

California Tahoe Conservancy  
Agenda Item 9  
July 17, 2014

**TAHOE PINES CAMPGROUND RESTORATION AND ACCESS PROJECT**

**Summary:** Staff recommends authorization of up to \$650,000 for implementation of the Tahoe Pines Campground Restoration and Public Access Project, and the execution of a Transfer of Jurisdiction to accept up to 0.5 acres of rights-of-way associated with U.S. Highway 50.

**Location:** Unincorporated El Dorado County on the edge of the community of Meyers, California at 860 U.S. Highway 50 (El Dorado County Assessor's Parcel Number 034-300-10) (Attachments 1 and 2)

**Fiscal Summary:** Up to \$650,000 in Conservancy funding from the Habitat Conservation Fund, and the Lake Tahoe Conservancy Account

**Recommended Action:** Adopt Resolution 14-07-06 (Attachment 3).

---

**Background**

The Conservancy acquired the Tahoe Pines Campground property in 2007 to further its mission and programs in support of the Environmental Improvement Program. The Board authorized a total of \$1,180,000 in Conservancy funding for the acquisition under the Stream Environment Zone and Public Access and Recreation Programs. The remaining \$3,011,600 of the total acquisition cost (\$4,191,600) was provided by a Sierra Nevada-Cascade Conservation Grant. The California Wildlife Foundation assisted with securing the grant, purchasing the property, and transferring the title to the Conservancy. Initial site evaluations began in 2009, and in January of 2011 the Board authorized acceptance of up to \$200,000 in federal funding from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to facilitate planning of site improvements.

The campground operated privately between 1932 and 2007, most recently providing 59 RV and tent campsites. The previous owners removed the majority of campground infrastructure prior to sale, consistent with Conservancy acquisition requirements and as a condition of escrow. Consistent with the acquisition agreement, the parking area,

driveway and retaining walls associated with demolished residential management units were preserved, as well as an artesian well. Forestry and general property maintenance activities, including fuel reduction work and general site clean-up, have been ongoing since the time of acquisition. A significant amount (3.72 acres) of Tahoe Regional Planning Agency-verified impervious surfaces (coverage) remain onsite, largely composed of asphalt and compacted native soils which are unable to infiltrate rain and snowmelt, or support vegetative growth.

Years of camping use resulted in large areas of floodplain which are compacted, un-vegetated, and void of desirable topographic complexity. Looking downstream, the left Upper Truckee River (UTR) river bank was extensively rip-rapped and cemented, and lacks vegetation. Campsites adjacent to the river were backfilled with sand and gravel to create a level surface. The armoring and filling of the UTR banks and adjacent surfaces have reduced the river's ability to regularly inundate its floodplain (shown in Attachment 6).

### **Project Description**

The Project is part of the coordinated UTR Restoration Strategy, as it helps address watershed impacts while complementing the downstream restoration efforts. The Tahoe Pines Campground Restoration and Access Project (Project) will restore and protect the integrity of onsite riparian habitat, improve water quality, and provide public access for river-oriented recreational day use opportunities. The Project will correct the resource damage created by decades of vehicular camping at the site by restoring native habitats and hydrologic processes. Passive recreation improvements, such as picnic tables, benches, a new bridge, and walking trails will complement the restoration objectives.

Riparian habitat improvements via vegetation re-establishment will occur on the banks of the UTR as well as select locations along the three branches of Echo Creek. Fill will be removed from the UTR floodplain, restoring natural topography and encouraging inundation during spring floods. Coverage removal and vegetation re-establishment will restore the floodplain and upland habitats in areas compacted and disturbed by the historic camping use. The Project will improve water quality by reducing erosion, restoring impervious surfaces, and facilitating deposition of sediment.

The existing onsite parking lot and bridge serve as the main access to the property, providing pedestrian and bicycle access for the general public. The Conservancy will remove the parking lot and replace it with new asphalt parking, striped to meet current standards. The Conservancy will install a gate to assist with property management and

seasonal site closures. A structural evaluation of the existing bridge over Echo Creek indicated a need for corrective actions. A new pre-fabricated bridge and foundation will replace the existing bridge and abutments roughly at the current bridge location. A new path will extend from the parking area to the UTR to support river-oriented access consistent with the purpose of acquisition.

