

California Tahoe Conservancy  
Agenda Item 8c  
June 18, 2015

**ANNUAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AUTHORIZATION**

**Summary:** Staff recommends authorization of up to expend up to \$751,978 for direct property management, hazard abatement, and restoration activities on Conservancy properties during Fiscal Year 2015/2016.

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

**Fiscal Summary:**

Source of Funds:

<b>Conservancy Support Funds</b>	\$413,078
(Environmental License Plate and/or Tahoe Conservancy Funds)	
<b>Capital Outlay Funds</b>	<u>338,900</u>
(Prop 84 Funds and other Capital Outlay Funds)	
Total Recommended Authorization:	\$751,978

**Recommended Action:** Adopt Resolution 15-06-04 (Attachment 1)

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**Background**

This is the 29th 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, totaling approximately 6,000 acres.

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:

- Developed a Parcel Data Management System (PDMS), which provides staff with real-time information on all Conservancy lands in 2014. The information includes past and planned projects, easements and licenses, annual site inspections and a variety of ownership information. With technical expertise provided by the Conservancy's information technology department, staff will continue to develop and maintain the system.
- 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.

**2014 Field Season Accomplishments:**

Annual lot inspections*	2323
Citizen reports and follow-up inspections	98
Fuels treatment (acres)	12
Maintenance work orders	65
Hazard tree removal	15
Smaller parcel restoration projects	33
* 95,994 inspections to date	

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 restoration of land and stream environment zones.

**Property Management**

This authorization will authorized staff 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 forested urban lots as needed between regular forestry prescriptions;
- Address inappropriate uses and trespass issues;
- Identify and remove hazardous trees to protect life and property;

- Develop resource restoration prescriptions and contracts for a Tahoe Resource Conservation District (Tahoe RCD) seasonal restoration crew to implement restoration projects;
- Assist with restoration activities implemented under other Conservancy programs;
- Contract for rental equipment services necessary to implement restoration activities;
- Contract and make other arrangements 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 a seasonal land management crew to perform fuels hazard reduction work, maintain past restoration projects, and maintain high-use properties such as the UTM;
- 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 seeks the assistance from various agencies and organizations, including the Tahoe RCD, the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office, Clean Tahoe Program, and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). While project implementation will be primarily performed by the Tahoe RCD seasonal field crews or work crews may be provided by the California Conservation Corps, AmeriCorps, the Nevada Conservation Corps, American Conservation Experience, and private sector independent contractors.

### **Priority Projects and Issues for 2015 Field Season**

#### *Demolition and Site Restoration*

Staff contracted for the demolition and site stabilization of the recently acquired Smoke Shop property in South Lake Tahoe. A private contractor will remove the buildings, asphalt, and hazardous materials. Initial soil scarification and site stabilization will also performed by the contractor. Staff will then assess the property following demolition and perform additional site stabilization and best management practices (BMP'S) as needed. A total of 15,500 square feet of SEZ is anticipated to be restored. This restored property may serve as a key component in the City of South Lake Tahoe's Tahoe Valley Area Plan and water quality improvement project.

### *Recreation and Access*

In fall 2014, the Conservancy closed escrow on the demolished Alta Mira building. The Conservancy subsequently stabilized the building footprint and protected it with vehicle barriers. Additional restoration, such as removal of paved areas, further site stabilization, and installation of appropriate BMP's are contemplated as conceptual long-term planning for the site proceeds.

### *Community Watershed Planning*

El Dorado County (County), Tahoe RCD, and the Conservancy will engage in a coordinated effort to address erosion and water quality issues in the Montgomery Estates neighborhood in South Lake Tahoe. Rock retaining walls will be built on eroding road cut slopes that share County right-of way and Conservancy property. While the Tahoe RCD is prepared to provide the materials, the County will provide heavy equipment, site preparation and additional expertise. Much of the labor will be provided by the Tahoe RCD seasonal contract crews. The retaining walls will stabilize the slopes and prevent erosion and sediment from entering Trout and Cold Creeks.

### *Parcel Signage Program*

Consistent with Strategic Plan direction, staff continues to implement the property signage program which began during the 2014 field season. The program effectively identifies Conservancy-owned parcels with a 4x6 inch property tag placed on trees and posts. Staff and seasonal field crews are actively installing the signage and anticipates completing 1,500-2,000 parcels by the end of the 2015 field season. This program assists the public and other agencies in determining Conservancy parcel ownership and reporting 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 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 (EDCSO) to provide law enforcement services within the UTM. While the EDCSO has provided quality service, staff is actively

working with DPR to secure a ranger (peace officer) that would be dedicated to the UTM and other designated Conservancy parcels. The Conservancy partners with the Lake Tahoe Humane Society - S.P.C.A. to assist with various public outreach efforts and events. Staff will report to the Board on an annual basis, 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 DPR, in return for approximately 9.3 acres of environmentally sensitive, subdivided parcels in El Dorado County. Conservancy and DPR staff hosted a public open-house in Tahoe City in December 2014 to provide details and seek input specifically on the Dollar Property and Rubicon Property transfers. Staff is implementing the transactional elements and resolving the management specifics of the exchanges.

