

2026 Best in Basin Awards

TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

Governing Board • November 18, 2026 • Presented by Kim Caringer

2026 Best in Basin Award Categories

1. Water Quality
2. Watershed Restoration
3. Sustainable Recreation
4. Transportation
5. Forest Health
6. Innovation
7. Climate Resilience & Sustainability
8. Affordable Housing & Community Revitalization
    1. Honorable Mention
9. Environmental Redevelopment

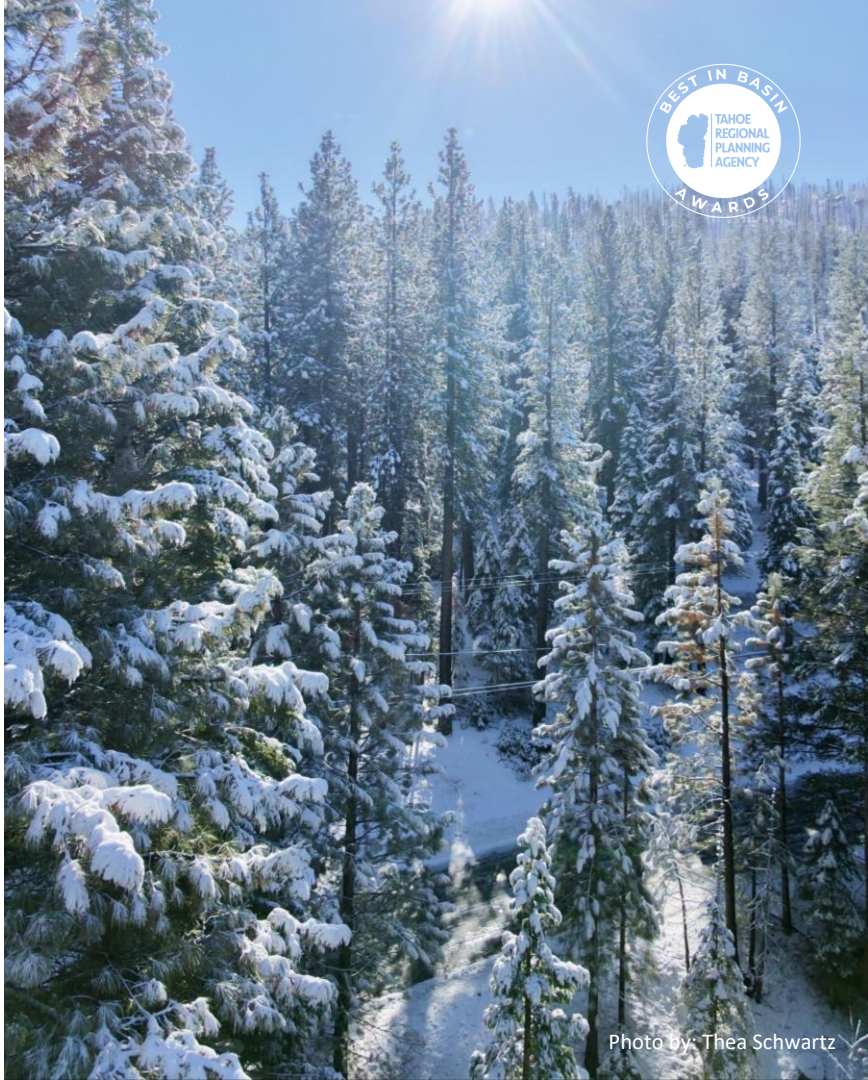


Photo by: Thea Schwartz

Thank you, Judging Panel, nominees, and project partners!







Photos by: TRPA

CATEGORY 1

Water Quality

Photo by: Drone Promotions

WATER QUALITY

Marla Bay Beach Sewer Infrastructure Removal

EAST SHORE · MARLA BAY

- 23 private property owners and the Tahoe Douglas District removed 1,100+ ft of 60-year-old failing sewer lines from Marla Bay Beach.
- District management and contractors completed this ultra-sensitive project in just two 30-day phases.
- Lift stations installed in each home now pump wastewater to the main system.

