

14 Tahoe forest fuels projects approved by state agency

By Kathryn Reed

Nearly \$1 million was allocated by the California Tahoe Conservancy board to reduce forest fuels, improve habitat and forest restoration.

In that dollar amount is \$200,000 to finish work in the Angora Fire area on CTC land. This includes the urban lots as well as 30 acres the state owns. Many of the trees that were planted after the devastating June 2007 fire have died.



Work in the Angora burn area will take place this summer.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

More trees will be planted, plus the money will pay for two years of monitoring the revegetation project.

When it comes to thinning of the forest, the CTC has seven areas targeted on the South Shore, four on the West Shore and three on the North Shore that will be treated this year. More

than 400 acres will be treated.

It costs about \$3,500 to treat one acre.

The projects that were approved on Thursday by the Conservancy board will be paid for with federal and state money that has already been secured.

The objectives of the plan are to: enhance the health of forest resources, preserve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and provide for public safety and protection of property.

“Fire frequency, intensity, severity, and seasonality have a great impact on forest vegetation,” the staff report says. “Studies of fire frequency dating back hundreds of years, known as the fire return interval, have shown that each acre of conifer and ponderosa pine forest burns on an average of every 11 to 15 years. In contrast, it may now be almost 200 years before each acre of this forest type burns as a result of fire suppression causing forest fuels to continue to accumulate.”

The Conservancy is hoping the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, which is percolating in Washington for reauthorization by Congress, will be approved. In it is millions of dollars dedicated to forest fuels reduction throughout the basin in both states.

The Conservancy has spent about \$1 million on average per year during the last decade on forest fuels management.