USDA Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region
Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

Decision Memo
For Implementation of the
Meeks Meadow Washoe Restoration Project
Placer County, CA

BACKGROUND:

The project area is located within the Meeks Meadow area. The project will occur on the north side of the meadow roughly a quarter mile from the eastern boundary. The meadow is located entirely on National Forest System land managed by the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) in Placer County, CA within Section 29 of Township 14N and Range 17E (Figure 1).

The Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California (hereafter Washoe Tribe or Washoe) is involved in the management of the shoreline zone and lower meadow at Meeks through their holding of a Special Use Permit with LTBMU for operation of the Meeks Bay Resort and marina; the 20-year agreement was issued in 1997 and expires in 2017. A 10-year extension option is stipulated in the permit that could allow management to continue until 2027. In addition, the Washoe Tribe has a Special Use Permit for plant material gathering in the lower meadow and a series of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with LTBMU ascribing to mutual cooperation in land use management.

PURPOSE AND NEED:

The Meeks Meadow ecosystem is currently in a state of decline. Lack of fire has led to Lodgepole pine and White fir encroachment into the meadow. Meadow vegetation and plant species, traditionally important to the Washoe Tribe, are currently being suppressed by Lodgepole pine and White fir. The dense stands are susceptible to wildfire and insect infestation. The project area is adjacent to urbanized development, developed recreation sites, and an area of concentrated public use.

The purpose of the project is to serve as a pilot project to restore the meadow ecosystem through a combination of treatments to restore native meadow species, as well as reduce fuel loading. The project will incorporate tree thinning, prescribed fire, and traditional Washoe stewardship practices (ie. digging sticks to disturb the land surface following burning). These practices will encourage regeneration of the meadow vegetation and restore culturally important native vegetation. Reducing tree densities and encouraging native plant regeneration will also reduce the risk of noxious weeds, dwarf mistletoe and mountain pine bark beetle. This will provide a source for the Washoe tribe to gather and utilize traditional plants.

PROPOSED ACTION:

The project will include treatments in six plots on approximately 10 acres of meadow ecosystem. The project will incorporate tree thinning, prescribed fire, and traditional stewardship practices to encourage regeneration of the meadow vegetation.

Five plots have been established and will receive treatments consisting of hand thinning, low intensity broadcast burning, disturbance and natural reseeding. A sixth plot has been established to serve as the control plot and will not receive any treatments. Lodgepole pine and fir trees will be hand thinned to allow for regeneration of native meadow vegetation in plots 1-5. All Lodgepole pine and fir trees of 20 inches dbh and below will be removed. Cedar and Jeffrey pine trees will be retained. Stumps will be flush cut and hatched to encourage natural breakdown. A low intensity broadcast burn will be used in the meadow ecosystem of plots 2-5 to promote the growth of native species and suppress exotic species. Traditional Washoe methods, such as digging sticks, will be used to disturb the surface of the land, following prescribed burning, to promote the growth of native vegetation. The digging sticks will be used in plots 4 and 5 and will break up the rhizomes of plant species and encourage natural regeneration of native plants. Digging sticks will be used randomly throughout the two designated plots and will break up the top 1-2 inches of soil. The digging sticks will not affect the meadow hydrologic features and are consistent with project design features. The plots will experience natural reseeding following treatments. No artificial seeding will take place. Down logs will be removed from the plots to decrease fuel loading and allow for meadow regeneration. All plots will be monitored pre and post treatment to evaluate effectiveness of treatments. Plots begin approximately 25 feet off of the trail. This will provide for a visual screen or buffer zone between the treatment plots and the trail.

STAND SPECIFIC ACTIONS – See Figure 1 for stand locations.

Stand P 1 (2.0 acres)

- Stand P 1 will be hand thinned. All Lodgepole and fir <20 inches dbh will be removed. Cedar and Jeffery Pine will be retained.
- Trees designated to leave (Jeffrey pine, sugar pine, trees >20 inches dbh) will have fuels reduced around the base to a distance based on crown diameter.
- Stems and chipped materials will be removed from site
- Vegetation is dominated by lodgepole pine.

Stand P 2 (1.0 acres)

- Stand P 2 will be hand thinned. All Lodgepole and fir <20 inches dbh will be removed. Cedar and Jeffery Pine will be retained.
- Trees designated to leave (Jeffrey pine, sugar pine, trees >20 inches dbh) will have fuels reduced around the base to a distance based on crown diameter.
- Stems and chipped materials will be removed from site.
- A low intensity broadcast burn will be conducted during falls months as burn conditions allow.

- Vegetation is dominated by lodegepole pine.