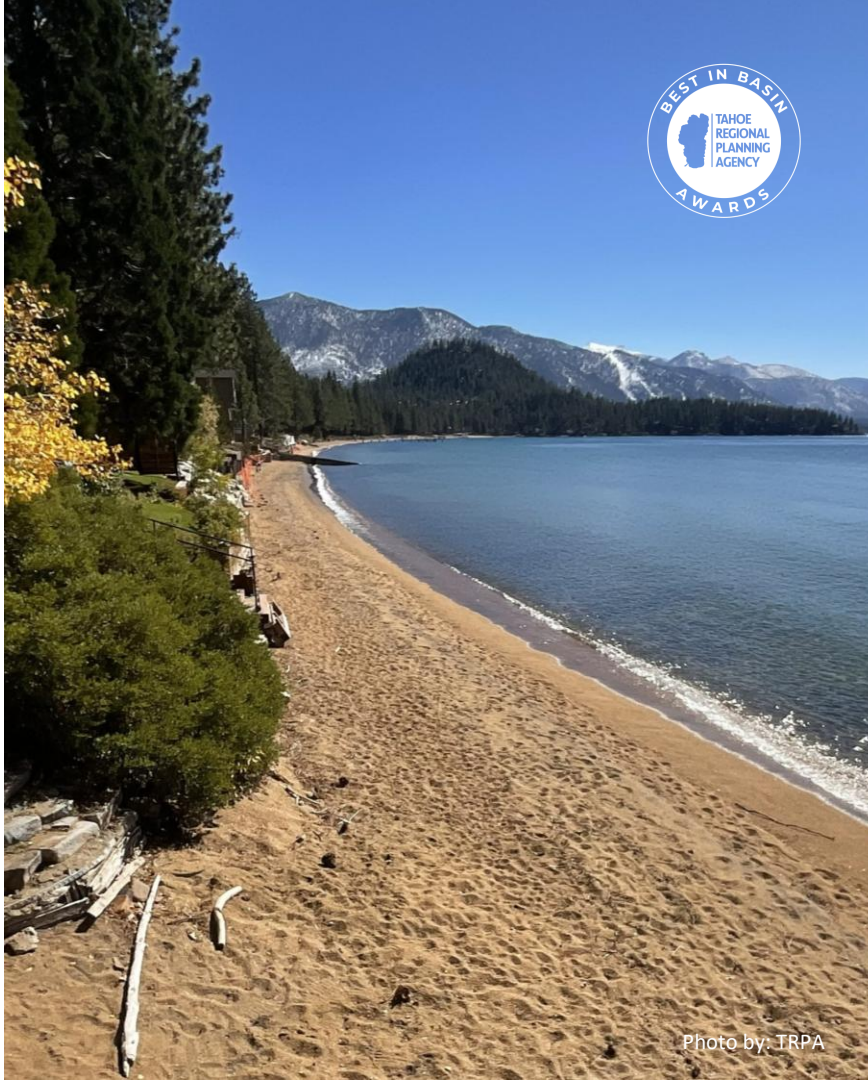


Photo by: TRPA

WATER QUALITY

Marla Bay Beach Sewer Infrastructure Removal





BEFORE

Photos by: Janet Murphy





AFTER

Photos by: TRPA

WATER QUALITY

Meyers Stream Environment Zone / Erosion Control

SOUTH SHORE · MEYERS

- El Dorado County rerouted uncontrolled runoff to a constructed treatment wetland in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.
- Targets 12–33 percent reductions across fine-to-coarse sediment
- Protects lake clarity, adds flood control, habitat improvements, and public education.

Lake Tahoe
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



Photo by: El Dorado County

WATER QUALITY

Meyers Stream Environment Zone / Erosion Control



BEFORE



AFTER

Photos by: El Dorado County

CATEGORY 2

Watershed Restoration

Photo by: TRPA

WATERSHED RESTORATION

Marlette Creek Restoration & SR28 Crossing

EAST SHORE · MARLETTE CREEK

- Nevada Tahoe Conservation District repaired 1,200+ linear feet of incised stream channel
- Removed barriers to spawning fish and realigned the channel to allow overbanking and meadow filtration
- Innovative culvert extension stops SR28 erosion into the creek

Lake Tahoe
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



Photo by: Nevada Tahoe Conservation District

WATERSHED RESTORATION

Marlette Creek Restoration & SR28 Crossing



DURING



AFTER

Photos by: Nevada Tahoe Conservation District

CATEGORY 3

Sustainable Recreation



Photo by: Luxuri Media

SUSTAINABLE RECREATION

North Tahoe Trail Access Improvement Project

NORTH SHORE · TAHOE VISTA

- North Tahoe Public Utility District extended the Pam Emmerich Memorial Pinedrop Trail with new Class I connections.
- Added crossings, traffic calming, and ADA-accessible paths and encourages active transportation.
- Leveraged a mix of local, state, regional, and private funding.
- Erosion-conscious design protecting park resources.



