

California Tahoe Conservancy  
Agenda Item 9b  
June 20, 2013

**ANNUAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AUTHORIZATION**

**Summary:** Staff recommends authorization of up to \$715,000 for direct property management, hazard abatement, and restoration activities on Conservancy properties during Fiscal Year 2013/2014.

**Location:** Throughout the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin

**Fiscal Summary:**

Source of Funds:

Conservancy Support Funds (Proposition 84 or other)	\$ 351,000
Capital Outlay Funds	\$ 364,000

Total Recommended Authorization: \$ 715,000

**Recommended Action:** Adopt Resolution 13-06-05 (Attachment 1)

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**Background**

This is the 27th 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 Forest Habitat Enhancement Program is bringing a separate recommendation for consideration by the Board at this month's meeting.

The Conservancy manages nearly 4,900 parcels. Program challenges include 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;
- Increased 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, 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 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.

During the 2012 field season, the land management and restoration seasonal staff accomplished the following:

Annual lot inspections	2980
Inspections to date	90,727
Citizen reports and follow-up inspections	145
Fuels treatment (acres)	9
Maintenance work orders	193
Hazard tree removal	53
Asphalt removal at Glenwood Drive-in (sq. ft.)	78,000
Smaller parcel restoration projects	17

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

### **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 property management authorization will specifically 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, the North Tahoe Public Utilities District, and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). Project implementation may be performed by public and private entities, including seasonal field crews, the California Conservation Corps, AmeriCorps, the Nevada Conservation Corps, Clean Tahoe Program, and other private sector and non-profit work crews.

***Priority Projects and Issues for 2013 field season***

***SEZ Restoration***

Existing fill will be removed, and 10,000 square feet of SEZ will be restored on a Conservancy-owned parcel in Christmas Valley. This restoration project will reduce in the Upper Truckee Hydrologic Area and mitigate future public service projects that may impact SEZs.

***Ward Creek Watershed Restoration Project (Stanford Rock Component)***

In July 2010, the Board adopted the Negative Declaration (ND) and authorized \$25,000 for Restoration Crew staffing and materials to implement the Stanford Rock component of the Ward Creek Watershed Restoration Project. In July 2011, the Board authorized an additional \$10,500 to further stabilize newly constructed channels within the project area in order to prevent sediment discharge to Ward Creek. To complete the project and achieve all anticipated benefits, staff is now requesting up to \$39,500 for materials and seasonal hand crews. This amount is included in the \$364,000 total shown in the Resource Restoration and Enhancement section of the Proposed Budget below.

*Annual Seasonal Dog Closure at the Upper Truckee Marsh*

In July 2010, staff recommended and 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 unless the Board changes the policy. Implementing a year-round, no dog policy, along with other potential management strategies, remains an option. Staff will report back to the Board in September 2013 regarding the efficacy of the seasonal closure, compliance with leash regulations subsequent to the closure period, and recommendations for management options for the 2014 season.

*Exchange and Transfer of Conservancy Lands and Kings Beach State Recreation Area*

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. Staff will provide an update on the status of the transfer at the meeting.

*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. The signing of the Park's Operating Agreement with Nevada Division of State Parks was completed in spring 2011, and 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 has been committed for monitoring 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 to DPR within three years. If the transfer does not occur, staff costs to operate and maintain Van Sickle may be considerable.

In celebration of National Trails Day, the Conservancy hosted the Tahoe Rim Trail Association on June 1, 2013 to complete important trail network segments within Van Sickle.

### *Conservancy Land Management Plan*

The Strategic Plan, adopted by the Board on September 12, 2012, directs the Conservancy to develop a comprehensive Land Management Plan to more effectively manage its lands.

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 will recognize the various purposes of Conservancy lands and classify them based on management objectives and goals. Desired conditions and management actions will then be developed to achieve these goals. The Plan will be consistent with 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 will seek input and guidance from the Board throughout the process, and seek Board adoption of the Land Management Plan in 2014.

### **Program Budget**

Staff is requesting authority to expend up to \$715,000, including \$351,000 in support funds and \$364,000 in capital outlay funds. Staff will continue to implement the Conservancy's property management, hazard abatement, and property restoration activities during Fiscal Year 2013/2014, as described below.

