***DRAFT -* SUMMARY**

**Stakeholder Science and Stakeholder Community Committee**

**Lake Tahoe West Restoration Partnership**

Tuesday, November 5th, 2019, 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Lahontan Water Board Annex, Hearing Room, 971 Silver Dollar Avenue, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

*All meeting materials are publicly available on the Lake Tahoe West website* [*http://nationalforests.org/laketahoewest*](http://nationalforests.org/laketahoewest)*.*

*For questions please contact facilitator Julia Golomb at* [*jgolomb@cbi.org*](mailto:jgolomb@cbi.org)*.*

# Meeting In Brief

At the November 5, 2019 joint meeting of the Lake Tahoe West Stakeholder Committees, the Interagency Design Team presented its approach to developing the Lake Tahoe West Proposed Action. The approach is informed by the Lake Tahoe West Goals, as described in the Landscape Restoration Strategy. Spatial data for Goals 1 and 2 were used to divide the landscape into ten broad priority planning areas; Spatial data for Goals 3 and 4 and operational constraints were then used to further refine planning areas into smaller operational planning units. Stakeholders endorsed the approach and offered the following suggestions: Develop a roads restoration plan; consider water quality; integrate data on forest species composition; and develop an approach to prioritize treatment areas on the landscape, while maintaining flexibility to leverage relevant funding opportunities. The Interagency Design Team will integrate stakeholder feedback and present refined polygons and a draft Proposed Action at the next joint Stakeholder Committees meeting, currently scheduled for December 11, 2019 (*note: this timeline may shift to January*).

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# Action Items

1. Interagency Design Team will integrate stakeholder feedback and proceed with its current approach to develop the Proposed Action.
2. Julia will send Stakeholders a link to the Lake Tahoe West webmap, once completed.

# Review of Timeline and Process for Proposed Action Development

Julia Golomb, Consensus Building Institute, reviewed the timeline and process for development of the Proposed Action. The Interagency Design Team (IADT) is responsible for developing the Proposed Action by the end of January 2020. Each meeting of the joint Stakeholder Committees, held monthly October 2019 through January 2020, will serve as a checkpoint at which the joint Stakeholder Committees will provide feedback to the IADT on progress to-date and the anticipated path forward for Proposed Action development. The joint Stakeholder Committees will next meet on December 11, 2019 and January 21, 2020. The IADT anticipates that stakeholders will provide feedback on a preliminary draft of the Proposed Action at the December 11 meeting.

Following completion of the Proposed Action, Lake Tahoe West will move into the formal environmental document development process. At this point, stakeholders will be considered members of the public. However, the joint Stakeholder Committees will continue to play a role in monitoring plan development.

# Approach to Develop Preliminary Proposed Action

Jen Greenberg, California Tahoe Conservancy,provided an overview of the proposed approach that the IADT will use to develop the Proposed Action.

The Proposed Action is informed by the Lake Tahoe West Goals, as described in the Landscape Restoration Strategy (LRS):

* 1. Resilient Forest Conditions
  2. Fire
  3. Improve Habitat for Native Species
  4. Water Quality and Quantity
  5. Operational Constraints and Opportunities

*Note: Goals 5 and 6 are not spatial, but will nonetheless inform the Proposed Action.*

The LRS describes the following as high priority for initial action:

* Improve forest health resilience (Goal 1)
* Reduce risk of high severity fire (component of Goal 2)

As such, spatial data for Goals 1 and 2 were used to divide the landscape into broad priority planning areas. Goals 3 and 4 and operational constraints spatial data were used to further refine planning areas into smaller operational planning units.

**Step 1a of approach to develop Proposed Action:** *Identify areas less and least resilient for trees/acre and are QMD > 15 (mid and late seral stands)*

* Goal 1: Resilient forest conditions
  + Trees per acre non-resilient
  + Mid-seral and late-seral
  + Aspen Stands
* Goal 1 analysis:
  + Majority of landscape is in non-resilient condition

**Step 1b:** *Identify areas that are in the WUI (defense and threat zones) or areas at risk of high severity fire in patches greater than 40 aces*

* Goal 2: Fire (with focus on fire risk)
  + Wildland-urban interface (WUI) threat and defense zones; not currently planned projects
  + High severity patch size greater than 40 acres
  + Prescribed fire opportunities
  + Fire breaks
* Goal 2 analysis: Still includes a sizable portion of the landscape

**Step 1c:** *Identify areas that met both Goals 1 and 2*

* Analysis of Goals 1 and 2 combined: Non-resilient, mid seral *and* risk of high severity fires or unplanned areas in the WUI

**Step 1d**: *Priority planning area development*

* For this step, the IADT started at the north end of the project area and worked south. The IADT focused on large, contiguous areas of landscape that met both Goals 1 and 2. The IADT used fire breaks and watershed boundaries opportunistically as planning area boundaries, with the intention that planning areas have relatively uniform acreage. This exercise resulted in ten distinct planning areas over a total area of 30,386 acres. The average and median size of a planning area is 3,038 and 2,500 acres, respectively.