Photo by: NTPUD

SUSTAINABLE RECREATION

North Tahoe Trail Access Improvement Project



BEFORE



AFTER

Photos by: NTPUD / Justin Broglio

SUSTAINABLE RECREATION

Ski Run Community Park

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

- Friends of Ski Run transformed an abandoned lot into a vibrant community space to connect, relax, and celebrate the outdoors.
- Neighborhood kids drew sketches that influenced the final park design.
- The park was designed and built with more than $800,000 in in-kind donations and gifts from local families and Tahoe Fund donors.

Lake Tahoe
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



Photo by: Novus Select

SUSTAINABLE RECREATION

Ski Run Community Park



BEFORE

Photo by: Novus Select



AFTER

Photo by: TRPA

CATEGORY 4

Transportation



Photo by: Thea Schwartz

TRANSPORTATION: CAPITAL PROJECTS

Apache Avenue Pedestrian Safety & Connectivity

SOUTH SHORE · MEYERS

- El Dorado County improved pedestrian safety and neighborhood connectivity.
- Sustainable stormwater design minimizing water clarity impacts.
- A broad-partnership model for basin infrastructure.

Lake Tahoe
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

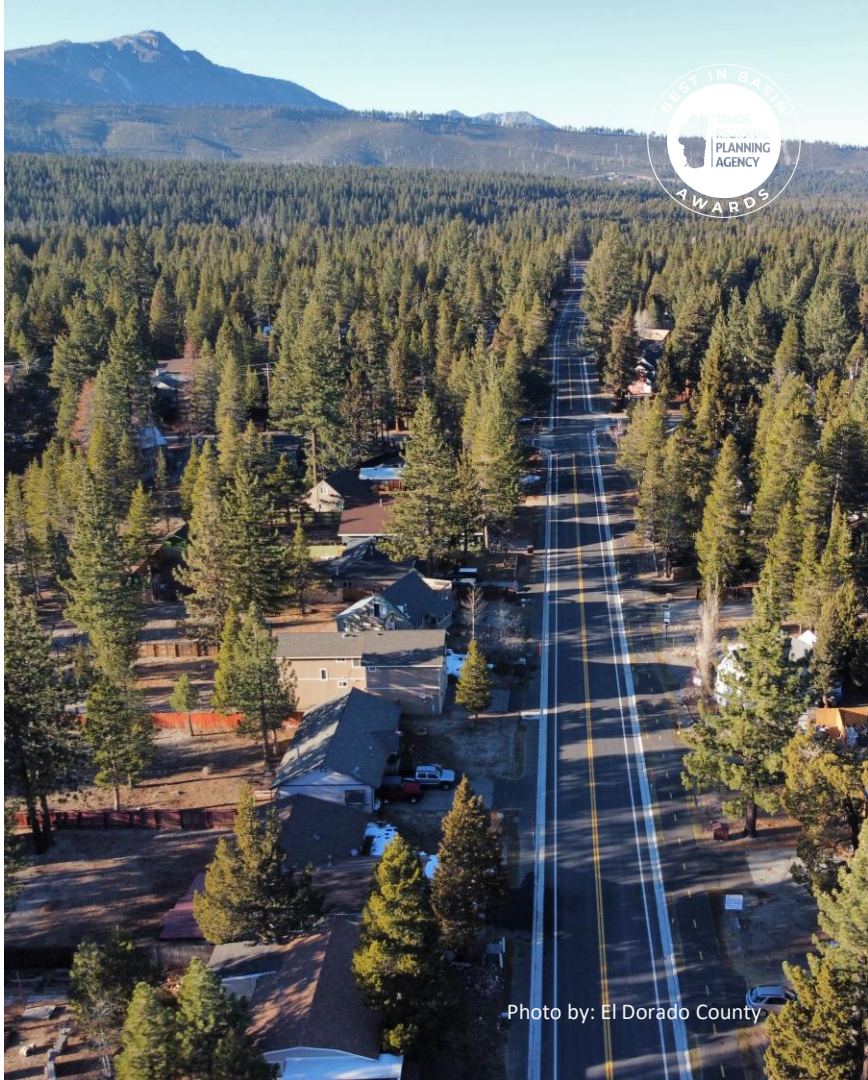


Photo by: El Dorado County

TRANSPORTATION: CAPITAL PROJECTS

Apache Avenue Pedestrian Safety & Connectivity



BEFORE

Photo by: Google Images



AFTER

Photo by: Donaldo Palaroan

TRANSPORTATION: TRANSIT/MOBILITY

Lake Tahoe Unified School District Electric Buses

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

- Lake Tahoe Unified School District upgraded their school bus fleet: 15 electric buses now serve all 13 in-basin routes.
- Ten diesel buses retired; cleaner air for communities.
- Anchored in the District's 2021 resolution to achieve 100 percent renewable energy by 2032, this effort reflects a clear commitment to turning long-term climate goals into meaningful, on-the-ground results.

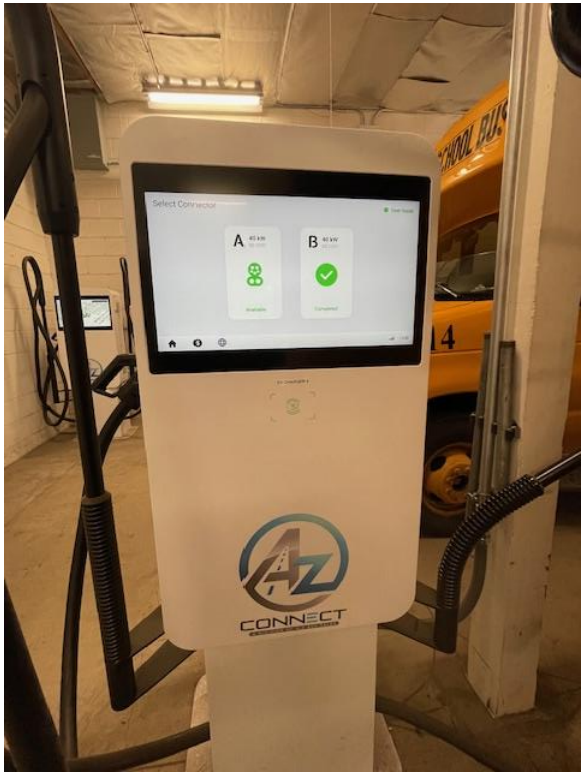