Stand P 3 (1.0 acres)

- Stand P 3 will be hand thinned. All Lodgepole and fir <20 inches dbh will be removed. Cedar and Jeffery Pine will be retained.
- Trees designated to leave (Jeffrey pine, sugar pine, trees >20 inches dbh) will have fuels reduced around the base to a distance based on crown diameter.
- Stems and chipped materials will be removed from site
- A low intensity broadcast burn will be conducted during falls months as burn conditions allow.
- Vegetation is dominated by lodegepole pine.

Stand P 4 (1.0 acres)

- Stand P 4 will be hand thinned. All Lodgepole and fir <20 inches dbh will be removed. Cedar and Jeffery Pine will be retained.
- Trees designated to leave (Jeffrey pine, sugar pine, trees >20 inches dbh) will have fuels reduced around the base to a distance based on crown diameter.
- Stems and chipped materials will be removed from site
- A low intensity broadcast burn will be conducted during falls months as burn conditions allow.
- Traditional Washoe methods, such as digging sticks, will be used to disturb the surface of the land, following prescribed burning.
- Vegetation is dominated by lodegepole pine.

Stand P 5 (1.52 acres)

- Stand P 5 will be hand thinned. All Lodgepole and fir <20 inches dbh will be removed. Cedar and Jeffery Pine will be retained.
- Trees designated to leave (Jeffrey pine, sugar pine, trees >20 inches dbh) will have fuels reduced around the base to a distance based on crown diameter.
- Stems and chipped materials will be removed from site.
- A low intensity broadcast burn will be conducted during falls months as burn conditions allow.
- Traditional Washoe methods, such as digging sticks, will be used to disturb the surface of the land, following prescribed burning.
- Vegetation dominated by lodegepole pine.

Stand P 6 (1.0 acre)

- Stand P 6; this stand will serve as a control plot. The plot will be similar in respect to vegetative cover, geographic location, age classes, and hydrologic function to both pretreated stands (stand 1-6) and existing surrounding meadow vegetation (desired future condition of stands 1-6)
- Monitoring will be identical to the other stands.
- This stand will include the two distinct conditions in the prescribed meadow area.
- Vegetation dominated by lodegepole pine.

PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES:

Project design features are elements of the project design that are applied in treatment areas. These features were developed to reduce or avoid negative environmental effects of the proposed action on forest resources.

Fire and Fuels –

1. All prescribed burning will adhere to Federal, regional, State and local guidelines regarding air quality including the LTBMU Smoke Management Plan. A Prescribed Burn Plan and Smoke Management Plan will be completed and approved with detailed prescriptions for smoke management and prescribed fire operations prior to burning operations
2. Public notification will take place prior to burning operations.

Soils –

1. Short term impacts from implementation or restoration treatments will be minimized through the use of BMP's during all treatment activities.

Monitoring –

1. This project will conduct BMP implementation monitoring to ensure that all pertinent and prescribed design features and BMPs are met. A list of applicable BMPs is located in Appendix A.
2. Plots will be monitored for cheat grass invasion into the meadow following disturbance. If cheat grass is detected appropriate action will be taken as directed by the Forest Botanist.

PERMITTING:

California Air Resources Board (CARB) regulates prescribed burning in accordance with the State Implementation Plan (SIP). Prescribed burning in this project will coordinate with CARB and follow the SIP to protect air resources, which includes obtaining and following air quality permits.

LTBMU and Washoe Tribe staff collaborated with LRWQCB to satisfy water quality regulations within the Lake Tahoe Basin that are specific to this project. The timber removal activities to take place in 2008 qualify under Category 1 of the Timber Waiver, therefore do not require permitting. Prescribed burn activities to take place in 2009 will be cover under the revised Timber Waiver to be implemented in January 2009. Permits will be obtained before burning activities start in 2009.

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) staff were contacted regarding this project and provided no comments.

REASONS FOR CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION:

This project is being planned under Forest Service Handbook (FSH 1909.15) Chapter 31.2 - Categories of Actions Excluded in an EA or EIS for which a Project File and Decision Memo are required. The category used is Category 6 - Timber Stand and Wildlife Habitat Improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction (Service level D, FSH 7709.56). The project is consistent with this category as tree thinning and underburning are intended to improve meadow function, promote native plant species, and is designed to improve wildlife habitat through the restoration of fire and associated plant composition/structure into this ecosystem. Removal of conifer encroachment from meadow areas will reduce shade and competition for water and nutrients, thereby promoting growth of meadows species. Additional, conifer removal could have a localized effect of raising the groundwater table, enhancing meadow function and native plant growth. Many native plants benefit from low intensity broadcast burns. Example of fire tolerant species include: willow (*Salix spp.*), Bracken fern (*Pteriduium aquilinum*), Sierra gooseberry (*Ribes roezlii*), and Pacific onion (*Allium validum*). Diversity and abundance of fire dependant plants are expected to increase after a low intensity broadcast burn. In addition, the project does not propose to use herbicides nor construct roads as part of the proposed actions.

