



US Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region
Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit



Decision Memo for Implementation of the
Fallen Leaf Campground Best Management Practices
Retrofit Project
El Dorado County, CA

BACKGROUND:

Fallen Leaf Campground occupies 110 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands located in El Dorado County, California. The project is located near the South Shore of Lake Tahoe; it is west of Fallen Leaf Lake Road, which connects to Highway 89 near Camp Richardson. The site is bounded by Fallen Leaf Lake's northern terminal moraine and Taylor Creek to the west (Figure 1). All facilities within Fallen Leaf Campground are owned by the Forest Service and managed by California Land Management (CLM), a privately held company, under the terms of a special use permit.

Fallen Leaf Campground was constructed by the Forest Service in the 1960's and remains one of the most popular campgrounds in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Some campground amenities, such as restroom buildings, have had investment to address maintenance and accessibility concerns; however some of the remaining amenities continue to require investment. Sensitive Stream Environment Zones (SEZ) soils are located within the campground in the form of meadows and riparian corridors.

PURPOSE AND NEED:

The purpose of the Fallen Leaf Campground Best Management Practices Retrofit Project is to repair or change specific campground conditions to be consistent with current water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs).

A seasonal stream and meadow occur within Fallen Leaf Campground. Existing metal culverts that convey stream water under the roads are rusting and reaching the end of their useful design life and are in need of replacement.

The parking lot for the Moraine Trail within the campground is currently unpaved and vehicular traffic is causing erosion and soil compaction.

Some of the existing campsites occur on stream environment zone (SEZ) soil types that are not well-suited for the vehicular and foot traffic and other activities associated with camping. Redesign of some campsites is needed to improve soil and water quality resource protection. There is also a need to consider a range of camping options that support the Forest Plan objective of providing a range of recreation opportunities for the public.

Some of the existing campsites and other features of the campground, do not meet Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guideline (FSORAG) standards for providing universal access for people with disabilities. These campsites, walkways, toilets, and other features need to be repaired or replaced to bring conditions into compliance with FSORAG Guidelines.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Refer to Figures 2 – 7 for graphic representation of the proposed BMP improvements.

This project proposes implementation of environmental and facility maintenance improvements within Fallen Leaf campground to bring it into compliance with water quality protection BMP requirements, as well as Forest Service accessibility standards. The project will include relocation of seven campsites from lower capability soils to areas of higher capability soils. As part of this effort, one of the campground roads located within SEZ soils will be removed and restored with native riparian vegetation. To facilitate this and maintain effective campground vehicle circulation, approximately 200 linear feet of new road will be constructed in adjacent high capability soils. Road fill material will be removed from SEZ areas and will be disposed of in a legal manner.

The project also proposes to pave the parking area for the Moraine Trail and implement permanent water quality protection BMPs at parking facilities for the Moraine Trail. These improvements include paving, installing a catch basin with sand/oil separator, and installing an infiltration basin.

Improvements at the trailhead leading to the Fallen Leaf Lake trail at the southern edge of the campground would include non-paved BMPs for the trail surface, as well as infrastructure and signage designed to minimize the potential transport of invasive aquatic species. The existing campsite at this location would be decommissioned and reconstructed elsewhere in the campground on high capability soil.

Campground campsite spurs are proposed for renovation, which in most cases would involve an increase in size from current conditions in order to comply with Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines (FSORAG). The majority of proposed campsite spurs will be 16' wide by 40' long. Sites will primarily be oriented for back-in access. Some sites will be designed for head-in use based on site conditions related to campsite living areas. Existing pull-through campsites are proposed to remain. Six accessible platforms are proposed at existing campsites for seasonal yurts or tent-cabins. These temporary tent structures would be removed during winter months and would be designed to visually blend with the surrounding landscape.

Culverts within the campground will be replaced and sized to pass 100-year storm flows.

Campground utilities are proposed for replacement. Limited RV site utilities will be designed and established for campground host sites to facilitate season-long occupancy

for these employees. Replacement of utilities to meet current standards are proposed to support future restroom replacement with accessible structures. The replacement of these structures or utilities is not planned to be funded with current approved SNPLMA funding.

Implementation is anticipated to occur in summer / fall 2009. Work within SEZ soils will likely not occur until September 2009 when surface and ground water resources are least sensitive. By working after Labor Day, impacts to recreation visitors will also be reduced. Any work analyzed in this project but not implemented in 2009 will occur in subsequent years. Sediment produced during implementation activities will be managed with approved temporary BMP measures.

PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES

Project design features are elements of the project that are applied in treatment areas. These features are developed based on Forest Plan direction and site specific evaluations in order to reduce or avoid negative environmental impacts of the proposed action. Project design features associated with this project include the following:

Soil Design Features

1. Erosion control and prevention of sediment transport for this project will be implemented in accordance with; *USDA, Water Quality Management for Forest System Lands in California - Best Management Practices* (USDA 2000). This project will also be included in the Region 5, Best Management Practices Evaluation Program (BMPEP) monitoring sample pool and will be subject to temporary BMP (TBMP) monitoring evaluations while construction is ongoing.
2. Project activities will occur within the TRPA grading ordinance season (May 01– Oct 15). If grading or movement outside of this window becomes necessary (i.e. to finish BMPs, etc.) a standard grading exception permit request will be submitted to TRPA and LWQCB for approval. During periods of inclement weather, operations would be shut down until stream flows are seasonably low and soil/channel conditions are sufficiently dry and stable to allow construction to continue without the threat of substantial erosion, sedimentation, or offsite sediment transport.

Biological Design Features

1. Any sightings of threatened, endangered, candidate, sensitive, management indicator, or special interest species would be reported to the project biologist. These species would be protected as directed by standards and guidelines in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Forest Plan (LTBMU FP), Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA), and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) code of ordinances.

2. Minimize the removal of larger trees as required for an efficient road system. Species preference would be given to large cedars, then pines, and finally to firs. Structural preference would be given to live trees with teakettle branches, large diameter broken tops, or cavities in the bole for wildlife habitat. Retain existing logs, or create down logs in timbered areas for a desired density of about 5 logs per acre. Preference would first be given to snags that are felled for public safety, then to the largest logs available in a variety of decay stages for wildlife habitat.
3. If any LTBMU sensitive plant species or special interest plant species are identified before or during project implementation a buffer of up to 100 feet in diameter or distance determined by LTBMU Botany Department will be flagged around the sensitive resource.
4. All construction and earth-moving equipment are required to be weed-free. All off-road equipment used on this project shall be free of soil, seeds, vegetative material, or other debris that could contain or hold seeds of noxious weeds. "Off-road equipment" includes all construction equipment; it does not include, service vehicles, pickup trucks, and similar vehicles not intended for off-road use. Equipment will be considered clean when visual inspection by contract Contracting Officer's Representative does not reveal soil, seeds, plant material, or other such debris.
5. All gravel, fill, or other materials are required to be weed-free. Use onsite sand, gravel, rock, or organic matter when possible. Otherwise, obtain certified weed-free materials from gravel pits and fill sources that have been certified weed free or surveyed and approved by the LTBMU Botany Department.
6. Minimize the amount of ground and vegetation disturbance in the construction areas. Reestablish vegetation where feasible on disturbed bare ground to minimize weed establishment and infestation.
7. Use weed-free mulches, and seed sources. Seed mixes and mulch would be used to enhance the establishment of native plants. Where feasible salvage topsoil from project area for use in onsite revegetation, unless contaminated with noxious weeds. All activities that require seeding or planting must utilize locally collected native seed sources when possible or seeds and plants approved by the LTBMU Botany department. Plant and seed material should be collected from or near the project area, from within the same watershed, and at a similar elevation when possible. Persistent non-natives such as *Phleum pratense* (cultivated timothy), *Dactylis glomerata* (orchard grass), or *Lolium* spp. (ryegrass) will not be used.
8. Noxious weed infestations identified before project implementation that are within the project area or along travel routes near the project area will be hand treated or "flagged and avoided" according to the species present and project constraints.

9. After the project is completed all disturbed project areas would be monitored for three years to ensure additional weed species do not become established in the areas affected by the project and to ensure that known weeds do not spread.

Heritage Design Features

1. If any previously unrecorded cultural resources are discovered during this project, all project related activities must cease immediately and the consultation process as outlined in Section 800.13 of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations 36 CFR 800 must be initiated.

Recreation Design Features

1. Provide advanced notice to public to ensure that the public is aware of proposed project activity. Post signs in project areas near public access points to highlight the proposed action and impacts to public access.
2. Initiate temporary campground / forest closure only during project activity period to ensure public safety. Closure should be as limited as possible to reduce restrictions to public access.

REASONS FOR CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION:

CEQ regulations allow Federal agencies to exclude from documentation in an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS) categories of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment, based on the agency's experience and knowledge. I have concluded that the proposed action fits under 36 CFR 220.6 (d)(5), "Repair and maintenance of recreation sites and facilities".

The proposed action fits within this category because the project scope is limited to the Fallen Leaf Campground and the included activities are common actions on the Forest, that normally do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, a categorical exclusion is appropriate.

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES:

Extraordinary circumstances do not exist which preclude this project under this Categorical Exclusion. The following paragraphs address the extraordinary circumstance categories associated with the project per 36 CFR 220.6(b). The mere presence of one or more of these resource conditions does not preclude use of a categorical exclusion (CE). It is the existence of a cause-effect relationship between a proposed action and the potential effect on these resource conditions and if such a relationship exists, the degree of the potential effect of a proposed action on these resource conditions that determine whether extraordinary circumstances exist (36 CFR 220.6(b)).

1. Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species –

The project area was evaluated and surveyed for federally listed species and Forest Service sensitive species. The project area is not located within designated or proposed critical habitat for threatened or endangered species. The Tahoe Basin Recovery Implementation Team for Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) has identified Fallen Leaf Lake a priority water body to achieve a naturally reproducing population. Land management actions in or adjacent to Fallen Leaf Lake will need to be consistent with recovery goals and objectives. The entire project area lies in a small intermittent drainage, which is a part of Taylor Creek watershed. The proposed Fallen Leaf Lake Campground BMP Retrofit Project will implement BMPs specifically designed to avoid sedimentation to Taylor Creek. For these reasons this project will not effect Lahontan cutthroat trout. This project will not effect any other threatened or endangered species as these species and their suitable habitats do not occur in or adjacent to the project area (Project Record Document No. 2).

Bald eagle is the only Forest Service sensitive species to occur within or near the project area. This project will not affect bald eagle because although the bald eagle is known to occur or have suitable habitat in and near the project area, implementation of project design features associated with this project ensure that no effects would occur (Project Record Document No. 2).

This project will not affect any LTBMU sensitive plant species because although there is suitable habitat within the project area, no individuals are known or expected to occur within the project area (Project Record Document No. 3).

There is no potential habitat for *Rorippa subumbellata* within the proposed Fallen Leaf Campground BMP Rehabilitation project area. Therefore this project will not affect *Rorippa Subumbellata* (Tahoe yellow cress) or any other plant species listed as threatened, endangered, proposed for listing, or candidates under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA), administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within the Fallen Leaf Campground BMP Rehabilitation project area (Project Record Document No. 3).

2. Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds –

Floodplains: Executive Order 11988 is to avoid adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains. Floodplains are defined by this order as, “. . . the lowland and relatively flat areas adjoining inland and coastal waters include flood prone areas of offshore islands, including at a

minimum, that area subject to a one percent [100-year recurrence] or greater chance of flooding in any one year.”

Parts of the Fallen Leaf Campground are located within Stream Environment Zone (SEZ) soils and in close proximity to an ephemeral stream. 100-year flood events would spill beyond this ephemeral stream and these areas are considered within the 100-year floodplain. During project demolition and construction activities, short term, isolated impacts to SEZ soils and the floodplain may occur. However, the proposed action includes soil, water quality and other design features that would provide adequate environmental protection ensure that floodplains-related impacts are minimized.

Wetlands: Executive Order 11990 is to avoid adverse impacts associated with destruction or modification of wetlands. Wetlands are defined by this order as, “. . . areas inundated by surface or ground water with a frequency sufficient to support and under normal circumstances does or would support a prevalence of vegetative or aquatic life that requires saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas such as sloughs, potholes, wet meadows, river overflows, mud flats, and natural ponds.”

The project is not located in wetlands. This has been validated by map and site-review. This decision will not result in wetlands-related impacts.

Municipal Watersheds: Municipal watersheds are managed under multiple use prescriptions in land and resource management plans. There are no municipal watersheds identified in the Forest Plan (FEIS, p. 3-62). This decision will not affect municipal watersheds.

3. Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – The Fallen Leaf Campground does not lie within the boundary of congressionally designated areas.
4. Inventoried roadless areas – The Fallen Leaf Campground does not lie within the boundary of inventoried roadless areas.
5. Research Natural Areas – Fallen Leaf Campground does not lie within the boundary of designated Natural Research Areas.
6. American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – The Fallen Leaf Campground does not lie within the boundary of known American Indian cultural or archeological sites.
7. Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – The Fallen Leaf Campground does not lie within the boundary of known archeological sites or historic properties. The campground is not eligible for listing on the National

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS:

This project is in accordance with Federal, State, and local laws. Specifically:

National Forest Management Act – This Act requires the development of long-range land and resource management plans (LRMP). The Act requires all projects and activities to be consistent with the forest LRMP (“Forest Plan”). The LTBMU Forest Plan was approved in 1988 and has been amended several times, including the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (2004). The LRMP guidance for natural resource management activities has been reviewed in consideration of this project (Forest Plan Consistency Spreadsheet, Project Record Document No. 1) and with incorporation of project design features this project is consistent with the Forest Plan. Management Indicator Species will not be affected by this project.

Endangered Species Act – In accordance with Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act, the USFWS list of “endangered and threatened species that may be affected by projects in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Area” (January 31, 2008) was reviewed and appropriate restrictions are reflected in the design features to ensure the project’s consistency with this law.

National Historic Preservation Act - Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires Federal agencies to take into account the effect of a project on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (P.L. 89.665, as amended) also requires Federal agencies to afford the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) a reasonable opportunity to comment. Surveys conducted for Native American religious or cultural sites, archaeological sites, and historic properties or areas that may be affected by this decision were reflected in the project planning. This project is consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act.

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board - Because this project will include work in a stream environment zone, the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board has been involved according to the Memorandum of Understanding between the LTBMU and the LWQCB.