Photos by: Lake Tahoe Unified School District

TRANSPORTATION: TRANSIT/MOBILITY

Lake Tahoe Unified School District Electric Buses





Photos by: Lake Tahoe Unified School District

CATEGORY 5

Forest Health

Photo by: Adobe Stock

FOREST HEALTH

Skyland Shaded Fuel Break

EAST SHORE · SKYLAND

- Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District reduced hazardous fuels on 23 acres of national forest.
- Improves defensible space and maintains forest structure with selective thinning and fuel reduction.
- Slows wildfire spread and supports firefighting.
- A frequently featured demonstration site.

Lake Tahoe
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



Photo by: Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District

FOREST HEALTH

Skyland Shaded Fuel Break



BEFORE



AFTER

Photos by: Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District

CATEGORY 6

Innovation



Photo by: UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center

INNOVATION

Tahoe Keys Large Acreage Hazardous Fuel Reduction

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

- California Tahoe Conservancy and partners reduced hazard fuels on 43-acres near the Tahoe Keys using a remotely controlled mastication machine called BurnBot.

- Exemplifies regional collaboration through a Good Neighbor Authority agreement

Lake Tahoe
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



Photo by: California Tahoe Conservancy

INNOVATION

Tahoe Keys Large Acreage Hazardous Fuel Reduction





Photos by: California Tahoe Conservancy

CATEGORY 7

Climate Resilience & Sustainability

Photo by: South Tahoe Public Utility District

CLIMATE RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY

West Lake Tahoe Regional Water Treatment Plant

WEST SHORE · TAHOMA

- Tahoe City Public Utility District led this $30M drought-resilient drinking-water supply project.
- Submerged intake replacement restored a public beach and improved scenic quality.

