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Proposed Action for the Camp Richardson Resort Campground and Vehicle Circulation BMP Retrofit Project

US Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region
Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
El Dorado County, California

I. Background

Camp Richardson Resort is a publicly owned recreation facility, managed by the US Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU), and operated under Special Use Permit. The Resort dates back to the 1930s, but was purchased by the US Forest Service in 1965.

The proposed project is located on approximately 79 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands within the Camp Richardson Resort Special Use permit area. Camp Richardson Resort is located on Highway 89, approximately two miles west of the City of South Lake Tahoe. The Resort is bounded by Pope Beach Road to the east, the Tallac Historic site to the west, Lake Tahoe to the North and general forest area to the south. Refer to **Figure 1** for project area location. All facilities within Camp Richardson Resort are owned by the Forest Service. The Camp Richardson Corral is located outside of the Resort Special Use Permit and Proposed Action project area.

A Vision Plan for Camp Richardson Resort was recently completed and is available on the LTBMU's website, http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu/projects/. The Vision Plan provides a framework for improvements to environmental resources and facilities at the Resort, and is consistent with the LTBMU's Forest Plan as well as Tahoe Regional Planning Agency environmental thresholds and Plan Area Statement direction. It identifies issues facing the Resort and strategies for resolving them. The Vision Plan itself is not a proposal, but provides the foundation for proposals such as the one described in this Proposed Action.

II. Decision Framework

The LTBMU Forest Supervisor would decide whether to implement the Camp Richardson Resort Campground and Vehicle Circulation BMP Retrofit project and amend the special use permit to reflect changes as proposed, whether to implement an

alternate proposal, or whether to take no action at this time. This decision would only affect National Forest System lands. Coordination and permitting through CalTrans would be required to implement changes within the Highway 89 Right-Of-way.

The Forest Supervisor expects to make a decision on the project in August 2009. Implementation of parking BMP's could begin as early as September 2009. Campground area retrofit activities could begin in 2011 and would be phased over several years so that only one of three campground areas would be under construction at any time. Depending on construction funding, implementation is anticipated to be completed by 2016.

III. Existing Conditions

For a variety of reasons, little effort or capital improvement has been made to preserve, rehabilitate or improve the resort facilities and environmental resources until recently. The campground areas do not meet environmental resource protection standards. Vehicle circulation and campsite locations are poorly defined, consisting mainly of unpaved surfaces with extensive soil compaction. The existing conditions contribute water-borne and air-borne sediment which can negatively affect the water clarity and quality of Lake Tahoe. In addition, the campground facility does not provide universal access to amenities and does not meet US Forest Service standards for providing opportunities to persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the campground's poorly defined vehicle circulation routes pose a challenge to medical and fire response vehicles in the event of an emergency.

Despite the facility's poor condition, the Resort campground remains very popular with recreation visitors and is often occupied to full capacity during summer months. The campground offers a range of amenities including various degrees of campsite utility services from which campers can chose. Campers are not restricted by the type of vehicle they arrive in: sites are open to all campers.

Resort day use and overnight hotel use are also very popular. Existing parking amenities that support these uses do not meet LTBMU standards for resource protection and are in need of improvement. Traffic congestion along Highway 89 and within the Resort is also of concern, especially during peak use periods. Measures to address these and other concerns are addressed in this Project Proposal.

Figure 4 shows existing conditions and compacted and impervious coverage, based on a 1987 survey.

IV. Desired Conditions

The desired condition for the project area is that the developed recreation amenities comply with established water quality protection Best Management Practices, while providing high-quality, year-round, family-oriented recreation opportunities. All developed amenities should meet current construction standards and provide universal access for persons with disabilities, consistent with Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines and the Architectural Barriers Act / Americans with Disabilities Act. An additional desired condition includes a reduction in existing traffic congestion within the portion of Highway 89 passing through the Resort core. Providing for safe emergency vehicle access to the developed recreation amenities, as well as access for the public via public transit is also a desired condition.

V. Purpose and Need

There is a need to:

1. Comply with the LTBMU's Forest Plan which includes guidance requiring that Forest Service facilities in the Lake Tahoe Basin be upgraded with Best Management Practices (BMPs) in order to minimize the amount of sediment and other pollution associated with storm water run-off.
2. Provide public recreation facilities that meet universal access requirements as well as health & safety and local building codes.
3. Provide high-quality camping opportunities within the Camp Richardson Resort permit area. Improved quality would be indicated by updated facilities and roadways with minimal deferred maintenance, animal-proof food storage lockers and trash containers, and accessible campsite amenities.
4. Respond to visitor use trends for multiple-use and utility hook-up camping, single family camping, and small group camping.
5. Provide year-round camping opportunities.
6. Reduce vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic congestion on Highway 89 associated with concentrated recreation facilities in the Forest Service's "South Shore Recreation Area" by reducing the need for campground traffic to enter the Resort village core. There is also a need to reduce vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic congestion along Jameson Beach Road during peak use periods.
7. Provide for controlled traffic circulation within the campground that allows emergency and other large vehicles to access the developed facilities and keeps vehicles on improved road surfaces. There is also a need to provide for a limited number of campsite "additional vehicle" parking use.
8. Provide for South Tahoe Public Utility District compliant sanitary sewer disposal for RVs and trailers that do not camp at sites with provided utility service, or that camp at nearby campgrounds that lack RV sanitary sewer services.
9. Reduce soil compaction in SEZ and non-SEZ soil areas, and restore previously compacted areas where feasible.

