

UPDATE ON POTENTIAL EXCHANGE OF CONSERVANCY LAND WITH NORTH TAHOE PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

Executive Summary: The California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) and North Tahoe Public Utility District (NTPUD) are considering a land exchange of two parcels (Exchange) to consolidate property ownership, improve land management, and provide public benefits. The Conservancy would transfer approximately 0.29 acres of Conservancy lakefront recreational land (Beach Parcel) to the NTPUD. The Beach Parcel is adjacent to existing NTPUD property, and the exchange would consolidate the NTPUD's ownership and management of Secline Beach. In return, the Conservancy would receive approximately ten acres of NTPUD forested land (Forest Parcel). The Forest Parcel contains seasonal creeks and public dirt trails that provide access to adjacent Conservancy and USDA Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) lands.

The Exchange is consistent with the Conservancy's Land Transfer Guidelines and Conservancy land management purposes of prioritizing natural resource protection and consolidating public recreation and land management. The Exchange advances the Conservancy's Strategic Plan goals to Provide Recreational Opportunities and Access for All; Safeguard the Lake Tahoe Basin's (Basin) Environmental, Cultural, Tribal, and Recreational Attributes for Future Generations; and Restore the Basin's Social and Ecological Resilience. The Exchange would result in a net increase of state-owned land, supporting California's Pathways to 30x30 and Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart strategies. Under these strategies, the State seeks to maximize carbon sequestration, provide public access, and enhance biodiversity.

Location: The proposed exchange involves two parcels in Placer County (County). The Beach Parcel is located at 141 Secline Street in Kings Beach (Assessment Number (AN) 117-180-011). The Forest Parcel is located just north of Kings Beach and east of State Route 267 (no address, AN 111-010-005) (Attachment 1).

Fiscal Summary: Conservancy staff would process the Exchange, if ultimately approved, as part of its regular workload. The annual program budget authorizations cover the Conservancy portion of due diligence costs, including for appraisals, land surveys, phase 1 environmental reports, escrow, and title insurance fees. The Conservancy and NTPUD would share these due diligence costs equally.

Overview

Conservancy Land Transfer History

Throughout its history, the Conservancy has transferred property and property interests, primarily to other government agencies, to achieve public benefits. Transfers of Conservancy lands must be consistent with the Conservancy's mission, guidelines, the purpose and funding source of the original acquisition, and enabling legislation. The Conservancy's enabling legislation, Government Code section 66907.8 states:

“Notwithstanding any other provision of law..., the Conservancy may lease, rent, sell, exchange, or otherwise transfer any real property or interest therein, or option acquired under this title to local public agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, individuals, corporate entities, or partnerships to fulfill the purposes of this title and to promote the state's planning priorities....”

Previous Conservancy transfers have consolidated property ownership, improved land management efficiency, and advanced public access, water quality, and other Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) purposes. Some recent land transfers include:

- More than twenty transfers of fee title or easement interests to public utilities or other local governments to facilitate shared-use trail, stormwater, or other Lake Tahoe EIP projects;
- A 2012 land exchange with the City of South Lake Tahoe (City), in which the Conservancy exchanged two non-sensitive urban parcels for three highly sensitive stream environment zone parcels along the Upper Truckee River and Trout Creek;
- A three-party land exchange with the City and Lake Tahoe Community College in 2016 to facilitate the Dennis T. Machida Memorial Greenway in South Lake Tahoe;
- Two land exchanges with the Tahoe City Public Utility District in 2016 and 2025 that facilitated environmentally sensitive land restoration, passive recreation management, drinking water infrastructure improvements, and enhanced public access.

The Conservancy's Land Transfer Guidelines convey the Conservancy's intent for transfers, including to shift management responsibility to the most suitable public land manager, facilitate delivery of public services, and enhance administrative capabilities or overall management efficiencies.

In 2025, NTPUD and Conservancy staff began discussing the potential Exchange to consolidate management of the subject parcels, align ownership with each agency's management expertise, and facilitate recreation improvements at Secline Beach.

Secline Beach

For many years, Kings Beach residents and visitors have advocated for improvements to public access and recreational amenities at Secline Beach. In response, the NTPUD secured grant funding, including a \$90,000 planning grant from the Conservancy, to

support a comprehensive, community-driven planning process for improvements at Secline Beach.

