

Tahoe Keys Marina parking spaces to be increased

By Kathryn Reed

Parking may no longer be a hassle for people using the Tahoe Keys Marina, Fresh Ketch restaurant and Cove East nature trail.

This is because the California Tahoe Conservancy board at its meeting this month agreed to enter a lease agreement with the marina owners to build 91 shared use spaces.

The Conservancy owns 1.3 acres of land between the current parking lot and the trail. It's that dirt area at the end of Venice Drive in South Lake Tahoe that could be paved over as early as this year.



The acreage behind the Tahoe Keys Marina sign is slated to become a parking lot. Photo/Kathryn Reed

"The existing footpath should not be affected," Bruce Eisner of the Conservancy told the board Jan. 20.

The parking lot would be linked to the popular path that leads to Lake Tahoe.

Negotiations have been going on for a couple years to seal this deal. Although the marina owner still has to sign-off on everything, the Conservancy is confident a contract will be in place shortly.

In addition to adding parking to an area that is congested throughout much of the summer, a lane leading to the boat ramp will be dedicated to people needing inspections related to invasive aquatic species. Also part of the project are restrooms, day use amenities and landscaping.

Although there are no plans today to make any of the spaces at the marina paid, if that were to happen, language in the lease calls for the Conservancy to receive 20 percent of the proceeds.

The 30-year lease will not cost the CTC a dime. The marina will pay for the planning, permitting, construction, and operation and maintenance of the facilities.

The board also on Thursday approved the lease agreement where the marina will pay the Conservancy \$5,000 a year for the use of the 1 acre parcel on Venice Drive that is about halfway between Tahoe Keys Boulevard and Cove East.

With the agreement comes an option for the marina to buy this plot of land for \$261,000. But the Conservancy does not want to sell it until after Jan. 1, 2015. This is because the state agency foresees using it as a staging area if work is done to the Upper Truckee River at this location.

If the river, which is being reconfigured upstream in stages, goes through a similar rebirth at the mouth of Lake Tahoe, then the footpath would be altered.

“The current path is merely a temporary path,” Eisner said of

the big picture that involves restoration to the river.

The other component that is likely to affect Cove East and what is called the Upper Truckee Marsh is the environmental impact statement and environmental impact report on 525 acres that are scheduled to be released this spring. Four alternatives are proposed in those documents about what should be done with the property that is owned by the state.

The land is some of the most sensitive in the Lake Tahoe Basin, containing rare and threatened species.