10. Provide controlled pedestrian access from the northern campground to Lake Tahoe, via Jameson Beach Road and/or Pope Beach Road in order to re-route use from user-created trails within the SEZ.
11. Reduce vehicle/pedestrian conflicts and congestion, and increase pedestrian safety within the resort's village core.
12. Provide regulated and BMP compliant parking for short-term resort guests, hotel guests, resort day users, overnight camping, and employees.
13. Maintain the resort's development footprint within its permit boundary.

VI. Proposed Action

The following section describes the Proposed Action for the Camp Richardson Resort Campground and Vehicle Circulation BMP Retrofit project. Refer to both **Figures 2 and 3** for specific project area boundary and the proposed actions. In addition to the Proposed Action, the LTBMU is considering improvements to 4.8 acres within the Highway 89 corridor Right-Of-Way. The LTBMU would coordinate these activities with the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans). A Caltrans encroachment permit is required before any improvements can be implemented within the right-of-way.

A. Install Water Quality Protection Best Management Practices (BMPs)

1. Retrofit the three existing campground areas at Camp Richardson Resort, within the existing Special Use Permit area. Elements of this campground water quality protection Best Management Practices (BMPs) retrofit include:

    A. Sediment source control via paved surfaces.
    B. Soil decompaction.
    C. Revegetation of decompacted areas.
    D. Sheet flow of storm water within dispersed areas to avoid concentrated water volumes and reduce the erosive force of runoff.
    E. Infiltration of storm water within project area (storm water would be conveyed to BMPs for treatment before leaving the permit area or entering the CalTrans highway Right-Of-Way).
    F. Catch basins with oil/water separators within concentrated parking areas, draining to infiltration basins as required.
    G. Temporary construction BMP measures including use of silt fences, covered stockpiles, etc.
    H. Reduction of overall project area impervious coverage (20% reduction from 1,146,737 square feet (sf) to 912,885 sf.).

I. Reduction of project area SEZ (Stream Environment Zone) impervious coverage (48% reduction from 11,595 sf to 5,971 sf.).

2. Restore existing compacted soil areas within the campground that are not expected to receive concentrated use. This restoration activity would include soil decompaction, soil amendment with organic, weed-free materials, seeding with USFS approved seed mixes, and mulching with pine needles and/or tub-ground mulch. Spreading of masticated slash may be considered within areas where pedestrian travel is discouraged.

3. Upgrade the existing service road between the north campground area and Jameson Beach Road, north of the Richardson House. This reconstruction would utilize appropriate BMPs and measures to improve hydrologic connectivity through the road base. Vehicle access to the road would continue to be limited to resort maintenance staff, and emergency vehicles.

4. Construct an accessible trail with appropriate BMPs along the edge of the north campground, and improve an existing trail from the campground to Jameson Beach Road and Pope Beach Road. This trail for non-motorized use may include portions of boardwalk construction as appropriate to protect hydrologic connectivity and reduce soil compaction. Decompact and obscure user-created trails that create resource impacts. Construct accessible pedestrian trails from the southern campgrounds to the resort village core area.

B. Retrofit the Campground

5. Develop asphalt paved circulation roads and campsite parking spurs with appropriate water quality protection BMPs and universal accessibility features to replace existing unpaved roads and campsite spurs:
    A. One-way roads would be 12’ wide.
    B. Two-way roads would be 22’ wide.
    C. Utility hook-up spurs would be 60’ long by 16’ wide and would meet Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guideline (FSORAG) direction (170 sites maximum, each with 6 Persons At One Time [PAOT] capacity). To accommodate campers with special accessibility needs 3 of the proposed sites would be 60’ long by 20’ wide.
    D. Non-utility spurs would be 40’ long and 16’ wide (50 sites maximum, each with 6 PAOT capacity). 3 or 4 of these spurs would be 40’ long and 20’ wide to meet FSORAG direction.
    E. Double occupancy group sites would be 40’ long and 30’ wide (27 sites maximum, each with 12 PAOT capacity).
    F. Quad occupancy group sites would consist of 8 parking spaces, each 20’ long and 10’ wide (6 sites maximum, each with 24 PAOT capacity).

G. Seasonal closure gates would be installed within the campground to allow for phased opening/closing of campground areas.
H. Campsite parking spurs would be designed with 2% maximum cross-slope to provide for universal accessibility.

