TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY
Lake Tahoe ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

TRPA
PO Box 5310
128 Market Street
Stateline, NV 89449

STAFF REPORT

Date: March 18, 2026

To: TRPA Governing Board

From: TRPA Staff

Subject: Meeks Creek Bridge Replacement, El Dorado County, California
Environmental Improvement Program #03.02.02.0103, TRPA File #EIPC2026-0001

Summary and Staff Recommendation:
Staff recommends that the Governing Board make the required findings and approve the proposed project.

Required Motions:
To approve the proposed project, the Board must make the following motions based on the staff report and evidence in the record:

1. A motion to approve the required findings set forth in Attachment A; and

2. A motion to approve the proposed project subject to the conditions contained in the draft permit (Attachment B).

For the motions to pass, an affirmative vote of five members from the State of California and nine members overall is required.

Project Description/Background:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to remove and replace the Meeks Creek Bridge (Bridge No. 25-0019), construct a new bridge to provide aquatic and terrestrial wildlife passage, repair scour damage, provide bicycle and pedestrian access, and restore the Meeks Creek channel within the Caltrans right-of-way.

The Meeks Creek Bridge, located on State Route 89 in El Dorado County, is adjacent to Meeks Meadow, Meeks Bay Resort, and Meeks Bay Campground on USDA Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) (See Project Vicinity Map Attachment C). The bridge replacement is critical to the LTBMU Meeks Bay Restoration project . That will restore the hydrologic function of Meeks Creek by removing the artificial lagoon at the former Meeks Bay Marina and widening the constricted stream channel. The bridge replacement also complements the ongoing restoration of Meeks Meadow, led by the Washoe Tribe.

The bridge replacement is identified as a priority in the SR 89 Recreation Corridor Plan to improve bicycle and pedestrian access. Caltrans secured federal funding to replace the Meeks Creek Bridge in 2023. The existing bridge, constructed in 1929, would be replaced with a larger bridge that improves access and allows natural stream flow and aquatic and terrestrial wildlife passage for native species including the threatened Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. The new bridge would also meet current seismic and safety standards.

The existing bridge, which is 24 feet long and 48 feet wide, would be replaced with a bridge that is 90-feet long and 56 feet wide. This much larger span is necessary to restore the stream channel to a natural floodplain, while the increased width will accommodate two 12-foot travel lanes, two 8-foot Class II bicycle lanes, and 6-foot concrete sidewalks on each side. The bridge would include concrete bridge railings designed to closely resemble the existing stone railings. While the existing bridge was not determined to be historically significant, it does contain historic aesthetic elements that Caltrans will incorporate into the design of the new bridge. (See Design Rendering, Attachment D).

Project Considerations

Caltrans anticipates that the removal of the existing bridge and construction of the new bridge will occur between April and October 2027. Work on the bridge will take place 24 hours per day; however, TRPA requires that activities generating significant noise, such as pile driving, be limited to daytime hours. Most project work would be carried out under standard traffic control involving a one-way lane closure. However, the main bridge construction would require a full closure of SR 89 at Meeks Creek for approximately ten days. The LTBMU may close the campground and Meeks Bay Resort during some phases of construction.

Caltrans will coordinate with LTBMU, El Dorado County, Placer County, the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), the North Tahoe Fire Protection District, the California Highway Patrol (CHP), California State Parks, and TRPA to manage traffic and to have a plan in case of an emergency. Caltrans has identified multiple locations around the Tahoe Basin where changeable message signs will be placed to inform travelers of potential delays, alternate routes, and the timing of the road closure. TRPA will require Caltrans to provide confirmation of coordination with the various agencies. TRPA will also assist in facilitating interagency coordination and public outreach prior to construction.

Environmental Review:

TRPA, LTBMU, and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Lahontan) prepared a joint Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Meeks Bay Restoration Project, which includes the Meeks Creek bridge replacement. This document met the environmental review requirements of the TRPA Compact, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and provided responsible agencies and interested persons with sufficient information to comment on the environmental analysis. The agencies completed the public review period for this document in 2022 and prepared a Final EIS/EIS/EIR.

