

CTC funds restoration of old campground



This cement filled culvert will be removed as part of the restoration efforts at the old Tahoe Pines Campground. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

For the first time in more than 80 years, an 8-acre parcel in Meyers is about to look a lot more like it did before white people took over the Lake Tahoe Basin.

At the California Tahoe Conservancy board meeting this month, \$650,000 was allocated to the restoration of the former Tahoe Pines Campground. (Board members Norma Santiago, Karen Finn and John Hopper were absent.)

In 1932 Alma Mater started the campground. From 1983 until when the CTC bought the land for \$4.19 million in 2007 the Poulen family ran it. When the Conservancy board was given a tour of the area in 2008, Greg Poulen told many stories about the flood of 1996. A loud clang would echo through the campground. Another barbecue pit from one of the 59 campsites had been dislodged and was banging along the rocks in the raging river.

"The ground is smashed from years of automobiles. We will try to get rid of the soft coverage and grow some vegetation," Peter Eichar, lead planner for the site, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It's heavily armored. There are culverts filled with concrete. We will get rid of the debris."

Work will take place over the course of next summer.

While the public is allowed to access the area today, in a year it should be even a more pleasant place to visit.

"Passive recreation improvements, such as picnic tables, benches, a new bridge, and walking trails will complement the restoration objectives," the staff report says.

But no one expects it to be a destination spot. No trailheads are being built. And the terrain does not link up with any other trails.

It could be a parking area for cyclists, though. Conservancy officials have noticed people using the area to park and then ride South Upper Truckee Road. Caltrans is putting in a Class 2 bike lane along Highway 50 that will be directly in front of the old campground. This, then, will link to the Pat Lowe bike trail.

The current pavement will be removed and a new parking area with 12 slots will be installed.

The major improvements to the site are environmental. The streambed will become more natural like it was before the campground. This means removing the culverts, some of the boulders, and planting vegetation to stabilize the banks of the Upper Truckee River.