6. Replace water, sewer, and electricity utility systems within the campground to meet health and safety standards for service and capacity. New utility infrastructure would be underground and located within high-capability soil areas. Private overhead utilities along the highway corridor are not proposed for undergrounding. The proposal would provide water, sewer, and electricity to each utility-hook up campsite (170 sites maximum), to each restroom building, and to a centralized campground check-in building. Install fire hydrants at appropriate locations to protect building infrastructure and other resources.

7. Reduce the overall campground capacity from 325 campsites to between 230 and 255 campsites. An increase in the overall number of utility hook-up sites from 114 (35 with water/sewer/electricity, 65 with water/electricity, and 14 with electricity only) to a maximum of 170 (each with code-compliant water/sewer/electricity), and a decrease in the number of non-utility-hook-up campsites from 211 to a maximum of 85 is proposed**.** This would include 27 group campsites with a PAOT (Persons At One Time) capacity of 12, and 6 group campsites with a PAOT capacity of 24. Campers would not be restricted based on their vehicle – all sites would be open to all users. Overall campground PAOT capacity is proposed to change from 1,950 to 1,788 maximum. Final proposed campsite numbers, configuration, and PAOT capacity would be determined during engineering design based on specific site limitations, and would be within the special use permit boundary and existing PAOT capacity.

8. Replace 6 existing restroom/shower buildings with 8 new universally accessible restroom and shower buildings. Restroom/shower buildings would be sized to provide approximately one toilet for every 35 persons in keeping with Forest Service Manual direction (FSM 2333.51, May 22, 2006). Water supply for the campground comes from the recently upgraded Forest Service water system and tank located near Fallen Leaf Road. Sewer service would be coordinated with South Tahoe Public Utility District. Restroom buildings would be consistent with the USFS Built Environment Image Guide to ensure an appearance in keeping with the forest setting. Restroom areas would include bear-proof trash dumpsters, regulatory and interpretive information, short term parking opportunities, and accessible water spigots and walkways. This also includes replacement of the beach day-use portable toilets with a universally accessible flush-toilet restroom building located on high capability soils.

9. Allow for year-round camping opportunities at all of the utility hook-up sites. The actual number of campsites operated for year-round use would be based on visitor demand. Develop and implement a snow removal, storage, and management plan (as part of the Resort's Operations and Maintenance Plan) for this portion of the campground area. Snow removal would occur primarily with the use of snow blowing techniques. This plan would include measures to reduce the volume of traction grit used, while providing for public safety.

10. Provide small parking areas for limited campsite "extra vehicle" parking along the campground arterial roads and one centrally located parking area for larger vehicles/trailers. The areas adjacent to the parking areas would be planted with vegetation to provide visual screening from the highway.

11. Remove up to approximately 950 trees from the 78.7 acre project area. (Tree removal data based on topographic and site survey from 1987. Sizes have been inflated from those indicated on survey to account for growth since the survey). Actual numbers of trees to be removed would vary as some trees identified in 1987 are no longer present. Additionally, road alignments and camp spur locations would be field adjusted to minimize disturbance to existing trees. The identified numbers of trees proposed for removal have been inflated by 10% to account for data gaps in tree survey information. All cut trees within this project area would have their stumps removed to facilitate paving BMP measures.
    a. Trees proposed for removal fall into the following size classes:

        -trees smaller than 30" Diameter at Breast Height (DBH): up to 910 trees, (16-19% reduction of 4,852 trees in project area)
        -trees 30" DBH or larger: up to 40 trees
        (2-4% reduction of 1,035 trees in project area)

12. Plant native conifer trees to improve visual screening between the campground and Highway 89.

13. Construct emergency access routes from Pope Beach Road to the eastern edge of the north campground area, from Hwy 89 to the western edge of the southwest camp area, and from Hwy 89 to the southeast camp area. These routes would provide for emergency vehicle access or campground evacuation in the event that the main campground access point is blocked. Access to these routes would be controlled by locked gates. The route surfaces would not be paved. Replace the existing fencing between Camp Richardson Resort and Pope Beach Road.

14. Construct an RV sewer dump station that complies with STPUD requirements to isolate the facility from storm water intake and to ensure adequate backflow prevention.

15. Install bear-proof food lockers at all campsites within the resort. Also install accessible fire rings, picnic tables, and BBQs at each campsite. Install bear-proof trash dumpsters and accessible water spigots (approx. one spigot per 8 tent campsites) at appropriate locations within the resort campground.

C. Reduce Congestion along Highway 89 and within Camp Richardson Resort

16. Eliminate the intersections with Highway 89 at the following locations:
    b. At the existing RV campground area entry, south of the hotel.
    c. At the existing driveway to the southeast campground area.
    d. At the existing driveway to the north campground area.
    e. At the existing driveway to the Richardson House.

17. Construct new intersections with Highway 89 at the following locations:
    f. A primary campground check-in, south of Hwy 89, east of the Resort village core.
    g. A primary access to the north campground and Richardson House.

