NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To:  
California State Clearinghouse  
Nevada State Clearinghouse  
Cooperating Agencies  
Responsible and Trustee Agencies  
Interested Parties and Organizations  
Affected Property Owners (within 300 feet of all Washoe Meadows State Park and Lake Valley State Recreation Area boundaries; the boundary of the affected property owners was extended to 500 feet along the western boundary of Washoe Meadows State Park)

Subject:  
Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/EIS for the Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course Relocation Project, Lake Valley State Recreation Area and Washoe Meadows State Park, Meyers, CA

Lead Agencies:  
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency  
P.O. Box 5310  
Stateline, NV 89448  
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and  
State of California  
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Sierra District  
P.O. Box 16  
Tahoe City, CA 96145  
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and  
United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
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Project Title:  
Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course Relocation Project

Project Location:  
The project site is located along the Upper Truckee River in Washoe Meadows State Park (SP) and Lake Valley State Recreation Area (SRA), near Meyers, California and the City of South Lake Tahoe (Exhibit 1). The project site is approximately 250 acres,
including an approximately 130-acre portion of meadow area, a 1.5-mile reach of the river, and a roughly 120-acre upland area. The project site includes the entire Lake Tahoe Golf Course within the Lake Valley SRA (Exhibit 2).

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) are preparing a joint EIR/EIS/EIS for the Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course Relocation Project (proposed action). This joint document is an EIR prepared by State Parks pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); an EIS prepared by Reclamation pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations; and an EIS prepared by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency pursuant to its Compact and Chapter 5 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances. This notice meets the CEQA and TRPA noticing requirements for a Notice of Preparation (NOP). Reclamation has prepared a separate notice that meets NEPA noticing requirements for a Notice of Intent (NOI) for publication in the Federal Register.

We would like to know the views of interested persons, organizations, and agencies as to the scope and content of the information to be included and analyzed in the EIR/EIS/EIS. Agencies should comment on the elements of the environmental information that are relevant to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed action. The project description, location, alternatives to be evaluated in the EIR/EIS/EIS, and potential environmental effects of the proposed action (to the extent known) are contained in this NOP.

In compliance with the time limits mandated by State law and TRPA, your response should be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than October 6, 2006. Please send your written responses to Paul Nielsen, Project Manager, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, at the address shown above. Responses should include the name of a contact person at your agency or organization.

SUMMARY

State Parks, Reclamation, and TRPA are pursuing a restoration project along the reach of the Upper Truckee River that extends from its upstream entry point at the southern boundary of Washoe Meadows State Park (SP) to that point just west of U.S. Highway 50 (U.S. 50) where the river exits Lake Valley State Recreation Area (SRA). The primary purpose of the Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course Relocation Project is to restore natural geomorphic and ecological processes along this reach of river and to reduce the river’s suspended sediment discharge to Lake Tahoe. The proposed restoration project would require relocation of a portion of the Lake Tahoe Golf Course to allow for restoration of the river, reduce the area of stream environment zone occupied by the golf course, and allow for establishment of a buffer area between the golf course and the river. The proposed action also includes realigning the boundaries of Washoe Meadows SP and Lake Valley SRA, so restored habitat areas are within the state park and the relocated golf course holes are located entirely within the state recreation area.

The following alternatives will be considered at an equal level of detail in the EIR/EIS/EIS: Alternative 1, No Project/No Action; Alternative 2, Geomorphic Restoration with 18-hole Golf Course (Proposed Action); Alternative 3, Geomorphic Restoration with 9-hole Golf Course; and Alternative 4, Engineered Stabilization (In Place). With Alternative 1, existing conditions on the project site would be projected into the future. Alternative 2 would include restoring the channel to a more natural balanced condition that improves geomorphic function and habitat, relocating a portion of the Lake Tahoe Golf Course holes to the west side of the river, reconfiguring and upgrading the remaining golf course holes on the east side of the river, restoring the riparian/floodplain area where the golf course holes would be removed from the river corridor, removing the golf course bridges that cross the Upper Truckee River and replacing them with a single bridge crossing (one that crosses the main channel and an existing parallel meander that is active only during high flows) in the proximity of the existing Hole 6 Bridge, and revising park unit boundaries and “trading” land between Washoe Meadows SP and Lake Valley SRA by realigning their boundaries. Alternative 3 would include the same river treatment as with Alternative 2, reconfiguring and upgrading a 9-hole golf course on the east side of the river, and eliminating all golf course
Existing Lake Tahoe Golf Course and Upper Truckee River Alignment

