioned above and will replace a similar contract with the North Tahoe Public Utilities District (NTPUD), which was terminated as of June 30, 2014. The NTPUD will no longer provide the Conservancy with north shore beach maintenance services.

Van Sickle Bi-State Park (Van Sickle)

The Board authorized implementation of the California Day-Use Area of Van Sickle in January 2011, and construction was completed the following summer. Van Sickle opened to the public in July 2011. Since that time, staff has seen increased summer and winter visitation. In response to this increase, additional staff time and contracted services have been committed for monitoring, managing, and evaluation of existing and emerging uses and potential management issues. While the Conservancy is committed to a high management

standard and providing a quality visitor experience at Van Sickle, staff continues to analyze long-term fiscal and staffing needs. Van Sickle is scheduled to be transferred pending an agreement between California and Nevada State Parks. If the transfer does not occur, staff costs to operate and maintain Van Sickle may be considerable.

The Conservancy will continue to coordinate with the Tahoe Rim Trail Association and Nevada State Parks this summer on various trail maintenance activities to continue enhancing the important and widely used trail network throughout the park.

The Van Sickle site hosts are the first volunteers through the Conservancy Volunteer Program, approved by the Board in March 2014.

Conservancy Land Management Plan

The Strategic Plan directed Conservancy staff to develop a comprehensive Land Management Plan to more effectively manage its lands. As explained during previous presentations and updates to the Board, the Land Management Plan will:

- Establish the basis for management recommendations and help direct the management of Conservancy lands;
- Provide transparency with respect to land management decisions and recommendations;
- Identify gaps and inconsistencies in current management strategies and activities;
- Increase consistency between the management practices of the Conservancy and other local and regional plans; and
- Facilitate the development of site specific plans, management, policies, and regulations.

The Land Management Plan identifies the various purposes of Conservancy lands and classifies them based on management objectives and goals. Desired conditions and management actions are being developed to achieve these goals. The Plan will be consistent with Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's (TRPA's) land classifications and, where appropriate, with the goals and objectives of adjacent public landowners.

Through development of the Plan, staff will also re-evaluate and update the Conservancy’s various program guidelines, including those developed for Special Use requests and related cost recovery fee structures.

Staff continues to actively develop the Plan and will seek input and guidance from the Board throughout the process. Board adoption of the Plan will be recommended at a future meeting.

Program Budget

Staff requests authorization to expend up to \$889,000, including \$466,000 in support funds and \$423,000 in capital outlay funds. Staff will continue to implement the Conservancy's property management, hazard abatement, and property restoration activities during Fiscal Year 2014/2015, as described below.

Land Management and Public Safety (Support Funds)

Land Management Crew	\$80,000
Property Inspection and Cleanup	102,000
Property Signage	10,000
Property Surveys	32,000
Beach Maintenance	125,000
Security/Service Contracts	32,000
Facilities and Maintenance	65,000
Equipment, Materials, and Supplies	<u>20,000</u>
Land Management and Public Safety Sub-Total:	\$466,000

Resource Restoration and Enhancement (Capital Outlay Funds)

Restoration Crew	\$85,000
Restoration Planning	65,000
South Y Lodge and Smoke Shop Demolition and Restoration	130,000
Property Surveys	38,000
Contracting and Project Implementation	75,000
Restoration Equipment, Materials and Supplies	<u>30,000</u>
Resource Restoration and Enhancement Sub-Total:	\$423,000

Total: \$889,000

The above amounts are estimates and reflect potential expenditures within these categories based on prior experience. Actual expenditures will depend upon the available funding, actual need, and relative management priorities as established throughout the fiscal year, but will not exceed the total funds requested.

Consistency with the Conservancy's Enabling Legislation

The recommended management activities are consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation. Under Government Code section 66907.10, the Conservancy is authorized to improve and develop acquired lands for a variety of purposes, including protection of the natural environment; protection of public access and recreational facilities; preservation of wildlife habitat areas; and access to and management of Conservancy-owned lands. Under Government Code section 66907.9, the Conservancy is authorized to initiate, negotiate, and participate in agreements for the management of land under its ownership and control with local public agencies, State agencies, federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, individuals, corporate entities, or partnerships. Finally, under Government Code section 66906.8, the Conservancy is authorized to select and hire private consultants or contractors as necessary to achieve these purposes.

