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Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
35 College Drive
South Lake Tahoe, California 96150
Phone: (530) 543-2600
www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu/



Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
128 Market Street
P.O. Box 5310
Stateline, Nevada 89449-5310
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California Regional Water Quality Control Board – Lahontan Region
2501 Lake Tahoe Boulevard
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NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT EIS/EIS/EIR FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

The USDA Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU), Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), and Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Lahontan RWQCB) have released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/EIS/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project listed below:

PROPOSED PROJECT: **Meeks Bay Restoration Project**
(State Clearinghouse No. 2018092031)

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD: June 10 to August 9, 2022

PROJECT LOCATION: The project is located on the west shore of Lake Tahoe in El Dorado County, California. The project area is approximately 74 acres that encompass recreation sites including Meeks Bay Marina, Meeks Bay Resort, and Meeks Bay Campground. State Route (SR) 89 provides access to the project area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project encompasses the Lake Tahoe shoreline and upland areas surrounding Meeks Creek, which historically included a stream channel, wetland, lagoon, and barrier beach. Historical development along Meeks Bay, including the construction of the Meeks Bay Marina displaced wetland and lagoon habitat, modified the remaining stream channel, created conditions conducive to aquatic invasive species (AIS), and accelerated pollutant delivery into Lake Tahoe.

Management actions are necessary to protect resources and move the project area toward desired conditions while continuing to support sustainable recreation opportunities. LTBMU developed the proposed project to restore and enhance ecological conditions and provide for sustainable recreation. Project alternatives were created through a collaborative interagency and stakeholder process. The project involves removal of Meeks Bay Marina; restoration of Meeks Creek and associated wetland/lagoon habitat; continued management of AIS; replacement of the SR 89 bridge; reconfiguration or construction of pedestrian and vehicle circulation, trail bridges, parking areas, cabins, and campgrounds; installation of utility infrastructure and best management practices, shoreline stabilization, habitat enhancement, and resource protection features; and other associated improvements. It also involves the potential for new recreation facilities, such as a pier or paddlecraft launch that varies by action alternative, to offset the loss of motorized boating access with the removal of the marina. Resource Protection Measures and mitigation measures are incorporated into all action alternatives to minimize potential environmental impacts from construction and operation of the project.

Four action alternatives and the no action alternative are evaluated in this Draft EIS/EIS/EIR. Each action alternative achieves the purpose and need and objectives of the project while including different approaches to achieve objectives related to sustainable recreation. Alternative 4 has been identified by LTBMU, TRPA, and Lahontan RWQCB as the preferred alternative proposed for adoption. Alternative 4 constitutes the proposed action for purposes of NEPA and the proposed project for the purposes of CEQA.

The following agencies may issue permits or other approval actions that may be required before implementation of individual elements of the project:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- California Department of Transportation
- California State Lands Commission
- Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 6)
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The Draft EIS/EIS/EIR identified significant or potentially significant effects of one or more of the four action alternatives evaluated with respect to recreation, scenic resources, cultural and tribal cultural resources, noise, and air quality. Many significant effects would be mitigable to less-than-significant levels. However, even with the application of RPMs and feasible mitigation measures, implementation of one or more of the alternatives would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to recreation and scenic resources.

PUBLIC MEETINGS: Three public meetings will be held during the public review period to receive comments on the Draft EIS/EIS/EIR. Attendance at the public meetings will be available via online webinar at the following dates and times. Instructions on attending these webinars are available at: www.meeksbayproject.org.

- Stakeholder Forum Meeting: 1:00 p.m. on June 14, 2022
- TRPA Governing Board Meeting: on June 22, 2022
- Virtual Public Workshop: 5:30 p.m. on June 27, 2022

The TRPA Governing Board meeting time will be finalized and posted online no later than June 15, 2022. Please refer to the meeting agenda at the following link up to 1 week prior to the meeting for the exact meeting time and updated information: <https://www.trpa.gov/meeting-materials/>. At each public meeting, a presentation about the project will be provided. The public and stakeholders are encouraged to submit questions to meeksbayproject@trpa.org at least 24 hours before the meeting that would be addressed or incorporated into the presentation during the meeting. Public comments will be recorded at each meeting, but commenters are encouraged to submit comments in writing at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/lbmu/meeksrestoration/comment>.

WHERE DRAFT EIS/EIS/EIR MAY BE REVIEWED: The Draft EIS/EIS/EIR is available for review by the public during normal business hours that could be limited by site-specific COVID protocols at the following locations:

- LTBMU Supervisor's Office (35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA)
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (128 Market Street, Stateline, NV)
- South Lake Tahoe Library (1000 Rufus Allen Boulevard, South Lake Tahoe, CA)

The Draft EIS/EIS/EIR is also available online at:

- www.Meeksbayproject.org
- <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/lbmu/meeksrestoration>
- <https://www.trpa.gov/major-projects/#meeks>
- <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lafront/>

HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS:

Several comment submission methods are listed below, with electronic comment submission via the USFS website listed below as the preferred method for submitting comments.

Electronic Comment Submission (preferred method):

To submit a comment electronically, please go to the Forest Project webpage:
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/lbmu/meeksrestoration/comment>

Entering comments into the comment box provided in the comment form is the most efficient method for providing comments on this Draft EIS/EIS/EIR. If attachments are provided, this creates an extra step in which USFS staff must manually process those attachments and copy the content into the comment form.

By mail to:

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
Attention: Rebecca Cremeen
PO Box 5310
Stateline, NV 89449

By hand delivery to:

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
Attention: Rebecca Cremeen
128 Market Street
Stateline, NV 89449

All comments received by LTBMU, TRPA, and Lahontan RWQCB during the 60-day public comment period will be shared with each lead agency and responded to in the Final EIS/EIS/EIR. Pursuant to 36 CFR 218.25, comments on the Meeks Bay Restoration Project EIS/EIS/EIR will be accepted for 60 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the Notice of Availability of this document in the Federal Register.

The Notice of Availability for the Meeks Bay Restoration Project Draft EIS/EIS/EIR is scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on June 10, 2022. If the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday, or federal holiday, comments will be accepted until the end of the next federal working day. The publication date of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. You should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Only individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) who submit timely and specific written comments about this proposed project during this or another public comment period established by the Responsible Official will be eligible to file an objection. Comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider (36 CFR 218.2). Other eligibility requirements are defined by 36 CFR 218.25(a)(3) and include name, postal address, title of the project and signature or other verification of identity upon request and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments in order to have eligibility to object as an individual. A timely submission will be determined as outlined in 36 CFR 218.25(a)(4). It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted.

Information received in response to this solicitation, including names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, the agency will not be able to provide subsequent documents to people who submit comments anonymously, and they will not have standing to file an objection. It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted.

For more information on the project, please contact:

- Ashley Sibr, Acting Environmental Coordinator, USDA Forest Service LTBMU, at ashley.sibr@usda.gov;
- Rebecca Cremeen, Associate Planner, TRPA, at 775-589-5214 or rcremeen@trpa.gov; or
- Brian Judge, Engineering Geologist, Lahontan RWQCB, at brian.judge@waterboards.ca.gov.