Lake Tahoe
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



Photos by: TCPUD

CLIMATE RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY

West Lake Tahoe Regional Water Treatment Plant





Photos by: TCPUD

CATEGORY 8

Affordable Housing & Community Revitalization

Photo by: California Tahoe Conservancy

AFFORDABLE HOUSING & COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

Sugar Pine Village

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

- The Tahoe Basin’s largest deed-restricted affordable housing.
- 248-unit affordable housing units, built with modular construction and environmental benefits.



Photo by: TRPA

AFFORDABLE HOUSING & COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

Sugar Pine Village



Photo by: Alain McLaughlin



Photo by: TRPA

AFFORDABLE HOUSING & COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

Brown Bear Studios

NORTH SHORE · KINGS BEACH

- Converted the blighted 7 Pines Motel into 14 studios.
- Permanent supportive, deed-restricted housing delivering deeply affordable, deed restricted units for residents experiencing homelessness.
- Full Best Management Practices (BMP) retrofit improving water quality.



Photo by:Tom Z

AFFORDABLE HOUSING & COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

Brown Bear Studios



BEFORE



AFTER

Photos by: Tom Zikas

Honorable Mention



Photo by: Mike Vollmer

HONORABLE MENTION

Lake Tahoe Community College Student Housing

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

- Lake Tahoe Community College built affordable housing units for 100 low-income, full-time students from Lake Tahoe and beyond, reducing one of the primary barriers to student success in college.
- Bike lockers, the on-campus mobility hub, and bike trail connections support car-free living, and upsized stormwater systems were critical to the building's location on a rise just above the Trout Creek Meadow.



Photo by: LTCC

HONORABLE MENTION

Lake Tahoe Community College Student Housing





Photos by: Hall Creations

CATEGORY 9

Environmental Redevelopment

Photo by: TRPA

ENVIRONMENTAL REDEVELOPMENT

Spurlock/Evers Environment & Education Center

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

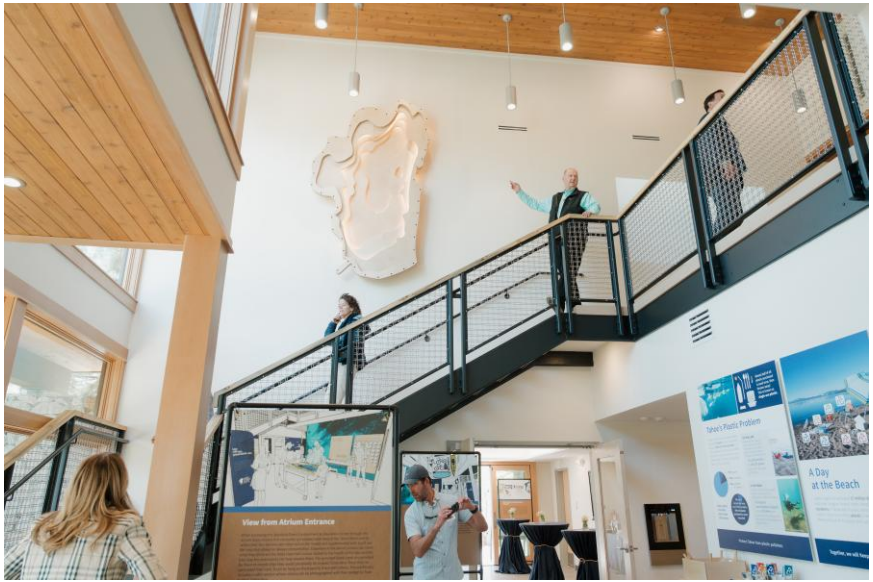
- Keep Tahoe Blue redesigned an old office building to house a new education center designed to support hands-on learning about Lake Tahoe's environmental challenges and conservation efforts.
- Connects visitors to science-driven stewardship



Photo by: Joseph Reinero / Ardent Media

ENVIRONMENTAL REDEVELOPMENT

Spurlock/Evers Environment & Education Center





Photos by: Keep Tahoe Blue


BEST IN BASIN
TAHOE
REGIONAL
PLANNING
AGENCY
AWARDS
Congratulations to our winners!
Thank you for helping protect and restore Lake Tahoe.
Photo by: Thea Schwartz