



Recreation Access

Many people from the surrounding area and visitors to the Basin enjoy use of the park for hiking, biking, swimming and other dispersed recreation activities. State Parks recognizes the desire of the community to access the river and park areas and minimize conflict between golf recreation and these uses. In summer 2006, State Parks conducted recreation surveys to determine general use patterns in Washoe Meadows State Park. One of the goals of the two public workshops to be conducted in winter/spring 2007 would be to further our understanding of existing use and access patterns, and to gather information for use in future recreation use and access planning.

Get Involved

Public scoping occurs early in the environmental review process to invite the public and agencies to raise questions and concerns, and to identify environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR/EIS/EIS. The scoping meetings were held in September 2006. Upon release of the Draft EIR/EIS/EIS (anticipated in summer/fall 2007), the public and agencies are provided the opportunity to review the project alternatives and the environmental analysis and to provide comments. Public meetings/hearings will be held by lead agencies during review/certification of the Final EIR/EIS/EIS.

In addition to the public review meetings associated with the environmental document, a community workshop is planned for February 2007 (see Public Meeting box inset on this page) to gather community input on the project and proposed alternatives. Additionally, State Parks anticipates holding a public information meeting to present a project status update in late spring 2007.

For more information on the project, viewing of maps, documents and photos, and future meeting dates, please visit the project website at:

<http://www.restoreuppertruckee.net>

To provide comments, suggestions and feedback, send email at: utproject@parks.ca.gov.

For additional information about this project throughout the planning/environmental review process, please contact:

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Public Workshop

Recreation Planning Workshop for the
Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course
Reconfiguration Project

Day and Date: Thursday, February 8 or Friday,
February 9, 2007. Agenda is the same for both
meetings.

Time: 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Location: Lake Tahoe Golf Course Clubhouse
2500 Emerald Bay Rd.
South Lake Tahoe, CA

Purpose of Meeting: To gather information about existing public access and use patterns in Washoe Meadows SP and Lake Valley SRA and provide an opportunity for the public to help identify public access and resource protection features of this project. The workshop will involve a short presentation about known important natural resources and public use of the State Park, followed by an interactive planning exercise in which all interested attendees can participate.

January 2007

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information and updates about a multi-year planning process that will determine a preferred alternative for restoring a 1.5-mile reach of the Upper Truckee River near Meyers, California. The property is owned by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), and is located west of U.S. Highway 50 just south of Sawmill Road.

The Upper Truckee River is the largest river in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and a primary source of sediment and nutrients that flow into Lake Tahoe. Nutrients and fine-grained sediment have been shown to reduce the clarity of Lake Tahoe. The river has been adversely affected by historic disturbances and modern development—including golf course construction and channel straightening—and has been targeted for restoration.

State Parks, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) have begun the environmental review process to identify and analyze alternatives for a restoration project along this reach of the river, including alternatives that would involve reconfiguration of the golf course. This newsletter is part of a comprehensive outreach effort by State Parks to keep the public informed and to encourage participation in the process.



Portions of the Lake Tahoe Golf Course about the Truckee River's edge as it runs through Lake Valley State Recreation Area. The project seeks to reduce the area of the stream environment zone that is occupied by the golf course and restore riparian and meadow habitat within this reach.

Project Objectives:

- Restore natural geomorphic processes that sustain channel and floodplain morphology
- Restore ecosystem function in terms of ecological processes and aquatic and riparian habitat quality
- Reduce erosion and improve water quality including reduction of the reach's contribution of suspended sediment and nutrient loading in the Upper Truckee River and Lake Tahoe
- Minimize and mitigate short-term water quality and other environmental impacts during construction
- Improve the golf course layout, infrastructure, and management to reduce the environmental impact of the golf course on the river's water quality and riparian habitat by integrating environmentally-sensitive design concepts
- Reduce the area of stream environment zone occupied by the golf course
- Restore, enhance, and increase the extent of riparian and meadow habitat
- Maintain golf recreation opportunity
- Continue to generate a similar level of revenue income to State Parks
- Avoid any increase in flood hazard to private property
- Avoid any increase in safety hazards to all recreation users
- Provide opportunities for informal, public access and non-vehicular recreation

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That's the idea behind Lake Tahoe's Environmental Improvement Program designed to preserve this spectacular place for future generations. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, along with 50 different partner organizations is making it happen. With about \$1 billion in improvement projects to benefit the lake's ecosystem, the EIP will contribute to saving the lake's world-famous clarity.

