



File Code: 1950

Date: April 23, 2012

Dear Interested Parties:

The U.S. Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the William Kent BMP Retrofit and Administrative Site Redevelopment project (William Kent Project). The EA is available for review at the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150 and can be found on the following website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/ltbmu/WilliamKentRetrofit>

The project area is approximately 22 acres in size and is located approximately one mile south of Sunnyside-Tahoe City on Hwy 89/W Lake Blvd, Section 24, Township 15N, Range 16E. The project area consists of the William Kent campground, the William Kent administrative site, and the William Kent day use beach area. This project also includes the Meeks Bay Fire Station, located adjacent to the Meeks Bay Resort on State Highway 89.

The Forest Service is proposing to:

1) Reduce the environmental impacts and improve the recreational opportunities and associated infrastructure at the William Kent site. This will be accomplished by retrofitting the existing campground area and beach day use area with water quality protection Best Management Practices (BMPs). The proposed BMP retrofit activities fall into three categories:

- a) Install water quality protection BMPs to reduce stormwater runoff volume, reduce peak flow levels, and reduce the amount of sediment and pollutants reaching Lake Tahoe.
- b) Retrofit the campground facilities (circulation routes, improved utilities, upgraded restroom facilities, improved emergency access, and relocation of impervious areas to high capability soils).
- c) Reduce congestion along Highway 89 and within the campground (improved intersections, improved check-in kiosk circulation).

2) Construct a new fire station/administrative building and associated parking. The proposal includes a fire station with an administrative office to serve the north and west shores of Lake Tahoe. This fire station would replace the fire station at Meeks Bay, and would also provide an administrative presence for the LTBMU in this area of the basin.

3) Decommission the fire station at Meeks Bay. Install BMPs and measures to improve vehicular circulation on the former fire station site.

The proposed actions are expected to lead to improved recreation opportunities and experiences for the public, improve safety conditions for pedestrians and vehicles by reducing congestion, and reduce existing environmental effects by reducing sedimentation associated



with impervious surfaces and user impacts. The proposed fire station and administrative building would improve the fire response and visitor services available to the north and west shore of Lake Tahoe.

## **Background**

The William Kent Campground was originally constructed in 1924. The current road and campsite spur design was implemented in 1963 with 95 spurs. Six flush toilet restroom facilities were constructed in 1969. No major upgrades to the facilities have occurred since then. The restroom facilities have structural health and safety concerns, and also do not meet Forest Service accessibility standards. The camping spurs do not meet Forest Service accessibility guidelines. The small paved footprint of the camping spurs has led to off-pavement vehicular traffic and parking in areas where physical barriers are not present. Destruction of vegetation, soil compaction and erosion has resulted. The small turning radii, confusing circulation patterns and poor signage on the site often result in vehicles driving the wrong way on the one way roads, traffic congestion, and damage to trees along the roads.

A small visitor center/campground check-in kiosk sits at the entrance to the campground. The only parking for the structure is a pull-off for short term parking on the main campground access road. Once the pull-off becomes full, parking along the road edges occurs, which causes erosion, vegetation destruction, and vehicle stacking. The path to the kiosk does not meet Forest Service accessibility guidelines.

William Kent Beach has approximately 150 linear feet of pebble shoreline. It is one of the few public beaches on the western shore of Lake Tahoe. The parking lot has 9 parking spaces that are almost always full during the summer and fall months. The elevation change along the beach occurs rapidly, resulting in a steep slope that is not accessible and readily erodes directly into the lake.

A stormwater pipe discharges onto the steep beach slope and the water then flows into Lake Tahoe. The outflow path below the pipes and the wall supporting the pipes has been almost completely undermined by erosion. The stormwater pipe collects the water from an ephemeral stream channel that runs through the campground, as well as from two basins that collect road runoff. The area surrounding the channel is classified as a stream environment zone (SEZ). The stream is fed via two stormwater channels that collect water from the neighborhoods to the north and west of the site. The resulting stream is highly disturbed and channelized.

The Meeks Bay Fire Station occupies an old gas station that dates back to 1940s. The current fire station site is inadequate in many respects. In 2003 the Forest Service decided to remove and rebuild the fire station. It was decided after further analysis that the Meeks Bay site was not the optimal location for a fire station. The site is small, which does not allow enough space for a building that meets current standards, as well as adequate parking for station employees. The site does not have a year-round water source, which limits the use of the facility during winter months. Also, the function of the fire station in that location is redundant due to the presence of a Meeks Bay Fire Protection District Fire Station less than 1500 feet to the south

on Hwy 89. The majority of wildland fire response calls for the Forest Service are farther north.

The desired conditions for the project area are as follows:

1. The William Kent campground, beach, and administrative site provide a high quality recreation setting and comply with established water quality protection Best Management Practices (BMPs).
2. All developed amenities meet current construction standards and provide universal access for persons with disabilities, consistent with Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines (FSORAG) and the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA).
3. Stream channel erosion is reduced and water quality is improved.
4. Fire response, visitor information services, and administrative presence are improved on the west shore of Lake Tahoe and appropriate facilities for these functions are provided.

### **Summary of Alternatives**

The Forest Service analyzed three alternatives in detail:

- Alternative 1 – No Action. Under this alternative, no improvements would be made and the existing William Kent campground, administrative site, and beach day use area would remain unchanged. Meeks Bay administrative site would continue to be used.
- Alternative 2 – Initial Proposed Action. Under this alternative the William Kent campground would be reconstructed. This includes installation of water quality BMPs, control of vehicle circulation by redefining and paving travel routes and camping spurs, and removal of inadequate restroom buildings and construction of new toilet/shower buildings. The check-in kiosk would be relocated. A new fire station/administration building and associated infrastructure would be constructed on the location of the former house and garage on the administrative site. The Meeks Fire Station would be removed and the area rehabilitated.
- Alternative 3 – This alternative is designed to meet the purpose and need while also responding to public concerns about noise from the location of the new administrative site and the proposed circulation pattern. This alternative is the same as Alternative 2 except for the following: The new administrative building and associated infrastructure would be constructed south of the existing campground entrance road, adjacent to the private boat storage facility, and the main campground circulation road would travel through the center of the campground. Generally this moves the administrative activities and main campground access farther away from the neighborhood that lies north of the campground. The check-in kiosk and RV dump station would be located on the existing administrative site. The project design features and BMPs that are prescribed for the Proposed Action would apply to this alternative as well.

### **How to Comment and Timeframe:**

The comment period is intended to provide those interested in or potentially affected by this project an opportunity to make their concerns known prior to a decision being made by the

Responsible Official. Those who provide comments or otherwise express interest in the project by the close of the comment period will be eligible to appeal the decision pursuant to 36 CFR 215 regulations.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this project will be accepted for thirty (30) calendar days following this publication of the legal notice in the Tahoe Daily Tribune. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period.

**Written comments must be submitted to: Nancy Gibson, Forest Supervisor, LTBMU, 35 College Drive, Re: William Kent Project, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.** The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office during normal business hours via telephone (530-543-2600) or in person. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text file (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), portable document format (.pdf), or Word file (.doc) to **comments-pacificsouthwest-ltbmu@fs.fed.us, using the subject William Kent Project.** In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for appeal eligibility. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will become part of the public record for this project. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal must meet the requirements of 36 CFR 215.6.

The EA is available for review at the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA 06150 and can be found on the following website:

**<http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/ltbmu/WilliamKentRetrofit>**. Additional information regarding this proposal can be obtained from Ashley Sommer, Landscape Architect, at (530) 543-2615.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

NANCY J. GIBSON  
Forest Supervisor