

# USFS to study Meeks Bay's future; marina closed



Meeks Bay Marina is closed indefinitely. Photo/LTN file

**By Kathryn Reed**

It's possible Meeks Bay Marina will never see another boat launched there.

The rest of the operations at the resort remain open. But what the area will look like in eight years remains to be seen.

A settlement agreement is expected to be approved Wednesday by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. The state agency went after the U.S. Forest Service – the landowner; Washoe Tribe – which has a 20-year contract that expires in two years to run all of the operations; and Action Water Sports owner Bob Hassett, the marina operator.

It has been an ongoing dilemma that finally has a resolution that includes long-term planning. Multiple citations had been issued and nothing changed. A dirt parking lot was dumping fine sediment into Lake Tahoe at a rapid rate.

**Last year** the marina was shut down. The Forest Service has removed it from the special use permit. Its future will likely be studied in forthcoming environmental and planning documents.

"It's unfortunate the marina is at the mouth of the creek. I'm not sure if they have an opportunity to put the ramp somewhere else," Cathe Pool, senior engineer with the water board, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Heather Noel with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit said, "I don't have an idea of when it could open until we are through the planning process and a decision on the use and restoration of the marina is determined."

No one from the tribe returned a call.

The Forest Service this summer intends to issue a notice of preparation, which is the prelude to environmental documents being initiated.

"We are looking forward to finalizing the proposed action this summer to get the public's weigh-in on what they would prefer to see at Meeks Marina," Noel told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The Forest Service developed a proposal using our existing appropriations budget, however we will need to identify the path forward on paying for planning and improvements."

By November the feds are supposed to present to Lahontan "a first phase assessment for the project identifying expected environmental benefits, multi-benefit success criteria, and a five-year monitoring plan."

Lahontan wants whatever the project is to be completed by

2025.

“I feel like we are getting more benefit to water quality than if they just paved the parking lot,” Pool said. That is what was initially asked of the USFS by Lahontan. Ultimately a more diverse project with enhanced environmental gains will be developed.

Temporary erosion control measures are in place, and according to Pool, held up well through this winter.

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**Notes:**

- The Lahontan board meeting is May 10 at 7pm, 971 Silver Dollar Ave., South Lake Tahoe.