

Troubling maintenance yard in SLT to be relocated



The Tahoe Keys' corporation yard will be relocated by May 2023. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Five acres of land bordering the Upper Truckee River near the mouth of Lake Tahoe are a reminder of how the environment wasn't always a priority. A maintenance yard next to a river. That wouldn't happen today.

Daily, trucks drive into the yard – which isn't paved. Old dumpsters are rusting. Debris clutters the landscape.

This is the Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association's corporation yard.

After more than 20 years of wrangling, TKPOA and California Tahoe Conservancy have reached an agreement to relocate the yard, which means this swath of land in South Lake Tahoe will eventually be restored.

The Conservancy owns the land, but was essentially stuck with TKPOA as the tenant because of a 99-year deal it had with the previous owner – Dillingham Development Corp. – the builder of the subdivision. That agreement wasn't going to expire until 2075.

CTC acquired the land through several lawsuits involving Dillingham, which had wanted to build 26 units on the marsh. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Sierra Club and state of California were all involved. This was in the 1980s and 1990s.

The new deal will allow the yard to stay as is until April 30, 2023. The new yard will be built on 1 acre of land on the side of Venice Drive away from the river that the Conservancy owns. Boats used to be stored there, but now it's vacant. TKPOA will take title to that land.

The TKPOA board in October voted to approve the new agreement, with the homeowners weighing in last month. Of the 1,529 property owners, 633 voted. Of those, 519 said yes.

"We're designing a new site," Kirk Wooldridge, TKPOA general manager, told the CTC board on Dec. 7. He said the organization has been setting aside money for this.

Aimee Rutledge with CTC explained to the board that the disturbed land will be absorbed into the 600-acre **Upper Truckee Marsh restoration project**. The goal is to restore it to wetlands – what it was a half century ago.

"There is a lot of potentially hazardous use that is inconsistent with the marsh," Rutledge said of the corporation yard.

One of the contingencies in the deal is that TKPOA will grant access to the site via Colorado Circle for the CTC use the land as a staging area for the marsh restoration. Currently, this is a highly popular route to get to the river for people who live in the neighborhood. The well-worn trail is used by

walkers, dogs and those who enjoy the rope swing in warmer weather. But all of that was going to change anyway with the restoration project.

The restoration project is slated to begin in 2019.