

## 3.11 RECREATION

### 3.11.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the recreation uses and existing facilities in the Lake Tahoe Region, as well as the regulatory and planning processes that address recreation in the Region. Potential impacts of the proposed alternatives are analyzed, and mitigation measures are provided for those impacts determined to be significant. Cumulative recreation impacts are addressed in Chapter 4, Cumulative Impacts.

None of the comment letters received on the Notice of Preparation included comments pertaining to recreation within the Region.

### 3.11.2 REGULATORY BACKGROUND

The following provides an overview of the public agencies involved with recreation opportunities and activities within the Tahoe Region. Laws, regulations, ordinances, and guidelines are also addressed that are applicable to the RTP/SCS alternatives.

#### TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

In 1987, TRPA adopted the first Regional Plan for the Lake Tahoe Region to address growth and development and provide a policy guide for decision making. Several components of the Regional Plan address policies and regulations pertaining to recreation: Environmental Threshold Carrying Capacities; Goals and Policies; and Code of Ordinances.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL THRESHOLD CARRYING CAPACITIES

TRPA has established two recreation threshold standard indicators for recreation, which represent minimum standards of environmental quality targets to be achieved in the Region. The two recreation threshold standard indicators are as follows:

- ▲ **Quality Experience and Additional Access.** It shall be the policy of the TRPA Governing Body in development of the Regional Plan to preserve and enhance the high-quality recreational experience including preservation of high-quality undeveloped shorezone and other natural areas. In developing the Regional Plan, the staff and Governing Body shall consider provisions for additional access, where lawful and feasible, to the shorezone and high-quality undeveloped areas for low density recreational uses.
- ▲ **Fair Share of Resource Capacity.** It shall be the policy of the TRPA Governing Body in development of the Regional Plan to establish and ensure a fair share of the total Basin capacity for outdoor recreation is available to the general public.

Based on the most recent Threshold Evaluation Report completed in 2012, both recreation threshold standard indicators are in attainment (TRPA 2012).

The **Quality Experience and Additional Access** Threshold Standard consists of two parts: (1) preservation and enhancement of a high-quality recreational experience and opportunities and (2) the provision of additional access to high-quality lands for recreation, including Lake access. The attainment of this threshold standard is evaluated by considering the quality of the experience of recreation users and by considering the availability of public access to the Lake and other natural features. The quality of recreation experiences is evaluated through

recreation user surveys conducted by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) following National Visitor Use Monitoring protocols. Such surveys assess the overall satisfaction of recreation users and compare the importance of identified recreation attributes, such as condition of recreation facilities, with the experience that the recreationists perceive. The evaluation criteria for the second part of the threshold standard relies on assessing the extent of public land acquired, and the availability of additional amenities that provide public access for low density recreational uses, such as trails and trailheads.

The Fair Share of Resource Capacity Threshold Standard is intended to ensure a fair share of the Region's total capacity for outdoor recreation is available to the general public. The attainment of this threshold standard is based on three indicators: (1) cumulative accounts of persons at one time (PAOT) allocations; (2) facility development for recreation projects that do not require PAOT assignments; and (3) land acquisition of new public lands that support recreation purposes.

## REGIONAL PLAN

### Goals and Policies

The Regional Plan contains the specific goals and policies to achieve and maintain environmental threshold standards. These are addressed in three broad categories: dispersed recreation, developed recreation, and urban recreation. Dispersed recreation includes such activities as hiking, jogging, primitive camping, mountain biking, nature study, fishing, cross country skiing, rafting/kayaking, and swimming. All these activities require a quality resource base and some degree of solitude. Developed recreation includes marina and boat launch facilities, ski areas, campgrounds, and beaches. Urban recreation includes facilities located near urban areas, such as sports facilities, day-use areas, and recreation centers. Goals and policies for all types of recreation generally pertain to providing opportunities and sufficient capacity for high-quality recreation opportunities in a manner consistent with resource protection and overall Regional capacity. The Recreation Element of the Regional Plan Update will not be substantially changed from the 1987 Regional Plan. Goals and policies most relevant to recreation include the following:

#### *Dispersed Recreation*

- ▲ **Goal 1:** Encourage opportunities for dispersed recreation when consistent with environmental values and protection of the natural resources.
  - // **Policy 1:** Low density recreational experiences shall be provided along undeveloped shorelines and other natural areas, consistent with the tolerance capabilities and character of such areas.
  - // **Policy 3:** Trail systems for hiking and horseback riding shall be expanded to accommodate projected demands and provide a link with major regional or interstate trails.
  - // **Policy 4:** Existing trails that are either underutilized or located in environmentally sensitive areas shall be relocated to enhance their use and to protect natural resources.
  - // **Policy 5:** Off-road vehicle use is prohibited in the Lake Tahoe Basin except on specified roads, trails, or designated areas where the impacts can be mitigated.
- ▲ **Goal 2:** Provide high-quality recreational opportunities.
  - // **Policy 1:** Wilderness and other undeveloped and roadless areas shall be managed for low-density use.
  - // **Policy 2:** Separate use areas shall be established for the dispersed winter activities of snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing when conflicts of use exist.
  - // **Policy 3:** Nearshore/foreshore structures should be appropriately located to minimize impacts to recreational boating and top line fishing.

### ***Developed Recreation***

- ▲ **Goal 1:** Provide a fair share of the total Basin capacity for outdoor recreation.
  - // **Policy 1:** All existing reservations of services for outdoor recreation shall continue to be committed for such purposes.
  - // **Policy 2:** When reviewing projects that commit significant resources or services to non-outdoor recreational uses, TRPA shall be required to make written findings that sufficient resource capacity remains to obtain the recreation.
  - // **Policy 3:** Provisions shall be made for additional developed outdoor recreation facilities capable of accommodating 6,114 PAOTs in overnight facilities and 6,761 PAOTs in summer day-use facilities and 12,400 PAOTs in winter day-use facilities.
  
