Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Dollar Creek Forest Health and Biomass Project

April 2018

California
Tahoe Conservancy

Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

for the

Dollar Creek Forest Health and Biomass Project

PREPARED FOR

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April 2018

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
AP	Air Pollutant
BMP	best management practice
BP	before present
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAAA	Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standard
Cal EPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Cal OES	Governor's Office of Emergency Services
Cal/OSHA	California Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CCAA	California Clean Air Act
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CDPR	California Department of Parks and Recreation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	community noise equivalent level
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CO_2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
Conservancy	California Tahoe Conservancy
county	Placer County
CRHR	California Register of Historic Resources
CRPR	California Rare Plant Ranks
CWPP	Lake Tahoe Basin Community Wildfire Protection Plan
CUPA	Certified Unified Program Agency
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plan
dB	decibel
dbh	diameter at breast height
diesel PM	diesel particulate matter
DTSC	California Department of Toxic Substances Control
EIR	environmental impact report
EO	Executive Order
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EPCRA	Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986
ESA	federal Endangered Species Act
FHSZ	Fire Hazard Severity Zones
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FVS	Forest Vegetation Simulator

GHG	greenhouse gas
GVWR	Gross Vehicle Weight Rating
I-80	Interstate 80
IPaC	Information, Planning, and Conservation System
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IS/MND	initial study and proposed mitigated negative declaration
Lahontan RWQCB	Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
lb/day	pounds per day
LOS	level of service
LTAB	Lake Tahoe Air Basin
LTBMU	Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
MLD	Most Likely Descendant
MMT	million metric tons
MRZ-4	Mineral Resource Zone 4
MT CO_2e/year	metric tons of CO2e per year
NAAQS	National Air Quality Ambient Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NO_X	oxides of nitrogen
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NTFPD	North Tahoe Fire Protection District
NTPUD	North Tahoe Public Utility District
OES	Office of Emergency Services
OHV	off-highway vehicle
OPR	California Governor's Office of Planning and Research
OSHA	federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PAS	Plan Area Statement
PCAPCD	Placer County Air Pollution Control District
PM_{10}	particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10 micrometers or less
project	North Tahoe Interagency Forest Health and Biomass Project
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RESD	California Department of General Services, Real Estate Services Department
RMS	root mean square
ROG	reactive organic gases
RPM	Resource Protection Measure
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
SARA	Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act
SB	Senate Bill
SEZ	Stream Environment Zone
SMAQMD	Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District
sq. ft.	square feet
SR	State Route

TAC	toxic air contaminant
TCPUD	Tahoe City Public Utility District
TMPO	Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization
TRCD	Tahoe Resource Conservation District
TRPA	Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VdB	vibration decibels
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
WRSL	Western Regional Sanitary Landfill
WUI	wildland urban interface

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Dollar Creek Forest Health and Biomass Project (project) involves the treatment of approximately 151 acres of forest in a wildland-urban interface area in the Placer County portion of the Lake Tahoe Basin, as well as transport and use of the generated biomass as fuel for electricity generation. The treated acres lie within a 263-acre project area consisting of State land owned and managed by the California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy).

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the lead agency is the public agency with primary responsibility for carrying out or approving a project that has the potential for resulting, directly or indirectly, in a physical change to the environment. As the agency responsible for accepting grant funding and implementing the proposed fire prevention vegetation management project, the Conservancy would be the CEQA lead agency. Tahoe City Public Utility District would authorize access to the project area and would be a responsible agency. The Conservancy may contract a forestry contractor through Placer County, if this occurs, Placer County would also be a responsible agency. The project would constitute an exempt activity under the 1999 Memorandum of Understanding between the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and the Conservancy. Therefore, this document does not include an initial environmental checklist pursuant to the TRPA Bi-State Compact, Code of Ordinances, and Rules of Procedure. The Conservancy and the California Department of General Services, Real Estate Services Department (RESD) directed the preparation of this analysis to comply with CEQA. At the direction of the Conservancy and RESD, Ascent Environmental Inc., prepared this document. The purpose of this initial study and proposed mitigated negative declaration (IS/MND) is to present to decision-makers and the public the environmental consequences of implementing the project. As required by CEQA, this document is being made available to the public for a 30-day review and comment period from April 13 to May 13, 2018

If you wish to send written comments (including via e-mail), they must be postmarked by May 13, 2018. Written comments should be addressed to:

Brian Hirt
California Tahoe Conservancy
1061 Third Street
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

E-mail comments should be addressed to brian.hirt@tahoe.ca.gov.

If you have questions regarding the IS/MND, please call Brian Hirt at (530) 543-6049.

After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies and considered by the Conservancy, the agency may (1) adopt the MND and approve the proposed project; (2) undertake additional environmental studies; or (3) abandon the project. If the project is approved, the Conservancy could proceed with all or part of the project.

Digital copies of the IS/MND are available on the internet at: http://www.tahoe.ca.gov

Copies of the document are also available for public review at the following locations:

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

Kings Beach Library
301 Secline Street
Kings Beach, CA 96143

Tahoe City Library
740 N. Lake Blvd
Tahoe City, CA 96145

Placer County, Tahoe
Planning Office
775 North Lake Blvd
Tahoe City, CA 96145

1.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Chapter 3, "Environmental Checklist," contains the analysis and discussion of potential environmental impacts of the project. The full range of environmental issues in the checklist have been analyzed. Based on the issues evaluated in that chapter, it was determined that the project would have no impact related to the following issue areas:

- agriculture and forest resources, and
- mineral resources.

