

Al Tahoe residents jittery over marsh plans

By Kathryn Reed

Proposed work by South Tahoe Public Utility District in the Upper Truckee Marsh has raised the awareness of Al Tahoe residents to the larger project the California Tahoe Conservancy is likely to undertake.

While the two are not related, they do involve the same area.



Trout Creek now runs close to STPUD infrastructure. Photos/Kathryn Reed

South Tahoe PUD's project is on the Conservancy board's July 17 agenda.

The heavy winter of 2011 saw Trout Creek flood its banks and the channel has been changed ever since. The problem with this is that it brings the stream close to the district's facilities at the end of Bellevue Avenue. A manhole cover is now just feet from the water.

"The district is planning to do a smaller type project to nudge water to the other side of the channel," Scott Carroll with CTC told *Lake Tahoe News*. "They want to redirect the

water to the left so their site dries out.”

The work to be done is on CTC property.

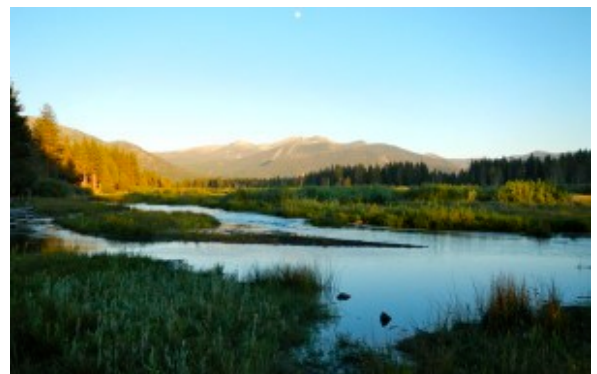
Members of the Al Tahoe neighborhood are planning to be at the CTC meeting to talk about this project and the final environment documents that are in the works.

While the comment period closed a year ago regarding restoring the 600-acres in the middle of South Lake Tahoe, there is a group of residents who now wants to have a say on what the preferred alternative is when the final environmental impact report/environmental impact statement is released.

Residents have had two meetings, with the latest being July 9. They are crafting a letter to present to the CTC board.

“We feel that the plan for the recreation component of the environmental impact report is beyond what really needs to be done in the marsh. It is going to have a negative impact on the welfare and nesting habitats of wildlife,” Greg Poseley, an Al Tahoe resident, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Today, this eastern side of the marsh has user-created trails that go to Barton Beach. May through July the Conservancy bans dogs from the area. This property is also where the Tahoe Yellow Cress grows. It doesn't exist anyplace outside the Lake Tahoe Basin.



Upper Truckee Marsh is one of the most sensitive areas

in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Several of the proposals in the draft EIR/EIS call for boardwalks into the marsh. Some would be viewing areas, others would be bike trails. And some of those bike trails would link to Cove East on the west side of the marsh that is accessed via Tahoe Keys.

The only way to make that link feasible for all cyclists would be to pave the Cove East trail. It is currently an earthen trail that is not conducive to road bikes.

“[The proposals] seem opposed to the principal vision of the Conservancy, which is restoration, conservancy and preservation of habitat. Somewhere along the line the pressure of a recreation component has been introduced to the Conservancy,” Poseley said. “They are more on board for helping with public access into this habitat as opposed to the preservation and conservation side of it. We feel they have lost sight of their original mission.”

Another concern is that this would bring more people to the neighborhood which does not have public parking, other than in front of residences. At Wednesday’s meeting neighbors voiced concern that the CTC lots in the area could be paved to solve that problem. They also brought up the Al Tahoe Plan Area Statement that says, “Access to and parking for the Barton Beach area should not be improved.”

The Conservancy is working on a preferred alternative for the entire marsh restoration, which could be a combination of the initial four as well as include components from comments submitted last year.

It’s possible the board will take action at the Sept. 18 meeting.

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Notes:

- California Tahoe Conservancy meets July 17, 9:30am in the board room at Lake Tahoe Community College.
- Info about the draft Upper Truckee River restoration project in online.