Play a part in preserving Lake Tahoe by visiting www.conservationclearly.org



For more information contact: TRPA • 775-588-4547 x 235 • conservationclearly@trpa.org



California State Parks Mission Statement

To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



January 2007

The Problem

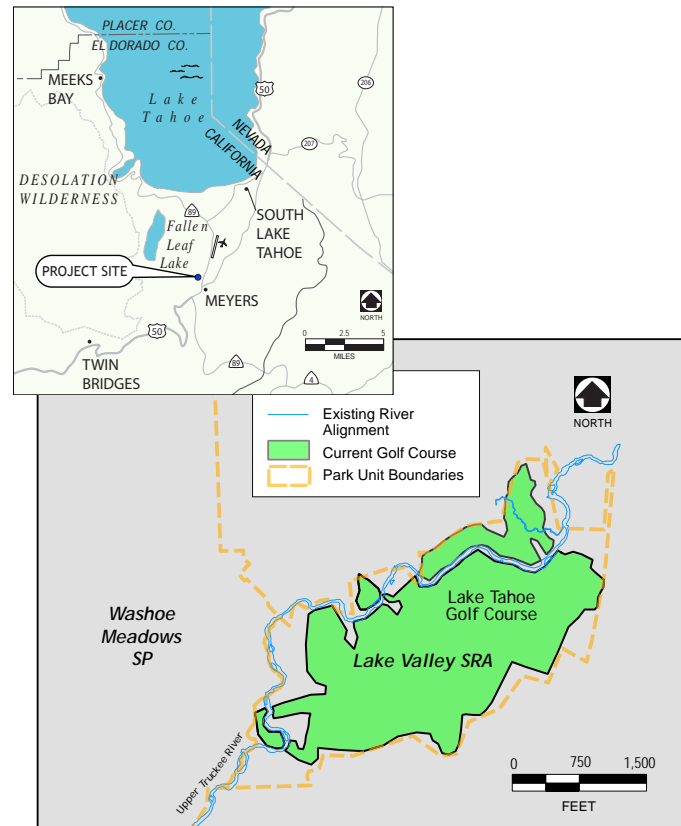
The Upper Truckee River has been substantially altered by land practices since European settlement in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Prior to the 1940s, this section of the Upper Truckee River was straightened, which decreased the river's sinuosity, steepened its slope, and resulted in increased erosive force. Over time, the channel has become incised to such a degree that the river rarely overtops its banks, a process that would naturally capture fine sediment and nutrients. Chronic erosion continues, meadow and floodplain function is impaired, and the system's natural mechanism for removing fine sediment is lost. In-stream and riparian corridor habitat are degraded through increased turbidity.

The golf course was constructed on the floodplain in 1958-1960, further degrading the meadow habitat. Portions of the course abut the river's edge with no protective buffer or habitat corridor. The combination of river straightening, the golf course infrastructure (including 5 bridges) and the attempts to stabilize the channel with rip-rap have interfered with the river's natural morphology and rendered it unstable. This reach is characterized by steep, rapidly eroding banks, with no riparian vegetation. The banks generate sediment that is introduced directly to the river and conveyed to Lake Tahoe. This situation causes deterioration of riparian habitat and degradation of water quality to the river and Lake Tahoe.

While several other restoration projects are planned for other reaches of the Upper Truckee River, the golf course reach has been identified as the greatest opportunity for rehabilitation because it presents an opportunity for full restoration and public ownership presents fewer constraints to project planning and implementation.