Project impacts were determined to be less than significant for the following issue areas:

- aesthetics,
- air quality,
- geology and soils,
- land use and planning
- greenhouse gas and climate change,
- hazards and hazardous materials
- hydrology and water quality,
- noise and vibration,
- public services,
- transportation/traffic, and
- utilities and service systems.

Project impacts were determined to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated for the following issue areas:

- biological resources,
- cultural resources, and
- recreation.

1.3 DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

This IS/MND is organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter introduces the environmental review process. It describes the purpose and organization of this document, and presents a summary of findings.

Chapter 2: Project Description. This chapter describes the project objectives and provides a detailed explanation of the project.

Chapter 3: Environmental Checklist. This chapter presents an analysis of a range of environmental issues identified in the CEQA Environmental Checklist and determines if the project would result in no impact, a less-than-significant impact, a less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated, or a potentially significant impact. If any impacts were determined to be potentially significant, an EIR would be required. For this project, however, the Conservancy has committed to resource protection measures, project modifications, and mitigation measures that would avoid or lessen the effects of the project to a less-than-significant level.

Chapter 4: References. This chapter lists the references used in preparation of this IS/MND.

Appendices. The appendices provide additional detail on regulatory requirements, and provide detailed technical information used in the preparation of this IS/MND.

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The 263-acre project area is located on State of California lands owned by the Conservancy within the Placer County portion of north Lake Tahoe area (see Exhibit 2-1). This project area is north and east of the Highlands community and south of Dollar Creek. It is bordered by Conservancy lands located outside of the project area to the north, east, and west. To the south, the project area is adjacent to a mix of Conservancy land and land owned by the North Tahoe High School and Tahoe City Public Utility District.

2.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Dollar Creek Forest Health and Biomass Project would implement vegetation management activities on approximately 151 acres within the Conservancy's approximately 263-acre project area to:

- reduce the risk of high-intensity wildfire in the wildland urban interface (WUI) defense and threat zones near development in the communities of Highlands and Dollar Point as well as undeveloped land in Burton Creek State Park;
- eliminate the vertical continuity of vegetative fuels and the horizontal continuity of tree crowns, for the purpose of reducing the rate of fire spread, duration and intensity, fuel ignitability, or ignition of tree crowns;
- reduce surface fuels that could promote the spread of wildfire to a level that would achieve the goal of an average of four foot maximum flame height under severe fire weather conditions;
- reduce susceptibility of the forest to insect and disease outbreaks;
- improve age and species diversity of the trees; and
- utilize the forest biomass for renewable energy production.

2.3 TREATMENT ELEMENTS

The treatment site would be managed by the Conservancy. A forestry contractor would implement the mechanical forest treatments required to meet project objectives. The following sections describe project elements proposed to implement the forestry prescriptions. Such prescriptions shall be compliant with the Lahontan Water Board's 2014 Timber Wavier, Category 1, as well as under the CAL FIRE Forest Fire Prevention Exemption (CCR, title 14, section 1038).

2.3.1 Forestry Prescription

A "forestry prescription" is a site-specific plan that outlines the forest management objectives for an area. In this case, the proposed forest treatment has been designed with a primary goal of achieving a forest structure that would minimize wildfire risk while enhancing the long-term habitat values of the sites where the forestry prescription is implemented. Forest treatments would occur on approximately 151 acres within the 263-acre project area, after the parameters described within forestry prescriptions are applied.