**Step 2:** *Refining priority planning areas into operational planning units*

* Each operational planning unit is intended to meet one or more specific LRS goals

This step used additional spatial data for Goals 3 and 4, prescribed fire opportunities, aspen stands, and operational constraints (note: may want to avoid using the term “constraints”)

* Focused on relatively static landscape features: PACs, streams, roads, change in slope class, meadows, sensitive soils.
* Began with PACs within priority planning areas that were unplanned; made these areas their own unit.
* Identified areas that could act as PAC buffers; areas without sensitive soils; areas with slopes 30%-50%; planned versus unplanned areas and projects
* Method to establish operational planning unit boundaries:

1. Used a projector and laptop to display the GIS map on a white board;
2. Toggled geospatial data on and off to identify whether to expand or contract planning unit boundaries;
3. Hand drawn units were then digitized in GIS; added attributes to reflect specific objectives.

**Discussion**

* Are there utility corridors in goshawk PACs? Are utilities considering these PACS? Yes. Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit recently completed the Liberty Project categorical exclusion. This concept is important to keep in mind as there is a continued emphasis on fire risk and powerlines. Liberty treatment for PACs will be separate from LTW. Further, when USDA FS conducts mechanical treatment in a PAC, it must add an equal acreage of suitable habitat to the PAC; this same rule would apply to LTW.
* Examples of operational planning units:
  + The Southern boundary of one operational unit operates as a PAC buffer.
  + The Northern boundary of one unit takes into account sensitive soils.
  + The area along Blackwood Creek could be its own operational unit; while not currently shown, this is in process.
* Water yield comes from LTW modeling work. Thinning treatments in areas with >75% canopy cover and at a lower elevation will produce the greatest water yield.
* Areas with sensitive soils are included in treatment areas and flagged for special consideration such that treatments are designed to reduce the risk of erosion.
* In late January 2020, LTW will receive updated 2018 LiDAR data, which will support a better understanding of current conditions. Though the existing fuels data layers are not very accurate, the assumption is that fuel loads are high due to decades of fire suppression.
* The IADT has not yet overlaid some features, such as distance from road; some activities are less feasible without a nearby road.
* The Proposed Action will be more general than the NEPA document. The proposed action describes general acreage, proposed treatments and type of operations.
* Additional considerations for archaeological sensitivity: Cultural resource surveys fieldwork will occur in 2020; USDA FS has data regarding which areas are sensitive to the Washoe. CalFire is meeting with eight different tribes for PTEIR and will share those data with LTW.
* The IADT intends to develop a prioritization scheme that supports flexibility, such that LTW is positioned to maximize funding opportunities.
* A stakeholder would like to see a roads restoration plan that enables roads need to withstand climate change.
* A stakeholder suggested broadening forest condition characteristics to include structure and species.

**Next steps and future considerations**

Stakeholders endorsed the IADT’s approach to develop the Proposed Action, as described above. The IADT will move forward with this approach and continue to refine polygons (priority planning areas and operational units). The polygons viewed by stakeholders will become more defined as the IADT continues to develop operational planning units within priority planning areas. Additionally, the IADT will create a separate priority planning area for Desolation Wilderness, since this area has unique considerations and regulations. The treatment for Desolation Wilderness will primarily include prescription burning and natural ignitions. Once ready, Mason Bindl will incorporate operational planning units into the web map.

The IADT will integrate today’s stakeholder feedback into the refined Proposed Action and polygons, which it will share with stakeholders in December or January (note: timeline TBD). Central stakeholder feedback included:

* + Develop a roads restoration plan;
  + Consider water quality;
  + Integrate data on forest species composition.
  + Develop an approach to prioritize treatment areas on the landscape, while maintaining flexibility to leverage relevant funding opportunities.

# Update on Landscape Restoration Strategy

A graphic designer is working on the LTW Landscape Restoration Strategy (LRS), with a December 6 release date. Sarah Di Vittorio requested that LTW partner agencies share the LRS on social media when it is released.

# Meeting Attendees

Organizing and Participating Agencies

CTC – California Tahoe Conservancy

FWS – Friends of the West Shore

NFF – National Forest Foundation

USFS LTBMU – U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

NDF – Nevada Division of Forestry

KTB – Keep Tahoe Blue/The League to Save Lake Tahoe

SPF – Sugar Pine Foundation

NTFPD – North Tahoe Fire Protection District

TRPA – Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

CBI – Consensus Building Institute

CSP – California State Parks

LRWQCB – Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control board

TF – The Tahoe Fund

EPA – US Environmental Protection Agency

HMR – Homewood Mountain Resort

**Stakeholder Science Committee Members**

1. Jennifer Quashnick, FOWS
2. Roland Shaw, NDF
3. Zach Bradford, KTB
4. Maria Mircheva, SPF
5. Jack Landy, EPA

**Stakeholder Community Committee Members**

1. Skyler Monaghan, TF
2. Dan Blood, HSR

**Staff**

1. Christine Aralia, CTC
2. Mason Bindl, TRPA
3. Michael Brumbaugh, USFS LTBMU
4. Stephanie Coppeto, USFS LTBMU
5. Sarah Di Vittorio, NFF
6. Brian Garrett, USFS LTBMU
7. Julia Golomb, CBI
8. Jen Greenberg, CTC
9. Eric Horntvedt, NTFPD
10. Ben Letton, LRWQCB
11. Kat McIntyre, TRPA
12. Alex Neeb, CSP
13. Dan Shaw, CSP
14. Bri Tiffany, NFF