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STAFF REPORT

Date: March 2, 2022

To: TRPA Advisory Planning Commission

From: TRPA Staff

Subject: Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course Reconfiguration Project Notice of Preparation and Public Scoping

Summary and Staff Recommendation:

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) released a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for a CEQA draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and TRPA Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course Reconfiguration Project (Project) on January 28, 2022. State Parks will be the joint document lead and the Project implementor. This report is informational, and no action is required.

Historical logging, gravel mining, grazing, channel manipulation, and development of the Lake Tahoe golf course directly adjacent to the floodplain have all negatively impacted this section of the Upper Truckee River. The river is straightened and rarely overbanks or inundates the floodplain. The golf course was built between 1958 – 1963 in the river floodplain and meadow. Golf course bridges constrict the channel and turf extends to the edge of the river in several locations. These impacts have changed the bed and bank dynamics of the river and cause degradation of instream and riparian habitat and increased erosion leading to poor water quality in the Upper Truckee River and eventually Lake Tahoe. The project is a high priority Environmental Improvement Program (EIP # 01.02.01.0010) project that aims to restore priority meadows, wetlands, and Lake Tahoe tributaries

The proposed project will restore a 1.8-mile section of the Upper Truckee River and reconfigure the golf course. The reconfigured golf course will remain an 18-hole regulation golf course completely within the limits of the Lake Valley State Recreation Area (LVSRA). The project goals include:

- Reduce erosion, fine sediment and nutrients into the Upper Truckee River and Lake Tahoe;
- Restore natural river channel to proper geomorphic function and reconnect to floodplain;
- Remove golf from rivers edge and restore habitat corridor with buffer zone;
- Improve aquatic and wildlife habitat;
- Improve and expand riparian and meadow vegetation;
- Reduce impacts of dated golf course by integrating environmentally sensitive designs; and
- Provide wide array of recreation access.

The project website has more information on the history of the project and current project description and may be found here: [Upper Truckee River Restoration & Golf Course Reconfiguration Project](#)

Background:

State Parks circulated a draft EIR/EIS/EIS in 2010. Some members of the public did not support the project at that time because a portion of the golf course would have been moved into Washoe Meadows State Park to make room for the river restoration. The CEQA EIR was litigated and the 2010 EIR/EIS/EIS was never adopted. Since then, State Parks has reevaluated the project and has produced the current proposed project that allows for restoration of the river while keeping the reconfigured golf course completely within the LVSRA.

Public Comment:

Three public scoping meetings have been held to date. Two were held on January 25, 2022, and the third meeting was the TRPA Governing Board meeting on February 23, 2022. The TRPA Advisory Planning Commission (APC) meeting will also serve as an opportunity to receive comments from the public as well as the APC members. All comments received during the meetings will be considered during development of the draft EIR/EIS.

Contact Information :

For questions regarding this agenda item, please contact Shannon Friedman, Senior Planner, at (775) 901-2800 or sfriedman@trpa.gov.

Attachments:

- A. Notice of Preparation
- B. Conceptual Layout

Attachment A
Notice of Preparation

To: California State Clearinghouse, Nevada State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Property Owners, & Interested Parties

From: California Department of Parks and Recreation

Subject: NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) AND NOTICE OF A SCOPING MEETING FOR THE UPPER TRUCKEE RIVER RESTORATION AND LAKE TAHOE GOLF COURSE RECONFIGURATION PROJECT

Date: January 28, 2022

Description of the Project

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) are initiating preparation of a joint EIR/TRPA EIS for the Upper Truckee River Restoration and Lake Tahoe Golf Course Reconfiguration Project (Project). This joint document is an EIR prepared by State Parks pursuant to CEQA (Public Resource Code Section 21000 et seq.) and State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.) and an EIS prepared by TRPA pursuant to the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact, Code of Ordinances, and Rules of Procedure. This notice meets the CEQA and TRPA noticing requirements for an NOP.

State Parks and TRPA are requesting comments on the scope and content of the EIR/EIS. The project includes geomorphic-based river restoration of the Upper Truckee River within the 169-acre Lake Valley State Recreation Area (LVSRA) and portions of Washoe Meadows State Park (WMSP). The purpose of the project is to restore natural river hydrologic conditions, geomorphic processes and ecological function to 1.8 miles of the Upper Truckee River, which will reduce erosion and therefore improve water quality in the Upper Truckee River and Lake Tahoe. The proposed restoration project aims to achieve this goal by constructing a meandering river channel at a grade that would be connected with the floodplain. The present channel would be restored to a more natural, balanced condition that mimics portions of the historic channel, which in general involves actions that reverse past actions that altered the natural course, depth, and velocity of the river. To accomplish this river restoration, the Project also includes reconfiguration of the 135-acre, 18-hole regulation Lake Tahoe Golf Course within LVSRA to allow room for the river meanders and establish a greater buffer between the river and the golf course. Existing undersized bridges would be removed and replaced with floodplain spanning bridges, the golf course would be modernized with a new irrigation system, drought resistant turf, and new restroom facilities, among other improvements. A trail connecting from Highway 50 along the river into Washoe Meadows State Park would also be included.