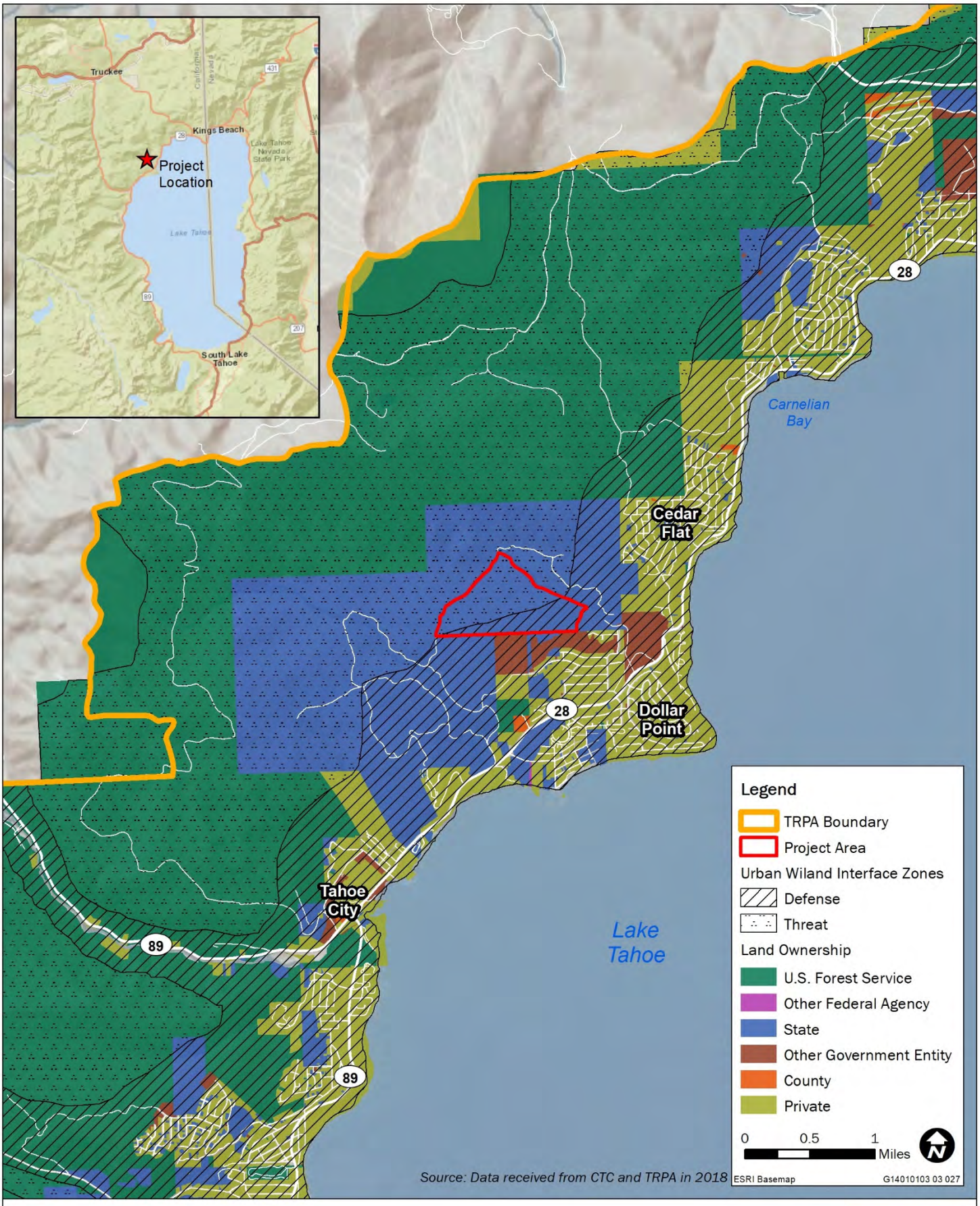

Exhibit 2-1 **Project Area**

Application of this forestry prescription promotes spatial heterogeneity of forest structure, including variations in stand density and canopy gaps with a mosaic pattern of trees and brush, similar to what would have been maintained by a natural/native fire regime. The prescription would maintain remnant old-growth trees, old-growth candidate trees, an uneven-aged stand structure arranged in multiple canopy layers, select clumps of shrubs and understory vegetation, snags, and pockets of coarse woody debris.

Prescribed fire, including pile burning, is not included in this project. Instead, residual slash generated by the project would be both masticated and left onsite, or chipped and removed for biomass purposes. No treatments are proposed for riparian areas and on slopes greater than 30 percent (Exhibit 2-2). Additional detail on resource protection measures that would apply during treatment are provided in section 2.3.6. Riparian area boundaries, steep slopes, and waterbody buffer zones (WBBZs) are shown in Exhibit 2-2; and may be refined in the field to better reflect onsite conditions.

Specific treatment included in this forestry prescription are:

- Retain between 80 and 150 square feet of basal area per acre.
- All live, dead, or dying trees 30 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) and larger would be retained unless designated for removal by a qualified forester. Such exceptions would be allowed for insect and/or disease outbreaks, and trees that pose a safety hazard in an area of high human use, such as the trail system, including the trails used by Tahoe City Cross Country Center.
- Trees greater that 14 inches dbh designated for removal would be identified with yellow paint located on both the bole of the tree for visibility as well as the lower portion of the tree below the anticipated stump location.
- Unmarked trees less than 14 inches dbh would be considered “designated by description” and thinned to 10 to 30 feet spacing.
- Residual canopy cover would average at least 60 percent and a diversity of tree size classes and species would be retained. Post-treatment forest composition would favor Jeffrey pine, sugar pine, and cedar species over white and red fir.
- Retain, on average, two snags and three to five downed logs per acre.
- Remove infestations of parasites (e.g., fir engraver beetle, Jeffery pine beetle) and diseases (e.g., dwarf mistletoe, rusts, and rots).
- Treatment would be limited to areas with less than 30 percent slope.
- Treatment would be excluded from riparian areas and stream environment zones (SEZs), except for the potential for skid trail to cross streams, when designated, only on existing crossings of Class III watercourses that are sufficiently dry as not to cause disturbance. Treatment activities and crossings would not occur on Class I (e.g., Dollar Creek) or Class II (intermittent) waterways or their Waterbody Buffer Zones (WBBZs). Mapped WBBZs and their buffer zones shall be field-verified and may be adjusted based upon actual on-site conditions.
- “Defensible space” is the area within the perimeter of a developed parcel where basic wildfire protection practices are implemented, providing the key point of defense from an approaching wildfire or escaping structure fire. To enhance defensible space to properties adjacent to the Dollar Creek project’s forest fuel treatments, within 300 feet of developed areas (homes and other infrastructure) treatments would include brush reduction. Brush would be masticated and materials spread on site as mulch, or removed for biomass, on up to 75 percent of the area and retained brush would meet CAL FIRE’s defensible space fuel separation guidelines.

