

Opinion: CTC comes clean about its parcels

By Patrick Wright

Lake Tahoe News recently published a letter from Ann Nichols (CTC needs to come clean about its parcels, March 17) sounding an alarm that the Tahoe Conservancy is on the verge of selling 400 environmentally sensitive parcels. Let me assure your readers and the community that the Conservancy has no plans to sell or leave unprotected any of the thousands of environmentally sensitive parcels that we have acquired since 1985.

In fact, the Conservancy board recently approved a set of guidelines to strictly limit sales of Conservancy-owned land. Under the guidelines, we will consider selling parcels only where they are not needed to achieve our conservation or recreation goals, or where state ownership is no longer necessary to achieve the goals of the original acquisition.



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To date, the Conservancy has been proceeding cautiously, and the board has authorized staff to market the sale of just four properties, all in South Lake Tahoe. Two of these properties are currently listed for sale. One is a former clubhouse and conference center site adjacent to Heavenly Mountain Resort known as Tallac Vista. The Conservancy acquired this parcel in a settlement agreement to prevent the development of 150

condos and protect the environmentally sensitive area of the parcel. The Conservancy can no longer afford to maintain or upgrade the old clubhouse on the developed area of the site, and continued ownership of this residential-zoned parcel does not serve our mission.

The other parcel for sale is the former drive-in movie theater site on Glenwood Avenue. The Conservancy recently acquired this parcel through a land exchange with the city of South Lake Tahoe. We removed nearly 80,000 square feet of asphalt and restored the sensitive stream environment zone on the property, which also includes a potential home site on the less sensitive upland area of the parcel. Having achieved our goals of removing the coverage and restoring and permanently protecting the sensitive stream zone, we are now making the property available for sale to recover our costs and invest in other high priority projects and programs.

The Conservancy may also consider selling a small number of other parcels on the South Shore, including several parcels in downtown Meyers that we purchased for a visitor center that is no longer planned, and a couple of highly urbanized parcels at the Y. Sales of these commercially-zoned parcels would not only provide revenue to the Conservancy to invest in high priority projects and programs, but would support the development of sustainable, walkable and bikeable town centers.

The Conservancy takes its commitment to restore and maintain its conservation and recreation lands very seriously, and we encourage the public to read our guidelines and responses to frequently asked questions on our website.

Patrick Wright is executive director of the California Tahoe Conservancy.