

9 projects highlighted for environmental excellence

Nine projects were awarded Best in Basin awards this week from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

The program recognizes and showcases projects that demonstrate exceptional planning and implementation and compatibility with Lake Tahoe's environment and communities.

Winners are:

Granlibakken – energy upgrades: Working with Sierra Business Council, Placer County, and the mPOWER program, Granlibakken upgraded its heating and air conditioning systems and kitchen appliances with more energy-efficient units. The project results in an estimated 43 percent reduction in energy use and annual savings up to \$44,000. The resort has also been recognized by the U.S. Department of Energy as one of its Better Buildings Challenge showcase projects.

Bijou Bike Park – South Lake Tahoe: Volunteers with the Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association, and Elite Trax built this highly-popular recreation site. The bike park includes a world class BMX track, two pump tracks, three slopestyle jump lines, and a perimeter of loop trail—all nestled in five acres of forested land in Bijou Community Park, a convenient location in the center of the South Lake Tahoe community.

Central Incline Village Phase II Water Quality Improvement: Washoe County and partners installed infiltration basins, sediment cans, inlets, and infiltration galleries, pervious concrete road shoulders, filters, and monitoring equipment to reduce stormwater pollution in 244 acres of Incline Village.

Sawmill 2B Bike Path and Erosion Control Project: El Dorado County and partners built 1.2 miles of Class 1 bikeway,

completing an important transportation link connecting South Lake Tahoe and Meyers. The bikeway connects neighborhoods, schools, and popular recreation sites. The project included water quality improvement features to reduce erosion and stormwater pollution and also thinned thick forested areas along the bikeway to help reduce wildfire risk.

Middle Rosewood Creek Area A Stream Environment Zone Restoration: Nevada Tahoe Conservation District and its partners restored more than 2,100 feet of stream channel and floodplain to improve water quality, fish passage, and wildlife habitat. This stretch of Middle Rosewood Creek was severely degraded before the project and had the potential to deliver thousands of cubic yards of sediment into Lake Tahoe over the next two decades, making it a high-priority restoration area.

Lower Chipmunk and Outfall Water Quality Improvement: Placer County and partners completed this project to capture stormwater and reduce sediment loads from Lower Chipmunk Street, Brockway Vista East, and Highway 28 that previously washed into Lake Tahoe.

Incline Creek Restoration, Highway 28 Culvert: Incline Village General Improvement District and its partners relined and upgraded this culvert to prolong its service life and also improve fish passage, stream habitat, and water quality. Before the project, the culvert dropped water more than four feet down on the other side. The project built a series of riffle and pool step sections to gradually raise the stream bed up to the culvert, creating low-flow fish passage for longer periods of migration.

Lake Forest Water Quality Improvement: Placer County and partners improved water quality and erosion control and restored stream environment zones in a 173-acre area around Lake Forest Beach. The project installed filters, drop inlets, sediment cans, and curb and gutter to reduce stormwater

pollution, upgraded compacted dirt road shoulders with pervious concrete that allows for stormwater infiltration and roadside parking at this popular recreation site, and also restored a wet meadow area.

Angora Burn Area Restoration Phase III: Following the Angora Fire in 2007, the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit took immediate steps to manage the 3,100 acre burn area to address immediate erosion risks. Over the last nine years the Forest Service, working with community and government partners, has reforested 672 acres, restored 44 acres of aspen and meadow, completed 1,400 acres of fuels reduction and forest thinning to reduce wildfire risk, relocated roads and trails out of stream zones and upgraded them with best management practices, installed new wayfinding signage for better recreation access, and restored 2,000 feet of stream channel.