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES:

1. Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – There are no federally listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat in the project area. No sensitive species are located within the project area.
2. Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – This project is not located within floodplains, wetlands or a municipal watershed.
3. Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – The project area is not located in a congressionally designated area.
4. Inventoried roadless areas – The project is not located within an inventoried roadless area.
5. Research Natural Areas – The project is not located within a Research Natural Area.
6. American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – Washoe elders and tribal members have been consulted in implementing this project. No sites were located within the project boundary.
7. Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – Surveys were conducted for archaeological sites and historic properties. None were located within the project boundary.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS:

National Forest Management Act (NFMA) – This Act requires the development of long-range land and resource management plans (Plans). The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Land and Resource Management Plan was approved in 1988 as required by this Act. It has been amended several times, including the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment, (2004). The amended plan provides for guidance for all natural resource management activities. The Act requires all projects and activities are consistent with the Plan. Therefore, a forest plan consistency analysis of standards and guidelines and management areas was completed for the project and is found in Project Record File A1. The project is consistent with management direction in the Forest Plan and the Meeks Management Area.

Sensitive Species (Forest Service Manual 2670) – The Manual direction requires analysis of potential impacts to sensitive species, those species for which the regional Forester has identified population viability is a concern; the project biological review contains the sensitive species list. Potential effects have been analyzed and documented in a Letter to File (Appendix B). According to the BE potential impacts of the proposed action to sensitive species will not result in a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability.

Clean Water Act – This Act is to restore and maintain the integrity of waters. The Forest Service complies with this Act through the use of BMPs (see Appendix A). This decision incorporates BMPs to ensure protection of soil and water resources. In addition, hydrological and soil field assessments were completed to determine site specific BMPs and project design features. Forest Service staff collaborated with LRWQCB staff to satisfy water quality regulations within the Lake Tahoe Basin that are specific to this project. The project design meets the Timber Waiver for Waste Discharge requirements and would continue to involve LRWQCB staff review during project implementation.

Clean Air Act – Under this Act areas of the country were designated as Class I, II, or III air sheds for Prevention of Significant Deterioration purposes. Impacts to air quality have been considered for this decision. Class I areas generally include national parks and wilderness areas. Class I provides the most protection to pristine lands by severely limiting the amount of additional human-caused air pollution that can be added to these areas. The Desolation Wilderness, adjacent to the project is a Class I airshed. The remainder of the Forest is classified as Class II airsheds. A greater amount of additional human-caused air pollution may be added to theses areas. Any prescribed burning in this decision will coordinate with CARB to protect air resources; including obtaining and following air quality permits.

National Historic Preservation Act - Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effect of a project on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (P.L. 89.665, as amended) also requires federal agencies to afford the State Historic Preservation Officer a reasonable opportunity to comment. Surveys were conducted for Native American

religious or cultural sites, archaeological sites, and historic properties or areas that may be affected by this decision and no sites were identified.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:

Collaboration between the USFS LTBMU and the Washoe Tribe Environmental Protection Department has been on-going. Discussion with the Meeks Bay Fire Department concerning the project occurred.

The scoping period began on May 29, 2008, and ended on June 23, 2008. Public scoping included mailing scoping letters 39 to interested parties, including 33 local homeowners, TRPA, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, the League to Save Lake Tahoe, Meeks Bay Fire Protection District, and California Land Management (concessionaire at Meeks Bay Campground) requesting comments on the proposed action. Additionally, the scoping package was posted on the LTBMU website. Comments were received from three individuals, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, the League to Save Lake Tahoe, and Meeks Bay Fire Protection District (see scoping summary, Appendix C).

A 30-day public comment period was conducted starting August 27, 2008. Legal notice was published in the Tahoe Daily Tribune and the pre-decisional memo was available on the LTBMU website on August 22, 2007. No comments were received.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE:

Implementation of this project will commence in October 2008 or upon issuance of all pertinent permits.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OR APPEAL OPPORTUNITIES:

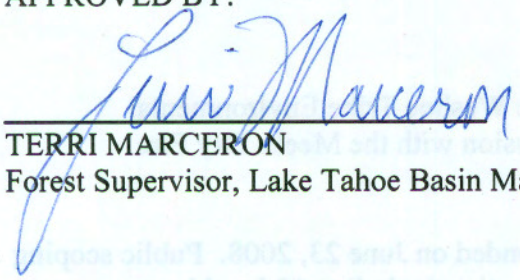
A 30 day comment period was provided pursuant to the July 2, 2005 order issued by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California in case *Earth Island Institute vs. Ruthenbeck* (including clarifying orders issued on September 16, 2005 and October 19, 2005). During the project's 30 day comment period which lasted from August 27, 2008 to September 26, 2008. No comments expressing concerns were received that would require an appeal period pursuant to 36 CFR part 215 regulations.

