

Forest Service talks about BMP effectiveness in basin



Dear concerned citizens,

Each year, the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) evaluates its temporary and post-project completion best management practices in terms of successful implementation and effectiveness in preventing sediment movement.

The temporary BMP and BMP monitoring reports for 2009 are now available by navigating to the LTBMU's website, clicking the link on the left for maps and publications, then the link for publications, and look under Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit monitoring Reports.

The overall results show the overwhelming majority of both BMPs and temporary BMPs were implemented as prescribed and were effective in preventing sediment transport, but a significant storm in October 2009 presented some challenges. BMP failures occurred at Valhalla Pier and Tallac Creek Bridge, where BMPs had been correctly implemented but were overwhelmed by the heavy rainfall over a short period of time. At the Angora Hazard Tree project, BMPs were not implemented as prescribed. This failure, combined with the network of user-created trails crisscrossing the project area, resulted in sediment transport to an SEZ.

In May 2009, an earlier significant storm resulted in the failure of a temporary grade control structure at the

Blackwood Stream Channel/Floodplain restoration. This BMP was implemented correctly, however, and work already completed to restore the stream channel and floodplain has resulted in an overall decrease in sedimentation from the project area.

The LTBMU was created for the purpose of safeguarding water quality by improving the health of the forest ecosystems surrounding the Lake. With this in the forefront of our minds, staff quickly remedied deficiencies once they were identified and are identifying steps to prevent future failures. The unit is already implementing some of these, such as an improved storm forecasting and communication process. We will continue to evaluate our BMP implementation and ensure we are doing our best to preserve water quality as we implement projects to restore forest health, reduce hazardous fuels, restore streams and meadows and provide high-quality, sustainable recreation opportunities.

Cheva Heck, public affairs officer LTBMU U.S. Forest Service