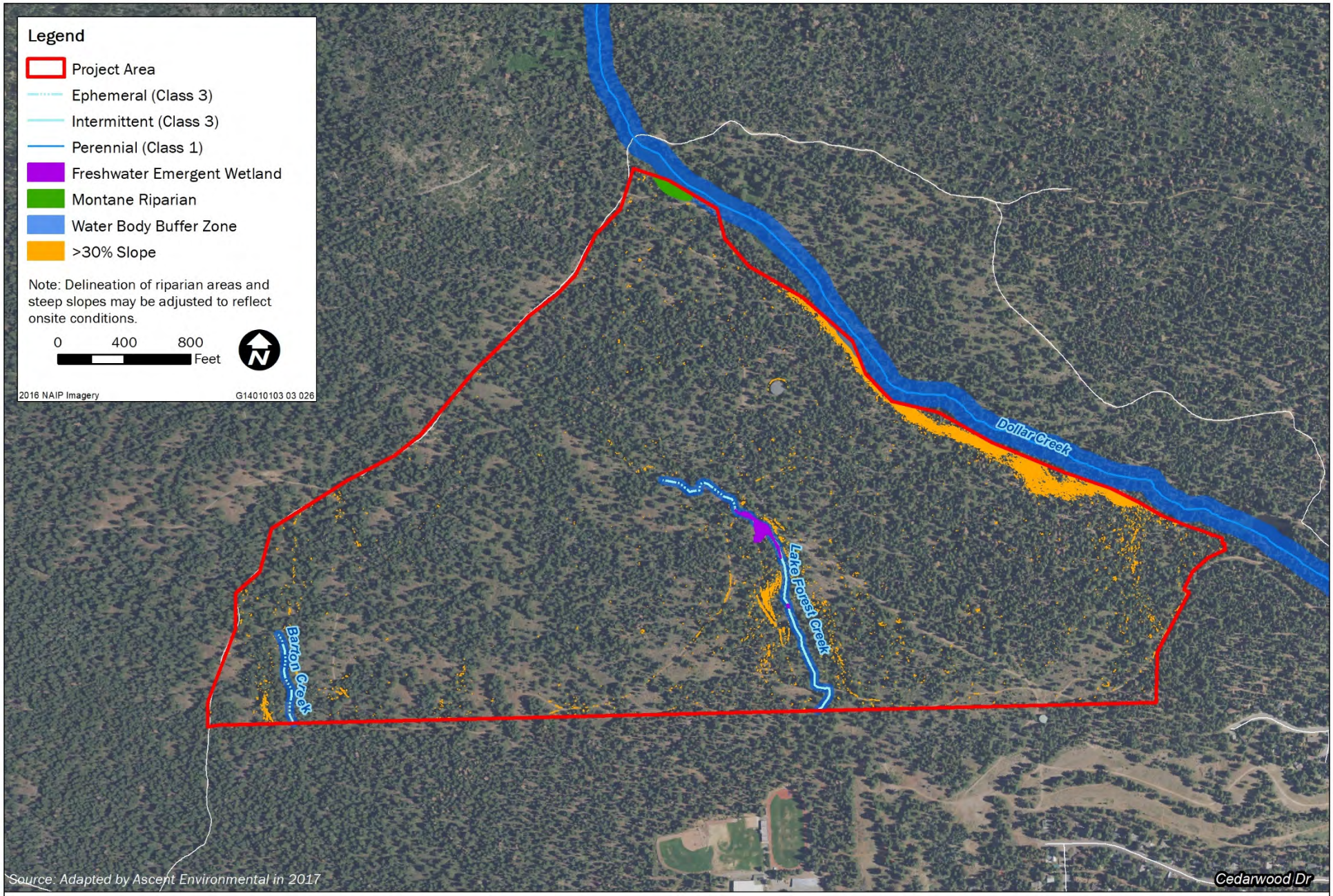

Exhibit 2-2 **Stream, Riparian, Wetland/Water Body, and Steep Slopes to be Avoided**

- Greater than 300 feet from developed areas, brush would be masticated on up to 50 percent of the area and materials spread onsite as mulch.

- Approximately 80 percent of the recoverable slash and dead and downed surface fuels would be removed, and non-recoverable materials exceeding the down log retention standard would be masticated or processed/compressed by cut to length equipment.

- Temporary landings would be identified by the forestry contractor and approved by the Conservancy forestry staff. All temporary landings would be less than 1/4 acre in size and would be located outside of WBBZs and where feasible, would be located within previously disturbed open areas. All landings would be located in flat areas (less than 5 percent slope), at least 50 feet from SEZs or other sensitive resources that would be avoided during treatments (e.g., archeological sites), and a minimum of 300 feet from the nearest residence.

2.3.2 Treatment Methods

Under the direction of the Conservancy, a forestry contractor would implement the forestry prescriptions described above within Land Capability Classifications 3-7 (see section 3.6, below for land capability classifications). The Conservancy and its contractor would:

- remove marked trees and trees designated by description, hauling marketable logs to an appropriate sawmill, and

- chip recoverable biomass and haul chipped biomass to a bioenergy generation facility.

