

Decision Notice
and Finding of No Significant Impact
for the
North Shore Trail Access and Travel Management Plan

**USDA Forest Service
Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
Placer County, California**

Decision and Reasons for the Decision

Background

The purpose and need for the North Shore Trail Access and Travel Management Plan is to establish a sustainable trail system that meets current and future use needs. Implementation of this plan will reduce impacts to water quality, wildlife, heritage resources, botanical resources, soils, and reduce maintenance needs of the trails within the project area. The need for this project was identified during the Road Access and Travel Management Plan. Trails were identified as having similar impacts to water quality as roads. Numerous unauthorized user created routes have been identified. Unmanaged recreation, including unauthorized user created routes, has been identified as one of the National Four Threats. This project will reduce if not eliminate the detrimental affect of unauthorized trail recreation and positively contribute to a sustainable managed trail system.

Decision

Based upon my review of the two alternatives, I have decided to implement Alternative 1, the proposed action, which includes the construction of new trails, decommissioning of existing trails, adoption of existing user created trails, rerouting of existing trails and reconstruction of existing trails.

Alternative 1 - Proposed Action

- Decommissioning of 14.5 miles of trails.
- Proposed conversion of 13.4 miles of non-system trails to National Forest System Trail for management, monitoring and maintenance.
- Construction of up to 9.6 miles of new National Forest System Trails (including reroutes), including 0.4 miles of universal access trail to Martis Peak Lookout.
- Classification of 5.0 miles of existing non-system trails as urban trails.
- System trail repairs and reconstruction on 26.3 miles of trail in the project area, including 0.3 miles of universal access trail to Stateline Peak Lookout.
- Updated trail signage and trail information kiosk at selected trailheads.
- Development of optional or parallel alignments for short sections of trail to provide challenge, reduce potential use conflict, and reduce the occurrence of user created trails. Optional alignments will be designed to take advantage of natural features to create challenging trail sections or technical trail features.
- This proposed action does not include the North Tahoe Public Utility District Bike Path.

Trail System Allowed Use Modifications from this proposal.

- OHV Trails (< 50" vehicles), 4.0 miles existing to 4.3 miles proposed
- Multiple Use, Non-Motorized Trails (18"-36" tread) , 29.2 miles existing to 50.0 miles proposed
- Urban Trails (primitive managed trails along the urban interface, 18" tread), 5 miles proposed
- Barrier Free Trails (36" to 60" tread with hardened surfaces), 0 miles existing to 0.7 miles proposed

Design Features Associated with Alternative 1 – Proposed Action:

The following measures are incorporated into the proposed action to avoid or minimize potential adverse effects on watershed resources, including soil, vegetation, wildlife, fisheries, stream, air, and heritage resources resulting from construction activities associated with trail decommissioning, construction, and upgrades. Collectively, these measures will avoid or minimize direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to resources analyzed in this EA. The North Shore Trail ATM NFMA report was used to ensure Forest Plan consistency and develop the appropriate design features for this project.

Soil Protection Measures

The measures listed below will be implemented to avoid or minimize effects on ground and vegetation, control erosion and sedimentation, and minimize adverse effects on soil and water quality during and after implementation of the proposed action. Most of the measures listed were developed by the LTBMU or derived from TRPA (1988), the USDA Forest Service (2000), and the RWQCB (Tahoe Interagency Roadway Runoff Subcommittee 2001). Additional measures were developed locally by LTBMU through years of road decommissioning and trail conversion experience. The measure descriptions provided are intended to convey the general approach and methodology, not specific design and implementation criteria, which will vary depending on the specific environmental conditions encountered at each work location.

SOIL-1: Limit timing of activities on all trails within project area. Trail decommissioning and upgrade activities will occur between May 1 and October 15 each year to avoid the period of highest rainfall, streamflows, and erosion potential, unless a grading ordinance exemption is obtained from the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). During periods of inclement weather, operations will be shut down until streamflows are sufficiently low and soil/channel conditions are sufficiently dry and stable to allow construction to continue without the threat of substantial soil compaction, erosion, sedimentation, or offsite sediment transport.