- ▲ **Goal 2:** Provide for the appropriate type, location, and rate of development of outdoor recreational uses.
  - // **Policy 2:** Bike trails shall be expanded to provide alternatives for travel in conjunction with transportation systems.
  - // **Policy 7:** Development of day-use facilities shall be encouraged in or near established urban areas, whenever practical.
  - // **Policy 8:** Visitor information facilities shall be located, to the extent feasible, near entry points to the Basin or close to urban areas.
  - // **Policy 9:** Parking along scenic corridors shall be restricted to protect roadway views and roadside vegetation.
  - // **Policy 10:** Transit operations, including shuttle-type boat service, should serve major recreation facilities and attractions.
  
- ▲ **Goal 3:** Protect natural resources from overuse and rectify incompatibility between uses.
  - // **Policy 2:** Regulate intensity, timing, and location of use to protect resources and separate incompatible uses.
  
- ▲ **Goal 4:** Provide for the efficient use of outdoor recreation resources.
  - // **Policy 1:** Promote the use of underutilized recreation areas through programs that improve the public awareness of recreation opportunities and through an expanded water and inland transit system.

### ***Urban Recreation***

- ▲ **Goal 1:** Provide sufficient capacity for local-oriented forms of outdoor and indoor recreation in urban areas
  - // **Policy 1:** Reserve sufficient public service and facility capacity to accommodate all forms of urban recreation.

### **People at One Time**

The Regional Plan uses the concept of people at one time (PAOT) as a measure of recreation capacity. PAOT describes the number of people that a recreation use area can accommodate at a given time. Allocations of PAOTs are used to both promote and control recreation facility development. Although certain recreation facilities have a design capacity for a given number of people at a time (e.g., developed campgrounds), PAOTs are not a management tool and do not indicate the overall use of a site. PAOTs are intended to ensure that a “fair share” of the Region’s remaining resource capacity (e.g., water and sewer services) is available for outdoor recreation areas and is allocated to projects that would result in an increase in the carrying capacity of recreation sites. If a recreation project would result in additional vehicle trips at a rate that would trigger a traffic analysis, PAOTs would be needed in an amount commensurate with the intensity of new development.

Three categories of PAOTs are utilized under this system:

- ▲ Winter day-use PAOTs are necessary for winter recreation facilities such as ski areas or snowmobile courses.
- ▲ Summer day-use PAOTs are necessary for summer day-use recreation facilities such as beaches or trailhead parking.
- ▲ Summer overnight PAOTs are necessary for a new campground or existing campground expansion.

Dispersed recreation does not require the allocation of PAOTs unless the dispersed activity is associated with a facility that requires them (e.g., a kayak rental concession at a developed beach).

### **Code of Ordinances**

The TRPA Code consists of ordinances needed to implement the Goals and Policies. Chapter 50, Allocation of Development, of the TRPA Code includes a section on the regulation of additional recreational facilities (Section 50.8). TRPA regulates the rate and distribution of expanding recreational uses in the Tahoe Region through the allocation of PAOTs. TRPA has identified targets for outdoor recreation, which are 6,114 PAOT in overnight facilities, 6,761 PAOT in summer day-use facilities, and 12,400 PAOT in winter day-use facilities, as well as the allocations set forth in the plan area statements (PAS), or the pools of reserved PAOT capacity. Development campgrounds and RV parks are classified as overnight-use facilities.

### **Plan Area Statements and Community Plan**

Chapters 11 and 12 of the Code, Plan Area Statements (PAS) and Plan Area Maps and Community Plans, requires that each Plan Area and Community Plan specify the amount of additional recreational capacity subject to the PAOT system that is permissible in the PAS or Community Plan. Any additional capacity that is beyond that specified in the PAS or Community Plan can be drawn from the reserved pool of PAOTs.

## **TAHOE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

### **LAKE TAHOE BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN**

The Lake Tahoe Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (BPP) presents a guide for planning, constructing, and maintaining a regional bicycle and pedestrian network and support facilities and programs. The network includes on-street bicycle lanes and bicycle routes, and off-street paths and sidewalks. The BPP includes maps and prioritized project lists for the bicycle and pedestrian network, and lays out policies for local governing bodies and transportation agencies. In addition, the BPP identifies potential funding sources and specifies recommended designs to encourage consistency and safety within the Region.

## **FEDERAL**

### **U.S. FOREST SERVICE LAKE TAHOE BASIN MANAGEMENT UNIT**

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) National Forests are managed on a multiple-use, sustained yield basis for production of forage, wildlife, wood, fish, water, and outdoor recreation. Wilderness management and protection of forest areas containing historic, scenic, geologic, ecologic, or other special qualities, are inherent in Forest Service management policies. Within the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) the Forest Plan that was adopted in 1988 guides decisions on recreational issues. Unique to this Forest Plan is the emphasis on watershed, wildlife and fisheries restoration, and outdoor recreation with a de-emphasis on grazing and timber production. The mission statement for the LTBMU states that “The Forest Service mission at Lake Tahoe is to manage, protect, and enhance the environment of this national treasure for the benefit of the people.”

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ACT

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Act of 1966 states that a transportation program or project requiring the use of publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance can be approved only if there is no prudent and feasible alternative to using that land and if the program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from the use.

## NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT

The National Trails System (NTS) was created in 1968 by the National Trails System Act (NTSA), Public Law 90-543. The NTSA authorized a national system of trails to provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities and to promote the preservation of access to the outdoor areas and historic resources of the nation. The Act also established the Appalachian and Pacific Crest National Scenic Trails. The NTS includes four classes of trails: National Historic Scenic Trails, National Historic Trails, National Recreation Trails, and Connecting or Side Trails (Johnson 1998).