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Some Conservancy property management and restoration projects, and all forest fuels maintenance projects, require CEQA analysis. Each project implemented pursuant to this staff recommendation will be subject to CEQA review. Staff will evaluate each project prior to implementation to determine the appropriate level of CEQA review. Where staff determines a project is statutorily or categorically exempt from CEQA, staff will file a Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse. Where staff determines a project requires a negative declaration or an environmental impact report, the project will be brought to the Board for adoption of environmental findings and authorization to expend funds to implement the project.

List of Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Resolution 14-07-03

Attachment 2 – Overview of the Conservancy's Property Management Program

Conservancy Staff Contacts:

Shawn Butler
Property Management

(530) 543-6034
shawn.butler@tahoe.ca.gov

ATTACHMENT 1

California Tahoe Conservancy

Resolution

14-07-03

Adopted: July 17, 2014

ANNUAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AUTHORIZATION

Staff recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Government Code sections 66906.8, 66907.9, and 66907.10:

“The California Tahoe Conservancy hereby authorizes staff to expend up to \$889,000 for direct management and restoration as described in the accompanying staff report, and take all other necessary steps, subject to the provisions and conditions discussed in the accompanying staff report and attachments, in order to implement the Conservancy’s Property Management Program. Implementation includes but is not limited to the following: property inspection and cleanup; hazard reduction; project planning; erosion control and ecological restoration; forest fuels reduction and maintenance; wildlife habitat enhancement; aspen and meadow restoration; land and facilities maintenance; demolition of structures; the resolution of use conflicts; public information activities; execution of leases, licenses, and agreements consistent with adopted guidelines; and coordination of management arrangements, and to enter into an agreement with the Department of Parks and Recreation for the management and operation of the Kings Beach State Recreation Area and Conservancy-owned land on the north shore of Lake Tahoe, including Secline Beach, North Tahoe Beach, Moon Dunes Beach and Sandy Beach.”

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution duly and regularly adopted by the California Tahoe Conservancy at a meeting thereof held on the 17th day of July, 2014.

In WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 17th day of July, 2014.

Patrick Wright
Executive Director

ATTACHMENT 2

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Program Objectives: Since the adoption of the Conservancy's Property Management Program on September 19, 1986, and subsequent annual re-authorizations, the Conservancy has been committed to addressing the following management objectives:

- Manage property in a manner consistent with the purpose(s) for which it was acquired;
- Restore and enhance on-site resources where appropriate;
- Resolve potential use conflicts;
- Coordinate the management of such lands with other public agencies and private entities in order to facilitate more responsive, cost-effective, and/or comprehensive management arrangements; and
- Continue to develop the Conservancy's administrative and fiscal capability to manage all types of acquired properties.

The primary objective of the Conservancy's management activities for these lands is to preserve and restore natural conditions and open space values.

A. Inspection and Maintenance

Staff continues to undertake a number of inspection and maintenance-related activities to further the purposes for which the lands were acquired. These include:

- Annual inspection of approximately 2,950 parcels, with follow-up as needed; bi-annual inspection of all Conservancy-owned parcels; over 93,671 parcel inspections completed since 1987.
- Approximately 97 inspections conducted last year in response to agency or citizen requests. In past years, citizen reports have exceeded 200 per season. Staff has received 21 citizen reports this season.
- Based upon inspections and citizen reports, the Land Management Crew and Tahoe Resource Conservation District (TRCD) staff perform clean-up activities and correction of other problems, such as

abandoned vehicles and other personal property storage. In some instances, the Land Management Crew or TRCD staff has installed signs to identify Conservancy property and promote uses consistent with management objectives. In other instances, they have constructed fences, closed dirt roads, and cleared drainage channel debris.

Resource protection is an ongoing task on Conservancy parcels.

- The Land Management Crew provides the Conservancy with the ability to respond to a variety of land management issues; maintain past restoration projects; address agency commitments in accordance with Operation Maintenance Repair Replacement and Rehabilitation (OMRRR) documents for Army Corps cost-share projects; provide fuels reduction treatment in a responsive manner; assist with cross-program restoration, access, and erosion control projects; maintain high-use areas; maintain the Upper Truckee Marsh; maintain Van Sickle Bi-State Park; and eradicate noxious weeds. In addition to 14.5 acres of fuels treatment, which included a nine-acre biomass project, the Land Management Crew completed 119 maintenance work orders during the 2013 field season, 37 of which were for the removal of hazard trees. Thus far, the Conservancy has identified 32 maintenance projects for this field season.

