Nevada Tahoe Conservation District

NEVADA TAHOE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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FY 2008 ANNUAL REPORT
July 1st, 2007 to June 30th, 2008

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MISSION STATEMENT

" TO PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE LAKE TAHOE BASIN'S NATURAL RESOURCES BY PROVIDING LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ALL BASIN USERS."

VISION STATEMENTS

Organization

"TO BE A HIGHLY RESPECTED AND EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION IN THE LAKE TAHOE BASIN WITH SUFFICIENT AND SUSTAINED FUNDING TO MEET OUR CONSERVATION EFFORTS."

Natural Resource

"A NEVADA LAKE TAHOE BASIN WHERE NATURAL RESOURCES AND NATURAL BEAUTY ARE PROTECTED AND ENHANCED IN HARMONY WITH THE USE AND ENJOYMENT OF RESIDENTS AND VISITORS."

DISTRICT SUPERVISORS*

SUPERVISORS – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Glen Smith, Chair
Barbara Perlman-Whyman, Vice Chair
Cary Sarnoff, Secretary/Treasurer

SUPERVISORS

Dan St. John
Brad Dorton
Chris Freeman, Representing Carson City
Jim Galloway, Representing Washoe and Douglas
Guy Burge Jr. – Alternate to Jim Galloway

***NTCD Board of Supervisors as of June 30th, 2008**

KEY DISTRICT STAFF

DOUG MARTIN – DISTRICT MANAGER

MARK THORPE – ADMINISTRATOR

SCOTT BROWN – SR. PROGRAM MANAGER, WATER RESOURCES GROUP

JASON BRAND – SR. PROGRAM MANAGER, BACKYARD CONSERVATION GROUP

INTRODUCTION

Nevada Tahoe Conservation District

The Nevada Tahoe Conservation District (NTCD) is one of approximately 3,000 Conservation Districts functioning in all 50 States and U.S. Territories. Conservation Districts are sub-divisions of State government and are unique locally led conservation agencies. Districts provide resource management and technical assistance to land occupiers (owners, renters, and producers) as well as work cooperatively with Federal, State, and Local governments in the delivery of conservation programs.

The Nevada Tahoe Conservation District is one of 28 Conservation Districts functioning under the auspices of Nevada Revised Statute, Chapter 548. The District is a Governmental Subdivision of the State of Nevada and a public body corporate created in 1976. Prior to July 1st, 1976 the land area that now makes up the NTCD was part of a larger Conservation District known as the Tahoe Verdi Conservation District. Local leaders realized the unique natural resource issues of the Lake Tahoe Basin and realigned District boundaries to create the NTCD. They believed the realignment would allow for more effective conservation management of Lake Tahoe's natural resources. Now the District encompasses all of the land in the Lake Tahoe Basin residing in the State of Nevada including portions of Douglas and Washoe Counties and the Carson City Rural Area.

The Nevada Tahoe Conservation District (NTCD) is Nevada Lake Tahoe's local conservation agency and source for technical assistance in the areas of erosion and conservation management. The District is a non-regulatory and grant funded agency that works closely with its Federal, State, and Local partners to deliver conservation programs to the Nevada Lake Tahoe Community. The District is guided by a Board of Supervisors made up of elected and appointed community leaders. The Board of Supervisors provides direction to the District's full time staff in carrying out the District's mission statement, vision statements, and guiding principles. As described in our mission statement, the District seeks to provide its constituents with superior technical assistance, educational resources, and conservation leadership with the goal of protecting Lake Tahoe's natural resources.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Fiscal Year 2008 proved to be another very successful and busy year for the District in terms of administration and operations. Accomplishments throughout the year focused on developing relationships with Fire Defensible Space Programs and Forest Health Programs within and outside the basin. To that end, the district assisted both Nevada Tahoe Fire Protection Districts with technical tours and assimilation of erosion and fire protection programs through enhanced communications and outreach. In addition, the district has become involved with the University of Nevada, Cooperative Extension, Living with Fire Guidelines.

Included in our accomplishments during the past year was the completion of the FY 2007 audit with an excellent rating. The audit showed a financial outlook for the District which continues to reflect a financial position of accountability. Internal controls are in place to insure the solvency of the District's funds and the two minor audit exceptions were found and correction action taken in FY 2008. These two were not receiving a report of completion from one of the GIDs and not having a back up receipt on a minor office purchase. The District also met all of its obligations to GASB 34 reporting requirements.

The District negotiated its Indirect Cost Rate with the Department of the Interior for the year 2008. The rate increased slightly to approximately 30% from the previous year's 26% and will be applied to new grants as they are developed.