## STATE

### CALIFORNIA

#### California State Parks

The California Department of Parks and Recreation, or California State Parks (CSP), defines its mission as follows, "...to provide the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and providing opportunities for high-quality recreational experiences based on those resources." CSP manages the California State Park System, including Emerald Bay State Park, D.L. Bliss State Park, Sugar Pine Point State Park, Washoe Meadows State Park, and Lake Valley State Recreation Area in the Region.

#### California State Lands Commission

The California State Lands Commission (CSLC) is responsible for leasing sovereign lands on the California side of Lake Tahoe. The area lying between the high and low marks of non-tidal navigable waters is subject to a public trust easement for commerce, navigation, fishing, recreation, and preservation. The high and low water marks for the California side of the Lake have been established as elevations 6,228.75 feet and 6,223 feet Lake Tahoe datum, respectively. Any activities involving the state's sovereign lands in Lake Tahoe below 6,223 feet require a lease from CSLC. The CSLC is involved with the protection of California's rare and endangered wildlife and plant species as described in Section 3.10 of this document, and for ensuring compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

#### California Tahoe Conservancy

The California Tahoe Conservancy (CTC) was created in 1984 to restore and sustain a balance between the natural and human environments for public and private uses at Lake Tahoe. CTC provides grants to local governments and non-profit organizations for erosion control, public recreation and access, land acquisition, and other projects, and implements a mandate that, among other things, seeks to increase public access to the Region's natural recreational opportunities. In the past 20 years, the CTC has acquired and developed many Lake access parcels, including highly visible park developments in Kings Beach and Carnelian Bay. Acquisitions in Tahoe Vista resulted in removal of dilapidated structures and site restoration for more passive Lake access. The CTC also owns shoreline property operated for other recreational purposes by the North Tahoe Public Utility District, and numerous other properties available for dispersed and developed recreational uses.

## California Recreational Trails Act of 1974

The California Recreational Trails Act includes two major components — the reauthorization of the California Recreational Trails Committee and the requirement to develop a California Recreational Trails System Plan.

The California Recreational Trails Act (Public Resources Code Section 5070.5) declares:

- ▲ Increase accessibility and enhance the use, enjoyment, and understanding of California’s scenic, natural, historic, and cultural resources.
- ▲ Encourage hiking, horseback riding, and bicycling as important contributions to the health and welfare of the state’s population.
- ▲ Provide for the use of recreational trails by physically disabled persons, the elderly, and others in need of graduated trails.
- ▲ Increase opportunities for recreational boating and use of recreational vehicles.
- ▲ Encourage the development by cities, counties, districts, and private groups of recreational and interpretive trails, including heritage corridors.

## NEVADA

### Nevada Division of State Parks

The Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP) manages the Lake Tahoe-Nevada State Park (LTNSP). The *Lake Tahoe-Nevada State Park Master Development Plan with Resource Analysis* (LTNSP Plan) describes the basic principles for the use, preservation, and operation of LTNSP (Nevada Division of State Parks 1990). The goal of the plan is to provide a long-range management and development strategy based on current visitation, needs and conditions, as well as projections for future use and needs. The plan describes user conflicts and visitor impacts for Sand Harbor Management Area, Cave Rock Management Area, Spooner Lake Management Area, Marlette/Hobart Backcountry Management Area, and the Highway 28 Management Area. NDSP is preparing an update to the 1990 plan, which will provide future guidance regarding development and management of the park.

### Nevada Division of State Lands

The Nevada Division of State Lands (NDSL) requires applications for structures lakeward of high water, 6,229.1 feet elevation, although the state claims ownership of Lake Tahoe lakeward of 6,223 feet elevation, Lake Tahoe datum (NRS 321.595). NDSL requests comments from the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) regarding impacts to recreational access and fish habitat resulting from Shorezone leases. NDSL also maintains the public trust on the Nevada side for submerged land below an elevation of 6,223 feet Lake Tahoe datum.

### Nevada Department of Wildlife

The NDOW is responsible for managing the fisheries, wildlife, and habitat resources on the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe. In addition, NDOW is also responsible for boating and safety on navigable waters in the state. NDOW protects boaters from navigational obstacles and protects the recreational angler’s boating access along the shoreline of Lake Tahoe. NDOW is a reviewing and commenting agency but has no regulatory authority related to permits for construction in hazards to navigation within the waters of Lake Tahoe.

## LOCAL

The City of South Lake Tahoe, Douglas County, Washoe County, El Dorado County, Tahoe City Public Utility District, North Tahoe Public Utility District, and the Incline Village General Improvement District administer park and recreation departments. These local jurisdictions manage several beaches, community parks, bike paths, trails, lakeside parks, and boat launch facilities.

### 3.11.3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Outdoor recreation opportunities in the Lake Tahoe Region are abundant because of the scenic setting, presence of the Lake, diverse terrain, extensive public lands, and accessibility of natural areas. Activities are generally associated with the Lake's open water (e.g., swimming, boating, personal watercraft use, and fishing), the shoreline (e.g., sunbathing, camping, bicycling, and sightseeing), and the mountains surrounding the Lake (e.g., hiking, mountain biking, backpacking, snowboarding, and skiing). Tourism is a key component of the Region's economy and a high-quality recreation experience is key to maintaining tourism. Recreation visitors originate mostly from the metropolitan areas closest to the Region, including Reno/Carson City, Sacramento, and the San Francisco Bay Area, but also travel to the Basin from many other states and countries.

Recreational activities are heavily influenced by the seasons and local weather. The recreational challenge in the Region is the delicate balance between public access to recreation and environmental preservation. Recreational activities can have an impact on water, air, soils, wildlife, transportation, and the scenic quality of the Region. As population increases, there is an increased demand for access to Lake Tahoe shores and other public lands for recreational activities. There is also increased demand for urban recreational facilities, such as swimming pools and sports fields.

