

Tahoe City area campground to be modernized

By Kathryn Reed

When the William Kent Campground near Tahoe City was created in 1924 there wasn't much else around. Now it's a bit like urban camping, as is the case with most developed campsites in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

But not many upgrades have been made in the last 89 years either. It's still a bit rustic when it comes to amenities even though residences surround it. The road and camping spur design was implemented in 1963, flush toilets came in 1969, and a bathroom at the day use beach was built in 2004.



Proposed changes for William
Kent Campground.
Rendering/USFS

A range of changes is in store for the campground as well as the Meeks Bay Fire Station that is manned by the Forest Service.

The USFS has allocated \$1 million to improve the campground and day-use beach area. (This is the only public camping facility on the West Shore.)

Work on the 22-acre site that is about one mile south of

Sunnyside and adjacent to Meeks Bay Resort could start in May 2014. The forest supervisor signed off on the environmental assessment on Feb. 8, which started a 45-day appeal period.

“The Forest Service recognizes that trends in recreation interests are changing. One of the changes we have observed is that many campground visitors are interested in experiences other than traditional tent camping. One such experience that has become popular is camping in a yurt,” Ashley Sommer with the U.S. Forest Service told *Lake Tahoe News*.

These tent-like cabins have a permanent platform. A wood or metal frame is erected on a seasonal basis.

“Yurts vary in their amenities, but generally have a heated sleeping area and eating area at a minimum,” Sommer said. “We have seen success with the yurts at Fallen Leaf Campground on the South Shore. The proposed yurts would be purchased and owned by the concessionaire that operates the campground.”

This project is just outside the scoping area of the much talked about realignment of Highway 89 to deal with the seismically challenged Fanny Bridge as well as the visioning area for Tahoe City.

Moving the fire station is designed to reduce response time by firefighters because most of that station’s calls are north of Meeks Bay.

“The Meeks Bay fire station is currently the only fire station responsible for wildland fire response and wildland-urban-interface (WUI) fire response on the West and North shores of Lake Tahoe,” Sommer said. “The Meeks Bay Fire Station is also no longer adequate for the size and mission of the fire engine module. The Meeks Bay site is too small, which does not allow enough space for a new building that meets current standards, as well as adequate parking for station employees. Furthermore, the site does not have a year-round water source, which would limit the use of a new facility during the winter

months.”

The new building will be about 3,500-square-feet and look much like the facility on Spooner Summit.

For more information about the project, contact Ashley Sommer at (530) 543.2615 or go online.