SOIL-2: Stabilize construction spoils on all trails within project area. Earthen spoils generated during construction will be temporarily stockpiled in stable areas located outside of subject stream environment zones (SEZs). Straw wattles, silt fences, or hay bales will be installed around the base of temporary stockpiles to intercept runoff and sediment draining from the stockpiles. If necessary, the stockpiles will be further stabilized by mulching them with available forest materials or an appropriate geotextile material. All spoils not used during construction will be hauled off site and deposited in stable areas once construction is complete.

SOIL-3: Implement erosion and sediment control BMPs on temporarily delayed project elements on all trail work within project area. Appropriate erosion and sediment control BMPs will be applied to all disturbed ground during temporary construction delays caused by inclement weather or other circumstances. Measures will vary with conditions, but are likely to include (1) placement of readily available mulch materials (e.g., pine needles, branches, coarse woody debris) and/or imported mulch materials (e.g., certified weed-free rice straw) to protect disturbed surfaces from raindrop impact, reduce runoff velocity, and reduce erosion; and (2) installation of straw wattles, silt fences, and/or hay bales to reduce runoff velocity and intercept sediment.

SOIL-4: Minimize ground and vegetation disturbance on all trails within project area. Ground and vegetation disturbance will be minimized during implementation of the proposed action. Activities are in most instances confined to existing trail prisms, defined as the top of the cutslope to the base of the fillslope. Few, if any, snags or green trees will be felled, because most disturbances to vegetation resulting from trail treatments would occur adjacent to existing trails. No live trees greater than 24 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) will be felled. Snags larger than 24" will be avoided unless they are deemed a hazard. Disturbances will also be minimized at channel crossings by locating proposed channel-crossing upgrades in approximately the same locations as existing channel crossings and by designating construction boundaries and equipment access corridors before initiating construction.

SOIL-5: Mulch and revegetate disturbed areas on trails 18E24, 18E24.3, 18E24.3A, 18E24.6, 18E24.7, 18E24.8, and 18E24.1C. Soils lacking adequate ground cover because of exposure or other disturbances caused by the proposed action will be mulched with available forest materials, such as pine needles, tree bark, and branches, or with imported mulch, such as certified weed-free straw. In addition, soils will be restored to promote natural and long term revegetation through soil decompaction and incorporation of organic matter. Slash and logs from the site may also be distributed over the disturbed area to provide additional soil cover, retain sediment, provide a microclimate to speed up the soil development and revegetation process, and discourage motorized use.

SOIL-6: Control concentrated runoff from decommissioned trail surfaces to reduce erosion on the 5.0 miles of trails decommissioned within the project area.. Methods to reduce erosion and disperse drainage include outsloping (10–12 percent), and tilling (decompaction of) the trail prism to break up the impervious surface and enable water infiltration and revegetation.

SOIL-7: Improve drainage on all approach trails, including 17E12, 19E00, 18E18D, 18E23, and 17E14. Drainage control methods such as water bars, rolling dips, and outsloping will be used to improve drainage on the approaches to the subject channel crossings and thereby reduce the delivery of sediment to stream channels.

SOIL-8: Stabilize approach trails, including 17E12, 19E00, 18E18D, 18E23, and 17E14. Where native surface approach trails exist at proposed upgrades, they will be surfaced with rock or paver stones or hardened (i.e. compacted) to increase their resistance to erosion and reduce the delivery of sediment to subject stream channels.

SOIL-9: Decommission abandoned approach trails and staging areas. This applies to trails to be decommissioned within the project area and listed in Table 1-1 on page 1-17 of the EA. Equipment staging areas and existing approach trails used during construction and abandoned as a result of the proposed upgrades will be restored to natural conditions by loosening or scarifying the soil, and mulching with native and/or weed-free material.

SOIL-10: Dispose of wastes and petroleum products properly, for wastes generated during project construction and within the project area. Wastes and petroleum products used during

construction will be collected and removed from the project site in accordance with Resource Conservation and Recovery Act regulations and federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.

SOIL-11: Remediate contaminated soil, within the project area. If contaminated soil and/or groundwater is encountered, or if suspected contamination is encountered during project construction, work will be halted in the area, and the type and extent of the contamination will be identified. A qualified professional, in consultation with the appropriate federal, state, and/or local regulatory agencies, will then develop an appropriate method to remediate the contamination.