There are three general types of recreation within the Region: dispersed, developed, and urban recreation. Dispersed recreation activities typically do not require the use of facilities other than access points and include hiking, jogging, primitive camping, fishing, backcountry and cross country skiing, rafting/kayaking, mountain biking and swimming. Developed recreation involves recreation activities enhanced by the use of built facilities, such as campgrounds, marinas, and ski resorts. Developed recreation sites are located and operated on both public and private lands. Urban recreation includes indoor and outdoor recreation facilities such as athletic fields, ice skating rinks, swimming pools, and neighborhood parks and are primarily designed for use by the residents of the Region.

#### LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 85 percent of land in the Region is publicly owned and managed by the USFS and other state agencies (Exhibit 3.11-1).

#### U.S. FOREST SERVICE LAKE TAHOE BASIN MANAGEMENT UNIT

Over 75 percent of the Tahoe Region is public land managed by USFS. This land includes beaches, hiking and biking trails, Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) trails, Wilderness, historic estates, and developed recreation areas such as campgrounds and riding stables. The LTBMU is managed to provide access for the public and to protect the natural resources of the area.

#### CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

There are nine CSP properties located within the Region that provide an assortment of dispersed and developed recreation opportunities (Exhibit 3.11-1).

- ▲ Burton Creek State Park
- ▲ D.L. Bliss State Park
- ▲ Ed Z'berg Sugar Pine Point State Park
- ▲ Emerald Bay State Park
- ▲ Kings Beach State Recreation Area
- ▲ Lake Valley State Recreation Area
- ▲ Tahoe State Recreation Area
- ▲ Ward Creek Park Property
- ▲ Washoe Meadows State Park

## **CALIFORNIA TAHOE CONSERVANCY**

The California portion of Van Sickle Bi-State Park is owned and managed by the California Tahoe Conservancy. A memorandum of understanding guides the joint management of the bi-state park with NDSP. CSP also assists with the provision of a volunteer park host through the California host program.

## **NEVADA STATE PARKS**

Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park (see Exhibit 3.11-1) is a major outdoor recreation resource consisting of five management areas (Sand Harbor, Cave Rock, Spooner Lake, Marlette-Hobart Backcountry, and Van Sickle Bi-State Park) that offer a variety of outdoor recreational activities for visitors to enjoy, including sandy beaches, multi-use trails, cross-country skiing, boat launch ramps, restrooms, and picnic and group use areas. Dispersed recreation opportunities are also available in the backcountry east of Lake Tahoe.

## **EXISTING OUTDOOR RECREATION USES**

User demand and attendance information is incomplete on recreational uses at all recreation sites and for all types of recreation. However, the following surveys, studies, and monitoring programs provide information for existing recreational uses at locations throughout the Region.

## **LAKE TAHOE NEVADA STATE PARK, SAND HARBOR RECREATIONAL CAPACITY STUDY**

The Sand Harbor Recreational Capacity Study (NDSP 2011) was conducted between April 2010 and July 2011, with data collected on site throughout the 2010 summer season. The study area covers all lands and recreation facilities within the Sand Harbor Management Area of Lake Tahoe-Nevada State Park (LTNSP), which includes the Sand Harbor, Memorial Point, and Hidden Beach. Sand Harbor is the most heavily used portion of LTNSP, receiving 700,000 to 900,000 recreation visits annually. The main purpose of the study was to determine the level of recreation activity that can be sustained at Sand Harbor during the peak summer season, when the greatest pressures on park facilities and resources occur. This determination was based on existing data as well as on-site visitor surveys conducted for the study, and an on-site assessment of facility and resource conditions and impacts from recreational use. The study also assessed visitor use levels to supplement vehicle count data collected at entrance stations and parking areas at Sand Harbor.

Overall, the study documents that peak season recreation use in the Sand Harbor area is exceeding the recreational capacity of the area. During the summer recreation season, physical/spatial and facility capacity are the primary constraints on recreational capacity. Ecological capacity is also a concern for the Main Beach and Diver's Cove use areas. Given the popularity of those two use areas and the large percentage of visitor use they receive; ecological capacity can also be considered a constraint in the Sand Harbor area at this time. Social capacity is of most concern at Diver's Cove at this time and may become a factor for the Sand Harbor area as a whole in the future; however, social capacity is not found to be a constraint overall. If management capability is also considered, the conclusion that the Sand Harbor area is exceeding its recreational capacity is reinforced. On a use area basis, overall, peak season recreational use is considered to be exceeding its capacity at the Main Beach, Diver's Cove and Boat Ramp use areas and approaching capacity at the Family Picnic Area. Overall, peak season recreational use at Memorial Point is considered to be at capacity (NDSP 2011).