In partnership with the Conservancy and County, NTPUD completed a public planning process to identify Secline Beach Project (Project) improvements that would enhance the public recreation experience. Community input informed conceptual plans that include accessible pathways, a foot bridge over Griff Creek, picnic areas, stand-up paddleboard (SUP) storage with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access, a restroom, an outdoor shower, parking and passenger unloading areas, an interpretive kiosk, and an outdoor classroom.

The Project area includes three parcels that are separately owned by the Conservancy, NTPUD, and County (Attachment 2). The Project area does not extend to the lake or beach because the proposed improvements focus on upland areas, and the beach is owned by the County. An NTPUD-owned sewer pump station is located immediately adjacent to the beach and is also excluded from the Project area.

The Conservancy-owned Beach Parcel is a critical component of the Project because it lies between the County and NTPUD properties. The preferred location for several proposed improvements, including an ADA-accessible restroom and adjacent outdoor shower, is on the Beach Parcel and depends on completion of the Exchange.

During the public outreach and planning process the staff identified the potential Exchange as a way to permanently consolidate ownership and management of Secline Beach and streamline implementation of the planned public access improvements. The NTPUD currently manages two of the three parcels that comprise Project area. One parcel is owned by the NTPUD and the other is owned by the County. The remaining parcel, the Beach Parcel, is owned by the Conservancy and managed by California State Parks under a management agreement with the Conservancy. The current management arrangement can be confusing for the public, who are uncertain which agency to contact when issues arise. It also requires multiple agencies and contractors to maintain facilities and services, including portable restrooms and concessions, within a relatively small area. The potential Exchange would consolidate management under the NTPUD, improving operational efficiency and provide a clear point of contact for the public.

The Beach Parcel is subject to a Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) deed restriction that prohibits new residential development and requires the property to be maintained in a natural state. This deed restriction will remain in effect and continue to apply to the parcel following its transfer to the NTPUD through the Exchange. In addition, before the transfer, the Conservancy will record a deed restriction requiring the parcel remain open to the public in perpetuity.

Forest Parcel

In exchange for the Beach Parcel, the Conservancy would receive the approximately ten-acre Forest Parcel (Attachment 3). The parcel consists of forested land in the Carnelian Creek watershed and contains seasonal creeks and existing dirt trails. The parcel is

adjacent to Conservancy and LTBMU lands to the north. The Conservancy is well positioned to manage the Forest Parcel and incorporate forestry, watershed, and land management expertise to enhance public access and preserve natural resources.

The NTPUD completed forest treatments on the parcel in 2022. If transferred to the Conservancy, the Conservancy would incorporate the parcel into regular long-term treatment plans. The parcel's modest size, easy access, generally flat terrain, and contiguity with an approximately 30-acre Conservancy property to the north would limit long-term management obligations.

The parcel also provides important natural resource benefits. It supports a healthy mixed conifer forest, including mountain juniper, sugar pine, ponderosa pine, Jeffrey pine, white fir, and incense cedar. Willows line the seasonal creeks, which appear to be functioning well and in generally healthy ecological condition.

The parcel also provides public access via an existing dirt trail starting at the end of Sherman Way in Kingswood, going north onto the adjacent Conservancy property. People actively use this trail for nonmotorized access to reach the larger trail network above Kings Beach, including the Tahoe Rim Trail.

In addition, the staff determined the parcel contains existing potential land coverage eligible for banking or retirement through the Conservancy's Land Bank, helping advance the goals of the Lake Tahoe Regional Plan.

Next Steps

Following the September 17, 2026, Board update and tour, and after considering any feedback from the Board and public, Conservancy and NTPUD staff would complete the remaining due diligence activities, including title research, encroachment resolution, and final inspections. NTPUD staff would also complete the environmental review process and prepare the required environmental document.

NTPUD staff anticipates presenting the potential Exchange and environmental document for the Project to the NTPUD Board in late fall 2026. Following NTPUD Board action, Conservancy staff could present the proposed Exchange and environmental document to the Conservancy Board for consideration in winter 2026 or spring 2027.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1 – Potential Exchange Parcels Location Map

Attachment 2 – Beach Parcel Map (141 Secline Street, AN 117-180-011)

Attachment 3 – Forest Parcel Map (no address, AN 111-010-005)

Conservancy Staff Contact

Aimee Rutledge, Acquisition Specialist

aimee.rutledge@tahoe.ca.gov

Chris Mertens, Recreation and Public Access Program Supervisor

chris.mertens@tahoe.ca.gov