Stream Environment Zone Protection Measures

In addition to defined perennial and intermittent streams, SEZs (**Figure 2-1**) include seasonally wet areas such as wetlands and are defined by the presence of hydrologic, soil, or vegetation indicator features. In addition to the soil protection measures described above, the following measures will be implemented for project activities in SEZs.

SEZ-1: Prevent discharges of hazardous substances from refueling and maintenance, for all trail work performed within the project area.

In areas where mechanized equipment might be used, all equipment refueling and maintenance activities will occur outside SEZs to minimize the potential to adversely affect water quality.

SEZ-2: Control sediment within SEZs, on trails within the SEZ. Affected trails are 19E00, 17E14, 17E09, 18E28A, 18E23, and 18E18D. Ground disturbance will be minimized and confined to the existing trail prism. All disturbed areas will be stabilized and restored. Native shrubs such as willows may be planted if stream channel or bank stability concerns are identified.

SEZ-3: Stabilize subject stream banks on trails, 17E12, 19E00, 18E18D, 18E23, and 17E14. Stream banks adjacent to and/or affected by the proposed channel crossing upgrades will be stabilized and protected from erosion using a combination of structural and biotechnical methods. The specific methods used will vary depending on site conditions, but will likely include one or more of the following: adjustment of stream bank slopes; installation of rock slope protection (riprap); installation of biodegradable erosion control blankets; installation of willow wattles (live fascines); and/or the use of pole cuttings, container stock, and seed collected from local sources to reestablish native stream zone vegetation.

SEZ-4: Achieve zero discharge during in channel excavation work. Several of the proposed channel-crossing upgrades and culvert installations/replacements will require work in stream channels that will likely contain flowing water during construction. The goal during in channel excavation is zero discharge. The following practices have proven effective in achieving zero discharge: (1) wherever possible, delay activities until flow has ceased or is at lowest flow (base flow); (2) when flow is present, convey flow around the construction site and discharge in a stable location; (3) install a coffer dam below the site to trap sediment and detain any turbid water; (4) dispose of any sediment from behind the dam in a stable location; and (5) remove turbid water by pumping and sprinkling it in a location and manner to allow infiltration into the soil. **This Design Feature does apply to this project since no major stream channel work is planned.**

SEZ-5: Install rock barriers. Rock barriers will be installed along the boundaries of approach trails at proposed channel crossing upgrades to contain traffic and discourage use in subject SEZs. **This Design Feature does apply to this project since no major stream channel work is planned.**

SEZ-6: Use appropriate water supply for construction on all trails within the project area during construction. In general, streams in the action area are not available for use as a project water

source. If drafting from a stream is necessary, a hydrologist and/or fisheries biologist will review and approve the location, amount of water, and other site-specific constraints.

SEZ-7: Contain spills during trail construction within the project areas. Strict onsite handling rules will be implemented to minimize spills and keep potentially contaminated materials out of the drainage waterways.

SEZ-8: Limit staging of materials and equipment during trail construction within the project area. Staging of materials and equipment will be limited to existing disturbed areas outside SEZs (where soils are already compacted and vegetation has been cleared). No new disturbance will be created for staging and stockpile areas, and no trees or other vegetation will be removed. Following project completion, these areas will be tilled, seeded, and mulched.

Fire Risk Reduction Measures

To minimize the risk of wildfire to resources and human health and safety, the following measures will be implemented.

FIRE-1: Keep fire tools onsite during trail construction within the project area. In areas where mechanized equipment might be used, fire extinguishers and tools shall be on site during construction activities as defined in the fire plan section of the contract.

FIRE-2: Monitor fire weather during trail construction within the project area. Daily monitoring of fire weather and Fire Activity Level will occur during construction. **Table 2-1**, below, lists requirements for the following types of activities that include chainsaw operation, motorized equipment use, and blasting. Hand work not involving combustion engines does not require fire restrictions. Exemptions may be granted by the Fire Protection Officer.

