

Marsh restoration compromise proposed



The Upper Truckee Marsh in April 2013. Photo/LTN file

By Kathryn Reed

A possible project to come out the California water bond that is on the Nov. 4 ballot is restoration of the Upper Truckee Marsh.

On Thursday the California Tahoe Conservancy board heard a presentation about staff's recommendation for how to restore this approximately 500-acre parcel. The CTC owns this swath of land that borders the Tahoe Keys and Al Tahoe neighborhoods in South Lake Tahoe and goes from Highway 50 to Lake Tahoe.



The west and east sides of the marsh. Image/CTC

Four alternatives were studied in the environmental documents, with the Conservancy not having a preferred one. Now staff is recommending a hybrid. The final environmental impact report and environmental impact study should be out in late spring, early summer 2015. The soonest any work could start is 2017, and that would not be anything substantive, according to staff.

Residents in Al Tahoe have been vocal about their opposition to increasing recreation opportunities on their side of the marsh. Parking would be an issue, plus they questioned how this would be good for plants and animals. Their concerns were heard.

And at the Sept. 18 meeting many applauded the decision.

No elevated boardwalks or viewing areas will be erected on the east side of the marsh. Trout Creek, which runs on this side, will see some restoration work. In the future it will come into the marsh as one channel, but then will be allowed to meander through the marsh to Lake Tahoe without a defined route. This returns the waterway to how it functioned before settlers messed with it.

One person raised issues about flooding, questioning if enough analysis has been done to ensure tweaking the area even a few inches won't cause problems for residents.

On the west side of the marsh is where most of the visible changes will take place. This includes rerouting the trail at Cove East, changing how the lagoon off the boat channel functions and possibly relocating the Tahoe Keys Property Owner Association's corporation yard.

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Preliminary Staff Recommended Alternative



ire project include:

- Restoring and enhancing habitat
- Improving water quality
- Protecting Tahoe yellow cress
- Providing appropriate public access

- Preserving cultural heritage
- Avoiding flood hazards.

CTC staff is in the process of responding to the 65 public comments and 12 agency comments. However, many centered on enforcement of the area and not the actual alternatives.

The east side has more issues with people being unruly, letting dogs run wild, parties and trash. The Conservancy said it is looking into how to better address these concerns.