

Washoe, USFS Looking to improve Meeks Bay

By Kathryn Reed

Upgrading restaurant features, linking to the new bike trail, moving cabins, improving traffic patterns. These are some of the ideas the Washoe tribe has for improving Meeks Bay Resort.

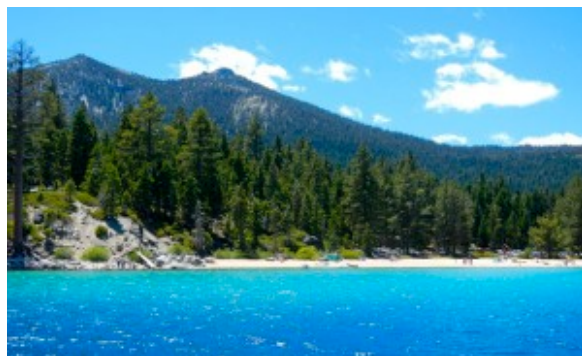
The tribe has operated the West Shore lakefront property under a special use permit from the U.S. Forest Service since 1999. It expires in 2019. But tribe officials are hoping for an extension.

Tonight the public is being asked to weigh in on what they would like to see at the resort. The resort provides day-use beach access, marina operations, cabins, and RV and tent camping.

Design Workshop is assisting the Washoe with coming up with ideas for what the improvements could look like.

Greg Weyland, business operations manager for the tribe, said they are looking at moving and upgrading the 1920s-era cabins.

“We would like to move them back and have more beach capacity,” Weyland told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Meeks Bay Resort upgrades are being talked about.

Photo/LTN file

The Washoe Indians have had a presence at Lake Tahoe for thousands of years and they want to keep it that way. Some of the possible changes include better telling their story to Meeks Bay guests.

With so many day users, an immediate need is to get rid of the port-a-potties and building more permanent restrooms, Weyland said.

The Wa She Shu Grill could use a walk-in cooler and freezer for added food storage.

“Our restaurant has become more popular. Sales increased quite a bit in this last season,” Weyland said. Being able to sell beer and wine at the restaurant is also a desire of the tribe’s.

In 2016, the bike path that will end at the resort is expected to be built. It is a Tahoe Transportation District-Tahoe City Public Utility District project. The tribe would then like to have bike rentals and a possible bike valet. It’s possible an older building on the premise could be used for this.

“The Forest Service is interested in having a facility that is self-supporting and provides a high quality recreation experience. Improving the visual character of the shoreline and updating water quality best management practices at the marina are of particular importance to the Forest Service,” Cheva Gabor, USFS spokeswoman, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We will be working with the tribe on improving the financial sustainability of the resort, while at the same time providing for improved guest services and overall recreation experience.”

After the open house tonight the tribe will take that information as well as data it has from surveys to come up with a proposal to be presented to the Forest Service.

Environmental documents will then need to be prepared.

Any improvements will depend of funding availability, and most likely would not start until 2016.

“Funding will come from multiple sources. A majority of the funds will come through the Granger-Thye fee offset program. This program allows the permittee to conduct work and maintenance onsite in lieu of their fee to the government for the special use permit,” Gabor said. “Additionally, money may come from other funding sources, such as through partnerships for water quality funding. We generally cannot compete for funding sources until after environmental documentation (NEPA) is complete.”

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Notes:

- Open house is Nov. 24 from 5-7pm, U.S. Forest Service office at 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe.
- Meeks Bay Resort is online.