Location of the Project

The Project would be located within the LVSRA and portions of the 608-acre WMSP, both of which are located at approximately 6,280 feet above mean sea level in El Dorado County, California, approximately 4.5 miles south of Lake Tahoe near the intersection of US Highway 50 and Meadow Vale Drive.

Issues to be Addressed in the EIR

It has been determined that an EIR/TRPA EIS is required because the Project could result in potentially significant impacts to environmental resources. The EIR/TRPA EIS will identify the potentially significant environmental effects of the Project, including those resulting from construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project. The EIR will also discuss and analyze a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project, including

a No Project alternative scenario and a “Stabilize in Place” alternative to the Project that could attain most of its basic objectives at a reduced cost. Other alternatives may be added to the analysis based on input received during the 45-day scoping period following issuance of this NOP, focused on avoiding or reducing any of its significant environmental effects while still attaining the goals of the Project, or by the EIR team in response to potentially significant environmental impacts identified during the EIR process.

Specific areas of analysis to be addressed in the EIR include: aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation and traffic, utilities and service systems, and energy conservation. Where feasible, mitigation measures will be recommended to avoid or reduce potentially significant impacts. The EIR will also address potential cumulative impacts of the Project, considered together with past, other current, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area.

Information to be included in the EIR/TRPA EIS will be based, in part, on input and comments received during the scoping period. Decision-makers, responsible and trustee agencies under CEQA, property owners, and members of the public will also have an opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR/TRPA EIS once it is issued. Additional information about the environmental review process for the Project can be found on the State Parks website for the Project at: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=29860. Further information about the project is available at: <https://restoreuppertruckee.net/>.

Public Scoping Period for this Notice of Preparation

The purpose of the NOP is to solicit comments from interested persons, organizations, and agencies as they relate to the scope and content of the information to be included and analyzed in the EIS/TRPA EIS. Agencies should comment on the elements of the environmental information that are relevant to their legal authority and statutory responsibilities in connection with the project.

The designated public scoping period will extend for 45 calendar days beginning on January 28, 2022 and concluding on March 15, 2022. Please include a name, organization (if applicable), mailing address, and e-mail address of a contact person for all future notification related to this process. Public comments will become part of the public record and will be published in a Scoping Report.

Please send your comments to: **Matt Trask, ECORP Consulting, Inc., 2525 Warren Dr. Rocklin, CA 95677, mtrask@ecorpconsulting.com**.

Two public scoping meeting will be held to provide the opportunity to learn about the Project and to receive comments from the public and other interested parties and agencies regarding the issues that should be addressed in the EIR/TRPA EIS. The scoping meeting will be held as follows:

Wednesday, February 23, 2022
TRPA Governing Board (GB) Meeting
Virtual

Wednesday, March 9, 2022
TRPA Advisory Planning Commission (APC) Meeting
Virtual

TRPA is concerned for the health and safety of community members, our staff, and our Governing Board. Amid rapidly evolving circumstances, the agency must consider its obligation to continue work while doing our part to slow the spread of the novel Coronavirus. TRPA will utilize technology to hold both public scoping meetings. Any interested member of the public will be able to participate and observe the meeting remotely without coming to a physical location. In-person attendance will not be part of the TRPA public meetings under the current recommendations from the state and local agencies. The staff summary for this project will be available for review via TRPA.gov seven (7) calendar days prior to the meeting. Interested persons may provide comments and input to the Governing Board and/or Advisory Planning Commission meeting prior to

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the meeting and day of the meeting. Interested parties can provide comments during the meeting by using the platform GoToWebinar. Visit the service providers website, www.gotomeeting.com/webinar, in advance of the meeting to prepare your system to connect to the meetings (webinar). The link to connect to the meeting will be posted on the Meetings and Notices page of the TRPA website the day of the meeting.

REMINDER: All comments will be accepted by postmark or e-mail through March 15, 2022. Please be sure to include your name, organization (if applicable), mailing address, and e-mail address.

Attachment B
Conceptual Layout

Upper Truckee River Restoration and Golf Course Re-Configuration Project Conceptual Plan 2021

Conceptual layout of reconfigured golf course,
restored river and habitat,
(including golf removed from meadow)
and recreation trails