The forest thinning activities would be completed as part of a ground-based equipment operation that using either cut-to-length and whole-tree-yarding harvest methods, or a combination of the methods. In cut-to-length operations, the harvester limbs and bucks the tree into marketable logs directly at the stump. Through this process the tree limbs and slash are scattered throughout the treatment area creating a "slash mat" which protects the forest floor, reducing erosion and soil compaction. A forwarder would then collect the logs and bring them to the landing area. The harvester and forwarder used in cut-to-length systems are relatively light weight machines with larger rubber tires (see Exhibits 2-3 and 2-4).

Source: Wikipedia commons

Exhibit 2-3 Cut-to-Length Harvester

Source: Wikipedia commons

Exhibit 2-4 Cut-to-Length Forwarder

Where a whole-tree-yarder is used, the entire tree would be cut and removed to the landing for processing. The feller/buncher (Exhibit 2-5) cuts and bunches a group of logs and leaves them on a skid trail where there are retrieved by a skidder (Exhibit 2-6). The skidder pulls the group of logs back to the landing where they are delimbed and cut to market length.

Source: Wikipedia commons

Exhibit 2-5 Feller/Buncher

Source: Wikipedia commons

Exhibit 2-6 Skidder

Conservancy-approved landings within the project area would provide areas for temporary stockpiling and processing of woody materials, and loading of log trucks, chip vans and/or other related service vehicles. Merchantable logs would be temporarily stockpiled at these landings, then transported to sawmills during daytime operating hours (8:00 am – 6:30 pm) via haul routes described in Section 2.2.3 – Access, below.

Regardless of the harvest method used, the non-marketable woody debris (small diameter trees, salvage materials, and tree tops) that are taken to the landings would be chipped there and removed via chip vans to a bioenergy generation facility to be used as fuel for energy generation. In cut-to-length treatment areas, the lateral branches of the trees would remain near their respective stumps. An appropriate number of chip vans would be used to reduce the amount of time the wood grinding machine needs to run, thus reducing excess diesel consumption and resulting emissions. The chip vans would transport the grindings to the biomass facility via approved road haul routes (described below) during daytime operating hours.

A mobile masticator (typically an excavator fitted with a specialized mastication drum) would move through each unit to masticate a portion of the limbs and shrubs remaining in the cutting units, leaving the masticated and unmasticated material on site as ground cover to a depth between 2-4 inches.

2.3.3 Access

Mechanical forest thinning operations would use local streets accessible from State Route (SR) 28. Access to the project area (haul routes) on local roads would utilize Cedarwood Drive, Village Road, and Fabian Way (see Exhibit 2-7). Project employees would park along roadways at access points to the project area. Agency approval would be required for any access routes across Tahoe City Public Utility District Parcels.

Access within the project area would use only existing roads for haul routes. No road reconstruction would occur. New skid trails no wider than fifteen feet on lands with a maximum grade of 30 percent may be evaluated by the Conservancy prior to use by the forestry contractor. Where possible, these skid trails would use existing roads and trails. As few skid trails as possible would be used or created, as needed to get materials to the landings. Skid trails would be located so as to protect residual stands by using natural openings and topographic characteristics. They would be closed to vehicle use and treated for revegetation (including mulch) no later than fifteen days following completion of operations within the unit or at the time of seasonal shutdown, whichever is sooner.

The Conservancy would notify Tahoe City Public Utility District (TCPUD) before completing any work within 100 feet of the Upper Highlands water storage tank and would maintain emergency access to the tank during treatment activities.

