

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

A BLUEPRINT FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE



The Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) is an unparalleled partnership working to achieve the environmental goals of the region. Local, state, and federal government agencies, private entities, scientists, and the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California have collaborated for more than 20 years to restore the environmental health of Lake Tahoe.



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ENVIRONMENTAL  
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JUNE 2020



# EIP

*Lake Tahoe*

## A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California demonstrated a deep respect for Lake Tahoe's fragile environment for thousands of years. America's second deepest lake has evolved over time to become a precious shared resource and is hitting a significant milestone in its proud history. Fifty years ago, California and Nevada established the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) with the consent of Congress. TRPA is the nation's first environmental organization with land use authority crossing state lines and continues to be unique in the United States. The bi-state compact charges TRPA with establishing a regional plan for the Tahoe Basin with the mandate to achieve environmental standards, called thresholds. The USDA Forest Service, which manages nearly 80 percent of the land in the Tahoe Basin, currently co-leads the Tahoe Interagency Executive Steering Committee, which governs the EIP, in partnership with the states of California and Nevada, local governments, the private sector, the Washoe Tribe, and the Tahoe Science Advisory Council.

LAKE TAHOE IS ONE OF THE CLEAREST, LARGEST LAKES IN THE WORLD AND IS DESIGNATED AN OUTSTANDING NATIONAL RESOURCE WATER UNDER THE FEDERAL CLEAN WATER ACT. AT THE CLOSE OF THE 20TH CENTURY, LAKE TAHOE'S SPECTACULAR ENVIRONMENT WAS STRUGGLING. THE LAKE'S FAMOUS CLARITY AND FRAGILE ECOSYSTEMS WERE SEVERELY DEGRADED BY URBANIZATION. COMPLICATED JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES AND NUMEROUS LAND MANAGERS THROUGHOUT THE REGION ADDED AN EXTRA CHALLENGE TO RESTORATION GOALS.

THE PARTNERSHIP CAME TOGETHER IN 1997 TO LAUNCH THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (EIP) TO IMPLEMENT HUNDREDS OF PROJECTS TO IMPROVE LAKE TAHOE'S WATER QUALITY, MAKE FORESTS HEALTHIER, CLEAN THE AIR, AND ENHANCE ALL ASPECTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

## EPIC COLLABORATION

The Lake Tahoe Regional Plan relies on what basin partners call epic collaboration. This network of partners works together to establish priorities, leverage funding, and find solutions to Lake Tahoe's biggest environmental threats. Together, the partnership is implementing projects that not only improve the environment but also enhance recreation opportunities and revitalize communities. The EIP has put Lake Tahoe on the map as a global model for collaborative landscape-scale restoration.

## THE REGIONAL PLAN AND THRESHOLD ATTAINMENT

The goal of the EIP is to accelerate the attainment of Lake Tahoe's environmental threshold standards through implementation of the Regional Plan. Environmental threshold standards set

long-term environmental goals for the Region. Many of the thresholds will take generations to achieve and will require a lasting commitment to environmental improvement over time. The Regional Plan outlines actions to attain these thresholds that restore Lake Tahoe while balancing economic and community vitality.



For more information visit: [thresholds.laketahoeinfo.org](https://thresholds.laketahoeinfo.org)

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### WATERSHEDS AND WATER QUALITY

#### GOALS

1. Maintain and improve lake clarity and water quality.
2. Restore ecosystem health and resilience.
3. Improve and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

#### ACTION PRIORITIES

##### Stormwater Management Program

- Reduce Stormwater Pollution from: Roads and Highways, Forest Roads, Public and Private Parcels

##### Watershed Restoration Program

- Acquire Environmentally Sensitive Lands for Restoration and Protection
- Restore Priority Meadows, Wetlands, and Lake Tahoe Tributaries
- Prevent, Control, or Eradicate Terrestrial Invasive Species

##### Aquatic Invasive Species Program

- Prevent, Control, or Eradicate Aquatic Invasive Species

### SUSTAINABLE RECREATION AND TRANSPORTATION

#### GOALS

1. Maintain and improve air quality.
2. Improve outdoor experiences for visitors and residents while protecting natural resources.
3. Increase the use of alternative modes of transportation and decrease reliance on the private automobile.

#### ACTION PRIORITIES

- Improve Public Access
- Build and Enhance Trail Networks
- Build and Enhance Transit Systems
- Improve Public Recreation Facilities

### FOREST HEALTH

#### GOALS

1. Protect communities from damaging wildfire.
2. Restore ecosystem health and resilience.
3. Improve and enhance wildlife habitat.

#### ACTION PRIORITIES

##### Community Wildfire and Protection Program

- Implement Defensible Space on Public and Private Parcels and Utility Corridors
- Upgrade Priority Water Infrastructure to Fight Catastrophic Wildfire

##### Forest Restoration Program

- Reduce Hazardous Fuels
- Restore Native Forest Communities
- Implement Prescribed Fire
- Restore and Protect Native Wildlife

### SCIENCE, STEWARDSHIP, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

#### GOALS

1. Implement leading-edge science to continuously improve projects and promote adaptive management.
2. Protect EIP investments and benefits.
3. Maintain transparency and accountability.
4. Cultivate environmental stewardship.

#### ACTION PRIORITIES

- Conduct Applied Scientific Research
- Implement Programmatic Monitoring and Reporting
- Engage Communities in Environmental Stewardship
- Utilize Innovative Technology
- Operate and Maintain Capital Projects