TRPA - This project is exempt from permitting under the Memorandum of Understanding between the LTBMU and the TRPA, in accordance with:

Section III.A.3. Reconstruction of recreation improvements provided they remain in substantial conformance with the original structure(s) in the floor area, height, volume, and land coverage, and provided they are retrofitted with BMPs. Relocation of improvements is included in the exemption where the relocation is necessary for health and safety or to avoid SEZ or other environmentally sensitive situations,

provided that relocated land coverage does not exceed 2,000 square feet in land capability districts 1, 2, and 3, and SEZ, nor exceeds a total of 10,000 square feet in all land capability districts and is offset by removing and restoring an equal amount of land coverage from an area equally or more environmentally sensitive and in the hydrologically related area.

TRPA Special Interest Species - Osprey and bald eagles foraging off the shores of Lake Tahoe shores [have] been recorded near the project area during the summer months. Osprey and bald eagle surveys have been done near the project area along Lake Tahoe shores resulting in no current nest trees in or within 0.25 miles of the project area in 2008. Peak project activities will be occurring during the osprey limited operating period (March 1 – August 15) and at the peak of Lake Tahoe’s summer recreational season at the lake. There was an active nest from 2008 that is located 85 meters from the entry road of Baldwin Beach. With normal road activity and successful nesting in 2008, the project is not likely to affect the nest by vehicles passing the area. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the project activities will affect foraging or nesting behavior beyond existing recreational disturbance during this time of the year.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:

