



June 23, 2008

US Forest Service -  
Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit  
35 College Drive  
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

**RE: Comments regarding the Meeks Meadow Washoe Restoration Project**

To Whom It May Concern:

The League to Save Lake Tahoe is in support of the pilot project to restore the Meeks Meadow ecosystem through fuels reduction and traditional Washoe stewardship practices. The dense stands of upland conifers that have encroached into the meadow currently pose a significant wildfire threat, which can be heightened by insect infestation. The league supports projects that incorporate sound scientific applications and monitoring to determine the best feasible land management practices, in respect to the local community and environment of the Tahoe Basin. In addition to the project design features described in the proposed project, the League would like to make the following suggestions pertaining to the Wildlife and Fish, Water Quality Maintenance and Improvement, and Soils project design features.

Wildlife and Fish

Overall, the League supports the project design features that protect and monitor for the occurrence of sensitive avian species in the project area, as well as the protection of sensitive plant species. The design features are lacking in protection and monitoring of the fishery resources of Meeks Creek. The project should avoid all impacts to local fisheries, in particular during the spring-fall spawning seasons of salmonid species. The project design components of surveying for avian species of concern, managing sensitive plants, retaining of large snags and large woody debris for wildlife, and requiring the use of native plant species in the project area are supported by the League.

## Water Quality Maintenance and Improvement

Restoration to damaged watersheds and sites contributing to water quality degradation is a high priority to the League, and we would recommend that the time-frame for completing the restoration of water quality degraded sites is shortened in time-frame to address the urgency in water quality improvements. In order to obtain the water clarity threshold standard for Lake Tahoe water quality watershed improvements need to be implemented as soon as they are feasible.

## Soils

The project goals, of reducing long-term impacts to soils, are an important component of any restoration/fuels reduction project in the Sierra ecosystem. The League recommends that the project design incorporate long-term monitoring protocols for evaluating potential project impacts to soil compaction and infiltration rates. Due to the precedence that this project will establish in SEZ/meadow habitats, long-term monitoring needs to be implemented to reaffirm that the best management practices concluded from this project will continue to be supported by the scientific community.

## Summary

The League is in support of projects that incorporate scientific applications, such as the Meeks Meadow Restoration Project, and monitoring for long-term potential impacts. Due to the continuing encroachment of upland conifer species and decades of fire suppression restoration of these sensitive meadow habitats is crucial. Overall, the League supports the Meeks Meadow Restoration Project with the additional recommendations of fishery resources, watershed restoration, and long-term soils monitoring be included in the proposed project.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments and if you are in need of further information please contact us at 530-541-5388.

Thank you,

Flavia Sordelet  
Program Advocate  
The League to Save Lake Tahoe