Exhibit 2
bridges. Alternative 4 would install bank protection (rip rap) and grade controls (rock weirs) that “lock” the river in its current alignment and elevation, incorporate bioengineering with native riparian vegetation, include selection of treatment areas to stabilize the river and minimize erosion, and leave the existing 18-hole golf course unchanged. These alternatives, including the major physical elements associated with each alternative, are discussed in more detail below.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

The Upper Truckee River has been substantially altered by land practices since European settlement in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Comstock Era timber harvest activities increased erosion and flooding, and the transport of logs on the river required straightening of the channel. Farming and ranching practices further altered the channel and surrounding floodplain. In many locations, particularly in the lower portion of the reach downstream of Meyers, the channel was straightened and enlarged to protect or improve farming operations. The floodplain adjacent to the river was also recontoured and native vegetation replaced by turf during the construction of the Lake Tahoe Golf Course. The channel has incised and is experiencing high rates of bed and bank erosion. These historic modifications have degraded the ecologic and geomorphic processes and functions of the Upper Truckee River.

State Parks owns the land adjacent to the river reach downstream of the U.S. 50 bridge crossing at Meyers (near Chilcothe Street) to the point just upstream of the Elks Club near the intersection of Sawmill Road and U.S. 50. The State Parks property includes Washoe Meadows SP and Lake Valley SRA, which includes Lake Tahoe Golf Course. While several other restoration projects are currently being planned for other reaches of the Upper Truckee River, the golf course reach was identified as the greatest opportunity for rehabilitation in the “Upper Truckee River Upper Reach Environmental Assessment Report” prepared for Reclamation and the Tahoe Resource Conservation District (TRCD), because it presents an opportunity for full restoration and there are less constraints on project planning and implementation due to public ownership by State Parks. This Environmental Assessment Report recommended four river treatment options including: 1) no action, 2) hard engineering or engineered stabilization, 3) creation of an inset floodplain and, 4) full geomorphic restoration. Three of the four alternatives to be analyzed in this EIR/EIS/EIS were derived from these original alternatives. The effort to prepare the Environmental Assessment Report and range of alternatives therein involved presentations, meetings and consultation with agencies, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the public. In continuing these outreach efforts, State Parks hosted and noticed two additional public and agency workshops in 2004 in its ongoing analysis of alternatives to be carried forward for further consideration.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed action is to restore natural geomorphic and ecological processes of this reach of the Upper Truckee River and to reduce this reach’s contribution to the river’s nutrient and suspended sediment discharge to Lake Tahoe. The need for the proposed action is to continue to reduce nutrient and suspended sediment loads to Lake Tahoe to protect the lake’s clarity while also improving habitat and geomorphic function.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives were developed for the proposed action to meet the purpose and need:

► Restore, to the extent feasible, natural geomorphic processes that sustain channel and floodplain morphology.

► Restore, to the extent feasible, ecosystem function in terms of ecological processes and aquatic and riparian habitat quality.
► Reduce erosion and improve water quality including reduction of the reach’s contribution of suspended sediment and nutrient loading in the Upper Truckee River and Lake Tahoe.

► Minimize and mitigate short-term water quality and other environmental impacts during construction.

► Improve the golf course layout, infrastructure, and management to reduce the environmental impact of the golf course on the river’s water quality and riparian habitat by integrating environmentally-sensitive design concepts.