Since most Conservancy properties are situated in residential areas, annual inspections identify use conflicts, which are an ongoing management concern. Larger parcels are subject to threat of significant resource damage if unauthorized activities are not detected and prevented.

Staff is undertaking three principal types of activities to resolve use conflicts, described in more detail below.

1. Identify and Resolve Unauthorized Activities and Adverse Resource Conditions

Unauthorized use of the property may adversely impact the natural and open space values of acquired lands by contributing to resource degradation, soil erosion, and water quality problems.

These uses include off-highway vehicle use; vehicle access; vehicle abandonment; parking; snow storage; personal property storage; illegal campfires; timber cutting; vegetation disturbance; landscaping; and structural encroachments.

Ongoing use conflicts are identified through regular property inspections, cleanup activities, and information provided by Conservancy staff, law enforcement, other resource management agencies, and public contacts. As these situations arise, the information is entered into one of the Conservancy's resource management databases. To date over 551 encroachments, ranging from minor trespass violations to major encroachments of structures have been identified. Efforts initiated by Conservancy staff or lot inspection contractors and the cooperation of property owners and residents resolved many of these issues. Public education, site rehabilitation, or restoration activities have also helped to eliminate numerous encroachments. The current inventory of active encroachments exceeds 330.

In the last few years, the number of new trespass and encroachment issues has decreased significantly due to the thorough work of the Conservancy's lot inspection and project planning efforts. In some cases, it is necessary to procure the services of a licensed surveyor to identify and document property boundaries to determine the extent of the problem. A substantial amount of time and resources is required to resolve some of the serious encroachment issues. Staff has recently secured property survey services through a retainer contract to help address some of these situations on a larger scale; however, further efforts are based on the extent of available staff and fiscal resources.

To assist in resolving use conflicts, staff developed a land management brochure featuring the Conservancy's acquisition and resource management objectives and policies relating to land uses and site restoration. An updated bilingual version was developed last field season. Staff distributes this brochure to interested residents and to parties causing adverse impacts on Conservancy properties. The Conservancy website and Facebook page also serve as valuable tools for conveying land management objectives, updates, and policies.

2. *Identify and Resolve Hazardous Conditions*

Increased staff time and resources have been dedicated to addressing potentially hazardous conditions on unimproved property, including hazardous trees that may pose a threat to

neighboring homes or improvements. To date, private contractors have removed over 4,354 hazardous trees.

3. Implement a Snow Storage Program

Staff implemented a snow storage license program in 1990 to allow snow storage on Conservancy properties while assuring the protection of resources, especially water quality. Once a landowner installs Best Management Practices (BMPs) to infiltrate all water and sediment onto their own property, the property is no longer eligible for a snow storage license agreement under the Conservancy Guidelines. Snow storage license agreements have diminished with increased implementation of BMPs. During winter 2013-2014, one license agreement was in place.

B. Land and Facility Management

The Conservancy also manages property for public access purposes. Properties managed for public access range from developed facilities such as North Tahoe Beach, to undeveloped sites with recreation potential, such as Moon Dunes.

1. Upper Truckee Marsh

Since the acquisition of the Upper Truckee Marsh (UTM), staff has managed the property consistent with the purposes of the acquisition. These purposes include open space resource protection, specifically maintaining the marsh, meadow, and riparian habitats, and protection of endangered and sensitive species and their habitats through passive public use.

Since 2001 staff has contracted a seasonal UTM Land Steward to provide a regular presence on the property and to educate the community about sensitive plant and wildlife resources. Portions of the beach have been designated as protected habitat for Tahoe Yellow Cress (TYC), an endangered species that only grows on sandy beaches in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Staff's routine maintenance of TYC protection areas and educational signage are encouraged by the public's willingness to respect this species' critical habitat.

Staff continually educates the public about activities that can damage or harm sensitive natural resources within the UTM.

Mutt Mitt dispensers and trash cans are available for the public and have substantially helped in keeping the meadow and beach environments clean. Staff continues to maintain and update signage and educational materials, and the Clean Tahoe Program provides additional garbage collection services on the property.

Since 2004, a cooperative educational and enforcement program has been in place to help limit the impacts of unleashed dogs on wildlife and other natural resources unique to the largest remaining alpine marsh at Lake Tahoe. In 2011 the Board authorized a seasonal closure prohibiting dog use within the UTM from May 1 through July 31 each year. To assist with this Board direction, staff maintains a contract with the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office (EDSO) to provide law enforcement services within the UTM. Compliance with the leash ordinance remains a challenge even with the assistance of the law enforcement personnel. During the months of May through July 2013, 20 citations and 93 warnings were issued by the EDSO for issues in the UTM, many of which were dog related.

