

# Plan to reduce congestion, upgrade Camp Rich campsites

By Kathryn Reed

Reconfiguring the three sections of the Camp Richardson Campground, making the road leading to the Beacon Restaurant more efficient, reducing congestion in the area, and removing parking from dirt areas along Highway 89 are the major components of a multi-million dollar, multi-year project the U.S. Forest Service wants to undertake.

The federal agency is taking public comment on the 79-acre project until Aug. 8.



Campsites at Camp Rich are slated to be improved by the USFS. Photos/Kathryn Reed

But the homeowners on Jameson Beach Road are not happy with the proposal because some believe their needs are not being met. This is the road that goes from Highway 89 by the cabins to the Beacon and then turns right to the residences.

Daniel Cressy, who is in charge of the project for the Forest Service, said the last meeting regarding the Jameson Road

issue was Thursday, but there is still uncertainty over who owns the road. He told *Lake Tahoe News* his agency is looking into the issue.

Jameson Beach Road residents are doing research, too.

At issue is whether the residents own the road or have an easement or right-of-way to use it to get to their property. The houses were there long before the Forest Service acquired the land in the 1960s. There also used to be another route to get to the houses, which the USFS has closed off. That was next to the general store.

Both sides agree congestion is horrible in that area.

Cressy said the proposal calls for having homeowners have an ID that would allow them to get home without enduring the backup at the parking kiosk. This would also entail widening the road to legally allow for cars to pass to the right.

A bike-pedestrian trail will be put in along Jameson Beach Road with easy access for people parking on the road so people and vehicles are not using the same strip of asphalt, as is the case now.

Four alternatives are being proposed in the environmental assessment. One is the standard to do nothing. Alternative 2 is the one the agency would like adopted.

With the campgrounds, all alternatives call for a reduction in sites from the 325 that are now available.

“As we redevelop the campsite to meet modern accessibility standards and vehicle radius turning, the campsites take more space (based on) how campsites are currently configured,” Cressy explained. “Now they are tucked in wherever they can fit.”



New bathrooms will be available this summer.

Alternative 2 calls for 253 campsites. Up to 170 of those would have sewer-water hook-ups. The majority would accommodate six people, with some designed for 12 and others for groups of 24.

Cressy said feedback from users reflects a changing demographic for camping – bigger groups, more RVs.

Moving the check-in for the campgrounds out of the main commercial area is designed to reduce congestion.

Work on the campgrounds could begin next summer. Without specific engineering and design work, it's unknown today if this would take two seasons.

Instead of needing a four-wheel drive to pull into the campground, the road will be improved, defined routes (instead of driving through the forest), and identifiable spurs for campers will be installed.

To accomplish this and other components of the proposal about 1,000 trees are slated to be felled – with about 40 of those being more than 30-inches in diameter.

Cressy acknowledges this sounds like a lot, but said to make the campground function – which includes having a fire truck be able to come and go – trees need to come out. He also said the density of some areas makes this no different than a

thinning project.



Millions of dollars in improvements are proposed by the USFS.

Having more transit stops and ones off the highway to allow the flow of traffic to continue are being proposed.

Restrooms are part of the project, too. Those are in addition to the two facilities that will be open later this summer. (They replace ones built in the 1960s.)

One will be by the beach to replace the port-a-potty near the cabins.

Funding initially will come from Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act money. Cressy roughly estimates about \$2 million worth of work could take place in 2012, with another \$1.5 million in work the following year.

The entire project could cost between \$10 million and \$15 million. Cressy stressed this is not a hard figure by any means. He also said funding for the project is not secured. Oftentimes dollars are not available until the environmental review is finished.

Once the public weighs-in, the agency assesses the comments to see if more work is needed. The forest supervisor has ultimate authority in signing off on the document.

Components of the proposed action plan that will affect the masses who use or drive through the Camp Rich area – which is about three miles north of the Y in South Lake Tahoe on Highway 89 – include eliminating the free parking in the dirt along the highway.

More defined parking areas on Jameson Beach Road will be installed.

With all of this will come better filtration of stormwater runoff to reduce sediment flowing into nearby Lake Tahoe.

Other parking areas will be built.



Congestion like this on July 9 may be reduced.

The bike trail that crosses Jameson Beach Road close to the highway will remain because it acts as a sidewalk as well. But cyclists will be directed to a new path that will go behind the general store on one side of the beach road and behind the lodge on the other side.

User-created trails in the Pope Marsh area will be decommissioned, with the most logical ones being revamped to encourage they be the only ones used.

The trail design is being worked on with the Forest Service employees who are involved in the larger bike-pedestrian plan being formulated for the area that goes to Fallen Leaf Lake

Road. (That document is slated to be released in the fall for public review.)

The current document is online as well as at the USFS office at 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe. Questions may be directed to Cressy at (530) 544.2857 or [dcressy@fs.fed.us](mailto:dcressy@fs.fed.us).