

Old South Shore campground being rehabbed

By Kathryn Reed

TAHOE CITY – While work has been going on at the 8.117-acre former Tahoe Pines Campground since the California Tahoe Conservancy purchased it for \$4.018 million in 2008, more substantive improvements could come late next summer.

The CTC board at its September meeting was given an overview of what staff is contemplating to do to this area along the Upper Truckee River in Meyers. Definitive plans will be forthcoming at the March or June meeting at which time funding will be sought.



The former Tahoe Pines Campground includes 915 linear feet along the Upper Truckee River.
Photos/Kathryn Reed

Peter Eicher, who is spearheading the project for the CTC, said a guesstimate at this time is about \$400,000 will be needed.

“There will be a lot of ripping out of old pavement, and (adding) new pavement and a new bridge,” Eicher told the board

at the quarterly meeting. It's likely the bridge will not be built for vehicle use.

The goal is to provide river access for the public. While people could put in there to kayak or canoe along the Upper Truckee River, that isn't going to be encouraged. This is because this section to Elks Club is more difficult to navigate, includes snags across the river and the need to potentially dodge golf balls.

A trail to the river is planned, along with casual spots to sit. No restroom facilities will be installed. A gate will prevent access during the winter – at least to vehicles. About 12 parking spaces are planned.

Eicher said his crew is trying to strike a balance of providing access, but not needing to provide daily maintenance to the area because the Conservancy doesn't do that sort of thing. It is considered a low-level use site.

Making the land function better is a primary goal.

In 1932 Alma Mater started the campground. From 1983 until when the CTC bought the land the Poulen family ran it. Little evidence of the 59 campsites remains.

When the Conservancy board was given a tour of the area in 2008, Greg Poulen told many stories about the flood of 1996. A loud clang would echo through the campground. Another barbecue pit had been dislodged and was banging along the rocks in the raging river.



A cement filled culvert, foreground, is near the river. And vehicles on Highway 50 roar by the property.

What is left today is compacted and disturbed land, a bridge that is sketchy at best, concrete filled culverts, and boulders in the river.

The Conservancy has put up some fencing, has taken down trees and is already seeing vegetation start to naturally re-establish in some locations.

“This area is prone to flooding. Our designers are looking at that,” Eicher said. The floodplain will be worked on so the groundwater table rises and the ecosystem works in a way that would be reminiscent to before the campground was put in.