Staff is currently managing the seasonal closure and monitoring compliance through Land Steward and law enforcement reports. Staff will report to the Board as needed regarding the success of the closure and subsequent leash restrictions, and recommended changes to future management strategies. Both the closure and leash restrictions are allowed under Chapter 18A of the South Lake Tahoe City Ordinances. Dogs continue to be permitted on leash at the Conservancy's Cove East property west of the UTM.

2. *Van Sickle Bi-State Park*

Acquisition of the Van Sickle property in 2002 provided the unique opportunity to partner with Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP) for development of the Van Sickle Bi-State Park (Van Sickle) at the California/Nevada state line. Van Sickle opened to the public in July 2011. Since that time, staff has seen increased summer and winter visitation. In response to this increase, additional staff time and contracted services have been committed for monitoring, managing, and evaluation of existing and emerging uses and potential management issues.

The Van Sickle site hosts are the first volunteers through the Conservancy Volunteer Program, approved by the Board in March 2014. The Site Hosts continue to be a valuable resource at Van Sickle performing routine maintenance, visitor education, and resource protection.

In 2011, the Van Sickle Foundation granted \$84,000 (\$17,500 per year for five years) to the Tahoe Rim Trail Association for park operations. That year the Tahoe Fund also granted \$25,000 to the Conservancy to fund initial operational and interpretive costs. The majority of the Tahoe Fund grant has been expended.

In December of 2014, Lake Valley Fire Protection District completed a comprehensive forest fuel reduction project on the California side to complement work conducted by NDSP. Additionally, the Conservancy will continue to coordinate with the Tahoe Rim Trail Association and NDSP on various trail maintenance activities during summer of 2014.

C. Restoration and Enhancement of Resources

Site improvements achieve objectives such as providing public access, enhancing wildlife habitat, protecting the site, and providing interpretation. In many cases, site improvements achieve multiple objectives.

A number of approaches are being used to rehabilitate, restore, and maintain degraded sites, including the use of:

- Specialized grass seed mixes, recycled pine needles, slow-release fertilizers, soil amendments, decomposed wood chips generated from forest management projects, and erosion control fabric to promote vegetative cover;
- Native shrubs and trees propagated from seed collected by crewmembers, staff, and local seed specialists to add vegetative diversity and provide erosion control;
- Biotechnical methods, such as the installation of willow stakes and fascines for stabilization and revegetation of stream banks and riparian areas;
- Rock and timber wall slope stabilization methods;

- Sod transplants of native plant material primarily for Stream Environment Zone (SEZ) restoration; and
- Temporary irrigation systems and other means of watering plants to establish vegetation on project sites.

Beginning in 1987, the Conservancy worked with the California Conservation Corps (CCC) and students in a combined project labor force. The students were hired through a variety of contracts, including California State University (CSU), University of California (UC), AmeriCorps, The Great Basin Institute (GBI) and the Tahoe Resource Conservation District (TRCD). Today, all crewmembers comprising the three crews – Restoration, Land Management, and Forest Improvement – are provided through agreements with TRCD and GBI. Additionally, Lake Tahoe Community College has been a valuable resource for recruiting students through the Cooperative Work Experience Education Program. In turn, the seasonal field crew members are provided with specialized training and educational opportunities.

During the past 27 years, staff and contractors, including the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU), TRCD, DPR, UC consultants, and a revegetation specialist, have evaluated Conservancy parcels to identify restoration and enhancement opportunities. Over 2,252 parcels were evaluated during several years to determine if restoration or other property management issues should be addressed. Similar evaluations are now done on a bi-annual basis through routine parcel inspections. These evaluations may recommend installation of erosion control structures, fences, and vehicle barriers, revegetation of barren and disturbed sites, fill removal, stabilization of road cuts, and/or SEZ restoration. Complex projects often require detailed plans and specifications to facilitate project review and approval by other agencies. The implementation of these projects depends upon funding and administrative capacities.

Over 350 project sites are currently targeted for potential restoration. These projects range in scope from the restoration of degraded small SEZs and land coverage parcels to the elimination of encroachment and trespass problems before site restoration. Lot inspections and citizen reports identified many of these potential projects.

