



Neighbor Stewardship Agreement

Expires October 15, 2026

2026 | California Tahoe Conservancy

Neighborhood: _____

Conservancy APN(s):

Agreement ID:

Approved Defensible Space Activities on Conservancy Land

This agreement allows neighboring homeowners/tenants to conduct the following activities designed to improve defensible space on adjacent Conservancy land, within and up to 100 feet of structures located on private property. Structures are defined as buildings which qualify for occupancy such as residential dwellings. Further guidance for all activities is provided on the Conservancy website at tahoe.ca.gov/stewardship-agreement.



1. Remove Downed Woody Debris (Within 100 feet of Structure)

Remove only solid dead and down trees, branches, and pinecones lying on forest floor (no standing trees). Do not remove wood that has settled into 3 inches of soil/duff layer or has no bark left intact, or a log that has decayed to a point of crumbling when picked up.

2. Remove Pine Needle/Leaf Litter (Within 30 feet of Structure)

Remove pine needles and leaf litter within 0-30 feet from your structure once every spring and as needed.

- 0-5 feet from a structure: remove all pine needles and leaf litter down to bare soil.
- 5-30 feet from a structure: remove pine needles and leaf litter leaving at least 2 inches of duff on top of soil to protect soil and prevent erosion.
- Within 10 feet of propane tanks: remove all pine needles and leaf litter down to bare soil.

For Activities 3-5, see limitations on page 2.

3. Prune Branches of Live Conifer Trees (Within 100 feet of Structure)

- If pruning a small tree, less than 18 feet tall, do not remove more than one-third of the tree's lower branches, as it will harm tree health.
- If pruning a larger tree, greater than 18 feet tall, prune live and dead lower branches up to 6 feet from ground level.
- Remove branches to create clearance of 10 feet from a structure, deck, roof or chimney outlet.
- **Prune** only conifer species such as pines, firs, and cedars. **Do not prune** riparian species such as willow, alder or aspen.

4. Remove Shrubs (Within 100 feet of Structure)

Removal means cutting the shrub's main stem within four inches of and parallel to ground. Do not dig or remove stump or root system.

0-5 feet from structure:

- Remove all shrubs.

5-100 feet from structure:

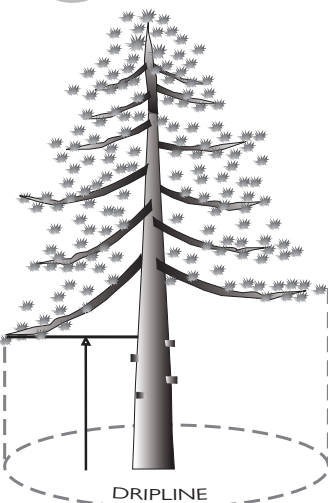
- **Within Dripline of Trees:** (Dripline: area located directly under the outer circumference of the tree branches. See graphic below.) Remove all shrubs in the dripline except Mahala Mat.
- **Contiguous Shrub Fields:** Create a separation of twice the height between individual shrubs or small clumps of shrubs. For example, if a sagebrush is 2 feet tall, multiply that by the number 2 and ensure there is a 4-foot separation between shrubs. Retain at least half of shrubs on site in a mosaic pattern.
 - **Remove:** flammable woody shrubs, including [Whitethorn](#), [Tobacco Brush or Snowbrush](#), [Bitterbrush](#), [Sierra Chinquapin](#), [Manzanita](#), [Huckleberry Oak](#), [Sagebrush](#), and [Rabbitbrush](#).
 - **Do Not Remove:** low-fire-risk shrubs, including [Snowberry](#), [Thimbleberry](#), [Elderberry](#), [Gooseberry](#), [Currants](#), [Serviceberry](#), [Mahala Mat](#), Willow, and Alder.

5. Remove conifer seedlings and saplings less than 6 feet tall, if they are within 20 feet of the nearest larger tree. Visit tahoe.ca.gov/stewardship-agreement for identification tips for trees and shrubs mentioned in this agreement.

Pruning

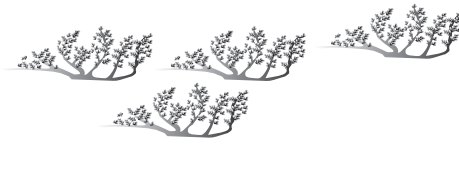
If pruning a small tree (less than 18' tall), prune only the bottom 1/3 of tree branches.

If pruning a large tree (over 18' tall), prune bottom 6' of branches.