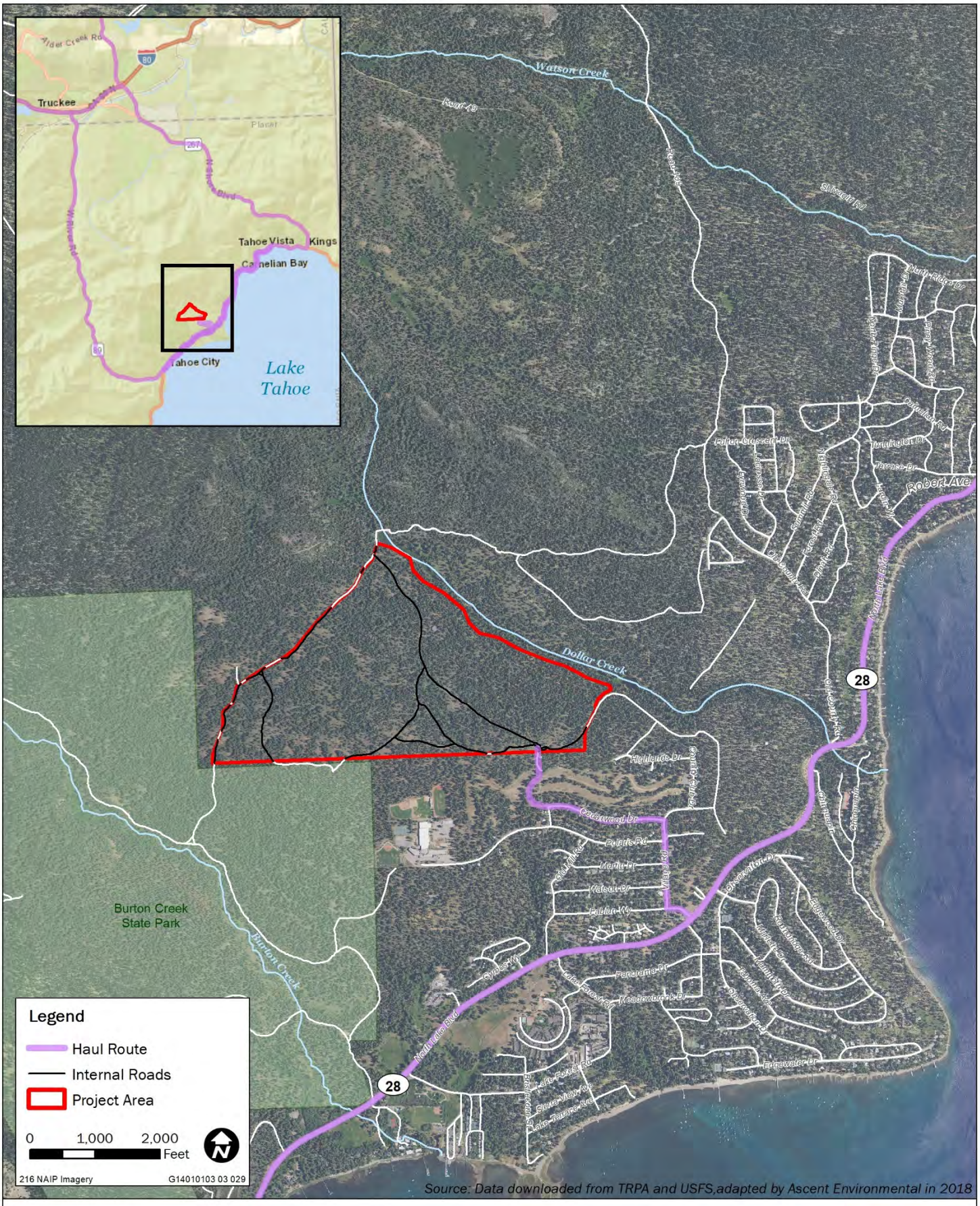

Exhibit 2-7 **Internal Roads and Haul Routes**

2.3.4 Hauling of Biomass and Timber

Hauling of biomass and timber could occur concurrently with forestry activities, or following completion of forest treatments. Biomass would be loaded into chip vans at landings located within the project area and hauled to a biomass facility in the region. Merchantable logs would also be loaded onto logging trucks at the landings. Chip vans would include medium-heavy duty diesel-powered vehicles with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of greater than 26,000 pounds. Log trucks would include a heavy-duty diesel-powered vehicle with a manufacturer's GVWR greater than 33,000 pounds. Chip vans and log trucks would exit the project area on the local streets identified in Section 2.3.3 and travel along SR 28, leaving the Tahoe Basin along SR 89 or SR 267.

The proposed project operations would require daily use of up to eight employee vehicles, eight log trucks, and 12 chip vans per day during treatment activities. Employees would arrive in the morning and park at an access point to the project area and leave in the evening. Potential haul routes to biomass facilities and sawmills and their approximate length could include:

- SR 28 to SR 89 for hauling biomass to the Cabin Creek facility in Truckee, California (15 miles), if it is opened;
- SR 28 to SR 267 to SR 89 for hauling biomass or logs to the Sierra Pacific Industries biomass and sawmill facility in Quincy, California (90 miles);
- SR 28 to SR 89 to Interstate 80 (I-80) to SR 65 for hauling biomass or logs to the Sierra Pacific Industries biomass and sawmill facility in Lincoln, California (100 miles); or
- SR 28 to SR 89 to I-80 to U.S. Highway 395 for transporting biomass to the Greenleaf Honey Lake facility in Wendel, CA (140 miles).

Although as a practical matter the available destination with the shortest haul would be preferred, for the purpose of analysis in this document, it is assumed that logs would be hauled to the Lincoln, CA facility and biomass would be hauled to the Honey Lake facility, which reflects the greatest hauling distances. This is a conservative approach to the environmental analysis, which seeks to avoid the risk of understating potential environmental effects of hauling operations.

2.3.5 Temporary Signage and Recreational Access

The Conservancy would temporarily close active treatment areas to recreational use to protect public safety. Prior to treatment, the Conservancy or the forestry contractor would post signs on well-established trails and roads leading to the treatment sites warning trail users of trail closures in the project area. The Conservancy or forestry contractor would post orange tree work and logging signs at the site entrance and on access roads during treatment operations. The forestry contractor would adhere to Resource Protection Measures, described below, to avoid impacts and maintain existing roads and trails in a safe and usable condition following operations.

2.3.6 Resource Protection Measures

Resource Protection Measures (RPMs) shall be incorporated into the project design, in contract specifications, and in instructions to all personnel involved in implementing the project. These measures are intended to minimize environmental impacts during and after treatment activities. The Conservancy shall require the forestry contractor to implement the following measures as part of their contracts. RPMs include:

- Compliance with all applicable general requirements and other provisions of Category 1 within the 2014 Timber Waiver issued by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Lahontan) (see Appendix A for Section D (Category 1) of the Waiver). Such measures include but are not limited to: use of temporary water quality best management practices (BMPs) to prevent sediment or other contaminants from flowing into surface waters, regular monitoring of equipment to prevent leaks or spills, maintenance of an emergency spill kit on site during all operations to contain fuel or other spilled materials, and prohibitions against operating equipment on soils that are saturated.