On August 28, 2024, the TRPA Governing Board certified the Meeks Bay Restoration Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) based on findings required by Compact Article VII, Chapter 3 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances, and Article 6 of the Rules of Procedure. A TRPA permit is required for the

bridge replacement. When the Board certified the EIS in August 2024, it found that the project as analyzed, which included the bridge replacement, would not have significant effects on the environment provided certain mitigation measures are implemented. It found that short term night construction noise could be significant and unavoidable; however, Caltrans has since modified the construction timing of pile driving so that this effect would not occur. See August 2024 meeting materials for Agenda Item VII.A. Relevant mitigation measures have been incorporated in the TRPA permit for the bridge replacement.

While the bridge replacement is included and generally described in the Meeks Bay EIS/EIS/EIR, Caltrans conducted a separate and more detailed CEQA analysis for the bridge replacement. TRPA coordinated with Caltrans to ensure that the analysis was consistent with the previous document, incorporated relevant mitigation measures, and supported TRPA's required findings. Caltrans adopted a Negative Declaration for the project in March 2025.

Public Comment:

TRPA, LTBMU, and Lahontan conducted a robust stakeholder engagement process for the Meeks Bay Restoration Project between 2018 and 2024. This included a public scoping period, a stakeholder assessment, seven stakeholder forum meetings, and two public workshops. The stakeholder forum included members of the local community, environmental advocacy groups, the Meeks Bay Fire Protection District, and the Lake Tahoe Marina Association. TRPA developed an interactive website for the project where the public provided input on design alternatives. The draft environmental document was available for public review from June 10 to August 9, 2022. Concerns focused primarily on the removal of the Meeks Bay Marina, whether to include a pier at Meeks Bay, visitation estimates, and scenic quality. The Meeks Creek bridge replacement itself was non-controversial.

Caltrans also conducted public outreach during preparation of the Initial Study for the bridge replacement. The draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration was circulated for public review between November 15 and December 27, 2024. Caltrans received clarifying questions regarding the construction plans and general support for the stream restoration and channel improvements.

TRPA also distributed public notices in advance of this meeting to solicit public feedback. TRPA received no additional public comment at the time the staff report was circulated.

Contact Information:
For questions regarding this agenda item, please contact Rebecca Cremeen, Senior Planner, at (775) 589-5214 or rcremeen@trpa.gov.

To submit a written public comment, email publiccomment@trpa.gov with the appropriate agenda item in the subject line. Written comments received by 4 p.m. the day before a scheduled public meeting will be distributed and posted to the TRPA website before the meeting begins. TRPA does not guarantee written comments received after 4 p.m. the day before a meeting will be distributed and posted in time for the meeting.

Attachments:

A. Required Findings/Rationale
B. Draft Permit
C. Project Vicinity Map
D. Bridge Rendering

Attachment A

Required Findings/Rationale

Mail
PO Box 5310
Stateline, NV
89449

Location
128 Market St
Stateline, NV
89449

Required Findings: The following is a list of the required findings as set forth in Chapters 4, 21, and 61 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances. Following each finding, Agency staff indicate if there is sufficient evidence contained in the record to make the applicable findings or briefly summarize the evidence on which the finding can be made.

1. Chapter 4.4.1 – Required Findings:

   A. The project is consistent with and will not adversely affect implementation of the Regional Plan, including all applicable Goals and Policies, Plan Area Statements and maps, the Code and other TRPA plans and programs.

      The project is located in Plan Area Statement 150, Meeks Bay, where the land use classification is Recreation. The bridge is part of State Route 89, allowing vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic to safely cross Meeks Creek. Transportation routes are a special use in the PAS. The Meeks Creek Bridge was originally constructed in 1929, prior to TRPA; therefore, special-use findings were not made at that time. Special use findings are being made now as part of the bridge replacement and improvement project. The project implements special policies in the PAS, including removing unnatural barriers to aquatic organism passage. The project, as conditioned in the draft permit, is consistent with the Regional Plan and the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP). The project is a TRPA priority and is on the 5-year EIP Project list (EIP # 03.02.02.0103).

   B. The project will not cause the environmental threshold carrying capacities to be exceeded.

      The Project was analyzed as part of the proposed action for the Meeks Bay Restoration Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (2024). The TRPA Governing Board made a mitigated finding of no significant effect on August 28, 2024.