**TABLE 2-1
FIRE ACTIVITY LEVEL REQUIREMENTS**

Level	Project Activity Requirements
A	All gasoline/diesel powered equipment must have spark arrestors or have exhaust driven turbo chargers. Vehicles must have proper fire protection/fire fighting equipment at all times.
B	In addition to A, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Furnish fire patrolperson for mechanical from cessation of operations until 2 hours after operations cease or sunset. 2) Furnish a water pack at work sites.
C	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Fire patrolperson is required until sunset. 2) Blasting is prohibited from 1 pm until 8 pm local time.
D	The following trail related activities may operate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Chipping on trails, roads or landings 2) Trail maintenance 3) Trail grading 4) Drainage installations/BMP upgrades 5) Hand Slash Disposal 6) Chainsaw operations on trails, roads or landings <p>All other activities may continue after 1 PM local time if they meet the following: A fire patrol person is required to walk all areas treated that day once per hour, until sunset local time. This includes chainsaw felling and motorized equipment operation.</p>
Ev	All of the following trail related activities may operate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equipment servicing
E	Operation of motorized equipment is not allowed.

Biological Resource Protection Measures

Measure SOIL-4 (minimize ground and vegetation disturbance), described above, will minimize disturbance to vegetation and terrestrial habitat resulting from project activities. For example, few snags or green trees will be felled; and no live trees greater than 24 inches in diameter will be felled. Snags larger than 24 inches will be avoided unless they are deemed a hazard. This measure will benefit wildlife species analyzed in the Biological Evaluation/Biological Assessment (BE/BA) prepared for this project such as California spotted owl, northern goshawk, and American marten. Measures described above such as SOIL-5 (mulch and revegetate disturbed areas) and SOIL-4 will be implemented to minimize disturbance and avoid permanent loss of native vegetation and terrestrial habitat. The following measures will be implemented to further protect special-status species, vegetation communities, and wildlife habitat.

BIO-1: Conduct preconstruction surveys for threatened, endangered, sensitive, or special-interest plant species and avoid such species on all trail work within the project area. Surveys have been conducted in suitable habitat where construction activities will occur to determine if any threatened, endangered, Forest Service sensitive, or TRPA-designated special-interest plant species occurs there. Any sighting of these species before or during project implementation will be reported to the Forest Service botanist. Where these plants are detected, they will be delineated and avoided to the maximum extent practicable during project activities. Results of past surveys are included in the BE/BA.

BIO-2: Control noxious weeds on all trail work within the project area. Surveys for noxious weeds within the project area have been conducted. On trail 18E18 there is potential for diffuse knapweed, 18E16A has cheat grass, and 17E46.2 has bull thistle. These areas will be flagged and avoided during implementation activities. Measures to control the introduction and spread of noxious weeds in the action area include, cleaning equipment, minimizing disturbance, and using weed free materials. The Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA) to the Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) provides direction regarding actions to control the spread of noxious weeds.

BIO-3: Construct during dry season. Construction activities will occur between May 1 and October 15 in the 100-year floodplain of any drainage in the action area to reduce the potential for siltation impacts on wetlands and drainages. **This Design Feature has been removed due to redundancy to the SOIL-1 design feature.**

BIO-4: Minimize impacts on waters of the United States. Construction activities will be limited to the trail prism or existing disturbed areas; this constraint will minimize the loss or disturbance of waters of the United States. **This Design Feature has been removed due to redundancy to the SOIL-1 and SEZ-2 design features.**

BIO-5: Conduct preconstruction surveys for selected wildlife species. Prior to implementation of the proposed action, protocol surveys for nesting California spotted owl and northern goshawk have been conducted in suitable habitat in the action area. Some locations in the action area have been surveyed for willow flycatcher in previous years. Additional preconstruction surveys for willow flycatcher may be conducted in these and other areas of suitable riparian habitat where project activities will occur. Results of these surveys have been used to implement some of the measures described below.

BIO-6: Avoid or minimize impacts on threatened, endangered, sensitive, or special-interest wildlife species. The following trails will be decommissioned or relocated to avoid or minimize impacts on the above mentioned species, 19E00, 17E44.5, 17E12, 18E23, 18E04, 18E24.7, 18E24.6A, 18E12.1, 18E18A, 18E18C, and 18E18E. Any detection of threatened, endangered, sensitive, or special-interest wildlife species or of nests, dens, roost sites, and other areas of

concentrated use of these species, before or during implementation of the proposed action, will be reported to the Forest Service wildlife biologist. Areas of concentrated use, particularly those that are important for reproductive activities (e.g., nest or den sites), will be protected in accordance with the LRMP, as amended by the SNFPA environmental impact statement (EIS), and TRPA Environmental Thresholds Carrying Capacities (ETCCs) for the Lake Tahoe Region. Specific measures for all of these wildlife species are described in measure BIO-7.