Historic camping activities encroached into the U.S. Highway 50 Right-of-Way (ROW). In an effort to comprehensively restore and manage the entire Project site, nearly one-half of an acre of Caltrans ROW is proposed to be transferred to the Conservancy. This Transfer of Jurisdiction (TOJ) is consistent with previous transfers of property rights between the Conservancy and Caltrans, and builds specifically upon the license and transfer approved by the Board in March of 2012.

### **Project Budget**

The Conservancy Board authorized \$236,500 for the Project through past annual planning authorizations. Planning funds have been used for resource evaluations, opportunity and constraint analyses, and preliminary design of the Project. In January of 2011, the Board authorized acceptance of up to \$200,000 in U.S. Bureau of Reclamation funding to reimburse planning costs. Reimbursements under this federal grant include costs related to Conservancy staff time in addition to contractual expenses.

The total estimated budget proposed to finalize construction plans and specifications, provide construction oversight and materials testing, and complete project implementation is \$650,000, as detailed below. California Conservation Corps and/or Tahoe Resource Conservation District crews will be utilized for revegetation and irrigation. Funding sources will include the Habitat Conservation Fund, the Lake Tahoe Conservancy Account funds.

<b>Budget Item</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
Final Design (plans and specifications)	\$50,000
Plan Check, Advertise/Bidding, Fees	35,000
Construction Management, Inspection, Material testing	120,000
Construction	370,000
Construction Contingency (20%)	<u>75,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$650,000</b>

Please note that costs for individual budget items may vary from those shown above, but total expenditures will not exceed \$650,000.

## **Project Implementation**

Staff will work with the Department of General Services (DGS) to secure State Public Works Board (PWB) approval to implement the Project. The Conservancy and DGS will complete final design and prepare bid documents. Project permit applications will be submitted in fall of 2014, to gain the necessary approvals from the applicable State, Regional and Federal authorities.

The Project is anticipated to take less than one construction season to implement, with at least two additional years for Project monitoring. Monitoring results will inform any necessary adaptive management actions to ensure the objectives of the Project are fully realized.

Staff will work with Caltrans ROW staff and DGS to complete the TOJ.

The Project is expected to proceed according to the following schedule:

PWB approval	September 2014
Permit applications	November 2014
Bid advertisement	March 2015
Start of construction	August 2015
Completion of construction	October 2015
Completion of TOJ	July 2017

## **Project Evaluation**

Implementation of the Project meets both the criteria and objectives of the Conservancy's Public Access and Recreation and the Stream Environment Zone (SEZ) Programs. The Project will increase and enhance significant regional public access to a regionally significant riverfront (the UTR) and public recreational opportunities by establishing an accessible day use area for passive river-oriented and general forest recreation. The Project will further the resource objectives of the SEZ program by restoring and enhancing a significantly degraded SEZ. Restoration actions will improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, enhance wildlife and fisheries habitat, advance vegetation health and complexity, and improve scenic resources from the State Scenic Highway, U.S. Highway 50.

The TOJ is consistent with the Conservancy's March 2014 Asset Lands Program Guidelines concerning government-to-government transfers, and fulfills Program objectives by delivering public services, including recreational use and public access, and advances Conservancy land management and site restoration goals.

### **Consistency with the Conservancy's Enabling Legislation**

Implementation of this project is consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation. Government Code section 66907.10 authorizes the Conservancy to improve and develop acquired lands for a variety of purposes, including protection of the natural environment. Government Code section 66907 authorizes the Conservancy to select and acquire real property or interests therein in the name of and on behalf of the State, for the purposes of protecting the natural environment, providing public access or public recreational facilities, preserving wildlife habitat areas, or providing access to or management of acquired lands. Pursuant to Government Code section 66907.1 and 66907.2, the Conservancy may acquire interests in land by means of land exchanges. Under Government Code section 66906.8, the Conservancy is authorized to select and hire private consultants or contractors.

### **Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

The Conservancy, acting as the lead agency, prepared an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Tahoe Pines Campground Restoration and Access Project to comply with CEQA. Copies of the IS/MND have been provided to the Board on an attached CD (Attachment 4) and are retained, with the record of proceedings upon which the Board's decision on this matter is based, at the Conservancy office, 1061 Third St., South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150. A Notice of Availability and Intent to adopt an initial study/ mitigated negative declaration was filed with the State Clearinghouse, commencing the public review/comment period May 6, 2014. The Clearinghouse circulated these documents to responsible agencies for review. The Notice of Availability and Intent for the project was also publicly noticed, announcing the public review period for the IS/MND and providing information regarding where the documents could be reviewed (Conservancy Office and website, and El Dorado County Library, South Lake Tahoe Branch). The Conservancy received two comment letters during the review and comment period, which ended on June 13, 2014. The comment letters, along with the Conservancy's Response to Comments, are attached to the IS/MND.

