

Executive Director's Report

Field season is in full swing for the California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy). Our staff and field crews are implementing forestry projects to reduce wildfire risk and improve forest health. At the same time, the Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin) is coming alive with both people and wildlife. The Conservancy balances its land management activities with protecting wildlife and recreation sites. For example, we are actively exploring with local climbing community members ways to protect resident peregrine falcons that nest on the Conservancy's popular Eagle Rock property while at the same time allowing climbing where it does not disturb the nesting birds. This everyday example highlights what the Conservancy does best; working with partners to find creative solutions to protect Lake Tahoe for all. Enjoy the season.

Jason Vasques, Executive Director
California Tahoe Conservancy

Program Updates

1. Land Management

Land Management Projects

The Land Management Program continues to implement small-scale projects on Conservancy land. Projects include restoring sensitive lands, protecting water quality, maintaining properties and facilities, reducing fuel hazards, and resolving encroachments.

Facilities Management

The Conservancy opened Van Sickle Bi-State Park and Tahoe Pines to vehicle access on May 1. The Conservancy closed the Upper Truckee Marsh to dogs on May 1 to protect birds and wildlife during the breeding season; closure ends August 1.

Staff continues to work with the Department of General Services (DGS) to prepare preliminary plans for demolition of the motel and restaurant buildings and parking lot on the Knox Johnson and Motel 6 property and will seek approval by the Public Works Board in August 2024. Staff will also continue to cooperate with the City of South Lake Tahoe (City) throughout the demolition phase.

2. Tahoe Livable Communities

Property Acquisitions

Conservancy staff continues to work on identifying and completing property acquisitions. This includes exploring acquisition opportunities, ordering appraisals, completing internal program reviews, lining up funding, teeing up Board approvals, and working with the DGS to meet state acquisition requirements.

Land Bank

The Conservancy banks and transfers development rights and land coverage for affordable housing, town center, and other infill projects in the City and El Dorado and Placer Counties. These rights come from acquisitions, such as the Knox Johnson and Motel 6 acquisition, as well as through restoration of environmentally sensitive land. The Conservancy sells rights to members of the public to help them meet permitting requirements. The Conservancy also exchanges rights with government agencies to promote recreation, housing, and other area plan goals.

Conservancy Asset Lands

In March 2014, the Conservancy Board designated 17 asset lands in three urbanized areas (the City, Kings Beach, and Meyers) that could support compact sustainable development consistent with the local area or town center plans. As described in the Conservancy Land Transfer Guidelines, the Conservancy will consider selling parcels only when those parcels are not needed to achieve the Conservancy's conservation or recreation goals, or when state ownership is no longer necessary to achieve the goals of the original acquisition. In addition, Board authorization is required to ensure sufficient public input and review of sale of any parcel.

- **2070 Lake Tahoe Boulevard (Assessment Numbers (AN) 023-381-001 and 023-231-003):** The Conservancy is coordinating with a developer to potentially use two asset lands, located in South Lake Tahoe within the Tahoe Valley Area Plan, for an achievable housing project with approximately 90-100 units. This summer, the developer is conducting public meetings on a draft site design, and plans to submit a project application to the City and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). In addition, this multi-benefit project incorporates storm water infrastructure and a shared-use trail as part of the City's Tahoe Valley Stormwater and Greenbelt Improvement Project.
- **8608 North Lake Boulevard (AN 090-134-056) and 8644 Speckled Avenue (AN 090-094-022):** In April 2020, Conservancy staff entered into an exclusive negotiating agreement concerning 8608 North Lake Boulevard with Brockway North, LLC, an adjacent landowner. Brockway North, LLC is pursuing a mixed-use project that includes offsite workforce-housing. Conservancy staff expects Brockway North, LLC to submit the project application to Placer County in summer 2024.