- The Fallen Leaf Campground BMP Retrofit project appeared on the LTBMU SOPA list starting on July 1, 2006.
- A focused list of public agencies, and interested parties were informed of the proposed action in May 2009. Additionally, public notice was provided in the Tahoe Daily Tribune newspaper providing information for public input and the proposal was posted on the LTBMU public website. No comments were received.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE:

The planned implementation date for the Fallen Leaf Campground BMP Retrofit project is July 2009. Additional work, including utilities and campsite renovation will be implemented as funds become available.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OR APPEAL OPPORTUNITIES:

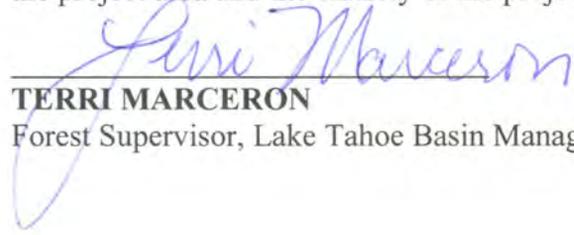
The Fallen Leaf Campground BMP Project decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12(f) as it is a decision which has been categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement.

SIGNATURE AND DATE:

I have concluded that this decision may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment as it is within one of the categories identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 7 CFR part 1b.3 or one of the categories listed in sections 220.6 (d) and (e) of 36 CFR 220.6. My decision concludes that no extraordinary circumstances exist related

to the proposed action that may result in a significant individual or cumulative effect on the human environment, and that the decision is not subject to appeal.

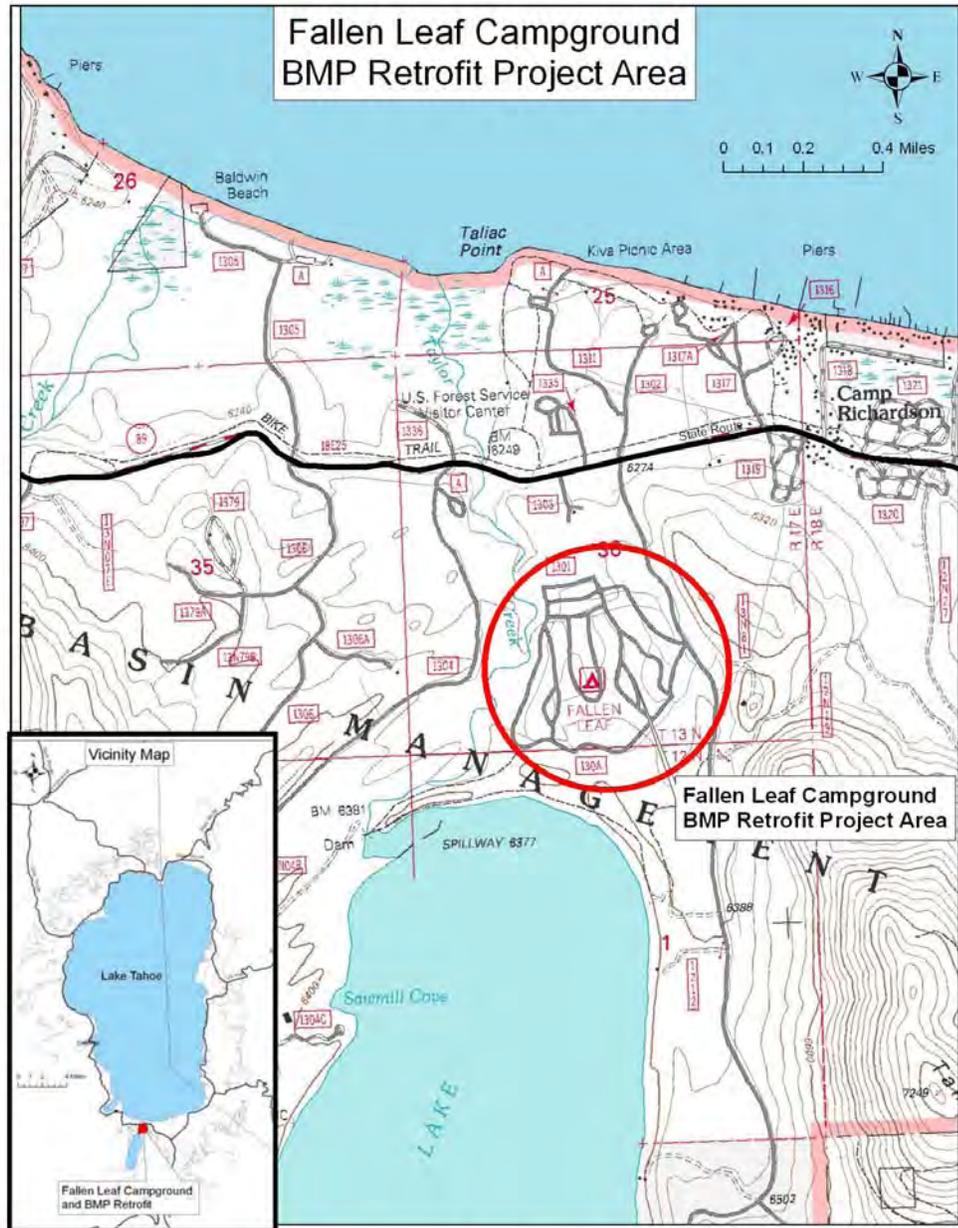
My conclusion is based on information presented in this document, my familiarity with the project area and the entirety of the project file.



