

# Scientist sues USFS to stop Echo Lake tree thinning

By George Warren, News 10

A prominent environmental scientist is suing to stop the U.S. Forest Service from cutting trees around Echo Lakes because he says it's unnecessary and destructive.

"There is essentially no wildfire risk in the Echo Lakes Basin," insists Dennis Murphy, a UNR research professor who helped draft the Lake Tahoe Watershed Assessment for the federal government.

In late September, the Forest Service began a multi-year project to clear mostly smaller trees and brush from roughly 100 acres around Upper Echo Lake and part of Lower Echo Lake.

A memo from the forest supervisor in South Lake Tahoe says the goal is to reduce the potential for a catastrophic wildland fire and provide defensible space around the rustic summer homes that are built on leased forest service land.

Murphy, whose family has owned a cabin on Upper Echo Lake for generations, filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Sacramento Nov. 6 claiming the Forest Service did not adequately consider the environmental impacts of the project.

**Read the whole story**