
NEWS RELEASE



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Celebrating a Milestone: Tahoe Program Timberland Environmental Impact Report Certification

Tahoe City, California April 16, 2021 – On April 07, 2021, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) certified the Tahoe Program Timberland Environmental Impact Report (Tahoe PTEIR or PTEIR) (State Clearinghouse No. 2019069054) and approved the proposed forest management program.

CAL FIRE and the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team celebrate a milestone with the certification and approval of the Tahoe PTEIR and commend Lake Valley Fire Protection District (LVFPD), California Tahoe Conservancy (CTC), and North Tahoe Fire Protection District (NTFPD) for their proactive efforts to complete the Tahoe PTEIR. Special thanks to Ascent Environmental Inc. and their subcontractors for the invaluable technical support provided throughout this process. The program, which covers approximately 17,480 acres of Wildland Urban Interface on the California side of the Tahoe Basin, supports an increase in the pace and scale of forest management and fuels reduction treatments to approximately 900 – 1,300 acres annually.

The report addresses a long-term program of forest management across private, local jurisdiction, federal, and California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) land. The Tahoe PTEIR includes numerous forest treatment activities including mechanical thinning, manual/hand thinning, prescribed understory burning, pile burning, sale and transport of merchantable timber, and the transport and use of biomass for energy generation and wood pulp products. Herbicide treatment is not proposed.

“This program will advance Tahoe Basin partners’ ability to implement the Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires and the potential damage to our forests, watersheds, habitats, and most importantly our communities,” said Steve Leighton, Acting Fire Chief with North Tahoe Fire Protection District. “These treatments will also increase forest resiliency to the effects of climate change we are already experiencing, such as prolonged drought, pest and disease outbreaks and increased tree mortality.”

CAL FIRE prepared the Tahoe PTEIR to evaluate the effects of forest management more efficiently and comprehensively, while improving project approval and delivery processes for fuels reduction activities.

Other public agencies may serve as responsible agencies in approving later treatment activities pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 and following California Forest Practice Rules. These responsible agencies, or project proponents, could include CAL FIRE, Conservancy, fire districts, or other public agencies or landowners with land ownership/stewardship responsibilities.

“The Program Timberland Environmental Impact Report project has received funding from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA), which has improved the quality of life for residents and visitors across Nevada and portions of both Arizona and California,” said Robert Wandel, Assistant District Manager, SNPLMA. “We are proud that SNPLMA has added to the protection and improvement of the unique and valuable resources of the Lake Tahoe Basin.”

Brad Zlendick, Fire Chief with Lake Valley Fire Protection District, stated “This showcase of inter-agency collaboration resulted in a true achievement and successful milestone for the Tahoe Basin. The Tahoe PTEIR could not have been accomplished without the forward-thinking vision of key funding partners who were willing to support this project.” The Tahoe PTEIR project development was funded primarily by federally approved SNPLMA funding sources, and seeded by state Water Quality, Supply, And Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 funds.

“This Programmatic Timberland EIR is both an important and necessary step for fuels reduction and community safety in the Tahoe Basin. The PTEIR provides a positive step forward in addressing the effects of climate change in this critical area,” stated Chief Thom Porter, CAL FIRE Director and California’s State Forester. “Providing this level of regulatory efficiency helps land managers get projects on the ground quicker to create healthy forest conditions that benefit all Californians. Healthy forests help clean our water and air, they sequester more carbon and are more resilient to pests, disease and catastrophic wildfire.”

The Draft and Final PTEIR are available at <https://www.ntfire.net/tahoe-pteir>. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, printed copies of the PTEIR will not be available for review at public buildings. Individuals that are unable to access the PTEIR online should contact North Tahoe Fire Protection District at TahoePTEIR@ntfire.net or 530-584-2344.

CAL FIRE served as the lead agency for completion of the PTEIR under CEQA and the California Forest Practices Act. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091, all supporting documents for the PTEIR (i.e., record of proceedings) are available for review during normal business hours at 1416 9th Street, Room 1506-14, Sacramento, CA 95814. The custodian of these documents is Bill Solinsky of CAL FIRE.

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