- **Meyers Area Plan ANs: 034-331-015 (3131 U.S. Highway 50), 034-311-023 (3121 U.S. Highway 50), 034-300-025 (no address), 034-300-026 (no address), 034-300-027 (no address), 034-300-028 (no address), 035-261-004 (no address), 035-261-005 (961 Pomo Street), and 035-261-006 (945 Pomo Street):** Conservancy staff continues to meet with the TRPA, Tahoe Resource Conservation District, and El Dorado County to determine the feasibility of siting a boat inspection station and potential workforce housing on the four asset land parcels on Pomo Street, southwest of the intersection of U.S. Highway 50 and State Route 89.

3. Recreation and Public Access

Future Project Planning Continues

Staff is completing environmental analysis and preliminary plans for pedestrian and storm water improvements at Van Sickle Bi-State Park.

Staff is also planning projects at North Tahoe Beach and Patton Landing Beach to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. The Conservancy has secured \$356,000 from two grants from the Tahoe Fund and North Tahoe Community Alliance to support the projects and has applied for further grant funding to complete these projects. The Conservancy is working with the DGS to develop project plans and aims to construct the improvements in 2026.

The Recreation Program supervisor co-chairs a subcommittee of the Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Council focused on recreation infrastructure. The subcommittee is identifying opportunities to coordinate resources, knowledge, and processes to improve recreational infrastructure throughout the Basin.

4. Community Forestry

Forestry Projects

Conservancy contractors will soon begin implementing projects to improve forest health and reduce hazardous fuels on public open space parcels in El Dorado County on the west shore. The projects total 54 acres and comprise hundreds of parcels owned by the Conservancy, the USDA Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, and El Dorado County.

Staff continues to develop agreements for future forestry projects on public open space parcels in Placer County along the west shore, and for a 150-acre forest health project on Conservancy property near the Golden Bear subdivision on the south shore.

5. Landscape Resilience

Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative

The Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative (TCSI) hosted a Collaborative Convening on April 18 in Auburn. This event provided regional collaborative groups the opportunity to discuss successes and challenges, compare ideas and tools, and develop a shared vision for the landscape. Participants highlighted insights and lessons learned about innovative funding and financing strategies, partnership governance and decision-making, monitoring and adaptive management, and wood utilization considerations. Overall, the event resulted in meaningful connections and concrete next steps to build cohesive and connected landscape-scale forest resilience.

Climate Resilience

On April 29, the TRPA released the [Tahoe Climate Resilience Dashboard](https://climate.laketahoeinfo.org/) on the Lake Tahoe Info web platform at <https://climate.laketahoeinfo.org/>. The Dashboard, which was funded by a Conservancy grant, tracks regional climate resilience indicators and progress toward regional goals. The Dashboard will help measure how the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) is collectively building resilience. It will provide data to prioritize future projects and investments, provide accountability to program funders, partners, public officials, and decision-makers, and will help engage the broader public in climate action.

Biomass

The Conservancy recently provided a \$250,000 grant to the TRPA for the Tahoe Basin Regional Biomass Feasibility Study. This study will provide a comprehensive regional assessment of potential opportunities to utilize woody biomass, reduce fuels on the landscape, and improve grid and energy resilience for critical infrastructure. The final report will help to inform the TRPA's consideration of a potential code amendment to allow such small-scale technologies in the Basin. The TRPA will complete the study by June 2026.

6. Watershed Restoration and Water Quality

Future Restoration Projects

Staff continued feasibility and project planning for multiple future restoration projects, including at Ward, Carnelian, Trout, and Cold Creeks; the Upper Truckee River near Sunset Stables; and the Knox Johnson and Motel 6 property. Staff is also developing a new agreement with the University of Nevada, Reno to continue and expand greenhouse gas monitoring at various restoration sites throughout the Basin.

Budget, Accounting, and Administration

In the May Revision, Governor Gavin Newsom reduces the State's projected deficits from around \$30 billion (December 2023 estimates) to less than \$10 billion by including several measures to reduce spending and find efficiencies. The Legislative Analyst's Office states that the May Revision puts the State on better fiscal footing and makes substantial progress toward structural balance.

The proposed budget, expected at the time of this writing to be passed by June 15, includes baseline funding that covers the Conservancy's staff and operations. The Conservancy anticipates approval of \$12.5 million for staff operations as well as funding for grants and Conservancy projects.