18. Construct a campground check-in facility (approx. 600 SF) and associated check-in parking.

19. Reconfigure the portion of Jameson Beach Road between the Hotel and General Store to reduce traffic congestion associated with day use fee collection. Develop a paved traffic lane to bypass the fee collection kiosk and traffic backed up at this facility. Access to the bypass lane would be controlled via key activated gates to provide access for resort maintenance staff, emergency vehicles and private homeowner's that access their property through an easement on Jameson Beach Road.

20. Redevelop the existing parking area south of Hwy 89 in the resort village core to provide a transit stop for existing and potential future south-bound transit service and allow for a transit stop off of highway traffic lane. Develop a portion of the north-bound highway shoulder, west of the Hotel to provide a transit stop for existing and potential future north-bound transit service and allow for a transit stop off of highway traffic lane to improve pedestrian safety and reduce highway traffic congestion.

21. Construct a new paved, non-motorized, multi-use trail that provides a bypass for existing trail thru traffic (bicycles, pedestrians, roller skaters, etc.) north of the resort's business core. This route would be constructed on high capability soils. The existing paved trail through the resort's business core would remain. Construct a new paved non-motorized multi-use trail parallel to and west of Jameson Beach Road.

22. Install parking barriers along the Hwy 89 shoulder to eliminate off-pavement

parking throughout the resort highway corridor with the exception of the Resort Village area which already restricts highway parking. Post regulatory signage prohibiting shoulder parking. This action would eliminate the capacity for approximately 90 vehicles to park within the highway corridor.

D. Upgrade Resort Parking

23. Upgrade Jameson Beach Road and existing day use parking areas with appropriate BMPs.

24. Construct a 50-car short-term parking area for Resort village visitors. This parking lot would include oil-water separators as part of its storm water drainage system. Free parking would be limited to a short-term duration, and would be controlled by a mechanized fee gate. The parking area would include irrigated vegetative screening to reduce its visual impacts. Also construct approximately 40 day use parking spaces, some on the western side of Jameson Beach Road and some south of Hwy 89 behind the resort village shops. These day use parking areas would comply with water quality protection BMP standards.

25. Upgrade the existing Hotel parking with appropriate BMPs. Pave surfaces and install catch basins with oil-water separators.

26. Upgrade existing employee parking and delivery access behind the resort's commercial buildings on the south side of Hwy 89 with appropriate BMPs.

27. Install 11 light posts along the west (cabin) side of Jameson Beach Road. These lights will meet the local light emitting code and reflect the historic nature of the Resort. Installation will include approximately 900 ft of utility trenching. The trench will be 24'' wide and 36'' deep and filled immediately upon placing the electrical cable in the trench. Alignment of the trench will vary to minimize disturbance to existing vegetation.

VII. Project Design Features

Project design features are elements of the proposed action and project design that are applied in the project area. These features were developed to reduce or avoid potentially negative environmental effects of the proposed action. They are grouped by resource areas.

A. BOTANICAL RESOURCES

SENSITIVE PLANTS

1. No sensitive, threatened or endangered plants were found during botany surveys for the proposed project. However, if any sensitive, threatened or endangered plants are found during project implementation, standard management practices would be applied. Management practices include flagging, buffering, and avoiding populations. New sensitive plant populations would also be documented and there may be an amendment to the project file.

NOXIOUS WEEDS

1. Botany surveys for the proposed project were completed and noxious weed infestations were identified (as defined in the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment, part 3.6). Weed locations will be treated prior to project implementation or will be avoided through flagging during implementation. Any additional noxious weed infestations found during project implementation would be treated or flagged and avoided.

2. All off-road equipment used on this project shall be washed before moving into the project area to ensure that the equipment is free of soil, seeds, vegetative material, or other debris that could contain or hold seeds of noxious weeds. "Off-road equipment" includes all tree removal and construction equipment and such brushing equipment as brush hogs, masticators, and chippers; it does not include materials transportation trucks, chip vans, service vehicles, water trucks, pickup trucks, and similar vehicles not intended for off-road use. Equipment would be considered clean when visual inspection by Contracting Officer's Representative does not reveal soil, seeds, plant material, or other such debris. When working in known noxious weed infested areas equipment shall then be cleaned before moving to other National Forest System lands.

3. All earth-moving equipment, gravel, fill, or other materials are required to be free of noxious weeds. Use onsite sand, gravel, rock, or organic matter when possible. Otherwise, obtain materials free of noxious weeds from gravel pits and fill sources that have been surveyed and/or approved by a botanist or ecologist at the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.

4. Minimize the amount of ground and vegetation disturbance in the construction areas. Reestablish vegetation where feasible on disturbed bare ground to minimize noxious weed establishment and infestation.

5. Use noxious weed-free mulches, and seed sources. Salvage topsoil from project area for use in onsite revegetation, unless contaminated with noxious weeds. All activities that require seeding or planting must utilize locally collected native seed sources when possible. Plant and seed material should be collected from or near the project area, from within the same watershed, and at a similar elevation when possible. Persistent non-natives such as *Phleum pratense* (cultivated timothy), *Dactylis glomerata* (orchard grass), or *Lolium* spp. (ryegrass) would not be used. This

requirement is consistent with the USFS Region 5 policy that directs the use of native plant material for revegetation and restoration for maintaining "the overall national goal of conserving the biodiversity, health, productivity, and sustainable use of forest, rangeland, and aquatic ecosystems". Seed mixes must be approved by a Forest Service botanist.