## **NATIONAL VISITOR USE MONITORING PROGRAM**

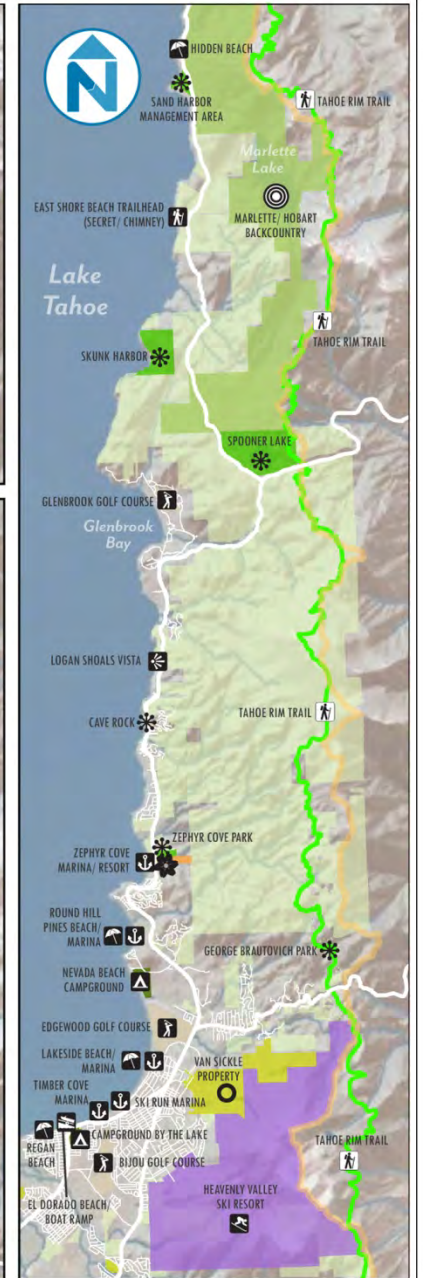
Through the National Visitor Use Monitoring Program, the USFS conducts visitor use surveys every 5 years to estimate the quality of recreational experiences at a variety of developed and undeveloped recreation sites on National Forest lands in the Region. These USFS visitor use data do not represent all recreation sites (especially urban sites), but they cover more than 75 percent of the land area with a variety of recreation sites and provide





### Recreation and Natural Resource Areas

- State Park; State Recreation Area
- County/Regional Park
- Campground
- Picnic Area
- Multi-day Use Area
- Day Use Area
- Undeveloped Park Land
- Backcountry Area
- Tahoe Rim Trail
- Trailhead
- OHV Trailhead
- Golf
- Historic Site
- Marina
- Public Dock; Boat Ramp
- Resort
- RV Park
- Ski Resort
- Visitor Center
- Vista Point
  
- Protected Open Space Parcels (non private)
- TRPA Boundary



X11010040 01 011

Source: TMPO 2012

Exhibit 3.11-1.

Parks and Protected Natural Resource Areas



a useful indicator of overall recreational uses in the Region. The 2009—2010 survey estimated 5,786,000 visits to the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (USFS 2010). This is a decrease from the estimated 7,832,000 visits in 2004—2005 (USFS 2005).

Activity participation is an indicator of the types of recreation opportunities and settings in current demand by recreation users. Table 3.11-1 summarizes the percent participation in a specific activity. Survey respondents were also asked to select just one of their activities as their main reason for visiting. While the order of percent participation differed for fiscal years 2010 and 2005, the top five activities remained the same: relaxing, downhill skiing, viewing natural features, hiking/walking, viewing wildlife, and driving for pleasure (USFS 2005 and USFS 2010).

Activity	FY2010		FY2005	
	Participation* (% of Respondents)	Identified as Main Activity^ (% of Respondents)	Participation* (% of Respondents)	Identified as Main Activity^ (% of Respondents)
Relaxing	65.5	11.2	31.1	7.7
Downhill Skiing	62.5	55.9	50.3	49.3
Viewing Natural Features	56.3	5.6	40.8	10.3
Hiking/Walking	47	8.8	34.3	18.5
Viewing Wildlife	43.2	1.5	33.2	1.6
Driving for Pleasure	31.8	2.1	12.4	1.9
Visiting Historic Sites	15.1	.4	6.2	0
Other Non-motorized	14.9	2.8	5.7	1.8
Nature Center Activities	13.2	0	3.6	0.2
Bicycling	11	3.1	3.3	1.2
Resort Use	10.7	0.2	1.2	0
Cross-country Skiing	9.8	1.5	6.5	3.6
Nature Study	9.6	0.1	5.2	0
Picnicking	9.5	0.6	6.2	0.9
Non-motorized Water	6.9	1.7	1.5	0.3
Motorized Water Activities	6.8	0.9	5	1.9
Snowmobiling	6.2	1	0.4	0.4
Fishing	5.6	0.4	1.2	0.1
Some Other Activity	5.3	1.6	1.4	0.3
Developed Camping	5.2	0.4	1.7	0.4
Gathering Forest Products	4.7	0	0.3	0
Backpacking	4.4	0.2	0.3	0.1
Primitive Camping	2.4	0.1	0.1	0
Horseback Riding	2	0	0.2	0
OHV Use	1.7	0.4	0.8	0.3
Motorized Trail Activity	1.4	0	0.7	0.2
Other Motorized Activity	1.3	0	0.2	0
Hunting	0.1	0	0	0

## TRPA AND TCORP BIKE TRAIL SURVEY

In July 2007, the Tahoe Coalition of Recreation Providers (TCORP), in cooperation with the TRPA and other Basin agencies, carried out a Bicycle Trail User survey. All surveys were conducted on Thursday, July 5, 2007 between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Survey interviews and user counts were conducted at nine locations. Most of the survey locations were on established shared use paths, but three were in areas where future bicycle routes are planned, and thus took place near the highway or on sidewalks. Summarized, this data shows that on Thursday, July 5, 2007, there were 938 users during the average midday hour passing through the nine points where data were collected. The highest numbers of trail users were counted at Camp Richardson (224 in one hour) and Incline Beach (217 in one hour). Most trail users were either cyclists or pedestrians, with only a very small percentage using rollerblades or skateboards. Forty percent of the respondents indicated that they were visitors to the Tahoe Area, 34 percent reported they were seasonal residents, and 26 percent said that they were permanent residents (TCORP 2008).

### 3.11.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES

#### METHODS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The following analysis assesses the environmental effects of each RTP/SCS alternative with respect to the existing or currently proposed recreation uses and facilities in the Region. This analysis is based on review of existing documents, policies, ordinances, and other regulations pertinent to recreation (see Section 3.11.2, Regulatory Background).

#### SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Implementation of the RTP/SCS would result in a significant adverse effect on recreation if it would:

- ▲ have the potential to create significant conflicts between recreation uses, either existing or proposed,
- ▲ create substantial additional demand for recreation facilities,
- ▲ reduce availability of outdoor recreation capacity for the general public, or
- ▲ result in a decrease or loss of public access to any lake, waterway, or public lands.

#### IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

---

**Impact 3.11-1** **Compatibility with Existing Recreation Resources.** The proposed RTP/SCS would result in projects in the Region that could potentially conflict with existing recreation resources and areas. However, existing Recreation Element Goals and Policies address potential conflicts and incompatibility of recreational areas and facilities with surrounding land uses. In addition, implementation of the RTP/SCS would provide new recreation facilities (i.e., trails) and improved access to existing recreation facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers. This impact would be **less than significant** for all alternatives.

---

Projects included in the RTP/SCS would involve roadway realignments, right-of-way acquisition, sidewalks, bike lanes, lighting, new/improved stormwater facilities, new bicycle and pedestrian trails, landscaping, new or expanded parking facilities, new or expanded ferry piers and ferry maintenance buildings, and new or improved bridge and pile-supported structures. Bicycle and pedestrian projects would involve bicycle lanes, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, new parking facilities, new/improved stormwater facilities, passive recreation facilities,

benches, water fountains, vista points, restroom facilities, crossings on streets and roads, as well as paved, multi-use paths, and unpaved parallel trails. These types of facilities would be generally consistent in scale with their surroundings. Water quality projects would involve work on road shoulders, bioswale trenches, detention basins, wetlands, and other groundwork activities. None of these types of physical changes related to water quality projects would include the addition of new buildings or structures. Transit facilities and ITS strategies would primarily result in changes and improvements to transit schedules and routes, and would include transit shelters and potentially include aviation-related buildings. Operations and maintenance projects for existing facilities would include general roadway repair (resurfacing, repairing potholes and repainting lines) and emergency roadway repairs (mud slides and accidents). No additional buildings or structures would be added.

## **ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT**

Alternative 1 includes the group of projects listed under Transportation Strategy Package A. Transportation Strategy Package A includes operation and maintenance of the existing transportation system and the construction of projects on the financially constrained project list that are already substantially in progress. Transportation Strategy Package A includes the Lake Tahoe Waterborne Transit Project, City of South Lake Tahoe Aviation Capital Project, Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project, SR 89/Fanny Bridge Community Revitalization Project, various bicycle and pedestrian projects, TMDL projects, Transportation System Management and ITS strategies, and operations and maintenance projects for existing facilities. Transportation Strategy Package A has the fewest bicycle and pedestrian projects of the three Transportation Strategy Packages.

As described above, most of the proposed RTP projects would be consistent in scale with their surroundings. Bike and pedestrian and Complete Streets projects would provide additional facilities for recreation users. Transit-related operations and maintenance projects could enhance accessibility to recreation uses around the Lake by maintaining and improving transit services. Buildings associated with the Lake Tahoe Waterborne Transit Project and the City of South Lake Tahoe Aviation Capital Project would not conflict with existing recreation resources. Existing Regional Plan policies related to avoiding recreational land use conflicts would be implemented, and maintenance of existing threshold standard attainment would be evaluated when considering approval of future projects. Roadway realignment projects could affect existing parks and recreation areas, depending on the ultimate alignments chosen. For example, the SR 89/Fanny Bridge Community Revitalization Project could result in a roadway realignment through an area designated as recreation and could affect access and uses through the USFS 64-acre tract area. For projects implemented using federal funds, Section 4(f) of the DOT Act would diminish the risk of conflict by requiring implementation of feasible and prudent alternatives to any encroachment into public park and recreation areas. In addition, implementation of Alternative 1 would result in some new bicycle and pedestrian projects that could include passive recreation facilities. It would also result in improved pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicle access throughout the Region, including access to existing recreation facilities. Projects included in the RTP/SCS would be developed in collaboration with existing recreation providers and, in many cases, the projects themselves would be developed to support existing recreation facilities and avoid conflicts with those facilities. For example, the Stateline to Stateline Bikeway Project and the State Route 89/Fanny Bridge Community Revitalization Project would be planned to maintain access to adjacent recreation areas. Because project planning would be completed in coordination with recreation providers and TRPA threshold standard requirements, and potential conflicts with existing parks would be addressed in Section 4(f) analyses for federal projects, this impact would be **less than significant**.

## **ALTERNATIVE 2: LOW DEVELOPMENT, INCREASED REGULATION**

Alternative 2 includes the group of projects listed under Transportation Strategy Package B. Transportation Strategy Package B represents a scenario that assumes additional revenue in the future. It includes all the projects on the unconstrained list and almost all of the projects on the constrained list, except the Lake Tahoe

Waterborne Transit Project and the City of South Lake Tahoe Aviation Capital Project. Transportation Strategy Package B adds the Sierra Boulevard Complete Streets Project from US 50 to Barbara Avenue and US 50 South Shore Community Revitalization Project (Loop Road) to the other roadway projects in Strategy Package A. In addition, as with Alternative 1, Alternative 2 includes Transit Facilities and Strategies (including BlueGO and TART), Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project, and State Route 89/Fanny Bridge Community Revitalization Project, Transportation System Management and ITS strategies, and operations and maintenance projects for existing facilities. Alternative 2 also includes many additional bicycle and pedestrian projects and TMDL projects from the unconstrained project list. Transportation Strategy Package B has the greatest number bicycle and pedestrian trail projects of the three Transportation Strategy Packages.