Discussion

The geomorphic and ecological function of the river is currently disturbed, leading to both poor water quality and degraded habitat. Geomorphic restoration would return the river to a more natural state, restoring natural



meanders, establishing a channel with less depth and slope, and thus less power to erode its bed and banks. Re-connecting the channel with the floodplain would increase the frequency and duration of over-bank flows, raising the water table and allowing the deposition of fine sediment on the floodplain. Restoring this geomorphic function would, in turn, restore natural ecological processes, enhance riparian vegetation communities, and improve habitat quality. Because the golf course occupies what once was floodplain, portions of the golf course may have to be reconfigured, eliminated, or relocated away from the river to achieve the restoration objectives.

Currently, the park serves golfers and dispersed recreation users with activities, such as hiking, biking, angling, horseback riding, and swimming. If the golf course were to be reconfigured or partially relocated, it would not increase in size or area but would be moved to less environmentally sensitive lands farther from the river, and constructed to current environmental standards. The vacated area would be restored. Opportunities for biking, hiking, and other dispersed recreation would be accommodated and improved, allowing access from the neighborhoods to the river and meadows.

The Environmental Review Process

State Parks, Reclamation, and TRPA are preparing a joint environmental document (EIR/EIS/EIS) in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) regulations for the Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course Reconfiguration Project. The environmental document will identify environmental impacts that may result from various alternatives and recommend mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any significant effects. The document will look at effects on water quality, archaeological resources, vegetation, wildlife, public access and recreation, economics, neighborhood compatibility, and other issues.

Four public scoping meetings were held in September 2006 to solicit public input on the content and issues to be addressed in the environmental document. Oral and written comments from the public and agency meetings were collected and will be addressed in the document. Additional public meetings will be held in 2007 to keep the community informed about the progress of the environmental review and provide other opportunities for input. The draft environmental document is expected to be available in summer/fall of 2007.



Several undersized bridges along this reach are located within the floodplain, constricting flow and accelerating velocities leading to erosion downstream.

Draft Alternatives

State Parks is proactively and voluntarily seeking a solution to improve the habitat and condition of this reach of the Upper Truckee River and to reduce the river's adverse impact on the water quality of Lake Tahoe.

State Parks has developed five draft alternatives to be evaluated for this reach of the river. These alternatives were modified after considering public scoping comments. The alternatives proposed to be studied are as follows:

- ♦ **Alternative 1, No Project/No Action.** The golf course and project site would remain unchanged.
- ♦ **Alternative 2, Geomorphic Restoration With 18-Hole Golf Course.** A portion of the golf course would be relocated to land farther from the river to allow for river restoration. Under this alternative, the river would be restored to a meandering pattern and raised to reconnect with the floodplain, thereby reducing erosion, raising the water table, and restoring valuable riparian and meadow habitat. The number of acres restored along the river would be approximately the same as the number of acres onto which the golf course would be relocated on the west side of the river. The restored area would become part of Washoe Meadows SP, and the area to which the golf course would be relocated would become part of Lake Valley SRA. The potential relocation area would minimize coverage in floodplain and meadow areas to allow a naturally functioning river and floodplain and provide a continuous corridor for wildlife.
- ♦ **Alternative 3, Geomorphic Restoration With Reduced-Area Golf Course.** The river restoration treatment would be the same as Alternative 2, but the river restoration would result in a smaller golf course (9-hole, executive, or other short course) with golf located on the east side of the river only.
- ♦ **Alternative 4, Engineered Stabilization (In Place).** The river channel would be stabilized in place, bank protection (rip rap) and grade controls (rock weirs) would be installed, and bioengineering would be incorporated. This alternative would leave the existing 18-hole golf course in its current location.
- ♦ **Alternative 5, Full Restoration (No Golf Course).** The river restoration treatment would be the same as in Alternative 2, but the golf course would be removed and the area restored.