- To prevent the spread of noxious weeds, all off-road equipment shall be cleaned prior to entry to the project area to remove all soil, plant parts, seeds, vegetative matter, or other debris that could contain or hold seeds.

- Riparian areas and waterbody buffer zones (WBBZs) within treatment units (see Exhibit 2-2) shall be flagged consistent with 2014 Timber Waiver requirements prior to treatment activities and avoided during treatment activities in the project area.

- Skid trails created as part of the forestry operations shall be covered with mulch from mastication operations and, if requested by Conservancy staff, re-contoured to promote natural drainage, de-compacted, and/or reseeded. The Conservancy or forestry contractor shall conduct minor trail rehabilitation activities, as needed, to maintain public use of existing trails for recreation users such as cross-country skiers, hikers, mountain bicyclists, and runners. Additional trail rehabilitation could include removing slash and re-contouring the trail, if needed, to restore it to pre-project conditions.

- Forestry contractors shall be instructed to notify the Conservancy representative of sighting of any roosting bird of prey, and any nesting bird, bat, or furbearer species. Project work would cease in the vicinity of a newly discovered nest, den, or wildlife habitation site pending review by a qualified Conservancy representative.

- An appropriate, qualified archaeological surveyor, archaeologist, or cultural resource monitor shall be available either onsite and/or over the phone during project operations to prescribe additional protective measures, as needed, for any newly discovered sites. If evidence of previously undocumented historical/archaeological resources are found (e.g., shell, burned animal bone or rock, concentration of bottle glass or ceramics, etc.), the contractor shall immediately cease work in the vicinity of the find and contact the Conservancy's cultural resource designee. Work in the area shall not resume unless instructed by the Conservancy after identification and proper avoidance, preservation, or recovery measures are determined and implemented.

- If human remains are discovered during treatment activities, work shall be suspended in the area of the remains, and the contractor or cultural resource monitor shall notify the Placer County coroner and the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) immediately, according to Section 5097.98 of the State PRC and Section 7050.5 of California's Health and Safety Code. If the remains are determined by the NAHC to be Native American, the guidelines of the NAHC shall be adhered to in the treatment and disposition of the remains. Following the coroner's findings, the cultural resource monitor, and the NAHC-designated Most Likely Descendant (MLD) shall determine the ultimate treatment and disposition of the remains and take appropriate steps to prevent disturbance of additional human interments.

- Prior to a competitive bidding process as well as implementation of project operations, the Conservancy, shall prepare a project area map that identifies boundaries of treatment units, access routes, landing areas, known invasive species infestations, and locations of known resources to be avoided (e.g., wildlife or habitat resources, stream courses, meadows, and wetlands). The forestry contractor shall adhere to all mitigation measures concerning flagged exclusion zones, all known cultural sites, wetlands, and WBBZs.

- Treatment activities shall not damage unmarked or undesignated trees or other vegetation not slated for treatment. The forestry contractor shall only fell trees designated for cutting.

- The forestry contractor shall implement temporary traffic safety measures that provide the public with adequate warning of potentially hazardous conditions associated with vehicle access and hauling. These measures shall include posting signs that meet the requirements of Manual on Uniform Traffic section 61.1.6B that warn of logging operations or truck crossings. Such signs shall be removed when no longer required. Prior to treatment activities, the Conservancy shall post signage in the neighborhood that identifies the timing and duration of operations associated with the project. Truck drivers shall be instructed to maintain safe driving speeds and be alert for the presence of pedestrians and children along neighborhood haul routes.

- Treatment activities shall be conducted in compliance with safety requirements for employees. The forestry contractor shall notify the Conservancy of any personal injury accidents or other accident or vandalism of property.

- The forestry contractor shall implement erosion prevention measures, which include measures on roads or skid trails to be maintained during the project's operations and maintenance period, to minimize soil erosion, control runoff, and prevent debris from entering stream courses. The types and intensity of erosion control measures shall be appropriate to the ground and weather conditions. Equipment shall not be operated during rain or on saturated ground. During implementation of this project, erosion control measures and drainage features shall be regularly inspected, including prior to periods of accelerated runoff, and maintained to ensure they are in working order. Contractors shall construct temporary erosion control measures before operations cease annually.

- Wheeled or track-laying equipment (e.g., harvester, loader, masticator, chipper, and the like) shall not be operated in stream courses or SEZ areas, except on existing, designated Class III watercourse crossings during dry surface conditions.

- To protect air, soil, and water quality, project contractors shall conduct operations in a sanitary and safe manner. All operating equipment would be maintained in working order and servicing of equipment will not occur in the project area. Storage facilities for oil or oil products shall take measures to prevent any spill of oil or oil products from entering any stream of other waters of the United States or California.

- All equipment used shall be monitored for leaks, and removed from service if necessary to protect water quality.

- All spills shall be immediately contained, and spilled materials and/or contaminated soils shall be properly disposed.

- An emergency spill kit adequate to contain spills that could result from on-site equipment shall be at the project site at all times of equipment use.

- In the event of a release of hazardous substances on or near the project area, the forestry contractor would immediately notify the Conservancy representative. All work shall stop on the project and not start again until all required mitigation has been remedied.