As discussed above the SR 89/Fanny Bridge Community Revitalization Project could result in a roadway realignment through the adjacent 64-acre tract recreation area. In addition, under Transportation Strategy Package B, the US 50 South Shore Community Revitalization Project could result in changes to the current location of the entrance to Van Sickle Bi-State Park. As explained above, existing Regional Plan policies related to avoiding recreational land use conflicts would be implemented, and maintenance of existing threshold standard attainment would be evaluated when considering approval of future projects. Also, protection of public park and recreation areas would be provided by Section 4(f) of the DOT Act for projects receiving federal transportation funds. Therefore, rather than conflicting with or obstructing existing and currently proposed recreation uses, implementation of Alternative 2 would likely result in increased availability to recreation facilities by increasing access, especially access to alternative transportation modes. Furthermore, implementation of Alternative 2 would result in the construction and operation of more bicycle and pedestrian projects than Alternatives 1, 3, 4, or 5. Implementation of Alternative 2 would result in a **less-than-significant impact**.

### **ALTERNATIVE 3: LOW DEVELOPMENT, HIGHLY INCENTIVIZED REDEVELOPMENT**

Alternative 3 includes the group of projects listed under Transportation Strategy Package C. Transportation Strategy Package C represents the financially constrained projects list. Transportation Strategy Package C includes the Lake Tahoe Waterborne Transit Project, City of South Lake Tahoe Aviation Capital Project, Sierra Boulevard Complete Streets Project from US 50 to Barbara Avenue, US 50 South Shore Community Revitalization Project (Loop Road), Transit Facilities and Strategies (Including BlueGO and TART), Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project, State Route 89/Fanny Bridge Community Revitalization Project, various bicycle and pedestrian projects, TMDL projects, Transportation System Management and ITS strategies, and operations and maintenance projects for existing facilities. Transportation Strategy Package C has many more bicycle and pedestrian projects compared to Alternative 1, but fewer than Alternative 2.

Alternative 3 would include transportation projects that would provide improved pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicle access throughout the Region, including access to existing recreation facilities. Implementation of Transportation Strategy Package C would result in new bicycle and pedestrian projects that could include passive recreation facilities, but to a lesser extent than Alternative 2. Therefore, implementation of Alternative 3 would result in increased availability to recreation facilities by increasing access, especially access to alternative transportation modes. Also, protection of public park and recreation areas would be provided by Section 4(f) of the DOT Act for projects receiving federal transportation funds. Implementation of Alternative 3 would result in a **less-than-significant impact**.

### **ALTERNATIVE 4: REDUCED DEVELOPMENT, INCENTIVIZED REDEVELOPMENT**

Alternative 4 includes the same transportation improvements as Alternative 3; therefore, recreation impacts resulting from implementation of Alternative 4 would be the same as Alternative 3. For the reasons explained above, this would be a **less-than-significant impact**.

## ALTERNATIVE 5: SIMILAR RATE OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGULATORY STRUCTURE TO THE 1987 REGIONAL PLAN

Alternative 5 includes the same transportation improvements (projects in process) as Alternative 1; therefore, recreation impacts resulting from implementation of Alternative 5 would be the same as Alternative 1. For the reasons discussed above, this would be a **less-than-significant impact**.

### MITIGATION MEASURES

*No mitigation is required for any of the alternatives.*

---

<b>Impact 3.11-2</b>	<p><b>Capacity of Recreation Facilities and Resources.</b> All RTP/SCS alternatives would implement new bicycle and pedestrian trails that would enhance recreational trail facilities and opportunities for residents and visitors. The proposed RTP/SCS would not convert recreational facilities to a non-recreation use, nor designate lands currently used for recreation for another land use or purpose; therefore, implementation of the proposed RTP/SCS would not reduce capacity of existing recreational facilities. The proposed RTP/SCS transportation strategy packages would not include new residential or commercial land uses that could directly increase use of existing, or demand for, new recreation facilities. The 1987 Regional Plan Recreation Threshold Standard includes indicators related to recreation that ensure appropriate Region-wide capacity for public outdoor recreation by assessing USFS user survey information and responding appropriately. Because of the enhancement of recreational trail opportunities, the overall impact to the capacity of recreation facilities and resources would be beneficial. This impact would be <b>beneficial</b> for all alternatives.</p>
----------------------	--

---

## ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT

Alternative 1 includes implementation of Transportation Strategy Package A, which would include roadway improvements, community revitalization projects, construction of bicycle and pedestrian trails, and the Lake Tahoe Waterborne Transit project. Transportation Strategy Package A includes relatively few other transit service upgrades.

Implementation of Alternative 1 would not result in the conversion of an existing recreational facility to a non-recreational use, would not designate lands currently used for recreation for another land use or purpose; therefore, existing capacity of recreational facilities would not be adversely affected. Demand for recreational facilities is typically generated by new residential uses or certain commercial uses (such as hotels). Implementation of Transportation Strategy Package A would not include development of new residential or commercial land uses that would directly increase the use of an existing recreational facility or increase demand for new recreational facilities. The only potential increase in demand for particular facilities could result from the increased access provided to recreational facilities (see Impact 3.11-1 above) or from improved facilities, such as the Stateline to Stateline Bikeway project. Many of the transportation improvement projects under Alternative 1 include expanded bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the Region, including off-street trails and paths. These new facilities would expand the overall recreational opportunities (and enhance the available recreational experiences) in the Basin. The Tahoe Region does have recreation areas that are already at or exceeding capacity based on existing demand. As described previously, the Sand Harbor Recreational Capacity Study (Nevada Division of State Parks 2011) found that overall, peak season recreation use in the Sand Harbor area is exceeding the recreational capacity of the area. The Nevada Stateline-to-Stateline Bikeway project has the potential to increase demand at this facility, because the bikeway includes a terminus at this location, which would increase access. However, as described under Impact 3.11-1, projects included in the RTP/SCS would be developed in collaboration with existing recreation providers, and the overall effect of implementation of the

RTP projects would be to expand the available recreation capacity in the Tahoe Region. Because of project planning in coordination with recreation providers and TRPA threshold standard requirements, on a regional level, this impact would be **beneficial**.