2013 Crew Accomplishments

Twenty seven urban lot restoration projects were completed in 2013 including a larger project on Golden Bear, which involved decompaction and restoration of a

16,000 square foot forestry project landing area and road bed. The completed project provided a significant water quality benefit due to its proximity to Trout Creek. Further coordination will occur with El Dorado County over the next two field seasons, as other water quality improvement projects are constructed in the area.

Numerous adaptive management and follow-up activities were completed on cross program projects, including:

- Final revegetation and site restoration efforts at the former Glenwood Drive-in Property
- Further Van Sickle trail construction and trail decommissioning as part of the 2013 National Trails Day
- General clean-up and site safety measures in advance of the Tahoe Pines Campground Project
- Eagle Rock Trail maintenance and improvements
- Bank stabilization and invasive weed removal on the Upper Truckee River Airport Reach Project
- As a final stage of the Ward Creek Watershed Restoration Project (Stanford Rock Component) an earthen dam was constructed to direct flows towards the swales and away from the incised gully channel.

Anticipated Projects for the 2014 Field Season

Urban Lot Restoration Projects

There are currently over 15 urban lot restoration projects planned for implementation this summer. Through routine lot inspections, additional projects may be identified and constructed. On average, the Restoration Crew completes 20-30 urban lot projects and provides assistance on larger cross program projects.

Panorama SEZ Restoration

Existing fill will be removed, and 11,000 square feet of SEZ will be restored on a Conservancy easement parcel on Panorama Drive in Christmas Valley. While planning started last field season, the project is scheduled for implementation in the fall. Staff has engaged the LTBMU in mutual planning efforts as there is a shared property and project boundary. This restoration project will increase SEZ function in the Upper Truckee Hydrologic Area and mitigate future public service projects that may impact SEZs.

Other priorities such as the Detention Basin Pilot Project and the demolition and future planning of new acquisitions are described in the accompanying staff recommendation.

D. Management Coordination

The Conservancy has increased its capacity, expertise, and flexibility to address changing management requirements by obtaining assistance from public and private contractors. Over the years, the Conservancy has used the expertise of the CCC, CSU, UC, TRCD, DPR, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire), Department of General Services, and the City of South Lake Tahoe to perform inspections and to develop prescriptions and plans for site restoration, revegetation, and forest management projects.

Currently, the Conservancy uses a combination of public and private contractors to undertake projects and activities. TRCD currently provides 21 people who assist the Conservancy in planning and implementing its programs. Seasonal labor includes 14 crew members, one property inspector, one UTM land steward, four program assistants, and one AmeriCorps member. TRCD staff assists with coordination and implementation of restoration, management, and forest improvement projects and with monitoring and reporting activities. The non-profit Clean Tahoe Program assists with cleaning up Conservancy lands in the City of South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County under a subcontract with TRCD. Private contractors and public agencies are also being used for specialized tasks such as heavy equipment operation, hazard tree removal, and security and enforcement patrol services.

The Conservancy has worked with local governments to manage improved public recreational facilities through operating agreements or management contracts.

Pursuant to the Property Management Program authorization, minor improvements or repairs to the Kings Beach Plaza, Carnelian Bay Lake Access, Van Sickle Bi-State Park, and North Tahoe Beach, sites may be funded or undertaken by staff if circumstances warrant such action. If authorized and funds permit, staff will continue these maintenance and management arrangements throughout this fiscal year. Funding requests for larger projects which cannot be met under the Conservancy's Property Management Program budget will continue to be brought to the Board on an as-needed basis. Staff will

continue to monitor these arrangements.

Currently, the Conservancy is coordinating its Property Management Program with those of other public agencies and private entities. This coordination takes several forms:

1. Easements, Leases, and Licenses

The Conservancy cooperates with public and private entities to implement various public service projects by granting easements and licenses. Long-term agreements include:

- Five long-term licenses to the Tahoe City Public Utility District for the construction, operation, and maintenance of:
 - Two water tanks on Highlands Drive
 - An emergency power supply and two water wells on Bunker Drive
- A 25-year lease with Tahoe Cedars Water Company for construction, operation, and maintenance of a water tank on a portion of a larger Conservancy property located in Tahoma
- A long-term lease of approximately 400 acres in Upper Ward Canyon to the Alpine Meadows Ski Area; this property recently changed ownership, and the new long-term lease expires in 2029
- One license with a gasoline company and one license with the LTBMU to provide access to Conservancy land for clean up and monitoring of groundwater contaminated with Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE) and other gasoline compounds
- One long-term license to K-Mart for an underground cable, located on Conservancy property in the City of South Lake Tahoe
- One long-term license to Sierra Boat Company for underground boat bulkhead tiebacks located on Conservancy property in Carnelian Bay

To date, the Conservancy has authorized over 228 short and long-term uses of Conservancy land and granted 62 licenses to various government agencies for improvements associated with Conservancy-funded projects. As the Conservancy's restoration projects become more comprehensive, additional interagency coordination of such agreements may be required in order to successfully develop and implement projects. Staff will evaluate future requests and recommend Conservancy authorization to proceed where appropriate.

