

USFS to upgrade Taylor Creek area

By Kathryn Reed

Improvements to the ecosystem near Taylor Creek as well as the physical structures is expected to begin in May.

The work will be done in phases across multiple years, and all work is dependent on funding.

Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Forest Supervisor Jeff Marsolais signed off on the decision last month.

Changes from the original proposal include eliminating work on the Fallen Leaf Dam and old Lucky Baldwin Dam. This is because of their complexity. Work on the dams will be looked at in the future as separate projects.

“... the selected alternative will begin restoring ecological processes and functions in Taylor and Tallac creeks and the greater wetland-marsh area by eradicating or controlling aquatic invasive species, improving hydrological connectivity of the swales and creeks, and upgrading infrastructure to guide public use and protect natural resources. The project will also enhance existing recreational facilities and infrastructure, and enhance opportunities for universally accessible, non-motorized access,” the decision says.

This area of the South Shore encompasses about 2,600 acres. Taylor Creek Visitors Center and Baldwin Beach are part of the project area.

The Forest Service acknowledges that this area has become neglected, has thousands of dollars of deferred maintenance that needs addressed, and that the habitat is degraded from overuse. The Rainbow Trail often floods.

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

The current center was designed in 1960s. Bats and mice infested the upstairs. While that problem was taken care of long ago, the area cannot be used.

A price tag on all of the work has not been calculated. A previous estimate of just replacing the visitor center was seven figures.