- The forestry contractor shall conduct operations in accordance with logging practices set forth by the Conservancy, including requirements for felling, bucking, stump heights, limbing, skidding, yarding, rigging, landings, and logging equipment.

- The forestry contractor shall maintain existing improvements, such as access roads and trails used during implementation of the project.

- Within 15 days of completion of operations, and no later than October 15th, the forestry contractor shall restore areas used for temporary skid trails (that were not existing roads or trails) and landings by achieving an 80 percent ground cover of masticated or chipped material and if needed, decompacting soil and/or restoring natural drainage patterns.

- The forestry contractor shall repair and rehabilitate any incidental damage caused by this project to existing trails and roads, such as if they are used as a skid trail, are within an active treatment area, or are disturbed by equipment accessing the site to ensure that existing roads and trails, including those that are part of the Tahoe Cross Country trail system, are open and free of masticated material or other debris after the project area is reopened for public use. These trails shall be left in a condition such that they would not pose a hazard to cross-country skiers or ski trail maintenance equipment.

- Materials removed from the project area shall follow a haul route that is the shortest, most economical haul route available between the treatment area and biomass energy facility or sawmill.

- The forestry contractor shall implement a Fire Prevention and Control Plan which shall be created by the California Tahoe Conservancy for the prevention and control of fires during operations. Operations shall follow fire prevention precautions, including caching of tools and equipment for firefighting at each active landing and regular testing and inspection of fire equipment. These tools shall only be used for firefighting purposes. Contractors, in cooperation with NTFPD and CAL FIRE, shall take all reasonable and practicable action to suppress fire resulting from forest thinning operations.

- No operations, including hauling, skidding, landing and skid trail construction, or other soil disturbing activities shall occur between October 15 – May 1 of each year, or when saturated soils exist. Saturated soil conditions (are defined as site conditions are sufficiently wet that timber operations displace soils in yarding or mechanical site preparation areas or displace road and landing surface materials in amounts sufficient to cause a turbidity increase in drainage facilities that discharge into Class I, II, III, or IV waters or in downstream Class I, II, III, or IV waters that is visible or would violate applicable water quality requirements.

- Forestry contractor shall close each unit within 15 days of ceasing operations.

- No falling, yarding, or loading shall be permitted within restricted areas. Directionally fell away from roads and trails.

- Any recreation infrastructure (e.g., cross country trails and roads) impacted by logging operations shall be restored to pre-project conditions and cleared of slash and any other debris and re-contoured, if needed, within 15 days of ceasing their use.

- During non-operational periods, the contractor shall ensure that trailhead access points shall be open to public use and not blocked with equipment.

- Warning signs at truck entry points shall be set up and taken down within five days of completion of operations.

- To reduce the spread of Annosus root disease, borax (trade name Sporax) shall be applied to freshly cut stumps of all conifer species 12" DBH or greater. Borax shall be applied by hand to all freshly cut stump surfaces. Application rates shall average 1 per 50 square feet of stump surface area.

Appendix A Section D, Conditional Waiver of Discharge Requirements for Timber Harvest and Vegetation Management Activities for Category 1, provides additional detail on RPMs that shall apply to the project.

2.3.7 Schedule

Mechanical forest thinning/fuel reduction is anticipated to begin in summer/fall 2018 and would be conducted over the course of two summer field seasons for a total of approximately 60 days. Transporting the products of vegetation management would occur concurrent with operations.

Work would occur during daylight hours between 8:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Work would typically occur on weekdays, however, weekend work could be implemented to accelerate work.

2.4 PROJECT APPROVALS

The following permits, reviews, and approvals would be required for project implementation:

Agency	Environmental Process Role	Permit/Approval
California Tahoe Conservancy	CEQA Lead Agency	CEQA compliance, funding approval
CAL FIRE	Forest Practices Act Compliance	Section 1038i exemption

3 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Project Title:	Dollar Creek Forest Health and Biomass Project
2. Lead Agency Name and Address:	California Tahoe Conservancy 1061 Third Street South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
3. Contact Person and Phone Number:	Brian Hirt, RPF, (530) 543-6049
4. Project Location:	Unincorporated Placer County, California
5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address:	California Tahoe Conservancy 1061 Third Street South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
6. General Plan Designation:	Multiple, see Section 3.10, "Land Use and Planning"
7. Zoning:	Multiple, see Section 3.10, "Land Use and Planning"
8. Description of Project:	Refer to Chapter 2, "Project Description"
9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:	Refer to Chapter 2, "Project Description"
10: Other public agencies whose approval is required:	Refer to Section 2.4, "Project Approvals"

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture and Forest Resources	☐ Air Quality
☐ Biological Resources	☐ Cultural Resources	☐ Geology / Soils
☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials	☐ Hydrology / Water Quality
☐ Land Use / Planning	☐ Mineral Resources	☐ Noise
☐ Population / Housing	☐ Public Services	☐ Recreation
☐ Transportation / Traffic	☐ Tribal Cultural Resources	☐ Utilities / Service Systems
	☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance	☒ None With Mitigation

DETERMINATION (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project could not have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature

4/10/18

Date

Brian Hirt

Printed Name

Registered Professional Forester

Title

California Tahoe Conservancy

Agency