BIO-7: Implement limited operating periods. To avoid construction-related disturbances to breeding activities and habitat of species analyzed in the BE/BA, limited operating periods (LOPs) will be implemented around nests, dens, roost sites, and other areas of concentrated use of these species. The following trails will use an LOP during implementation, 18E18, 18E18A, 18E18C, 18E12.1, 18E24.6A, 18E18B, 18E28A, 17E44.5, and sections of 19E00. An LOP constitutes a period during which project activities will not occur and is enforced in project implementation contracts. Implementation requirements such as the timing and location of LOPs for certain species are described below.

- **California spotted owl and northern goshawk.** To avoid disturbances to California spotted owl and northern goshawk breeding activities and habitat, LOPs during sensitive nesting times will be implemented around active nest sites and in occupied protected activity centers (PACs). Specific guidelines for implementing LOPs are provided at the end of this section. A PAC is a land allocation around the known or suspected (based on patterns of concentrated use) nesting or denning area of a particular species that is present in a given area; the size of a PAC depends on the species involved. If pre-project surveys determine that a nest or PAC is not active, the LOP may be lifted at the Forest Service wildlife biologist's discretion.
 - A California spotted owl PAC is an area 300 acres in size that includes the best available habitat around known or suspected nest stands in as compact a unit as possible (USDA Forest Service 2004). There are currently five spotted owl PACs in or near the action area (**Figure 2-2**). A northern goshawk PAC is an area 200 acres in size that includes the best available habitat around known or suspected nest sites. There are currently five goshawk PACs in the action area (**Figure 2-3**).
 - An LOP between March 1 and August 15 will be imposed within 0.25 mile of an active spotted owl nest site or within an active spotted owl PAC. Pre-project surveys will attempt to determine the locations of active nest sites (see measure BIO-5).
An LOP between February 15 and September 15 will be imposed within an active northern goshawk PAC and within 0.25 mile of the nest site itself. Pre-project surveys will attempt to determine the locations of active nest sites. Also, an LOP will be imposed within 0.25 mile of any suitable habitat for either species unless surveys conducted within the last 2 years have confirmed that the species are not nesting there. Because LOPs would be established for project activities in areas of suitable habitat (except as noted above), project activities within these areas would occur outside of the nesting seasons and not adversely affect nesting attempts.
- **Willow flycatcher.** Pre-project surveys for willow flycatcher were conducted in areas of suitable riparian habitat where project activities will occur. One willow flycatcher has been detected in Antone Meadows, however it is located on California State Park lands and biologists do not feel the need for an LOP. If additional willow flycatchers are detected, an LOP between June 1 and August 31 will be imposed. The location of the LOP will be determined by the Forest Service wildlife biologist based on site conditions and type of project activity.

- **American marten.** Carnivore surveys have not been conducted throughout the action area. Suitable habitat for American marten occurs within the action area and this species is highly likely to occur there. If a den site is detected in the action area before or during project activities, an LOP would be implemented from May 1 to July 31 within 100 acres surrounding the den site.
- **Other wildlife species.** LOPs or protection zones for all other threatened, endangered, sensitive, or special interest wildlife species will be implemented if these species are detected in the action area prior to project implementation. Appropriate LOPs or protection zones would be implemented around a nest site, roost site, den site, or other area of concentrated use. The Forest Service wildlife biologist would determine the location and duration of an LOP, using standard guidelines if available and appropriate (e.g., the Record of Decision for the SNFPA EIS).
- **Waterfowl, Fisheries, and Aquatic Resource Measures.** The measures described above for protection of soil and SEZ resources will avoid or minimize potential short-term adverse effects of project activities on aquatic and riparian habitats that support waterfowl, fish (Lahontan cutthroat trout), amphibians (e.g., mountain yellow-legged frog), and other aquatic species.

Heritage Resource Measures

HER-1: Incorporate Standard Resource Protection Measures. For known heritage resource sites, the proposed action will implement Standard Resource Protection Measures as outlined in the Programmatic Agreement entered into by the Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The Standard Resource Protection Measures will include flagging or fencing the sites prior to commencement of work. The LTBMU Heritage Resources staff must be notified in advance of construction activities so that these measures can be implemented on the following trails, 17E46.1, 17E46.2C, 17E46.2D, and 17E46.3.