► In the stream environment zone, reduce the area occupied by the golf course and improve the quality and increase the extent of riparian and meadow habitat.

► Maintain golf recreation opportunity and quality of play at a championship level.

► Maintain revenue level of the golf course.

► Avoid any increase in flood hazard to private property.

► Avoid any increase in safety hazards to golf course and other recreation users.

► Provide opportunities for informal, non-vehicular recreation.

**PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (PROPOSED ACTION)**

The preferred alternative that will be addressed in the EIR/EIS/EIS is referred to as Alternative 2, Geomorphic Restoration with 18-hole Golf Course (Exhibit 3). This restoration alternative can be considered to have two general components: removal of land uses incompatible with ecosystem function (passive restoration), and direct reconstruction of the channel and riparian vegetation communities (active restoration).

This alternative would restore the channel morphology by constructing a meandering channel at a grade that would be connected with the floodplain. The channel would be restored to a more natural, balanced condition that mimics portions of the historic channel, prior to channel disturbance and straightening that was likely intended to reduce flooding and increase the cattle grazing period and prior to golf course construction. This restoration would include reconnecting the river to recently abandoned meanders and constructing new meanders combined with grading and revegetation of segments of the river bank. Exhibit 3 shows the intended meander belt of the restored river, which is area where new or reconstructed river meanders would be located and where the river channel would be expected to meander naturally over time. Construction of armored riffles may be incorporated into the channel to control grade. By restoring the channel to a more natural condition, it would allow for the restoration of dynamic processes that are responsible for creating and maintaining aquatic and riparian habitat. Alternative 2 may also include construction of grade controls for transitions to upstream and downstream reaches of the existing channel. Depending on the final alignment of the restored river, the potential exists for a portion of the restored river to cross portions of several parcels owned by the California Tahoe Conservancy and U.S. Forest Service and may require relocation of a portion of South Tahoe Public Utility District sewer line.

Several of the existing Lake Tahoe Golf Course holes would be relocated as part of this alternative. These golf course holes would be relocated to an area on the west side of the river that contains large areas of upland; this would reduce the amount of Stream Environment Zone (SEZ) area occupied by the golf course. The area of potential golf-hole relocation is intended to: maximize use of higher capability lands, avoid sensitive biological and cultural resources known to exist in Washoe Meadows SP, and maintain a buffer from adjacent residential areas to the west. Restoring the river and relocating some of the golf course holes would also establish a buffer between the golf course and the river; the setback on the west side of the river shown in Exhibit 3 generally coincides with the 100-year floodplain resulting from the proposed river treatment. With Alternative 2, all of the golf course bridges, except the existing bridge at Hole 6, would be removed. The Hole 6 Bridge would be
Alternative 2, Geomorphic Restoration with 18-Hole Golf Course (Preferred Alternative)
redesigned and repositioned to reduce scour and erosion downstream of the bridge. A set of golf course holes would be redesigned to lead up to and cross the river in a manner that minimizes impacts to the stream zone. The golf course holes remaining on the east side of the river would be reconfigured and upgraded to improve its surface drainage design, irrigation, and water collection system, and to incorporate current Best Management Practices (BMP) technology. As part of this reconfiguration, the unnamed creek crossing through the center of the golf course and discharging into the Upper Truckee River (Exhibit 3) would also undergo modification (e.g., added setbacks and buffer areas between turf areas and the creek, and native vegetation treatments within those buffer areas).