TERRI MARCERON

Forest Supervisor, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

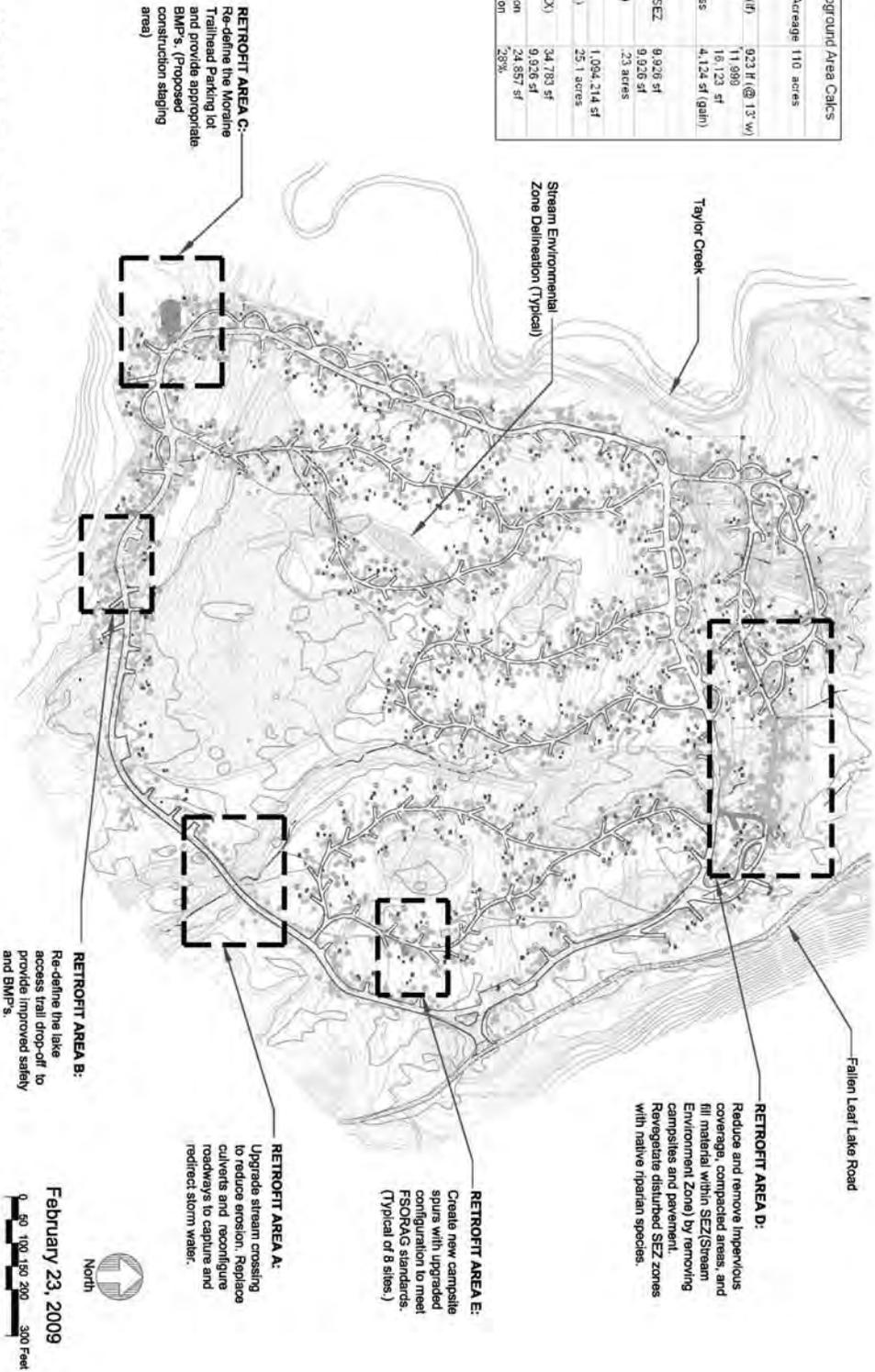
6/29/09
Date



Fallen Leaf Campground BMP Retrofit Project Area Map

Figure 1. Project Area Map

Fallen Leaf Campground Area Calcs	
Project Area Total Acreage	110 acres
Paving	923 ft ² (@ 13' w)
Total A/C Removal (ft)	11,989
Total A/C Removal	16,123 sf
Total New A/C	4,124 sf (gain)
Paving Net Gain/Loss	
SEZ	
A/C removal within SEZ	9,926 sf
New SEZ	9,926 sf
New SEZ (acreage)	.23 acres
Total SEZ (sf)	1,094,214 sf
Total SEZ (acreage)	25.1 acres
SEZ Compaction (EX)	34,789 sf
New SEZ	9,926 sf
New SEZ Compaction	24,857 sf
Percentage Reduction	25%



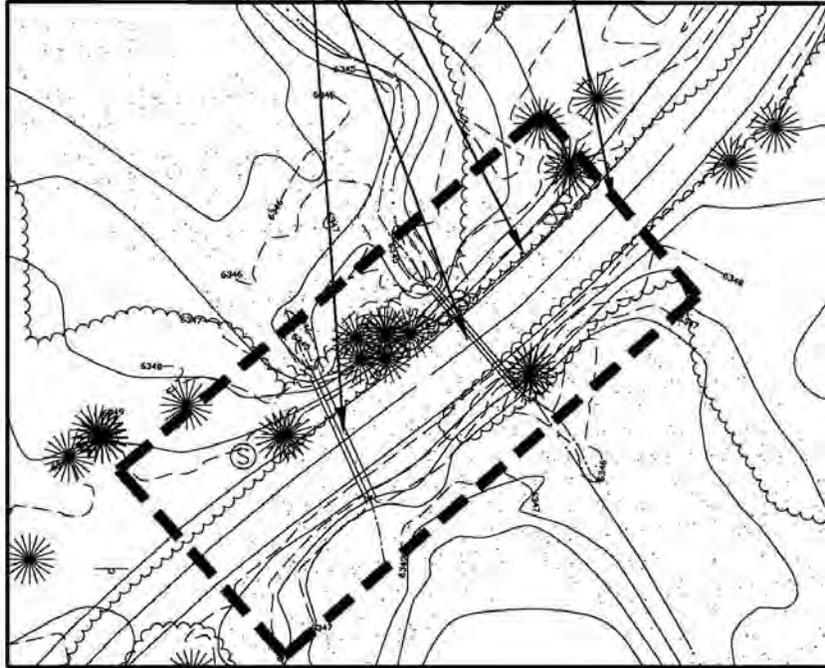
Fallen Leaf Campground BMP Retrofit
US Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

Figure 2

Reconfigure roadways to capture and redirect storm water.

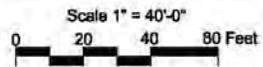
Replace culverts with concrete pipe to reduced environmental impacts and increase utility.