### *Management*

Beginning on July 1, 2014, 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.

Conservancy and DPR routinely coordinate to identify project needs and priorities, while DPR maintenance staff are actively managing and maintaining the properties on a day-to-day basis. Their efforts and quality of work are well received.

## **Van Sickle Bi-State Park (Van Sickle)**

In its four years of operation, Van Sickle continues to provide a high quality natural experience for visitors and local alike. The Conservancy is committed to

a high management standard and providing a quality visitor experience at Van Sickle, and staff continues to analyze long-term fiscal and staffing needs prior to transfer to DPR. Long-standing volunteer site hosts continue to provide a day-to-day seasonal presence service at Van Sickle.

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

Heavenly Mountain Resort's Epic Discovery Project proposes to connect their trail system to Van Sickle in the future. To address concerns of the Conservancy, TRTA, and NSP about potential impacts to Van Sickle as a result of the connection, the Trails Partnership Action Plan was drafted. This Action Plan establishes a framework to monitor and address user impacts over time. The partnership includes the Conservancy, Heavenly Mountain Resort, the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, NSP, TRTA, and the Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association. The partners will meet on an annual basis to cooperatively manage, plan, survey, design, construct or reconstruct, improve, and maintain the trail network.

In 2011, the Van Sickle Foundation granted \$84,000 (\$17,500 per year for five years) to TRTA to fund fire hydrant water service at the park. This year TRTA received another five year grant from the Van Sickle Foundation to again fund the water service.

Van Sickle will be transferred to DPR upon completion of an operating agreement between DPR and NSP. When the transfer occurs, the operating agreement will address day-to-day and long term operation and maintenance.

### **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 in previous years, 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 for 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 the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's (TRPA's) land classifications and, where appropriate, with the goals and objectives of adjacent public landowners.

Staff continues development of 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 \$751,978, including \$413,078 in support funds and \$338,900 in capital outlay funds. Staff will continue to implement the Conservancy's property management, hazard abatement, and property restoration activities during Fiscal Year 2015/2016, as described below.

**Land Management and Public Safety  
(Environmental License Plate and/or Tahoe Conservancy  
Fund -Support Funds)**

Land Management Crew	\$125,000
Property Inspection and Cleanup	101,000
Property Signage	6,000
Property Surveys	26,000
Security/Service Contracts	80,000
Facilities and Maintenance	55,078
Equipment, Materials, and Supplies	<u>20,000</u>
<b>Land Management and Public Safety Sub-Total:</b>	<b>\$413,078</b>

**Resource Restoration and Enhancement  
(Prop 84 or other Capital Outlay Funds)**

Restoration Crew	\$100,000
Restoration Planning	55,000
Property Surveys	38,000
Contracting and Project Implementation	120,000
Restoration Equipment, Materials and Supplies	<u>25,900</u>
<b>Resource Restoration and Enhancement Sub-Total:</b>	<b>\$338,900</b>

**Total: \$751,978**

The above line item 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)**

The implementation of property management, restoration and forest fuels management and improvement projects falls within the purview of CEQA. As part of the project planning process, staff evaluates each project to determine the appropriate level of environmental review pursuant to CEQA. 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 15-06-04

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

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## **ATTACHMENT 1**

California Tahoe Conservancy

Resolution

15-06-04

Adopted: June 18, 2015

### **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:

“Conditioned upon and subject to the passage of the 2015/16 Budget Act, the California Tahoe Conservancy hereby authorizes staff to expend up to \$751,978 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.””

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 18<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2015

In WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 18<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2015.

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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.

#### **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 2,323 parcels, with follow-up as needed; bi-annual inspection of all Conservancy-owned parcels; over 95,994 parcel inspections completed since 1987.
- Approximately 98 inspections conducted last year in response to agency or citizen requests. In past years, citizen reports have exceeded 200 per season.
- Based upon inspections and citizen reports, the Tahoe Resource Conservation District (Tahoe RCD) Land Management Crew and staff perform clean-up activities and correction of other problems, such as abandoned vehicles and other personal property storage. Increasingly,

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 Tahoe RCD 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 maintenance in a responsive manner; assist with cross-program restoration, access, and erosion control projects; maintain high-use areas; maintain and patrol the Upper Truckee Marsh; maintain Van Sickle Bi-State Park and eradicate noxious weeds. In addition to 12 acres of fuels maintenance, the Land Management Crew completed 65 maintenance work orders during the 2014 field season. Thus far, the Conservancy has identified 28 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 well over 600 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 is approximately 320.