6. Staging areas for equipment, materials, or crews would not be sited in noxious weed infested areas.

7. After the project is completed areas disturbed during implementation will be monitored to ensure additional noxious weed species do not become established in the areas affected by the project and to ensure that known noxious weeds do not spread.

B. HERITAGE RESOURCES

1. Flag and avoid any known Washoe heritage sites.

2. Washoe Tribal site monitors would be present to observe ground disturbing activities including trenching and tree stump removal at specified locations.

3. In the event any historic properties are discovered during the implementation of this undertaking, all project related work must stop immediately, the LTBMU Heritage Resources personnel be notified immediatelt, and the procedures as set forth in Section 800.13 of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations must be implemented in accordance with the guidance as stated in this sub-section.

C. WILDLIFE RESOURCES

1. During final engineering design and construction layout, minimize required tree removal where possible. Prioritize the retention of largest trees. Prioritize the retention of cedar trees first, pine trees second, and white fir trees third.

2. Protect or create (from trees proposed for removal) down logs that are greater than 12 inches in diameter, where possible when log density is less than 5 per acre. Preference would be given to the largest logs available for wildlife habitat.

VIII. Monitoring

The following is a preliminary list of monitoring items that would be carried forward as part of project implementation.

1. Each year, the LTBMU completes evaluations for the Best Management Practices Evaluation Program (BMPEP), as part of the Pacific Southwest Region's effort to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of BMPs created for protecting soil and water resources associated with Forest Service management activities. The Camp Richardson Resort Campground and Vehicle Circulation BMP Retrofit project would be included in the pool of projects for random BMP evaluations under the BMPEP program.

2. Implementation monitoring to ensure that all contract items including temporary BMPs, design features, and permit requirements are being followed will be provided by the Forest Service Contracting Officer's Representative following protocols established for public works contract administration.

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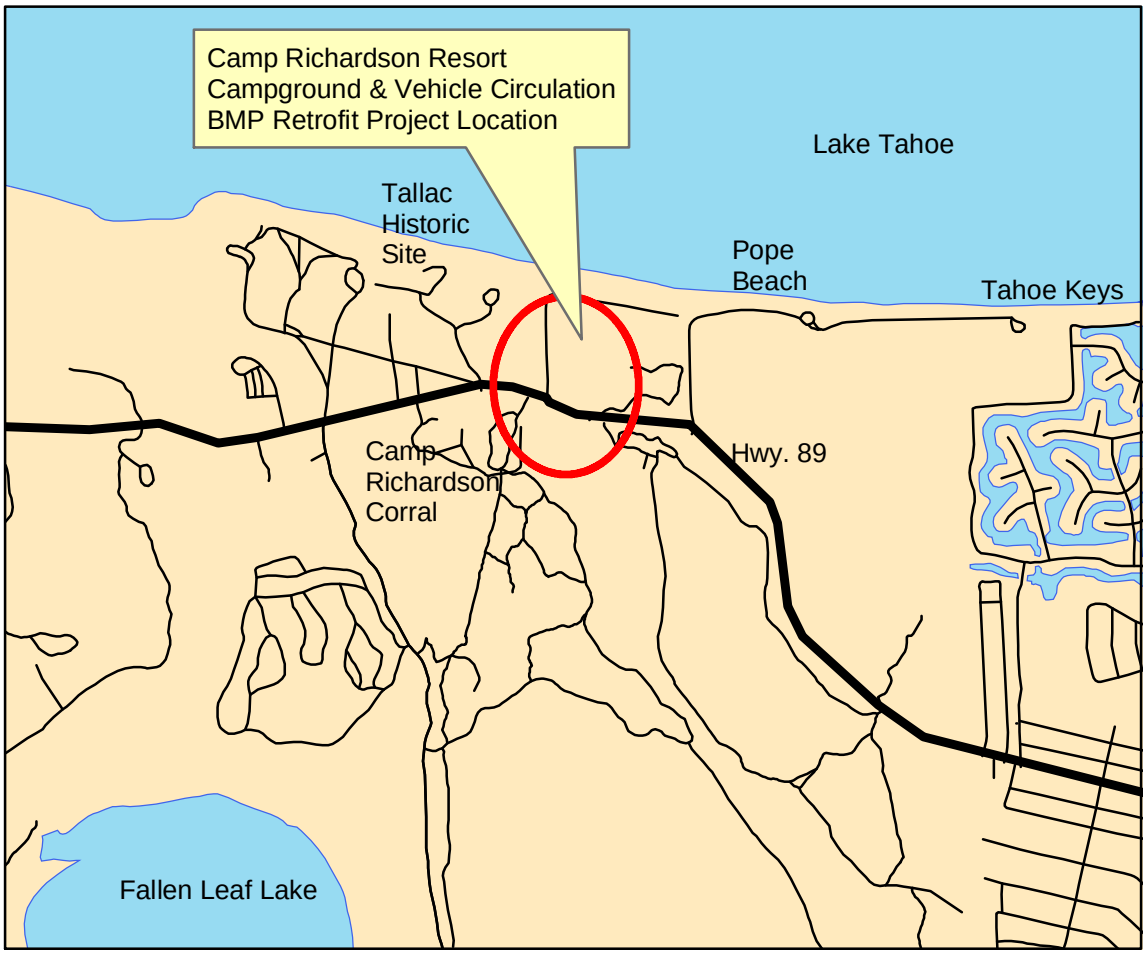
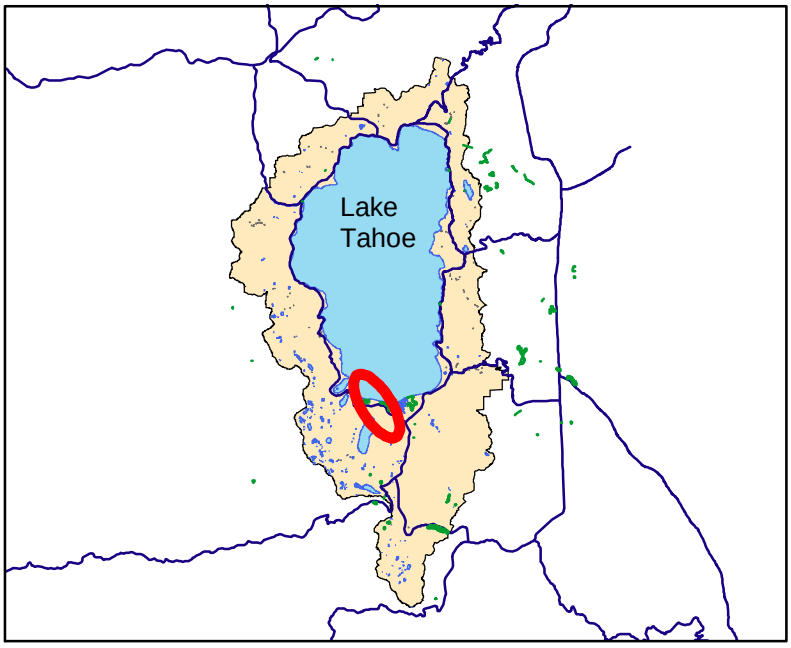