   C. Wherever federal, state, or local air and water quality standards are applicable for the Region, whichever are strictest, must be attained and maintained pursuant to Article V(g) of the TRPA Compact, the project meets or exceeds such standards.

      The project meets or exceeds the applicable federal, state, and local air and water quality standards. Refer to Paragraph B, above.

2. Chapter 21.2.2 Special Uses

   The project to which the use pertains is of such nature, scale, density, intensity, and type to be an appropriate use for the parcel and the surrounding area in which it will be located.

   The new Meeks Creek Bridge will be both longer and wider than the existing bridge. This is necessary to accommodate the sidewalks and bike paths, support the stream restoration effort, and span the 100-year floodplain, allowing passage for terrestrial and

aquatic organisms. The bridge is designed to meet its purpose and need. The new bridge will incorporate aesthetic elements intended to honor the existing bridge and blend with the surrounding environment. The bridge replacement is therefore appropriate for the Meeks Bay area.

A. The project to which the use pertains will not be injurious or disturbing to the health, safety, enjoyment of property, or general welfare of persons or property in the neighborhood, or general welfare of the region, and the applicant has taken reasonable steps to protect against any such injury and to protect the land, water, and air resources of both the applicant's property and that of surrounding property owners.

   The project, once complete, will improve the safety of all people who live or travel through the region. All mitigation measures identified in the TRPA EIS will be implemented during and after construction. This includes both temporary and permanent stormwater Best Management Practices to treat stormwater runoff during construction and post-construction conditions.

B. The project to which the use pertains will not change the character of the neighborhood or detrimentally affect or alter the purpose of the applicable local plan, and specific or master plan, as the case may be.

   The project will replace the Meeks Creek Bridge in the same location as the existing structure. While the bridge will be larger to accommodate the planned improvements, the design will incorporate aesthetic elements from the existing bridge. The bridge replacement was planned as part of the Meeks Bay Restoration Project, and the PAS also identifies the removal of aquatic organism barriers as a priority. The project is therefore consistent with the purpose and character of the surrounding area.

3. Chapter 61.3.7.A. Standards for Conservation and Recreation Lands.
   Within lands classified by TRPA as conservation or recreation land use, any live, dead, or dying tree larger than 30 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) in westside forest types shall not be cut except as provided below.

   61.3.7.A.6 EIP Projects: Trees larger than 30 inches dbh in westside forest types may be removed when it is demonstrated that the removal is necessary for the activity.

   There are four Jeffrey Pines greater than 30 inches dbh that need to be removed for the bridge replacement and stream restoration component of the project. The new bridge is larger than the existing bridge to span the full 100-year floodplain, allow passage of terrestrial and aquatic organisms, and includes sidewalks and bicycle lanes. There is no alternative that would eliminate the need to remove these trees.

4. Chapter 3.7.4 Findings for Environmental Impact Statement:

   A. Changes or alterations have been required or incorporated into the project that avoid or reduce the significant adverse environmental effects to a less than significant level.

   The Meeks Bay Restoration Project EIS, which includes the bridge, found potentially significant impacts related to short term construction noise. The project has been modified to remove night pile driving that would exceed TRPA's noise standards; and therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

Attachment B

Draft Permit

TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY
Lake Tahoe ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

TRPA
PO Box 5310
128 Market Street
Stateline, NV 89449

DRAFT PERMIT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Meeks Creek Bridge Project

TRPA PROJECT NUMBER: 520-201-00 FILE: EIPC2026-0001

PERMITTEE(S): California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

COUNTY/LOCATION: El Dorado/Meeks Creek Bridge at SR 89 PM 24.4 – PM 25.3

Having made the findings required by Agency ordinances and rules, the TRPA Governing Board approved the project on March 25, 2026, subject to the standard conditions of approval attached hereto (Attachment Q) and the special conditions found in this permit. This permit shall expire on March 25, 2029, without further notice unless the construction has commenced prior to this date and diligently pursued thereafter. Commencement of construction consists of pouring concrete for a foundation and does not include grading, installation of utilities, or landscaping. Diligent pursuit is defined as completion of the project within the approved construction schedule. The expiration date shall not be extended unless the project is determined by TRPA to be the subject of legal action which delayed or rendered impossible the diligent pursuit of the permit.