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 continues to utilize 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 in 2013. 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.

## **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 encourages the public 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 2010 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 2014 through April 2015 twenty-nine (29) citations and 181 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 annually 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 8 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.

Staff is actively working with DPR to secure a ranger (peace officer) dedicated to the UTM and other designated conservancy properties. The position will be a permanent intermittent (PI) status, which will allow for 1500 hours of service in a given fiscal year. A job announcement was recently posted on an inter-district (Sierra District) level. If no candidates apply, the announcement will be posted state-wide. Staff hopes to have a ranger in place by June or July of this year.

## **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 to provide fire hydrant water service at the park. This year the Van Sickle Foundation granted additional funding for the next five years (2016-2020).

The Tahoe Fund also granted \$25,000 to the Conservancy to fund initial operational and interpretive costs in 2011. The 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 the 2015 field season.

### **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 various agencies and organizations to provide a project labor force. Today, all crewmembers comprising two crews – Restoration and Land Management - are provided through a Joint Powers Agreement with Tahoe RCD.

During the past 28 years, staff and contractors, including the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU), Tahoe RCD, DPR, UC consultants, and a revegetation specialist, have evaluated Conservancy parcels to identify restoration and enhancement opportunities. These evaluations are now done on a bi-annual basis through routine parcel inspections and 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.

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.

#### **2014 Crew Accomplishments (EIP Performance Measures)**

- Thirty three urban lot restoration projects completed
- 63,000 square feet of disturbed area restored
- Eight acres of Conservancy land protected
- 2900 ft. of linear fence installed
- 11,000 square feet of meadow restored

In addition to urban lot restoration projects, numerous activities were completed on cross program projects, including:

- Installed fence segments for the Greenway bike trail.
- Installed initial site protection measures at the former Alta Mira site.

- Coordinated with State Parks in their management of north shore beaches.
- Continued trail construction and improvements at Van Sickle.
- Performed general clean-up and site safety measures at the former Tahoe Pines Campground property.
- Maintained and improved sections of the Eagle Rock Trail.
- Performed additional bank stabilization, native plantings and invasive weed removal on the Upper Truckee River Airport Reach Project.

## **Anticipated Projects for the 2015 Field Season**

### *Urban Lot Restoration Projects*

There are currently over 22 urban lot restoration projects planned for implementation this summer. Through routine lot inspections, additional projects may be identified. The restoration crew typically completes 20-30 urban lot projects annually and provides assistance on larger cross program projects.

### *Thunderbird Wall Restoration*

In 2003, the Conservancy purchased a parcel on Thunderbird Drive in South Tahoe that has existing portions of a home foundation and walls. A steel support system was set in place in 2006 to prevent the wall section from failing. The demolition and restoration project, scheduled for fall 2015, will include removal of the foundation and walls and re-contouring the site to match existing slopes found on adjacent Conservancy parcels. Portions of steel structure and walls will remain in place to provide additional slope stability. The void space and steel structure will be backfilled with native soil and compacted to specifications. The area will be re-vegetated and BMPs will be installed. Given the proximity to the road and county right-of-way (ROW), El Dorado County will be consulted.

## **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 numerous partner agencies 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. Tahoe RCD currently provides 15 people who assist the Conservancy in planning and implementing its programs. Seasonal labor includes 11 crew members, one property inspector, one UTM land steward, and two program assistants. Tahoe RCD staff assists with coordination and implementation of restoration, management, and forest improvement projects and with monitoring and reporting activities. The Clean Tahoe Program, a local non-profit, assists with cleaning up Conservancy lands in the City of South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County under a subcontract with Tahoe RCD. 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.

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 shore beaches, 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. Projects accommodated through these easement and licenses include, but are not limited to, public and private utility facilities, Alpine Meadows ski area, and contaminated groundwater cleanup.

To date, the Conservancy has authorized over 249 short and long-term uses of Conservancy land and granted 63 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, 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.

## **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 – operating as Waterman's 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, online databases, and GIS based 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 2014/15, expected revenues generated from long and short-term use of Conservancy-owned lands will total approximately \$140,000. As of the end of Fiscal Year 2013/14, revenues from these activities totaled approximately \$3,619,564.

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.