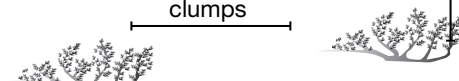


Shrub Removal

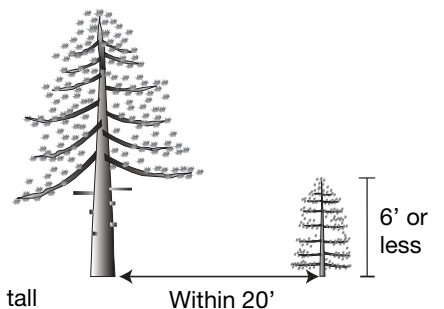
BEFORE



AFTER



Conifer Seedling/Sapling Removal



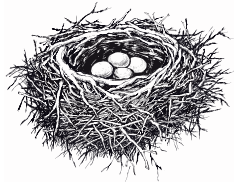
These pruning, shrub removal, and conifer seedling/sapling activities improve defensible space by helping to reduce ladder fuels: low-growing vegetation that promote the movement of fire from the ground to the tops of trees.

Limitations

- **No Gas-Powered Tools:** All work authorized by this permit must be done without the use of gas-powered tools. You may use electric power tools under the following conditions:
 - **No electric power tools on Red Flag fire weather days.**
 - Before using electric power tools, call the Project Activity Level hotline at (530) 295-5699 to determine if powered woodcutting is allowed in the Basin for that day.
 - On days woodcutting is allowed, when using electric power tools you **must** have a standard size metal shovel nearby, to extinguish potential fires resulting from sparks.
- **No tree cutting, except conifer saplings less than 6 feet in height (see #5).** To report a tree issue or hazard tree, contact (530) 542-5580 or visit tahoe.ca.gov/report-an-issue.
- **No vehicles/equipment for removal:** No vehicles or ground-based equipment are authorized by this permit. Remove debris by hand carrying, wheelbarrow, or other non-mechanized method.
- **Debris Disposal:** Permittee is responsible for removing debris generated by stewardship activities from Conservancy land, including cut shrubs, needles, leaf litter, branches, etc. **No piling or burning of debris is allowed.** Debris removal and disposal may have associated costs, which are the responsibility of the permittee. Visit tahoe.ca.gov/stewardship-agreement or use the QR code to find debris disposal information for your location.
- **No Grass Removal:** No mowing or grass removal of any kind.
- **Personal Responsibility:** All costs associated with work performed, disposal of debris, and liability for damages or injury resulting from your activities under this agreement are your sole responsibility. The Conservancy is not liable for your action on Conservancy land. You are responsible for complying with all governing laws and regulations.
- **Use:** This agreement does not give authorization to use Conservancy land for exclusive personal use, including modifying the natural condition of Conservancy land, landscaping, fencing, storage of personal property, creating trails or roads, etc. These activities are strictly prohibited.

Active Bird Nest Protection

The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. Sec. 703 et seq.) and California State Fish and Game Code (FGC § 3513) prohibit the taking, killing, or possessing of nesting birds and their nests.



Prior to conducting defensible space activities on any given day under this permit, the permittee shall:

- Check the work area for active bird nests.
- Report active bird nests immediately via tahoe.ca.gov/stewardship-agreement (see QR code on front).
- Avoid active bird nests by a minimum distance of 30 feet while conducting defensible space activities.



Waiver of Liability

I hereby waive, release, and hold harmless the Conservancy from any and all claims, demands, suits, actions, and judgments against the Conservancy, its employees, or agents, arising from any personal injury, illness, property damage, or wrongful death, by me, my family, estate, heirs, or assigns, during or in connection with any activities associated with this permit, I have fully informed myself of the contents of this liability release and assumption of risk.

Indemnification

I further agree to indemnify, defend, and save harmless the Conservancy, its officers, agents and employees from any and all claims and losses accruing or resulting to any and all contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, laborers, and any other person, firm or corporation furnishing or supplying work services, materials, or supplies in connection with this Agreement, and from any and all claims and losses accruing or resulting to any person, firm or corporation who may be injured or damaged in the performance of this Agreement.

Agreement

By signing this agreement, I agree to follow these guidelines when or if I choose to conduct defensible space activities on adjoining California Tahoe Conservancy land, and complete a participant feedback survey.

Once all work has been completed prior to the expiration date listed below, visit tahoe.ca.gov/stewardship-agreement (or use QR code on front) to complete the mandatory participant feedback survey.

Issued to:
Signature:
Additional Site-Specific Considerations:

Office Use Only

Date Issued:

Issued By:

Expires Oct. 15, 2026



The California Tahoe Conservancy is a state agency, established in 1984, with a mission to lead California's efforts to restore and enhance the extraordinary natural and recreational resources of the Lake Tahoe Basin. tahoe.ca.gov