Project Area

NTS

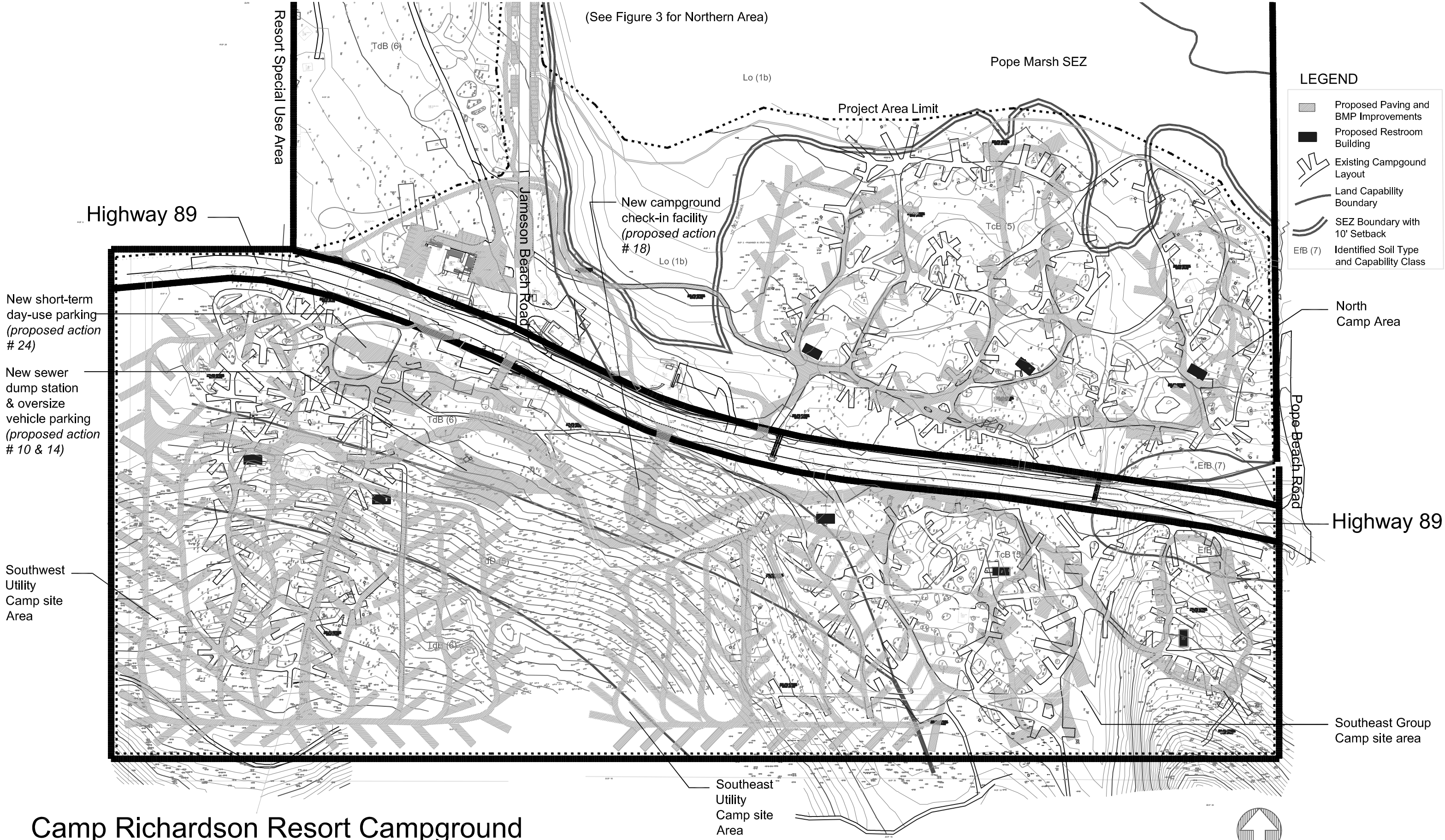


Vicinity Map

NTS

Camp Richardson Resort Project Location

Figure 1

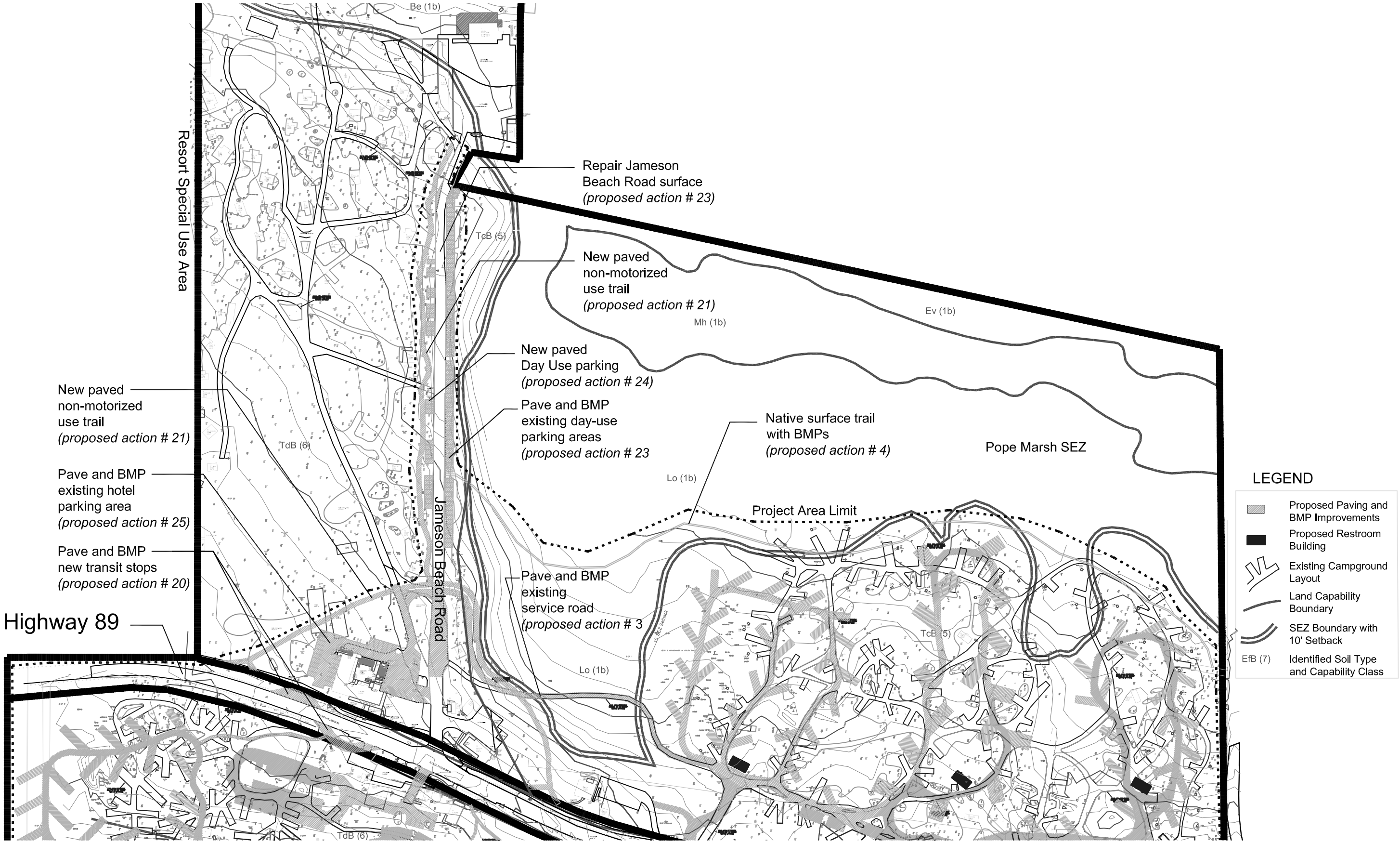


Camp Richardson Resort Campground and Vehicle Circulation BMP Retrofit
US Forest Service - Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