NO DEMOLITION, TREE REMOVAL, CONSTRUCTION OR GRADING SHALL COMMENCE UNTIL:
(1) TRPA RECEIVES A COPY OF THIS PERMIT UPON WHICH THE PERMITTEE(S) HAS ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT OF THE PERMIT AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONTENTS OF THE PERMIT;
(2) ALL PRE-CONSTRUCTION CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL ARE SATISFIED AS EVIDENCED BY TRPA'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THIS PERMIT;
(3) THE PERMITTEE OBTAINS ALL NECESSARY PERMITS. THE TRPA PERMIT AND OTHER PERMITS ARE INDEPENDENT OF EACH OTHER AND MAY HAVE DIFFERENT EXPIRATION DATES AND RULES REGARDING EXTENSIONS; AND
(4) A TRPA PRE-GRADING INSPECTION HAS BEEN CONDUCTED WITH THE PERMITTEE

_____ _____
TRPA Executive Director/Designee Date

PERMITTEE'S ACCEPTANCE: I have read the permit and the conditions of approval and understand and accept them. I also understand that I am responsible for compliance with all the conditions of the permit and am responsible for my agents' and employees' compliance with the permit conditions. I also understand that if the property is sold, I remain liable for the permit conditions until or unless the new owner acknowledges the transfer of the permit and notifies TRPA in writing of such acceptance. I also understand that certain mitigation fees associated with this permit are non-refundable once paid to TRPA. I understand that it is my sole responsibility to obtain any and all required approvals from any other state, local or federal agencies that may have jurisdiction over this project
Signature of Permittee(s) _____ Date _____

Required plans determined to be in conformance with approval: Date: _____

TRPA ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The permittee has complied with all pre-construction conditions of approval as of this date:

_____

TRPA Executive Director/Designee Date

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. This permit specifically authorizes the replacement of the Meeks Creek Bridge Project. The project includes replacing the existing bridge with a new single-span bridge that includes sidewalks and a class one bike lane. A small portion of Meeks Creek under the bridge will be restored to address existing scouring, remove an existing fish barrier, and allow for terrestrial wildlife crossing under the bridge. Construction will occur within the Caltrans right-of-way and the USDA Forest Service property through a Special Use Permit. The project is planned to start construction in 2027 and will take one to two years to complete.

2. The Standard Conditions of Approval listed in Attachment Q shall apply to this permit.

3. Prior to permit acknowledgement, the following conditions shall be met:

    a. Submit the 100% construction plans electronically for TRPA review and approval.
    b. Submit a traffic control plan for TRPA review and approval.
    c. Submit the USDA Forest Service Special Use Permit.
    d. The permittee shall coordinate with Placer County, El Dorado County, The North Tahoe Fire Protection District, Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), California Highway Patrol, California State Parks, the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, and other appropriate emergency response agencies, land managers,-and transportation authorities, to assess potential impacts on emergency evacuation routes during closure of State Route 89. To achieve this, Caltrans shall:
        i. Conduct a review of applicable emergency evacuation plans and identify designated evacuation routes within the project area, if applicable.
        ii. Engage with the agencies listed above to confirm that the project and traffic control plan does not obstruct or impair emergency evacuation routes or response times. This coordination shall also take into account other construction projects and road closures in the region.

iii. Incorporate design modifications, traffic management strategies, or alternative routing as necessary to maintain or improve emergency evacuation capacity.

iv. Develop and implement a Traffic Control Plan (TCP) that ensures emergency access is maintained during all phases of construction.

v. Submit documentation demonstrating compliance with this permit requirement to TRPA.

4. An onsite inspection by TRPA staff is required prior to any construction or grading activity. TRPA staff shall determine if the onsite improvements required by Attachment Q (Standard Conditions of Approval) have been properly installed. No grading or construction shall commence until TRPA pre-grade conditions of approval are met.

5. An EIP project sign shall be designed, fabricated, and installed prior to the start of construction. Work with the TRPA graphic designer on sign design.

6. The stream restoration component of the project shall be designed in coordination with the USDA Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.