CONTACT PERSON:

For additional information on this project contact Stephanie Heller, Hydrologist at (530) 530-2838 or sheller@fs.fed.us.

SIGNATURE AND DATE:

APPROVED BY:



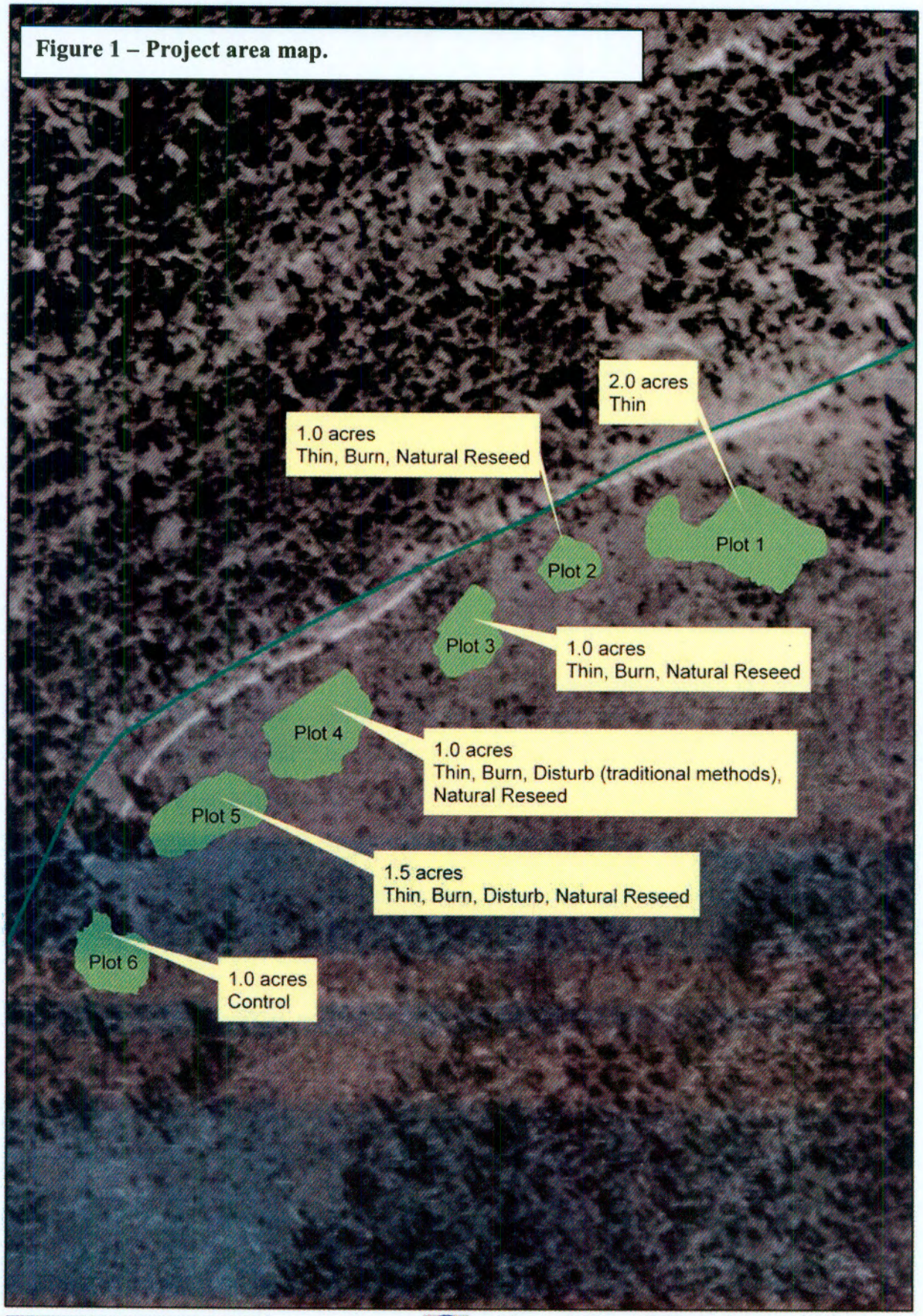
10-14-08

TERRI MARCERON — Date
Forest Supervisor, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