Alternative 2 would also include revising the park unit boundaries and “trading” land between Washoe Meadows SP and Lake Valley SRA by realigning the boundaries between the two park units. Revising the park unit boundaries would be supported by appropriate policy changes, such as adopting revised flexible management policies for the Lake Valley SRA. State Parks proposes to amend the Lake Valley SRA General Plan and its management policies concurrent with its evaluation of Alternative 2. The General Plan Amendment would revisit the Lake Valley SRA river protection goals and policies and establish a flexible network within which restoration of a portion of the Upper Truckee River and golf course relocation could be implemented. State Parks has not prepared planning documents for Washoe Meadows SP, because it is an undeveloped unit. The EIR/EIS/EIS will evaluate the potential environmental effects associated with the proposed boundary change and the Lake Valley SRA General Plan Amendment.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES

The following alternatives are intended to be evaluated in the EIR/EIS/EIS. These alternatives will be evaluated at an equal level of detail as the proposed action (Alternative 2, Geomorphic Restoration with 18-hole Golf Course).

ALTERNATIVE 1, NO PROJECT/NO ACTION

With Alternative 1, existing conditions on the project site would be projected into the future.

ALTERNATIVE 3, GEOMORPHIC RESTORATION WITH 9-HOLE GOLF COURSE

Alternative 3 would include the same river treatment as Alternative 2, reconfiguration and upgrade of a 9-hole golf course on the east side of the river, and the elimination of all golf course bridges resulting in the removal of all river crossings between the U.S. 50 Bridge in Meyers and the U.S. 50 crossing near its intersection with Sawmill Road. Alternative 3 would be similar to Alternative 2 shown in Exhibit 3, but would not alter the area west of the river and would not include the proposed bridge crossing near the existing Hole 6 Bridge.

With Alternative 3, the floodplain near the Hole 6 Bridge could be more fully restored relative to Alternative 2 given that the bridge would be removed and golf course activities would be setback from this area. Alternative 3 would not include the following Alternative 2 elements: revision of park unit boundaries, Lake Valley SRA policy revisions, or the Lake Valley SRA General Plan Amendment.

ALTERNATIVE 4, ENGINEERED STABILIZATION (IN PLACE)

Alternative 4 would involve the systematic installation of bank protection revetment (rip rap) and grade controls (rock weirs) that “lock” the river in its current alignment and elevation, incorporate bioengineering with native riparian vegetation, include selection of treatment areas to stabilize the river and minimize erosion, and leave the existing 18-hole golf course unchanged (Exhibit 4). Alternative 4 would use the existing stream channel longitudinal profile and planform. The bank treatment and grade control areas were selected to achieve localized stability and minimize erosion, avulsion, or other damage.

Alternative 4 would not include the following Alternative 2 elements: revision of park unit boundaries, Lake Valley SRA policy revisions, or the Lake Valley SRA General Plan Amendment.
POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The following subject areas include potential environmental effects that will be analyzed in the EIR/EIS/EIS:

Land Use. Land use impacts to be addressed in the EIR/EIS/EIS include changes to onsite uses, land use compatibility, and community character, and for the proposed action, changes to the Washoe Meadows SP and Lake Valley SRA unit boundaries and policies of the Lake Valley SRA General Plan. The EIR/EIS/EIS will also address consistency with the TRPA plan area statement (PAS) requirements.

Hydrology, Geomorphology, and Water Quality. The proposed action would restore a portion of the Upper Truckee River and would relocate a portion of the Lake Tahoe Golf Course with the intent of improving long-term water quality in the river and Lake Tahoe by reducing the reach’s contribution of nutrients and suspended sediment to the river, as well as geomorphic function. Construction of the proposed action would create a risk that short-term increases in sediment load could occur. BMPs and mitigation measures would be developed to address potential short-term impacts to water quality that are identified in the EIR/EIS/EIS. Restoration of the river channel would change the hydrologic and geomorphic processes of the river by reducing erosive energy and improving the connection of the channel to the floodplain. The hydrologic analysis will focus primarily on assessing changes to flow patterns as related to changes in channel form and function. The geomorphic assessment will focus on potential short- and long-term changes in sediment fate and transport and landscape-scale factors. The EIR/EIS/EIS will also address long-term water quality monitoring needs.