2. Coordinated Management with Other Public Agencies

Historically, staff has worked with DPR and LTBMU on several land exchanges and explored management coordination where appropriate. LTBMU, DPR, and other public agencies, including the City of South Lake Tahoe and South Tahoe Public Utility District, are exploring potential land adjustments with the Conservancy. Such adjustments could improve management efficiency, site protection, and coordination of the Conservancy's management activities with these respective agencies.

The staff recommendation provides a status update on DPR and Conservancy coordination over the past year.

3. Transfer of Management Responsibilities to Public and Private Entities

The Conservancy's program objective to coordinate its efforts with public agencies as well as the adoption of a leasing program has set the stage for the transfer of management responsibilities to both public and private entities. Currently, developed and undeveloped public recreational areas are maintained by staff or through agreements with private entities, nonprofit organizations, and other public agencies.

Arrangements with the private sector have assisted the Conservancy in providing enhanced recreational lake access at minimal cost. Specifically, Gar Woods Grill and Pier maintains the Carnelian Bay Lake Access Phase I parking area, restrooms, walkways, and grounds year-round in exchange for shared use of parking on State land. The Concession Agreement for Carnelian Bay Lake Access Phase II (Patton Landing) permits a coffee house and non-motorized beach rentals.

In some instances the Conservancy uses leases as an interim management tool until site planning processes are completed. Short-term licenses for temporary activities have also been granted. Future transactions will conform to the Special Use Guidelines.

E. Management Tools and Administration

Staff continues to develop management tools to assist with the complex task of tracking property management conditions and projects. First, spreadsheets, databases and computerized land ownership and resource maps assist in the identification of land management problems, prescriptions, and site characteristics previously identified in the acquisition database. They also provide information on material needs, supply inventories, labor costs, and project restoration costs. This information assists with project planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring.

Second, the Conservancy utilizes operating agreements, partnership agreements, memoranda of understanding (MOUs), easements, leases, licenses, and Stewardship Land Management Services agreements to deal with various management situations.

Third, the Conservancy has expedited regulatory review of its projects by entering into an MOU with TRPA. The MOU establishes standards and procedures for projects that are given exempt or qualified-exempt status under TRPA guidelines, subsequently relieving TRPA's need for case-by-case review of many management activities. Staff works with TRPA to update and modify the MOU as appropriate.

Additionally, the Conservancy has received a blanket set of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) from Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Lahontan). The WDRs only cover limited restoration projects within Stream Environment Zones (SEZs). As the Conservancy designs and implements larger and more complex projects within SEZs, greater lead time and planning will be required to meet Lahontan requirements.

Fourth, the Conservancy has developed the capacity to generate revenues for its Property Management Program through its Special Use and land coverage activities. Historically, the Conservancy had insufficient funds to fully implement its management program and could only realize a limited number of larger restoration projects. The Conservancy continues to develop sources of revenue dedicated to management activities to supplement available support funds or other monies. In Fiscal Year 2013/14, revenue generated from long and short-term use of Conservancy-owned lands totaled \$120,223. To date, revenues for these activities total approximately \$3,598,564.

Fifth, land coverage proceeds are also dedicated to the restoration and management of lands. In Fiscal Year 2013/14, the Board authorized approximately \$293,000 for restoration purposes from various capital and land bank sources.

Finally, the Conservancy continues to develop internal procedures for land management. Staff regularly updates its Project Development, Design, and Construction Handbook for the purpose of identifying, planning, designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating restoration projects. The handbook provides a guide to the procedures, equipment, and materials frequently used in the project planning and implementation process. Staff also uses it as a field reference for such information as construction details and use of plant materials. This handbook serves as an orientation tool for new staff and interns involved in site restoration procedures. Additionally, the *Revegetation Guidance Document for Erosion Control Projects in the Tahoe Basin* completed in 2010 by the Conservancy in cooperation with AECOM, a private consulting firm, continues to serve as an important project planning resource.