## **ALTERNATIVE 2: LOW DEVELOPMENT, INCREASED REGULATION**

With respect to recreation capacity/demand, Alternative 2 would result in similar impacts as Alternative 1. The primary difference is that Alternative 2 would result in additional transportation projects that would provide additional access, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities because it includes the greatest number bicycle and pedestrian projects of the three Transportation Strategy Packages. As with Alternative 1, projects included in the RTP/SCS would be developed in collaboration with existing recreation providers, and the overall effect of implementation of the RTP projects would be to expand the available recreation capacity in the Tahoe Region. Furthermore, additional bicycle and pedestrian facilities included under Alternative 2, as compared to Alternatives 1, 3, 4, and 5, would further expand the Region-wide recreational opportunities and would enhance available recreational experiences. Implementation of Alternative 2 would result in a **beneficial impact**.

## **ALTERNATIVE 3: LOW DEVELOPMENT, HIGHLY INCENTIVIZED REDEVELOPMENT**

Although the transportation improvement projects included under Alternative 3 differ from those under Alternatives 1 and 2, the impacts associated with recreation demand and capacity would be similar. Alternative 3 includes more transportation improvement projects than identified under Alternative 1, but fewer than Alternative 2; therefore, the potential for increased demand and use of recreational facilities from increased access, as well as the expanded recreational opportunities associated with additional bicycle and pedestrian facilities, would fall between the levels identified under Alternatives 1 and 5 and Alternative 2. Therefore, impacts associated with implementation of Alternative 3 would similarly be **beneficial**.

## **ALTERNATIVE 4: REDUCED DEVELOPMENT, INCENTIVIZED REDEVELOPMENT**

Alternative 4 includes the same transportation improvements (from the constrained list) as Alternative 3; therefore, impacts resulting from implementation of Alternative 4 would similarly be **beneficial**.

## **ALTERNATIVE 5: SIMILAR RATE OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGULATORY STRUCTURE TO THE 1987 REGIONAL PLAN**

Alternative 5 includes the same transportation improvements (projects in process) as Alternative 1; therefore, impacts resulting from implementation of Alternative 5 would similarly be **beneficial**.

## **MITIGATION MEASURES**

*No mitigation is required for any of the alternatives.*

---

<b>Impact 3.11-3</b>	<b>Public Access to Lake Tahoe, Public Lands and Recreation Areas.</b> All proposed RTP/SCS alternatives include transportation improvement projects that would increase public access throughout the Region, including enhancing access to the Lake, public lands, and recreation areas. Improvements involve primarily alternative transportation modes, such as transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects. None of the RTP/SCS alternatives would obstruct public access to water or public land. Implementation of the RTP/SCS would result in a <b>beneficial impact</b> for all alternatives.
----------------------	---

---

## ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PROJECT

Alternative 1 includes operation and maintenance of the existing transportation system, plus the construction of projects that are already significantly in progress. The transportation improvement projects under Alternative 1 include expanded bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the Region, including off-street trails and paths. Other projects would involve roadway realignments, right-of-way acquisition, sidewalks, bike lanes, lighting, new/improved stormwater facilities, new bicycle and pedestrian trails, landscaping, new or expanded parking facilities, new or expanded ferry piers and ferry maintenance buildings, and new or improved bridge and pile-supported structures. These projects would not decrease public access to recreation areas because they would result in improved circulation and the construction of Complete Streets projects that would improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Bicycle and pedestrian projects would involve bicycle lanes, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, new parking facilities, new/improved stormwater facilities, passive recreation facilities, benches, water fountains, vista points, restroom facilities, crossings on streets and roads, as well as paved, multi-use paths, and unpaved parallel trails. These projects would improve overall connectivity to Lake Tahoe, public lands, and recreation areas. Water quality projects would involve work on road shoulders, bioswale trenches, detention basins, wetlands, and other groundwork activities. None of these types of physical changes would include the addition of new buildings or structures and would not be expected to change existing access to recreation facilities. Transit facilities and ITS strategies would primarily result in changes and improvements to transit schedules and routes and could increase accessibility of recreational users to existing facilities in the Region. This category of projects would also include transit shelters and potentially include aviation-related buildings. Overall, the new facilities would not obstruct access, but would increase access to the Lake, public lands (including recreational facilities), and recreation areas. Implementation of Alternative 1 would result in a **beneficial impact**.

## ALTERNATIVE 2: LOW DEVELOPMENT, INCREASED REGULATION

Alternative 2 would result in very similar impacts as Alternative 1. The primary difference is that Alternative 2 would result in additional transportation projects that would provide additional access, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Therefore, to an even greater extent than Alternatives 1, 3, 4, and 5, implementation of Alternative 2 would result in a **beneficial impact**.

## ALTERNATIVE 3: LOW DEVELOPMENT, HIGHLY INCENTIVIZED REDEVELOPMENT

Implementation of Alternative 3 would result in more transportation improvement projects than under Alternative 1, but fewer than under Alternative 2. Therefore, the increased public access to recreation facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians would be greater than Alternatives 1 and 5, but less than Alternative 2. This would be a **beneficial impact**.

## ALTERNATIVE 4: REDUCED DEVELOPMENT, INCENTIVIZED REDEVELOPMENT

Alternative 4 includes the same transportation improvements as Alternative 3; therefore, impacts resulting from implementation of Alternative 4 would similarly be **beneficial**.

## ALTERNATIVE 5: SIMILAR RATE OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGULATORY STRUCTURE TO THE 1987 REGIONAL PLAN

Alternative 5 includes the same transportation improvements as Alternative 1; therefore, impacts resulting from implementation of Alternative 5 would similarly be **beneficial**.

## MITIGATION MEASURES

*No mitigation is required for any of the alternatives.*