Biological Resources (Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Vegetation and Wildlife). The proposed action would remove vegetation within Washoe Meadows SP for relocation of golf course holes and restore riparian and meadow habitat in the current Lake Valley SRA. Impacts to the forested habitat, wetlands, and native vegetation (including tree removal) will be analyzed in the EIR/EIS/EIS. Removal of site vegetation and direct and indirect impacts to wetlands has the potential to affect wildlife habitat. The wildlife assessment will include the potential project impacts on existing habitat, special-status wildlife species, and sensitive biological communities. Fisheries and aquatic resources along the affected reach will also be addressed.

Earth Resources: Geology and Soils, and Land Capability and Coverage. The proposed action would involve the clearing and grading for construction of the relocated golf course holes. Relocation of the golf course holes to upland areas would reduce coverage in more sensitive land capability areas (SEZ areas) and would shift coverage and disturbance to an area further from the river than current conditions. The EIR/EIS/EIS will describe potential environmental effects related to land capability and coverage, soils and geology, topographic alteration, seismic hazards, slope stability, and erosion potential.

Scenic Resources. The proposed action would result in the removal of trees and would replace undeveloped forested land with a golf course, as well as restore existing golf course holes to riparian and meadow area. Visibility of the proposed action from U.S. 50, a TRPA-designated scenic travel route, will be determined. Potential impacts from construction and operation of the proposed action will be evaluated through the use of ground-level site photographs from sensitive viewpoints on or near the project site. Scenic effects will be evaluated in terms of visibility of the proposed action, alteration of the visual setting, sensitivity of viewpoints, and potential effects on TRPA scenic thresholds.

Recreation. The proposed action is located within the Lake Valley SRA, which is primarily used for golf recreation, and the undeveloped Washoe Meadows SP, which experiences informal recreation use. Construction and operation of the proposed action would change the character of both of these areas. The EIR/EIS/EIS will evaluate the changes to these recreation areas, the change to TRPA persons-at-one-time (PAOTs) allocations in the project area, the effect on TRPA recreation thresholds, trail connectivity, river access and crossings, and golf course recreation.
Engineered Stabilization (In Place)

Source: USFS 2006, State Parks 2006

Exhibit 4

Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course Relocation Project
Notice of Preparation

September 2006
**Cultural Resources.** The proposed action is located partially on developed and partially on undeveloped land in the Meyers area of the Tahoe Basin, which is known to contain prehistoric and historic cultural resources. The EIR/EIS/EIS will analyze the potential for cultural resources to be located on or near the site. The analysis will focus on the areas of the site to be altered by structures and surface disturbance and will include consultation and evaluation in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

**Transportation, Parking and Circulation.** The proposed action would generate short-term, construction-related traffic. Long-term traffic generated by the state park and golf course uses will also be discussed. The transportation analysis will include identification of major roadways that may be affected by the proposed action, traffic volumes on those roadways, overall operating conditions, public transit routes that may be affected by the proposed action, and major pedestrian or bicycle routes that may be affected by the proposed action.

**Air Quality.** The proposed action would involve construction emissions and generation of fugitive dust, as well as generate construction traffic in the area, contributing pollutants to the air basin. The EIR/EIS/EIS will include an assessment of short-term (i.e., construction) air quality impacts and long-term (i.e., operational) regional air pollutant emissions, including mobile, stationary, and area source emissions.

**Noise.** The EIR/EIS/EIS will assess potential short-term (i.e., construction) noise impacts, relative to sensitive receptors and their potential exposure. Noise levels of specific construction equipment will be determined and resultant noise levels at nearby receptors (at given distances from the source) will be calculated. Long-term (i.e., operational) noise impacts, including increased noise from mobile, stationary, and area sources, will be assessed.