HER-2: Incorporate Specific Resource Protection Measures. For known heritage resource sites, the proposed action will implement site-specific heritage treatment recommendations on the following trails, 17E46.1, 17E46.2C, 17E46.2D, and 17E46.3. Treatments will include avoiding ground disturbance and decommissioning user created trails by the use of barriers such as logs and slash.

HER-3: Implement additional review and/or consultation if necessary. If the design of the proposed action is altered or changed, additional review by the LTBMU's Historic Resources Program will be required. Furthermore, if any previously unrecorded heritage resources are discovered during this action, all project-related activities must cease immediately and the consultation process as outlined in Section 800.13 of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations 36 CFR 800 must be initiated.

Air Quality Measures

AIR-1: Water exposed soil. In areas where mechanized equipment might be used, exposed soil will be watered with adequate frequency to keep soil moist at all times. **This Design Feature is not applicable to the activities anticipated in this project and therefore have been removed.**

AIR-2: Revegetate disturbed areas. Revegetate disturbed areas immediately after the completion of construction to reduce wind erosion. **This Design Feature is not applicable to the activities anticipated in this project and therefore have been removed.**

AIR-3: Comply with federal air quality standards. In areas where mechanized equipment might be used, construction activities will comply with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) air quality standards for dust and condensed fumes, so that emissions do not exceed hourly levels as regulated per processing weight. **This Design Feature has been removed, applicable laws and regulations relative to project implementation will be abided by.**

Monitoring Statement

Monitoring of project implementation and effectiveness will be performed as described in the EA. Monitoring will be performed prior to project implementation.

When compared to the other alternatives, Alternative 1 will best establish a sustainable, managed trail system by location and design. Trails will be located on the highest capability lands possible and minimize bisection or intrusion upon wildlife habitat. Trails will be relocated out of sensitive riparian habitat where possible and will be designed to minimize soil loss and sedimentation of surface waters while maintaining a spectrum of recreation opportunities. Additionally, because the new trail system will meet use needs, the proliferation of user created trails is expected to decrease as trail upgrades are implemented.

Soil and Water Monitoring

- (1) Has the implementation of Trail Decommissioning and Best Management Practices (BMP) Upgrades reduced the potential for water quality impacts, and to what degree were permanent trail BMPs successfully implemented and effective? (Water Quality Risk Assessment, BMPEP evaluations)
- (2) What impact do trails within the North Shore ATM project have on sediment loading to Lake Tahoe, and how successful are BMP retrofits and decommissioning in mitigating those impacts? (WEPP Modeling)
- (3) Are Temporary BMPS being adequately designed, implemented and maintained during construction projects? (BMPEP evaluations).

Visitor Experience Monitoring

- (1) Did the majority of visitors have a positive recreational experience as a result of trail upgrades?

Pre-project monitoring will consist only of Water Quality Risk Assessments. Temporary BMP monitoring will be implemented during project construction, and will include storm events if they occur. Post project monitoring will be conducted the first year after project construction. Specific monitoring plans identifying specific monitoring protocols, sampling locations, sampling frequency, analysis techniques, and reporting will be completed prior to project implementation. An Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved visitor survey will be developed to assess degree of use conflict, trail conditions, signage, and achievement of desired user experiences.

Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the selected alternative, I considered the no action alternative. A comparison of these two alternatives can be found in the EA on pages 3-1 to 3-13.

Alternative 2

No Action

Under the No Action alternative, current management plans would continue to guide management of the project area.

Public Involvement

A proposal to develop the North Shore trail ATM was listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions on April 1, 2005. The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during scoping Oct. 24, 2005 – Nov. 30, 2005. A news release was published in the Tahoe Tribune for the scoping period on October 24th, 2005 and public meeting at the North Tahoe Conference center on November 3, 2005. A total of 25 mailings were sent to the public and agencies on October 24th inviting comment on the proposed action and providing the location, time and purpose of the public meeting. In addition, as part of the public involvement process, the agency collaborated with the interested public, the Tahoe Rim Trail Association, and specifically invited the Sierra Club, League to Save Lake Tahoe, Lahonton Water Quality Control Board, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and local outdoor retailers to meet and discuss the project. As a result, one field trip with interested publics (3) was conducted on June 22, 2005 to assess the connectivity and some challenges of the existing trail system.