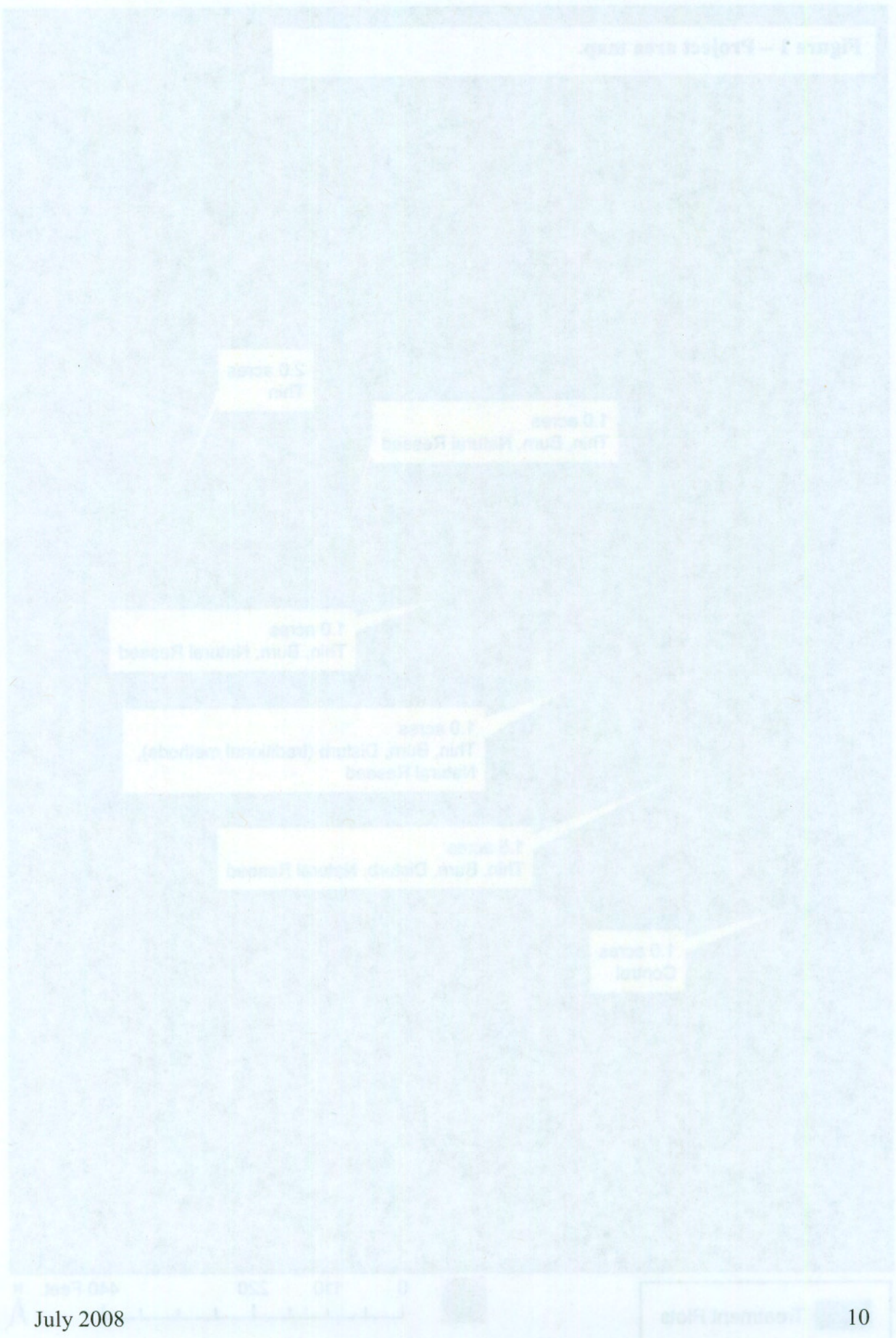
Meeks Meadow Washoe Restoration Project
Treatment Plots 1- 6

Washoe Tribe of NV and CA
Environmental Protection Department
GIS: J. Johnson
June 2007

Figure 1 – Project area map.



This data has been compiled on a geographic information system for the use of Washoe Tribe Environmental. The data does not represent survey delineation and should not be construed as a replacement for the authoritative source. The Washoe Tribe assumes no liability as to the sufficiency or accuracy of this data.