Staff believes the proposed Project has been adequately analyzed in the IS/MND. Staff has determined that the Project, as proposed, would not cause a significant effect on the environment. The mitigation measures for the Project can be found on pages 10, 13 and 14 of Section 3 - Initial Study/Checklist.

Staff recommends the Board consider the IS/MND, together with comments received during the public review process; adopt the MND and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program by making the findings as set forth in the resolution (Attachment 3);

and authorize the Project as described above. If the Board adopts the IS/MND and authorizes the Project, staff will file a Notice of Determination (Attachment 5) with the State Clearinghouse pursuant to CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., title 14, § 15000 et seq.), section 15075.

**List of Attachments:**

Attachment 1 – Project Location Map

Attachment 2 – Surrounding Ownership

Attachment 3 – Resolution 14-07-06

Attachment 4 – Initial Study, Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration  
(On attached CD)

Attachment 5 – Notice of Determination

Attachment 6 – Project Photos

**Conservancy Staff Contact:**

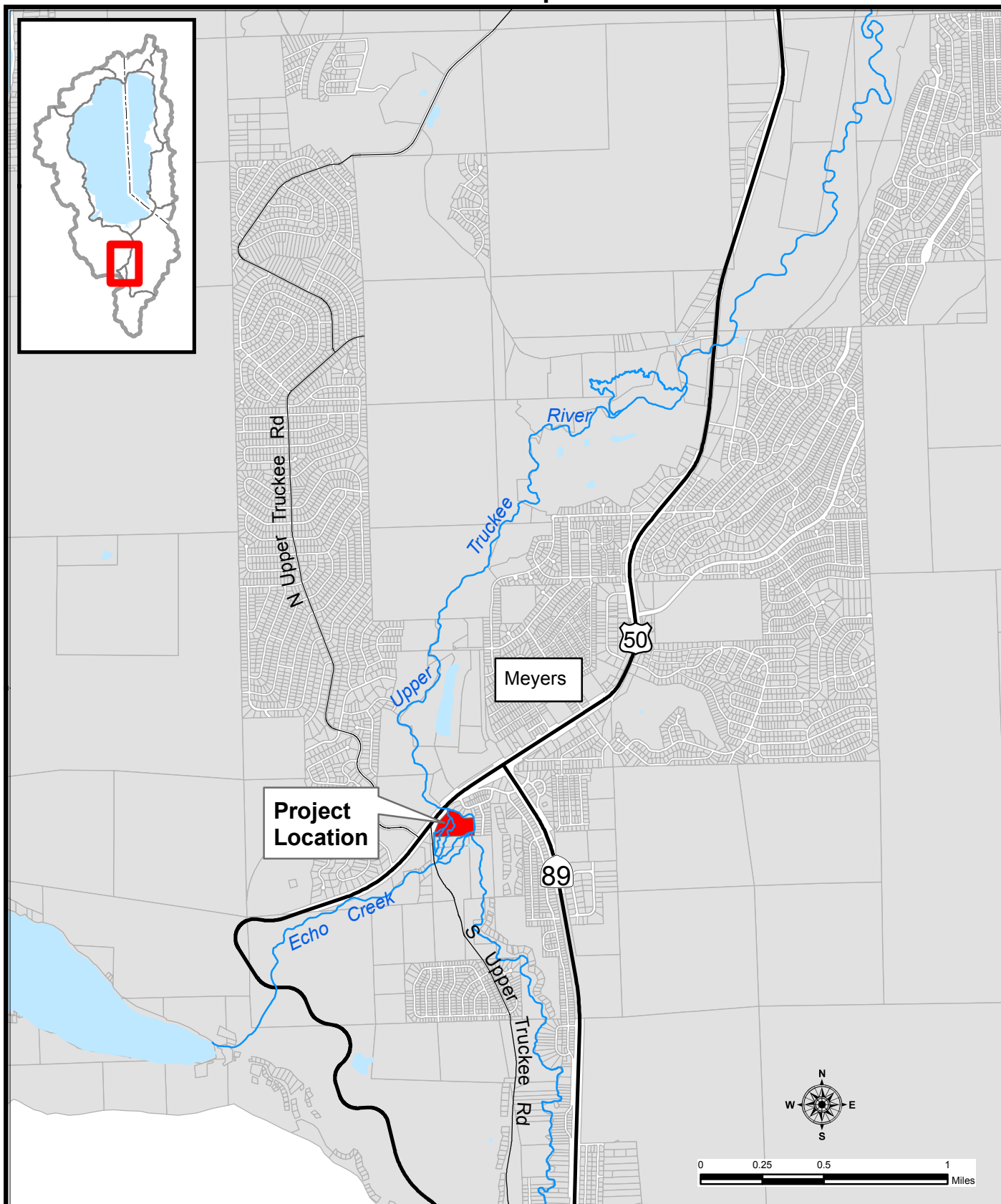
Peer Eichar, AICP

Phone: (530) 543-6046

Peter.Eichar@tahoe.ca.gov

Tahoe Pines Campground Restoration and Access Project

Location Map



 **Tahoe Pines Campground  
Restoration and Access Project**

California Tahoe Conservancy

July 2014

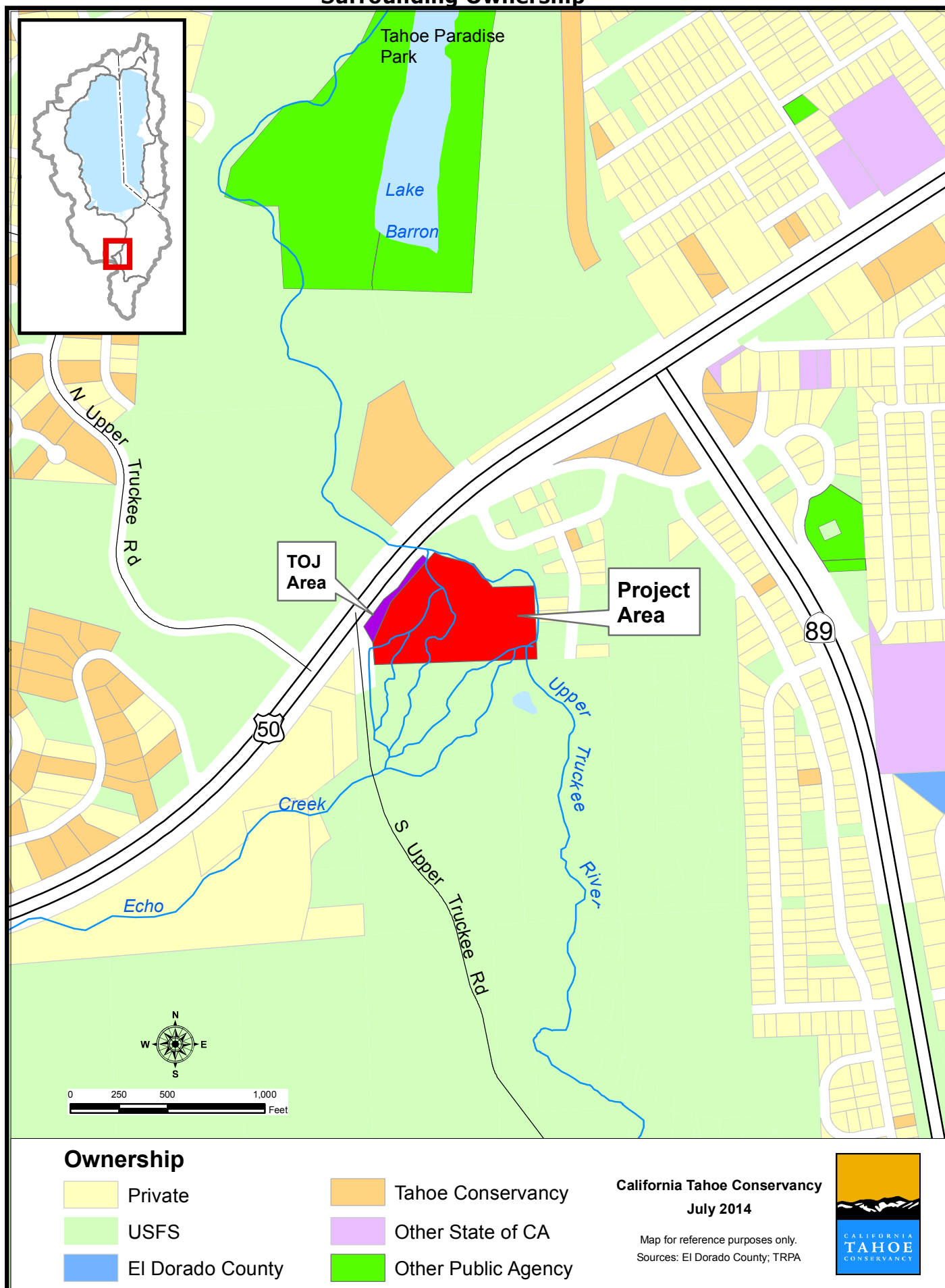
Map for reference purposes only.  
Sources: El Dorado County; TRPA