Limit of Work: Install temporary BMP's as appropriate



Retrofit Area A

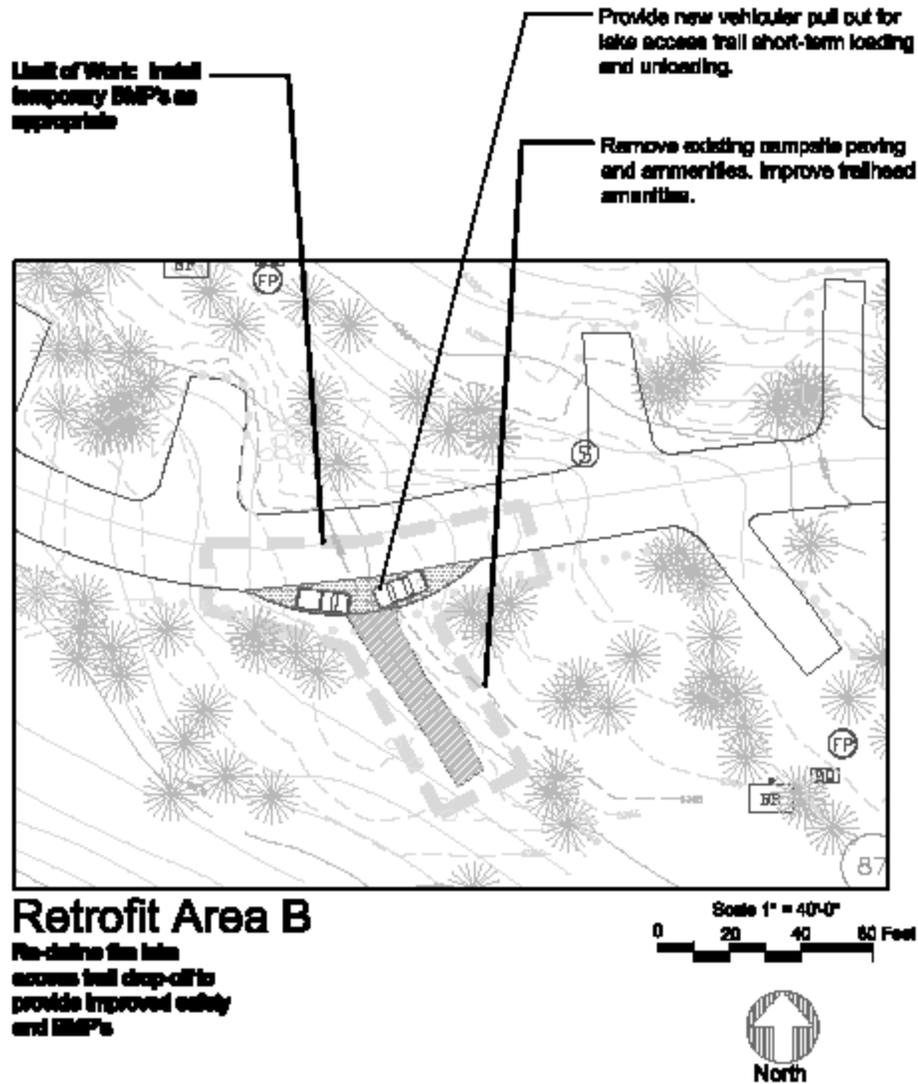
Upgrade stream crossing to reduce erosion.
 Reconfigure roadways to capture and redirect storm water.



**Fallen Leaf Campground
 BMP Retrofit - Area A
 US Forest Service
 Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit**

February 23, 2009

Figure 3



**Fallen Leaf Campground
 BMP Retrofit - Area B
 US Forest Service
 Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit**

**January 17, 2009
 Figure 4**

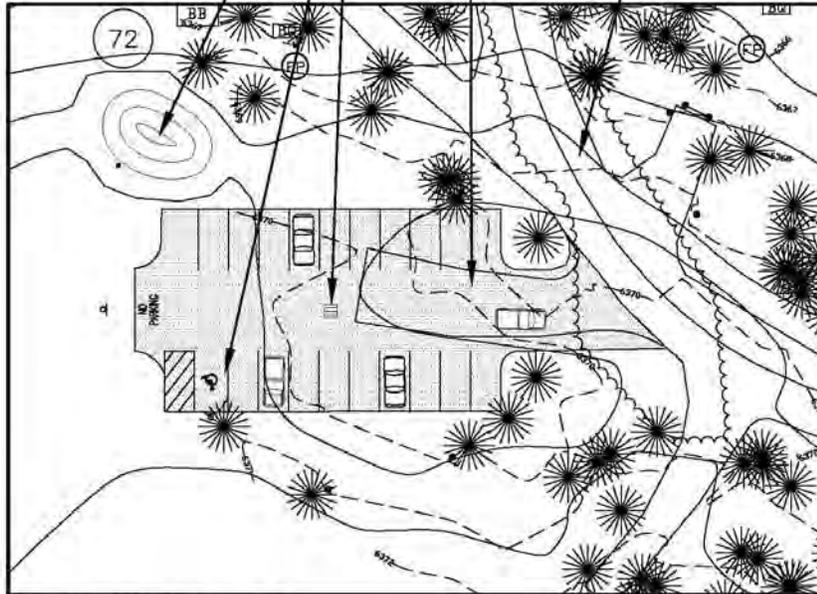
Re-define and pave the Moraine Trail head parking lot. Utilize appropriate temporary and permanent water quality BMP's.

Catch basin w/sand/oil separator

Provide accessible parking and path access.