Appendix A:

Meeks Meadow Washoe Restoration Project

Best Management Practices (BMP)

USFS Pacific Southwest Region (2000) (LTBMU revised BMP descriptions in bold)

Best Management Practice	Description
BMP 1-1: Timber Sale Planning Process (TSPP)	Earth scientists or other trained individuals will evaluate onsite watershed characteristics and the potential environmental consequences of activities related to the proposed timber harvest activities. They will design the timber sale to include site-specific prescriptions for each area of water quality concern.
PSW Region BMP 1-2: Timber Harvest Unit Design	Earth scientists or qualified specialists will conduct a hydrologic and geologic survey of the area affected by proposed harvest activities. Mitigations or changes needed to stabilize slopes or improve streamcourses will be incorporated into the harvest unit design.
PSW Region BMP 1-4: Use of Sale Area Maps (SAMs) for Designating Water Quality Protection Needs	The Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) will identify and delineate water quality protection features, such as the location of streamcourses and riparian zones to be protected, wetlands to be protected, boundaries of harvest units, and roads where log hauling is prohibited or restricted, as part of the environmental documentation process. The Sale Preparation Forester will include them on the SAM at the time of contract preparation.
PSW Region BMP 1-5: Limiting the Operating Period of Timber Sale Activities	Limited operating periods will be identified and recommended by the IDT.
PSW Region BMP 1-18: Meadow Protection	At a minimum, meadow protection requirements contained in Forest Land and Resource Management Plans must be identified and implemented. Unauthorized operation of vehicular or skidding equipment in meadows or in protection zones is prohibited by the TSC. Damage to designated meadows and/or their associated protection zones will be repaired by the purchaser in a timely manner, as agreed to by the SA. Damage to a streamcourse or streamside management zone (SMZ) caused by unauthorized purchaser operations will be repaired by the purchaser in a timely manner and agreed upon manner.
PSW Region BMP 1-19: Streamcourse Protection (Implementation and Enforcement)	Streamcourse protection principles including but not limited to the following will be carried out: location and method of streamcourse crossings must be agreed to by the SA prior to construction; all damage to streamcourses, including banks and channels, must be repaired to the extent practicable; all debris generated by the project will be removed from streamcourses in an agreed upon manner that will cause the least disturbance; equipment use in **stream channel buffers and on wet soils**

	in SEZs will be excluded; water bars and other erosion control structures will be located to disperse concentrated flows and filter out sediments prior to entry into a streamcourse; and material from temporary road and skid trail streamcourse crossings will be removed and streambanks restored to the extent practicable.
PSW Region BMP 2-22: Maintenance of Roads PSW Region BMP 2-23: Road Surface Treatment to Prevent Loss of Materials	Provide the basic maintenance required to protect the road and to ensure that damage to adjacent land and resources is prevented. This is the normal prescription for roads closed to traffic and often requires an annual inspection to determine what work is needed. At a minimum, maintenance must protect drainage facilities and runoff patterns. Additional maintenance includes surfacing and resurfacing, outsloping, clearing debris, etc. When necessary, contractors, purchasers, special users, and Forest Service project leaders will undertake road surface treatment measures such as watering, sealing, aggregate surfacing, or paving to minimize loss of road materials.
PSW Region BMP 2-24: Traffic Control during Wet Periods PSW Region BMP 2-25: Snow Removal Controls to Avoid Resource Damage	Roads that must be used during wet periods should have a stable surface and sufficient drainage to allow use while also maintaining water quality. Rocking, paving, and armoring are measures that protect the road surface and reduce soil loss. Where wet season field operations are planned, roads may need to be upgraded, use restricted to low ground pressure vehicles or frozen ground conditions, or maintenance intensified to handle the traffic without creating excessive erosion and damaging the road surface. Where Forest Roads are used throughout the winter, the contractor will be responsible for snow removal that will protect roads and adjacent resources. Rocking or other special surfacing will be necessary before the operator is allowed to use the roads. Snow berms will be removed where they result in accumulation or concentration of snowmelt runoff on the road and erosive fill slopes. Snow berms will be installed in places that will preclude concentration of snowmelt runoff and that will serve to rapidly dissipate melt water.
PSW Region BMP 6-1: Fire and Fuel Management Activities	To reduce public and private losses and environmental impacts that result from wildfires and/or subsequent flooding and erosion, measures including the use of prescribed fire or mechanical methods will be used to achieve defensive fuel profile zones, fuel reduction units, and fire suppression activities.