**Public Services and Utilities.** The public services and utilities section of the EIR/EIS/EIS will evaluate impacts on power, water treatment and distribution, wastewater collection, solid waste collection and disposal, police services, fire protection services, schools, and fire fuel management. The proposed action may require relocating a portion of the South Tahoe Public Utilities District (STPUD) sanitary sewer line to accommodate reconstruction of one of the meanders of the river channel. The feasibility and effects of this relocation will also be addressed in the EIR/EIS/EIS. The EIR/EIS/EIS will also evaluate utility needs (e.g., power, water and wastewater) for the restroom/snack facility that would be located on the east side of the river with the relocated golf course holes.

**Hazards and Hazardous Materials.** The EIR/EIS/EIS will map and address potential hazardous materials located on the project site such as petroleum products, fertilizers, and/or pesticides. The EIR/EIS/EIS will also address hazardous materials issues related to adjoining properties.

**Agricultural and Mineral Resources.** The proposed action has the potential to affect agricultural and/or mineral resources on the project site. All active or formally active mining operations or agricultural operations, including grazing and logging, will be identified and discussed in the EIR/EIS/EIS.

**Socioeconomics.** The proposed action could affect socioeconomic factors associated with the project site including income, employment, and taxes generated by golfing activity at the Lake Tahoe Golf Course. The EIR/EIS/EIS will focus on direct economic impacts related to these issues.

**Growth-Inducement.** The affect of the proposed action on growth-inducement will be addressed in the EIR/EIS/EIS; however, the proposed action is not expected to induce or result in the growth of population in the region, cause an increase in demand for employment opportunities, or cause an increase in other public needs.

**Cumulative Effects.** The EIR/EIS/EIS will identify and describe recently approved and reasonably anticipated non-river related projects in the Meyers area and vicinity of Washoe Meadows SP and Lake Valley SRA (e.g., the Sawmill Bike Trail Project), other river restoration projects being contemplated for upstream and downstream reaches of the Upper Truckee River, and region-wide planning efforts currently underway (e.g., Pathway 2007, the total maximum daily load (TMDL) requirement being developed for the Upper Truckee River, etc.). The EIR/EIS/EIS will evaluate the combined effects of these activities with the proposed action.
**TRPA Threshold Carrying Capacities**: The EIR/EIS/EIS will include assessment of the proposed action’s compliance with and contribution to the attainment of threshold carrying capacities adopted by TRPA.

**INTENDED USES OF THE EIR/EIS/EIS**

State Parks, Reclamation, and TRPA will use this EIR/EIS/EIS to consider the environmental effects, mitigation measures, and alternatives, when reviewing the proposed action for approval. The EIR/EIS/EIS will serve as the State’s CEQA compliance document, as Reclamation’s NEPA compliance document, and as TRPA’s compliance document with respect to its Compact and Chapter 5 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances. State responsible and trustee agencies and federal cooperating agencies may also use this EIR/EIS/EIS, as needed, for subsequent discretionary actions.

**PUBLIC SCOPING**

Two public scoping meetings are being conducted to provide you with the opportunity to learn more about the proposed action and to express oral comments about the content of the EIR/EIS/EIS, in addition to your opportunity to submit written comments. The scoping meetings will be held at the following times and locations:

- **Tuesday, September 26, 2006**
  - 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
  - USFS Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
  - 35 College Drive
  - South Lake Tahoe, CA. 96150

- **Tuesday, September 26, 2006**
  - 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
  - USFS Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
  - 35 College Drive
  - South Lake Tahoe, CA. 96150

In addition, the proposed project will be an agenda item at the following TRPA meetings:

- **Wednesday, September 13, 2006**
  - TRPA Advisory Planning Commission Meeting
  - 128 Market Street
  - Stateline, NV 89449

- **Wednesday, September 27, 2006**
  - TRPA Governing Board Meeting
  - North Tahoe Conference Center
  - 8318 North Lake Boulevard
  - Kings Beach, CA 96143

Please mail written responses to Paul Nielsen, Project Manager, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, at P.O. Box 5310, Stateline, Nevada or email at utproject@trpa.org to be received no later than **October 6, 2006**.

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**TRPA Project Manager**

**State Parks CEQA Coordinator, Sierra District**