Proposed expenditures are outlined as follows:

**Land Management and Public Safety (Support Funds)**

Land Management Crew	\$64,000
Property Inspection and Cleanup	70,000
Hazard Tree Removal	25,000
Beach Maintenance	125,000
Facilities and Maintenance	42,000
Equipment, Materials, and Supplies	<u>25,000</u>
<b>Land Management and Public Safety Sub-Total:</b>	<b>\$351,000</b>

**Resource Restoration and Enhancement (Capital Outlay Funds)**

Restoration Crew	\$125,000
Restoration Planning	69,000
Contracting and Project Implementation	75,000
Restoration Equipment, Materials and Supplies	30,000
Heavy Equipment Contract	<u>65,000</u>
<b>Resource Restoration and Enhancement Sub-Total:</b>	<b>\$364,000</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$715,000</b>

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. It should also be noted that the support funding in this staff recommendation reflects one time savings of \$100,000 due to prior year encumbrances.

**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.

The Conservancy, acting as the lead agency, prepared an Initial Study and Negative Declaration (IS/ND) for the Drainage and Stream Environment Zone Project near the Stanford Rock Road (Stanford Rock) to comply with CEQA. The Board adopted the ND for Stanford Rock on July 15, 2010 and a Notice of Determination (NOD) was filed with the State Clearinghouse on July 20, 2010. A copy of the IS/ND has been provided to the Board on the attached CD and is available for public review at the Conservancy office, 1061 Third Street, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150 (Attachment 3).

Staff has reviewed the ND and believes that the proposed improvements are consistent with and have been adequately analyzed in the document. Staff has determined that the project, as proposed, would not cause a significant effect on the environment. Since completion of the ND, there is no new information, substantial changes to the proposed project, or changes to implementation which would involve any new significant effects that were not analyzed in the ND.

Staff recommends the Board review the ND and make the findings as set forth in the attached resolution. If the Board certifies the ND and authorizes the additional funding, staff will file a NOD (Attachment 4) with the State Clearinghouse pursuant to CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., title 14, § 15000 et seq.), section 15075.

**List of Attachments:**

Attachment 1 – Resolution 13-06-05

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

Attachment 3 – Drainage and Stream Environment Zone Project Near the  
Stanford Rock Road Crossing Initial Study and Negative  
Declaration (on attached CD)

Attachment 4 – Conservancy Proposed Notice of Determination

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## **ATTACHMENT 1**

California Tahoe Conservancy

Resolution

13-06-05

Adopted: June 20, 2013

### **ANNUAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AUTHORIZATION**

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

“The California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy), in its capacity as the lead agency, independently prepared the Initial Study and Negative Declaration for the Drainage and Stream Environment Zone component of the Ward Creek Watershed Restoration Project near the Stanford Rock Crossing. The Conservancy first considered and adopted the Negative Declaration on July 15, 2010. The Conservancy has reviewed the Negative Declaration and finds that the improvements proposed have been adequately analyzed. The Conservancy finds that no substantial changes are proposed in the project, and no substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken that would involve any new significant environmental effects or significantly increase the severity of any previously identified impacts. Accordingly, the Conservancy hereby adopts the Negative Declaration and directs staff to file a Notice of Determination for the project with the State Clearinghouse.”

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 \$715,000 for direct management and restoration as described in the accompanying staff report, including up to \$39,500 for the Ward Creek Watershed Restoration Project, 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."

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 20<sup>th</sup> day of June 2013.

In WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 20<sup>th</sup> Day of June, 2013.

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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.

The Conservancy is making substantial progress in the following areas:

#### **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 2,980 parcels, with follow-up as needed; bi-annual inspection of all Conservancy-owned parcels; over 90,727 parcel inspections completed since 1987
- Approximately 145 inspections conducted last year in response to agency or citizen requests. In past years, citizen reports have exceeded 200 per season. Staff has received 14 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; 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 nine acres of fuels treatment, the Land Management Crew completed 193 maintenance work orders during the 2012 field season, 53 of which were for the removal of hazard trees. Thus far, the Conservancy has identified 40 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 535 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 270.

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 initiated a process to address these situations; 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. Staff distributes this brochure to interested residents and to parties causing adverse impacts on Conservancy properties. The Conservancy website also serves as a valuable tool for conveying land management objectives 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 4,258 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 2012-2013, 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 Kings Beach Plaza, North Tahoe Beach, Carnelian Bay Lake Access, and Van Sickle Bi-State Park to undeveloped sites with recreation potential, including Moon Dunes, Eagle Rock, Snow Creek, Sandy Beach, Cove East, Upper Truckee Marsh, the former Sunset Stables and Elks Club properties.