Using comments from the public, other agencies, and interest groups (see EA section 1-22-*Public Comment*), the interdisciplinary team identified several issues regarding the effects of the proposed action. No significant issues were raised during scoping (see EA Appendix A). The Forest Service worked collaboratively with the public to design a proposal that addressed concerns and incorporated that input into the design of the proposed action. A total of 17 comments were received.

Finding of No Significant Impact

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA, I have determined that these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. I base my finding on the following:

1. My finding of no significant environmental effects is not biased by the beneficial effects of the action (EA 3-14).
2. There will be no significant effects on public health and safety, because trails are planned to minimize safety concerns such as unexpected hazards and use conflicts (see EA pages 3-1, 3-2, 3-27).

3. There will be no significant effects on unique characteristics of the area, because trail upgrades are designed to mitigate and reduce disturbance to areas identified to have unique characteristics. (see EA pages 3-27 to 3-34).
4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. There is no known scientific controversy over the impacts of the project (see EA pages 3-34).
5. We have considerable experience with the types of activities to be implemented. The effects analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk (see EA pages 3-34).
6. The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, since the proposal is based upon local conditions and other Trail ATM areas are being analyzed individually. (see EA pages 3-34).
7. The cumulative impacts are not significant (see EA pages 3-35 to 3-40).
8. The action will have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, because it mitigates impacts through avoidance (see EA pages 3-41). The action will also not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources, because the proposal mitigates impacts through avoidance (see EA pages 3-41). A programmatic agreement finding is located in the project file.
9. The action will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species act of 1973. A BE/BA was conducted and no proposed or designated critical habitat is in or near the action area (see EA pages 3-41 to 3-42).
10. The action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA (see EA pages 3-43). The action is consistent with the LTBMU Land and Resource Management Plan (See EA pages 1-23).

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

This decision to implement the Proposed Action to:

- Decommissioning of 14.5 miles of trails.
- Proposed conversion of 13.4 miles of non-system trails to National Forest System Trail for management, monitoring and maintenance.
- Construction of up to 9.6 miles of new National Forest System Trails (including reroutes), including 0.4 miles of universal access trail to Martis Peak Lookout.
- Classification of 5.0 miles of existing non-system trails as urban trails.
- System trail repairs and reconstruction on 26.3 miles of trail in the project area, including 0.3 miles of universal access trail to Stateline Peak Lookout.
- Updated trail signage and trail information kiosk at selected trailheads.

- Development of optional or parallel alignments for short sections of trail to provide challenge, reduce potential use conflict, and reduce the occurrence of user created trails. Optional alignments will be designed to take advantage of natural features to create challenging rail sections or technical trail features.

The Decision is consistent with the intent of the Forest Plan's long term goals and objectives listed on page 1-23. The project was designed to incorporate Land and Resource Management Plan standards and specifically accomplish the following Land and Resource Management Plan guidelines:

1. Enhance the opportunities by building and maintaining, where appropriate, trails, trailheads, and other support facilities to provide for multiple kinds of dispersed recreation opportunities. LRMP IV-22
2. All trails receiving significant use will be managed as part of the trail system according to the Trail Management Handbook, or closed and rehabilitated. Trails not meeting construction standards will be reconstructed. LRMP IV- 41
3. Increase the trail system outside of wilderness for recreation use. LRMP IV-41
4. Determine priorities and establish a schedule to rehabilitate system trails to include water quality standards applicable in the basin. The standard requires more cross-drains and protective surfacing than would be typical on system trails. LRMP IV-41
5. OHV trails will be designed when appropriate and environmentally feasible to form loops to enhance user enjoyment. Access to OHV trail systems shall be through designated trailheads with opportunities for limited parking where appropriate. OHV trail systems will require bridges or similar structures when designated over streams. Fencing and similar barriers will be constructed as appropriate to minimize random access to the OHV trail system. LRMP IV-41

Implementation Date


Implementation of the decision may occur immediately.

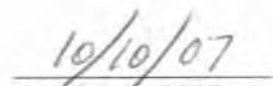
Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215.12 because no comments were received.

Contact

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Garrett Villanueva, Project Manager, LTBMU, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150, 530-543-2600.


Terri Marceron
Forest Supervisor
Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit


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