New infiltration basin

Limit of Work: Install temporary BMP's as appropriate



Retrofit Area C

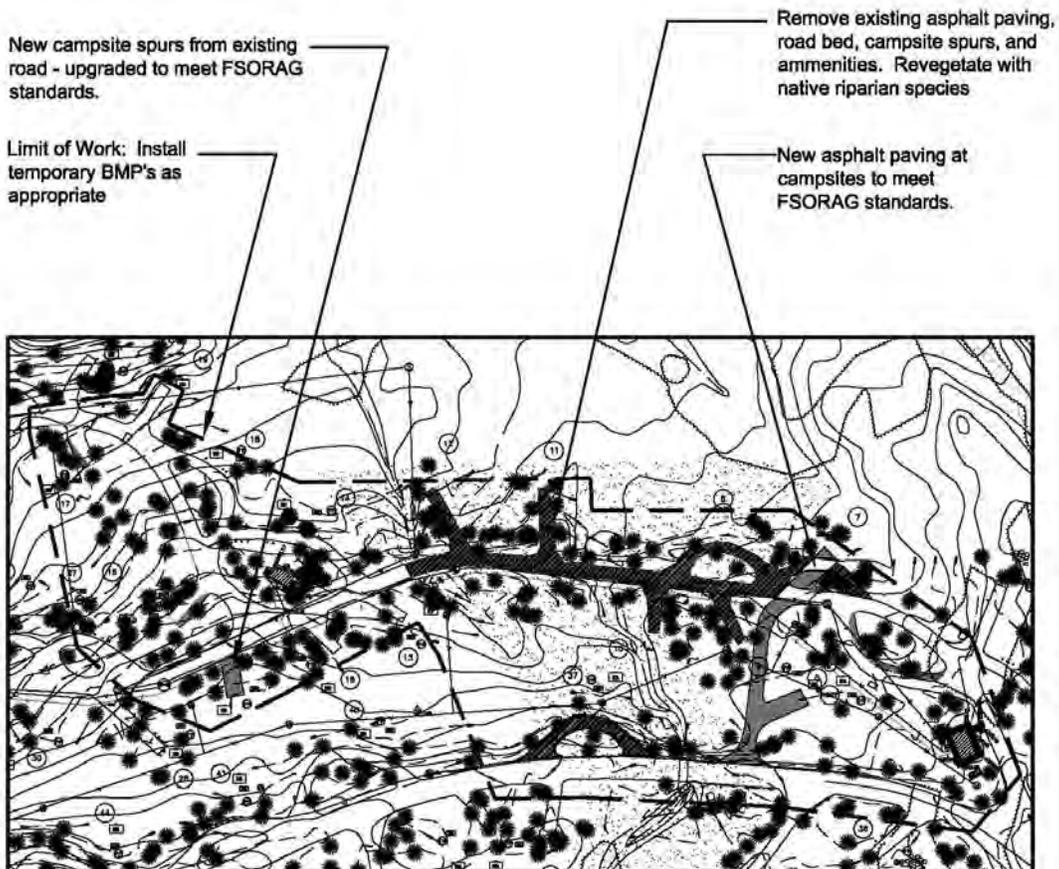
Re-define the Moraine Trailhead Parking lot and provide appropriate BMP's, including catch basin with sand/oil separator. Proposed construction staging area.

Scale 1" = 40'-0"



Fallen Leaf Campground
 BMP Retrofit - Area C
 US Forest Service
 Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

February 23, 2009
 Figure 5



Retrofit Area D

Reduce and remove impervious coverage, compacted areas, and fill material within SEZ (Stream Environment Zone) by removing campsites and pavement. Revegetate disturbed SEZ zones with native riparian species. Replace culverts in existing road to remain.

Scale 1" = 125'-0"
 0 125 250 500 Feet



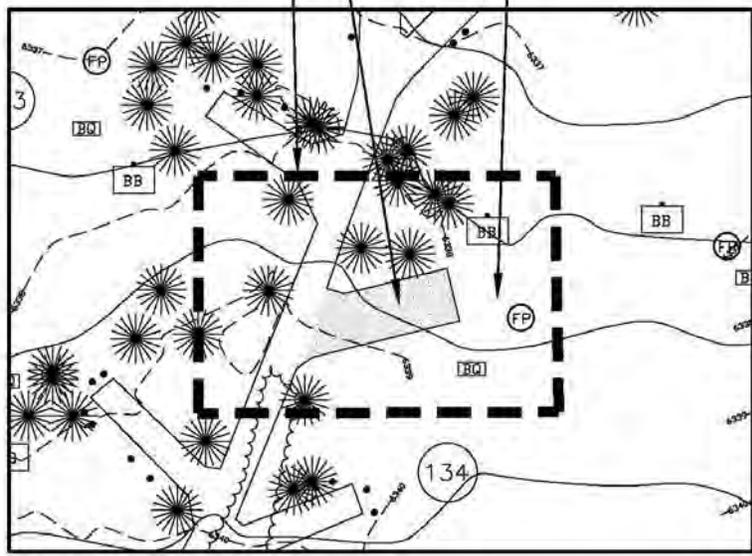
Fallen Leaf Campground
 BMP Retrofit - Area D
 US Forest Service
 Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

February 23, 2009
 Figure 6

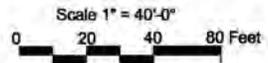
New asphalt paving at campsites to meet FSORAG standards.

Limit of Work: Install temporary BMP's as appropriate

New campsite configuration and amenities upgraded to meet FSORAG standards.



Retrofit Area E
 Create new campsite spurs with upgraded configuration to meet FSORAG standards. Typical of 8 sites.



Fallen Leaf Campground
 BMP Retrofit - Area E
 US Forest Service
 Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

February 23, 2009
 Figure 7