### **1. Upper Truckee Marsh (UTM)**

Since the acquisition of the Upper Truckee Marsh in November 2000, 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 provide information to the community about the sensitive plant and wildlife resources present and changes in management related to dog access. Portions of the beach have been designated for habitat protection for the Tahoe Yellow Cress (TYC), an endangered species that only grows on sandy beaches in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Staff and the land steward's routine maintenance of TYC protection areas and educational signage are encouraged by the public's willingness to respect this species' critical habitat.

Staff and the Land Steward continually provide education for 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 July and August 2012, 33 citations and 54 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 in September 2013 regarding the success of the closure and subsequent leash restrictions, and recommended changes, as necessary, to the management strategy for 2014. Both the closure and any applicable 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. This policy is consistent with the purposes for which the Cove East property was acquired.

## **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. In May 2009, the Board adopted the environmental findings, authorized the execution of modified easements to allow NDSP to proceed with park improvements, and authorized the execution of a management agreement between the Conservancy and NDSP.

The Board authorized implementation of the California Day-Use Area of Van Sickle in January 2011, and construction was completed the following summer. The NDSP infrastructure project and signing of the Park's Operating Agreement was completed in spring 2011, and 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 has been committed for monitoring and evaluation of existing and emerging uses and potential management issues.

Since June 2007, the Conservancy has partnered with the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to provide site hosts on the property. The Site Hosts continue to be a valuable resource at Van Sickle performing routine maintenance, visitor education, and resource protection. In addition to the Van Sickle Foundation's \$84,000 grant (\$17,500 per year for five years) for operations, provided to Van Sickle through a grant to the Tahoe Rim Trail Association in 2011, the Tahoe Fund granted \$25,000 in 2011 to fund initial operational and interpretive costs. The majority of the Tahoe Fund grant has now been expended.

This summer the Lake Valley Fire Protection District will complete a comprehensive forest fuel reduction project on the California side to complement work conducted by NDSP. Additionally, in celebration of National Trails Day, the Conservancy hosted the Tahoe Rim Trail Association on June 1, 2013 to complete some important trail network sections within Van Sickle.

### **C. Restoration and Enhancement of Resources**

A key component of the Conservancy's Property Management Program is the restoration and enhancement of acquired properties. 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;
- Other 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, and the Tahoe Resource Conservation District (TRCD). Today, all crewmembers comprising the three crews – Restoration, Land Management, and Forest Habitat Enhancement – are provided through agreements with TRCD. Additionally, Lake Tahoe Community College has been a valuable resource for recruiting students through the Cooperative Work Experience Education Program. In turn, the Conservancy provides crew members with specialized training and educational opportunities.

During the past 26 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 280 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. Staff anticipates that, subject to budget limitations, 20-30 priority projects will be selected from this inventory and implemented during the 2013 field season.

### ***2012 Crew Accomplishments***

Following National Trails Day in June 2012, the restoration crew began their field season by completing, connecting, and refining sections of new and existing trails at Van Sickle Bi-State Park. Along with the Tahoe Rim Trail Association, volunteers, and the crew, the National Trails Day effort and follow up work yielded approximately 4,257 linear feet of new trail, of which 538 feet was realignment or maintenance of existing trail tread. Over 5,000 square feet of disturbed area was restored in the process.

Assisted by a local heavy equipment contractor, the Conservancy Restoration Crew removed over 78,000 square feet of asphalt from the former drive-in on Glenwood Way, which was followed by restoration and revegetation of the area. Over 23,000 square feet of this area was classified as SEZ. This restoration project will assist the Conservancy's Land Bank with meeting Excess Coverage Mitigation obligations in the South Stateline Hydrologic Area and mitigate future public service projects that may impact SEZ. Through a license agreement with the City of South Lake Tahoe, the remaining 25,000 square feet of asphalt will be utilized as a staging area for the Bijou Area Erosion Control Project, Phase 1. After two construction seasons the asphalt will be removed and the area will be restored.

The crew also continued adaptive management on the Ward Creek Watershed Restoration Project, restoring areas that needed revegetation and rehabilitation. Contingent upon Board approval, additional work is planned for the 2013 field season.

