

USFS seeks comments on Taylor-Tallac project

The U.S. Forest Service is asking for public input on plans to restore the Taylor and Tallac creek ecosystems, while maintaining or improving visitor services.

Located on Highway 89 on the South Shore, the Taylor-Tallac project area includes some of the most heavily visited recreation sites in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Baldwin Beach serves an estimated 2.5 million visitors each summer.

The area also provides habitat for numerous protected wildlife species and an important hydrological connection to Lake Tahoe.

Taylor and Tallac channels were historically connected through a series of four swales, which formed a large wetland complex. The Forest Service proposes to restore this connection by removing culverts that are impeding water flow and replacing them with crossing structures, and by recontouring and revegetating swales.

The project would include stream restoration in Taylor and Tallac creeks, such as renovating the fish ladder at the Fallen Leaf Lake Dam to support potential Lahontan cutthroat trout recovery actions, removing portions of the Lucky Baldwin Dam to restore connectivity between Fallen Leaf Lake and Fallen Leaf Dam, and modifying flow releases at Fallen Leaf Lake Dam.

The project proposes to improve wildlife habitat by eradicating or controlling aquatic invasive species, protecting Tahoe yellow cress through physical barriers, installing nest and perch structures for waterfowl and sensitive raptors, placing bat boxes and planting willows for willow flycatcher.

At Baldwin Beach, the Forest Service proposes to construct pedestrian pathways, formalize and upgrade the picnic area (including a pavilion or similar structure), provide foot-washing stations at restrooms and install water quality best management practices throughout the site.

Restoration efforts at Taylor Creek Visitor Center would include upgrading the stream profile chamber building to meet contemporary building codes and provide a more natural aquatic habitat and reconfiguring the Rainbow Trail to reduce impacts to the stream environment zone, such as by raising sections of trail or replacing them with boardwalks.

Comments on the project are due Dec. 5. The project is in the scoping phase of National Environmental Policy Act review.

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