PSW Region BMP 6-2: Consideration of Water Quality in Formulating Fire Prescriptions	To ensure water quality protection while achieving management objectives through the use prescribed fires, prescription elements will include, but not be limited to, factors such as fire weather, slope, aspect, soil moisture, and fuel moisture. The prescription will include at the watershed and subwatershed level the optimum and maximum burn block size, aggregated burned area, acceptable disturbance for contiguous and aggregate length for the riparian/SMZ, and maximum expected area covered by water repellent soils.
PSW Region BMP 6-3: Protection of Water Quality from Prescribed Burning Effects	Implementation of techniques to prevent water quality degradation, maintain soil productivity, and minimize erosion from prescribed burning. These techniques include: constructing water bars in fire lines, reducing fuel loading in drainage channels, and retain or re-establish ground cover as needed **to keep erosion to a minimum**.
PSW Region BMP 7-1: Watershed Restoration	Implementation of the restoration plan will improve ground cover density, prevent excessive overland runoff and conserve the soil resource and improve soil productivity
PSW Region BMP 7-6: Water Quality Monitoring	**The water quality monitoring plan will be implemented by the Washoe Tribe**.

Appendix B – Wildlife Letter to file, Biological Evaluation for Sensitive Plant Species, Noxious Weed Risk Assessment

Appendix C – Scoping Summary

Meeks Meadow Washoe restoration project
Scoping Summary Report

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service/Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) sought input regarding a proposal to implement a pilot project to restore the Meeks Meadow ecosystem through prescribed burning and thinning. The project will incorporate thinning, prescribed fire, and traditional stewardship practices to encourage regeneration of meadow vegetation. Management of the meadow is expected to improve ecological functions and promote native flora and fauna. The low intensity burn and use of digging sticks is expected to increase the density of native meadow species and reduce the invasion of upland species. A Decision Memo (DM) will be prepared and circulated for comment before a decision is made.

The scoping (request for comments) period began on May 29, 2008, and ended on June 23, 2008. Public scoping included scoping letters mailed June 2, 2008 to interested parties requesting, by June 23, 2008, comments for consideration in the Meeks Meadow Washoe Restoration Project DM.

In response to the scoping request, formal input was received from the following organizations and individuals on the dates indicated.

- Jim Lawson – June 4, 2008
- Ned and Mardy Robinson – June 20, 2008
- Taylor Farnum (Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board) – June 23, 2008
- Flavia Sordelet (League to Save Lake Tahoe) – June 23, 2008
- John Pang, Fire Chief (Meeks Bay Fire Protection District) – June 20, 2008
- Chester T. Rice – July 18, 2008

Comments

Comments received are organized by respondent. Through the scoping analysis, the interdisciplinary team identified that some comments warranted clarification in the proposed action. Though there are no "issues," a response is given following the comment.

Comments from Jim Lawson

1. "I object to additional recreation use to the Meeks Meadow."

   Forest Service Response: This project is not expected to have an impact on recreation use of the area.

2. "Forest Service needs to enforce parking restrictions at trailhead."

   Forest Service Response: Parking enforcement is beyond the scope of this project.

Comments from Ned and Mardy Robinson

3. "One of our concerns is that after the needle minor devastation, the Forest Service entered into a contract to harvest the dead, but standing, trees in the Wintertime…[this] result[ed] in trees being cut off three feet above the ground…[they] stand as an ugly reminder…"

   Forest Service Response: For this project all trees will be removed during summer/fall conditions. Stumps will be cut flush to the ground and hatched to encourage breakdown.

4. "..we hope that one of these plans will not cause more flooding of our cabin.

   Forest Service Response: Due to the small scale, this project is only expected to have a small and very localized effect on ground water.

5. "We applaud the idea of allowing snags that have not fallen to remain"

   Forest Service Response: All lodgepole pine and fir trees of 20 inches dbh and below will be removed. An average of 2-4 snags per acres will be retained in areas were snags occur.

6. "We also applaud the elimination of exotic species and cultivating only native plants."

   Forest Service Response: The project will reinitiate Washoe stewardship practices in order to restore culturally important native vegetation. No exotic species will be cultivated and weed mitigations will be implemented to avoid the spread/introduction of non native species.

7. "…are there any plans of getting rid of the beavers in Meeks Creek which are an exotic species, not native to the Sierra and, as a result, do a lot of damage to the Aspen and Willow along the stream."

Forest Service Response: Beaver management is outside the scope of this project. However, in January 2008 Swanson Hydrology and Geomorphology completed a "Beaver activity and associated geomorphic implications" memo for the LTBMU. This assessment indicates that at the time surveys were conducted (September 26, 2007) the effect of beaver dams in Meeks Creek seems to be neutral. That is the negative effects of beaver dams were balanced by the benefits of the dams. The LTBMU will continue to monitor beaver activity in Meeks Creek.