As part of a new collaborative effort the restoration crew was involved in a Community Watershed Program (CWP) project, which was a coordinated effort between with the Conservancy, El Dorado County, and TRCD. The project addressed severely eroding cut slopes in the County right-of-way, many of which were connected to Conservancy parcels. Some of the project components included installation of erosion control blanketing, rock slope stabilization and revegetation.

The crew constructed 600 feet of timber fencing to help delineate the completed portion the El Dorado County Sawmill Bike Trail and protect Conservancy and the adjoining Washoe Meadows State Park lands from potential resource damage.

After the demolition of three residential units at the former Tahoe Pines Campground in South Lake Tahoe, the crew cleaned up and delineated areas for public safety, as well as revegetated and stabilized 8,000 square feet of disturbed and compacted soils.

Staff also planned and hosted a project to include the Tahoe Baikal Institute (TBI) and the crew, as it has in previous years. The project on a Conservancy-owned Jewell Road parcel included fuels reduction, SEZ restoration, revegetation, timber fence construction, and general site protection.

In addition to the larger projects, the restoration crew implemented 17 projects on smaller Conservancy-owned parcels with various resource management issues including soil compaction, erosion control problems and inappropriate uses.

Restoration accomplishments to date include 488 resource protection, SEZ restoration, revegetation, and erosion control projects on 824 parcels, totaling over 45.47 acres of land restoration. It should be noted these restoration totals generally reflect only work done on small urban parcels and do not reflect larger cross-program restoration projects; however, the former drive-in on Glenwood Way restoration project is included in these totals.

### *Anticipated Projects for the 2013 Field Season*

As the Conservancy restoration crew has become increasingly involved in cross-program projects and adaptive management, several such projects are planned for the 2013 field season. These projects include installation of a temporary irrigation system at the former drive-in on Glenwood Way restoration project to enhance revegetation efforts from the 2012 field season, additional improvements to the Van Sickle Bi-State Park trail network, and additional work on the Ward Creek Watershed Restoration Project, including installation of a temporary irrigation system, revegetation, and monitoring activities.

Other cross-program projects will include additional work at the Tahoe Pines Campground and a 10,000 square foot SEZ restoration project on Panorama Drive in Christmas Valley, which will assist the Conservancy's Land Bank with meeting Excess Coverage Mitigation obligations in the South Stateline Hydrologic Area and mitigate future public service projects that may impact SEZ.

A large house foundation and slope stabilization project on Thunderbird Drive in El Dorado County and coordinated erosion control and storm water improvement project on Golden Bear Trail are still in the planning process.

Since TBI has put their summer program on hold, staff will not be hosting a collaborative project during the 2013 field season.

### **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 24 people who assist the Conservancy in planning and implementing its programs. Seasonal labor includes 17 crew members, one property inspector, one UTM land steward, five program assistants, and one AmeriCorps member. TRCD staff assists with coordination and implementation of restoration, management, and forest habitat enhancement 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. The North Tahoe Public Utility District currently provides site maintenance services for the Conservancy's North Tahoe Beach, Kings Beach Plaza, Sandy Beach, Moon Dunes Beach, Steamer's Beach, and Secline Beach public access areas.

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

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 207 short and long-term uses of Conservancy land and granted 55 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. The Glenridge land exchange exemplified of this process, resulting in the transfer of over 300 acres to DPR from LTBMU. 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.

Ultimately, the Conservancy may wish to acquire lands to consolidate public ownership in a specific area in order to facilitate property management pursuant to its enabling legislation. Initial land exchanges with DPR were approved by the Board in September 2012.

Staff continues working with DPR to identify resource sharing opportunities, including:

- Project and monitoring coordination;
- Equipment coordination and storage;
- Training coordination;
- Office space and personnel;
- Facility maintenance;
- Publicity;
- Land transfer;
- Staffing; and
- Law enforcement

### ***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 with the non-profit Alpengroup for Carnelian Bay Lake Access Phase II (Patton Landing) permits a coffee house and non-motorized beach rentals.

As the Board is aware, leases are also being used in some instances 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 Leasing Guidelines adopted by the Board on February 19, 1988, and amended on July 17, 1992 and July 24, 1998. Additional updates and modifications to the Leasing Guidelines were adopted by the Board on July 15, 2010, and on January 20, 2011.

The implementation of the Stewardship Land Management Services Program (SLMS), adopted by the Board in July 1989 and modified in July 1994, has provided additional means of property management involving the private sector. Through SLMS, private landowners or groups are given an opportunity to provide a variety of voluntary services, including site restoration activities, seed collection, litter control, and reporting of adverse resource conditions such as trespass and encroachment activities on Conservancy-owned lands. To date, staff has entered into 59 SLMS agreements involving 93 parcels.