7. Only the trees on the TRPA stamped plans are authorized for removal. Any additional trees greater than 14 inches in diameter at breast height will require TRPA approval prior to removal.

8. Drop inlets and storm water conveyance and treatment facilities located downslope of excavated material shall be protected by temporary erosion control fences or fiber rolls or logs (minimum 12” diameter), or approved equivalent.

9. All new galvanized or reflective metal surfaces including but not limited to guardrails, guardrail posts, traffic signal posts, light posts, utility boxes, signposts, backs of signs, markers, and exposed culverts shall be colored through use of Natina, federal brown, or an approved equivalent. Samples of colored structures shall be submitted to TRPA and approved prior to installation.

10. This approval is based on the permittee’s representation that all plans and information contained in the subject application are true and correct. Should any information or representation submitted in connection with the project application be incorrect or untrue, TRPA may rescind this approval, or take other appropriate action.

11. Any modifications to the TRPA approved plans shall be submitted to TRPA for review and approval.

12. This site shall be winterized in accordance with the provisions of Attachment Q by October 15th of each construction season.

13. Vegetation shall not be disturbed, injured, or removed except in accordance with the TRPA Code or the conditions of project approval. All trees, major roots, and other vegetation not specifically designated or approved for removal shall be protected according to methods approved by TRPA. All vegetation outside the construction site/project area boundary shall not be disturbed.

14. All waste resulting from the saw-cutting of pavement shall be removed using a vacuum (or other TRPA approved method) during the cutting process or immediately thereafter. Discharge of waste material to surface drainage features is prohibited and constitutes a violation of this permit.

15. Dust control measures shall include sprinkling with water as needed to keep the surface moistened but not saturated and sweeping of paved surfaces.

16. All rock material (gravel, cobble, and boulders) shall be clean and thoroughly washed prior to arrival at the site to ensure that the rock is free of any silt or clay particles.

17. All spoil piles shall be protected during construction by properly installing either filter fabric fencing or fiber rolls around the perimeter of the piles with a plastic or other impervious covering.

18. All excavated materials that are not to be reused on site shall be hauled to a TRPA-approved disposal site or out of the Tahoe Region.

19. All vegetated areas disturbed by construction shall be re-vegetated in accordance with the TRPA Handbook of Best Management Practices.

20. This approval is based on the permittee's representation that all plans and information contained in the subject application are true and correct. Should any information or representation submitted in connection with the project application be incorrect or untrue, TRPA may rescind this approval, or take other appropriate action.

21. All permanent BMPs shall be maintained and functional. This includes visually inspecting BMPs at least biannually and after major storm events.

22. To the maximum extent allowable by law, the Permittee agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless TRPA, its Governing Board, its Planning Commission, its agents, and its employees (collectively, TRPA_ from and against any and all suits, losses, damages, injuries, liabilities, and claims by any person (a) for any injury (including death) or damage to person or property or (b) to set aside, attack, void, modify, amend, or annual any actions of TRPA. The foregoing indemnity obligations applies, without limitation, to any and suites, losses, damages, injuries, liabilities, and claims by any person from any cause whatsoever arising out of or in connection with either directly or indirectly, and in whole or in part (1) the processing, conditioning, issuance, or implementation of this permit; (2) any failure to comply with all applicable laws and regulations; or (3) the design, installation, or operation of any improvements, regardless of whether the actions or omissions are alleged to be caused by TRPA or Permittee.

Included within the Permittee's indemnity obligation set forth herein, the Permittee agrees to pay all fees of TRPA's attorneys and all other costs and expenses of defenses as they are incurred, including reimbursement of TRPA as necessary for any and all costs and or fees incurred by TRPA for actions arising directly or indirectly from issuance or implementation of this permit. Permittee shall also pay all costs, including attorneys' fees, incurred by TRPA to enforce this indemnification agreement. If any judgment is rendered against TRPA in any action subject to this indemnification, the Permittee shall, at its expense, satisfy and discharge the same.

END OF PERMIT

Attachment C

Project Vicinity Map

VICINITY MAP
MEEKS BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT (IIJA)

ED-89-24.4/25.3 EA 03-4J090

Attachment D

Bridge Rendering

CONSENT CALENDAR ITEM NO. 6.H