8. "Might I also suggest pulling some of the large logs out of the stream that are causing erosion of the banks were the logs diverting the flow of water."

Forest Service Response: Channel manipulation is outside of the scope of this project. Large woody debris (i.e. logs) is an important component of stream habitat and stability. Bank erosion is a natural process. Recent surveys have not identified excessive amounts of bank erosion. However, LTBMU will continue to monitor this stream for stability, especially in relationship to beaver dams and large woody debris.

Comments from Taylor Farnum, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

9. "Water Board staff supports the overall project goal of meadow restoration."

Forest Service Response: Comments that state a position for or against a specific alternative are appreciated as this gives the Forest Service a sense of the public's feeling and beliefs about a proposed course of action. Such information can only be used by the decision maker in arriving at a decision and not for improving the environmental analysis or documentation.

10. "These activities may be eligible for coverage under our Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Timber Harvest Activities, Resolution No. R6T-2007-0008 (Timber Waiver), which waives the requirement to submit reports of waste discharge or obtain waste discharge requirements for specified timber harvest activities of federal timber lands managed by the Forest Service. Please review the eligibility criteria and conditions specified in the timber waiver instructions to ensure that this project will comply with the requirements…Please submit your application and all required information for the timber waiver to us at least 30 days before operations will commence."

Forest Service Response: A Timber Waiver will be submitted at least 30 days before operations commence.

11. "The Timber Waiver includes a required monitoring component. The monitoring plan must show whether any harvest or post harvest activities impact water quality. Please ensure that this projects monitoring plan will comply with the Timber Waiver monitoring requirements and the Water Board will receive

monitoring reports. More information can be found at the above mentioned web site under Waiver Attachment 2 – Monitoring and Reporting Program"

Forest Service Response: The projects monitoring plan will comply with the Timber Waiver monitoring requirements.

Comments form Flavia Sordelet, League to Save Lake Tahoe

12. "The League to Save Lake Tahoe is in support of the pilot project to restore the Meeks Meadow ecosystem through fuels reduction and traditional Washoe stewardship practices"

Forest Service Response: Comments that state a position for or against a specific alternative are appreciated as this gives the Forest Service a sense of the public's feeling and beliefs about a proposed course of action. Such information can only be used by the decision maker in arriving at a decision and not for improving the environmental analysis or documentation.

13. "The design features are lacking in protection and monitoring of the fishery resources of Meeks Creek. The project should avoid all impacts to local fisheries, in particular during the spring-fall spawning seasons of salmonid species."

Forest Service Response: This project is not directly adjacent to Meeks Creek channel, therefore fisheries impacts are not anticipated.

14. "…we would recommend that the time-frame for completing the restoration of water quality degraded sites is shortened in time-frame to address the urgency in water quality improvements."

Forest Service Response: The restoration of water quality is outside the scope of this project.

15. "The League recommends that the project design incorporate long-term monitoring protocols for evaluating potential project impacts to soil compaction and infiltration rates."

Forest Service Response: All project work will be complete by hand (no heavy equipment), so no soil compaction is expected in the project area. Infiltration rates could be affected by a hydrophobic layer forming on the soil as a result of the prescribed burn. We will consider implementing a hydrophobicity monitoring protocol after the prescribed burn. However it is important to note that this type of monitoring can only be performed on bare soil, therefore significant vegetation recovery would make this type of monitoring impossible.

Comments form John Pang, Chief Meeks Bay Fire Protection District

16. "The Meeks Bay Fire District supports this proposed project and urges all parties involved to streamline the process so it can start as soon as possible."

Forest Service Response: Comments that state a position for or against a specific alternative are appreciated as this gives the Forest Service a sense of the public's feeling and beliefs about a proposed course of action. Such information can only be used by the decision maker in arriving at a decision and not for improving the environmental analysis or documentation.

Comments from Chester T. Rice

17. "Plant some Witchopple Bushes (frequently found in the Adirondacks), and some native blueberry bushes.)

Forest Service Response: The purpose of this project is to promote the growth of native species through natural regeneration. There will be no plating of non-native or native species. Western blueberry, currently found in Meeks Meadow, is a fire tolerant species that is expected to benefit from prescribed burns.

18. "Improve Meeks Creek from the point of view of encouraging small trout, with a series of small pools along the creek in the meadow."

Forest Service Response: Fish habitat improvement is outside of the scope of this project.

19. "Remove dead trees in the meadow, thereby reducing the fire hazard."

Forest Service Response: This project will serve as a pilot project for a larger meadow restoration that will focus on removing lodgepole pine encroachment (dead and live trees) from Meeks Meadow.