

# Opinion: LTBMU forest supervisor says goodbye

By Nancy Gibson

The New Year brings big changes for me personally and for the Forest Service in Lake Tahoe. After 37 years with the agency, I'm looking forward to retirement and handing over the reins at the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit to a new forest supervisor.

I'm grateful for steady basin leadership that has enhanced relationships making them stronger. Days of past tensions between conflicting interests have passed. Today, local agencies work closely together on solutions that protect our communities and our environment.



Nancy Gibson

I'm proud of contributions this agency has made to Lake Tahoe restoration. The Forest Service has made ecological restoration its top priority nationwide, and nowhere is this more evident than Lake Tahoe. Our projects not only repair past damage, they increase resilience of our lands to future impacts, such as climate change and catastrophic wildfire.

We've been fortunate to have dedicated funding from sales of federal land in Southern Nevada. One of the challenges my replacement and our partners face is identifying funding to complete important work that remains.

During my time here, we completed planning for the massive South Shore fuel reduction project. We are now three years into forest thinning and prescribed fire on South Shore that reduces the risk of severe wildfire and increases forest health. We've completed initial forest thinning around much of the lake, complementing the work of California and Nevada state agencies, local fire districts and individual homeowners.

We're midway through a major project with the California Tahoe Conservancy that will restore a stretch of the Upper Truckee River. The project will reduce sediment that harms Lake Tahoe's clarity, encourage return of meadow vegetation and improve habitat for fish and wildlife. Once completed, it will stand alongside other successful stream and meadow restoration projects, such as Cookhouse Meadow, Blackwood Creek, and Cold Creek/High Meadows.

We've helped build bike paths and trails, enhance water quality at our recreation sites, provide outdoor education experiences for young people, and educate and entertain our 5.7 million visitors.

In the next few months we will complete our Forest Plan revision; a culmination of eight years of effort and analysis made stronger through public involvement. The revision sets a solid foundation for the next 15-20 years of National Forest management in the Basin.

In my last few days as forest supervisor, the work hasn't slowed. I've signed a decision to return former manmade Incline Lake to wetlands. Another project that will take ecological restoration in the basin to the next level, through tree-thinning and prescribed fire operations in six impaired meadows, is moving forward for public comment.

In retirement, I'll be enjoying the home my husband and I built here in South Lake Tahoe and playing outdoors on beaches

and trails I've worked to protect. I'll do so knowing I've left the future of the basin in the capable hands of my former employees, dedicated partners, and the next supervisor of the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. I hope to see you out there.

*Nancy Gibson's last day as forest supervisor of Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is Jan. 3, 2015.*