September 22, 2008

0 50 100 150 200 300 Feet

Figure 2



(See Figure 2 for Campground Area)

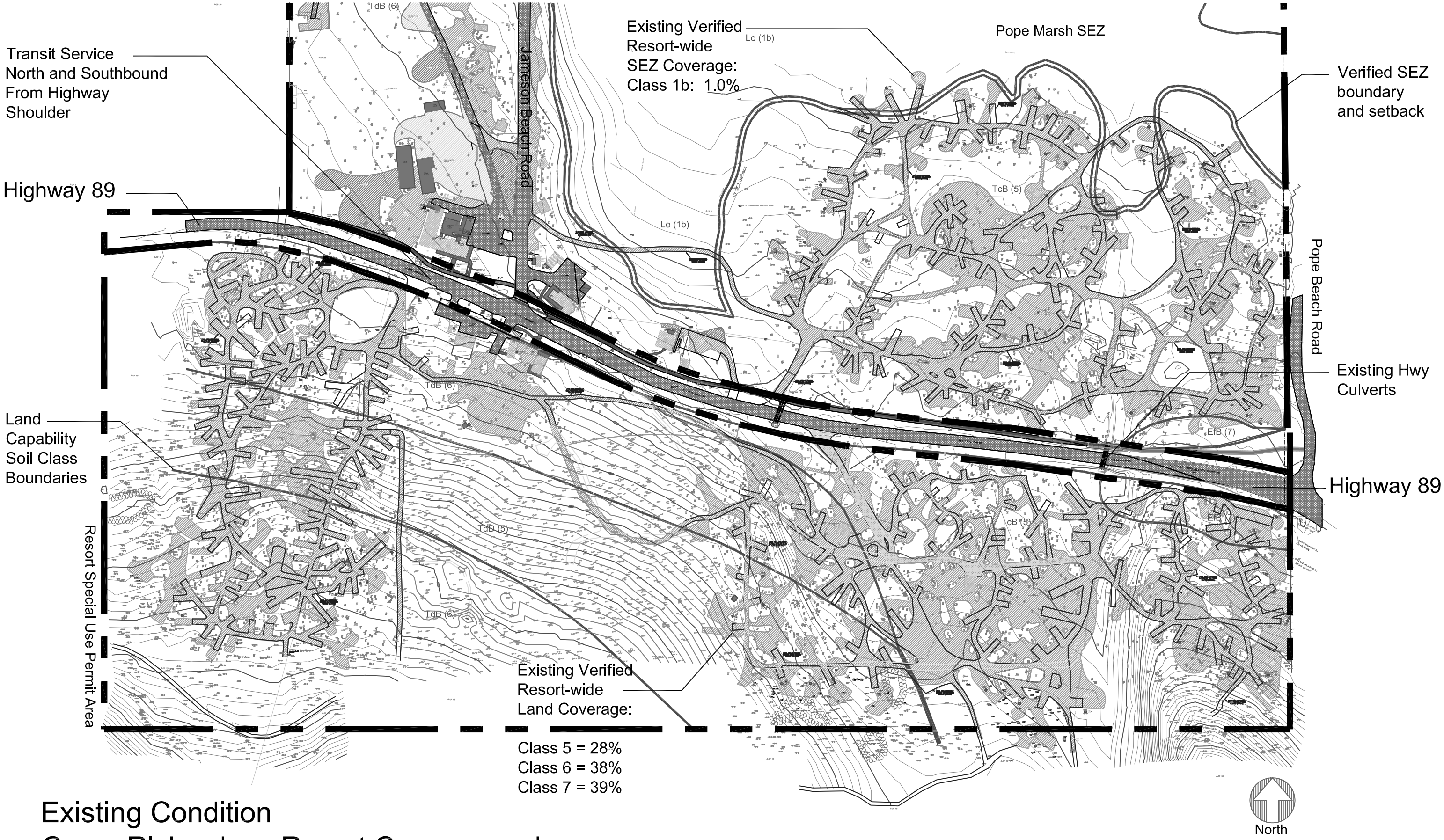
Camp Richardson Resort Campground and Vehicle Circulation BMP Retrofit
US Forest Service - Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

September 22, 2008

0 50 100 150 200 300 Feet

North

Figure 3



Existing Condition
Camp Richardson Resort Campground
and Vehicle Circulation BMP Retrofit
US Forest Service - Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

September 22, 2008

0 50 100 150 200 300 Feet

Figure 4