# ATTACHMENT 2

## Tahoe Pines Campground Restoration and Access Project

### Surrounding Ownership



### **ATTACHMENT 3**

California Tahoe Conservancy

Resolution

14-07-06

Adopted: July 17, 2014

### **TAHOE PINES CAMPGROUND RESTORATION AND ACCESS PROJECT**

Staff recommends that the California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) adopt the following finding based on the accompanying staff report, and pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.:

"The Conservancy, in its capacity as the lead agency, independently prepared the Initial Study and Final Mitigated Negative Declaration, Response to Comments, and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Tahoe Pines Campground Restoration and Access project (Project). The Conservancy finds on the basis of the whole record before it that there is no substantial evidence that the Project, as mitigated, will have a significant effect on the environment and that the Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the Conservancy's independent judgment and analysis. The Conservancy incorporates the mitigation measures described in the MND as a condition of approval. The Conservancy hereby adopts the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and approves the project as described in the Mitigated Negative Declaration."

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following resolution, pursuant to Government Code section 66907:

"The Conservancy hereby authorizes staff to expend up to \$650,000 to facilitate preparation of final design plans, construction funding and, construction oversight and materials inspection for the proposed Project."

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution duly and regularly adopted by the 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 Officer

## **ATTACHMENT 4**

### **TAHOE PINES CAMPGROUND RESTORATION AND ACCESS PROJECT**

California Tahoe Conservancy  
Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration

(On attached CD)

## ATTACHMENT 5

### NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

TO: Office of Planning and Research  
1400 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 121  
Sacramento, CA 95814

FROM: California Tahoe Conservancy  
1061 Third Street  
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

---

***Subject:***

The Tahoe Pines Campground Restoration and Access Project (Project) proposes to restore and protect the integrity of the riparian habitat while providing public access for river-oriented recreational day use opportunities.

---

***Project Title:***

Tahoe Pines Campground Restoration and Access Project

---

***State Clearinghouse Number:***  
2014052009

***Contact Person:***  
Peter Eichar

***Telephone Number:***  
(530) 543-6046

---

***Project Location:***

The Project site is located in unincorporated El Dorado County on the edge of the community of Meyers, California at 860 U.S. Highway 50 (El Dorado Assessor's Parcel Number 034-300-10).

---

***Project Description:***

The Tahoe Pines Campground Restoration and Access Project (Project) proposes to restore and protect the integrity of the riparian habitat while providing public access for river-oriented recreational day use opportunities. The Project will correct the resource damage created by decades of vehicular camping at the site and restore natural habitats and hydrologic processes. Passive recreation amenities, such as picnic tables, benches and, hiking trails will compliment the restoration objectives. Riparian habitat improvements via vegetation re-establishment will occur on the banks of the Upper Truckee River (UTR) as well as select locations along the three branches of Echo Creek. Vegetation re-establishment will also occur throughout the site in areas compacted and disturbed by the historic camping use in effort to restore the floodplain habitat function and roughness.

---

This is to advise that the Conservancy, acting as the lead agency, has approved the above described project on July 17, 2014 and has made the following determinations regarding the above described project:

1. The project will not have a significant effect on the environment.
2. An Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project was prepared by the Conservancy. The Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration may be examined at 1061 Third Street, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.
3. The Mitigated Negative Declaration was adopted pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
4. Mitigation Measures were made a condition of the project approval by the Conservancy.

---

**Fish and Wildlife Fees:** A California Department of Fish and Wildlife Environmental Filing Fee will be filed with this notice.

***Date Received for Filing:***

---

Patrick Wright  
Executive Director

## ATTACHMENT 6

### Project Photos



2007 flood event



Debris and heavily armored bank void of vegetation