#### **E. Management Tools and Administration**

Staff is continuing to develop management tools to assist with the complex task of tracking property management conditions and projects. First, spreadsheets and databases 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 development of additional capabilities and coordination with other agencies for various activities (such as coverage restoration) is ongoing. An interagency Geographic Information System (GIS) has aided in the production of computerized land ownership and resource maps. Retention of a GIS specialist has assisted the Conservancy to develop far greater capabilities during the past five years.

Third, the Conservancy has developed a wide range of tools to deal with various management situations such as operating agreements, partnership agreements, memoranda of understanding (MOUs), easements, leases, licenses, and SLMS agreements.

Fourth, the Conservancy has sought to expedite regulatory review of its projects. The Conservancy has entered into an MOU with TRPA that establishes standards and procedures for projects that are given exempt or qualified-exempt status under TRPA guidelines. The MOU relieves the need for case-by-case review by TRPA of many management activities undertaken by the Conservancy. Staff has engaged with TRPA staff 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 (LRWQCB). These WDRs cover a variety of activities and are required to meet water quality objectives established by LRWQCB. At this time, however, 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 LRWQCB's requirements.

Fifth, the Conservancy has developed the capacity to generate revenues for its Property Management Program through its leasing 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. Consequently, it is important to develop sources of revenue dedicated to management activities to supplement available support funds or other monies. To date, private lease revenues total approximately \$3,478,341.

Sixth, land coverage proceeds are also dedicated to the restoration and management of lands. Historically, about \$250,000 in TRPA mitigation funds and proceeds from the sale of coverage and other marketable rights have been included in the annual authorization to fund restoration activities. To date, \$4,680,000 from various capital outlay sources have been authorized for restoration purposes by the Board.

Finally, the Conservancy is continually developing internal procedures for management of lands. 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. It is also used 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.

**ATTACHMENT 3**

**DRAINAGE AND STREAM ENVIRONMENT ZONE PROJECT  
NEAR THE STANFORD ROCK ROAD CROSSING**

Department of General Services  
Initial Study  
Negative Declaration

On attached CD

## ATTACHMENT 4

### 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

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***Subject:***

Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resource Code

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***Project Title:***

Drainage and Stream Environment Zone (SEZ) Restoration Project near the Stanford Rock Road Crossing (Ward Creek Watershed Restoration Project/Drainage and SEZ Component)

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***State Clearinghouse Number:***

2010052065

***Contact Person:***

Scott K. Cecchi

***Telephone Number:***

(530) 543-6015

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***Project Location:***

The proposed project is located in the Ward Creek watershed on the West Shore of Lake Tahoe. Proposed restoration activities will occur on Conservancy owned property (APN 084-010-047), which is located on the south side of Ward Creek, southwest of the Stanford Rock Road crossing.

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***Project Description:***

The Conservancy, in conjunction with DGS, is proposing partial restoration of an area highly disturbed by previous logging activities. The objective of the project is to restore, to the extent practical, the original drainage patterns, wet meadow and wetland areas, improve wildlife habitat and reduce erosion in the project area. Following project completion, artificially concentrated drainage flows will be spread across the landscape in a similar manner to that which existed prior to disturbance. All work is intended to result in a natural appearing and self-sustaining drainage system when the project is complete.

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This is to advise that the California Tahoe Conservancy, acting as lead agency, has approved the above described project on June 20, 2013 and has made the following determinations regarding the above described project:

1. The project will not have a significant effect on the environment.
2. A Negative Declaration for the project was prepared and adopted by the Conservancy on July 15, 2010, and a Notice of Determination (NOD) was filed on July 20, 2010. The Conservancy considered and adopted the Negative Declaration again on July 21, 2011 and filed a NOD on July 25, 2011. The NODs, Negative Declaration, and record of project approval may be examined at the California Tahoe Conservancy, 1061 Third Street, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.
3. The Conservancy finds that no substantial changes are proposed in the project, and no substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the project is being implemented that would result in any potentially significant environmental effects. Furthermore, there are no changes regarding the project that would require new mitigation measures.

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Fish and Game Fees: Paid on 7/20/10

***Date Received for Filing:***

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Patrick Wright  
Executive Director