Other administration and operations accomplishments for fiscal year 2008:

- Successfully held twelve regular board meetings and three special board meetings
- Approved a number of Policy and Procedures
- Participation in national and state conservation programs
- Selection to participate in Urban Conservation Roundtables nationwide.
- Selection to participate in a steering committee to establish FDS/CD interface
- Successfully completed three community grants from Carson City, Washoe and Douglas County
- Revised the District's organizational chart
- Successfully met all deliverable requirements of the Conservation Commission

District Staff and Supervisors continued to provide support for the NvACD in that we helped to coordinate and provide support to the November 2007 annual meeting in Winnemucca, Nevada and the National meeting help in February, 2008.

PROGRAMS:

WATER QUALITY AND EROSION CONTROL PROGRAM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:
Scientists, researchers, and water quality specialists in the Lake Tahoe Basin have identified untreated storm water runoff, eroding soils, and impaired or disturbed stream environment zones (SEZ) as key threats to the water quality of Lake Tahoe. The District's Water Quality and Erosion Control (WQEC) Program is focused on identifying and correcting areas where point and non-point source pollution from stormwater runoff, eroding soils, and impaired SEZs are negatively impacting the quality of Nevada Lake Tahoe surface and ground waters.

In partnership with the Nevada Division of State Lands (NDSL) and other basin agencies, the District identifies and prioritizes critical areas and projects. Once projects have been identified, the District works diligently to assist project proponents in obtaining funding from Federal, State, and Local sources to design and construct the projects. During design, the District, NDSL, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provide technical oversight to ensure the project meets the natural resource, water quality, and community objectives of the WQEC Program.

Fiscal Year 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS NDSL CONTRACT:
NTCD, in partnership with NDSL, successfully implemented one project and completed engineering on another project under the WQEC Program during FY 2008. NTCD coordinated the twelfth round of funding for the State of Nevada WQEC Grants program recommending two projects receive state funding.

Projects funded through this program focus primarily on erosion control, storm water runoff, and stream environment zone restoration. The cooperative effort between NTCD and NDSL has led to design and implementation work on the following projects:

Design Work in FY '08
Crystal Bay Phase 2
Lake Village Phase 2

Implementation Work FY '08
Crystal Bay Phase 1

FY08 saw the completion of the existing NDSL contract with NTCD. NTCD completed several final reports for various project over the past few years and summarized the costs, accomplishments, and lessons learned from those reports.

Fiscal Year 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS USDI BUREAU OF RECLAMATION GRANTS:

Two Bureau grants were used to fund the final engineering for restoration of Rosewood Creek Area F (between College Dr. and Village Blvd). All environmental documentation and permits were completed. With the help of Washoe County, the project was let for bid and awarded in July 2008.

Rosewood Creek Erosion

MONITORING PROGRAM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:
NTCD's environmental monitoring program is designed to provide answers to the scientific and natural resource questions of Lake Tahoe's resource managers. The program delivers these answers by the following means:

- Evaluation of environmental restoration projects
- Inventory of Basin-wide project accomplishments
- Assessment of surface water infiltration
- NDEP compliance monitoring
- Stream health and water quality
- Advanced surface water treatment system

Fiscal Year 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

A monitoring station with auto-sampler and solar power continues to collect data on upper portion of middle Rosewood Creek to determine background concentrations prior to implementation of the SEZ restoration project. We have joined forces with DRI to combine data from their two monitoring stations on lower Rosewood Creek. The collaborative arrangement means we jointly manage the three sample sites with funding from NDSL and USFS.

District staff has collected a 20 months of low-cost monitoring data on lower Mill Creek examining hydrology, sedimentology, and geomorphology of the creek channel and riparian zone. This monitoring was implemented in response to home owner concerns that the reintroduction of continuous flow to Mill Creek (the Mill Creek by-pass project was completed 15 Oct 2006) would increase groundwater levels and erosion. The final report for this effort is in production and should be complete in October 2008.

Generation II of the Cultured Ecologies program began with site selection in August of 2007. The criteria was a site with continuous water flow and sufficient capacity to store stormwater runoff during summer storms. An existing stormwater basin was selected at the corner of County Club and Village Blvd in Incline Village. The system was operational in January 2008 and will continue through October 2008. A final report is due in March 2009.

Lake Village water quality monitoring was complete in March 2008. Work is on-going to generate a final report.

Water quality and flow measurements were completed on Burke Creek adjacent to the Sierra Colina property in December 2007. The final report was completed with Northwest Hydraulics Consultants in March 2008.

Water quality sampling for storm and spring snow melt events continues for the Stateline Stormwater Association. The new contract includes monthly sampling to ensure NDEP permit compliance.

Glenbrook HOA sought to validate the combined treatment of runoff from public (GHOA) property and private residences. NTCD installed several nests of 5 ft peizometers in various locations in GHOA to document the depth to groundwater. Pending approval by TRPA, the combined runoff may be infiltrated in the open spaces adjacent to Glenbrook Creek. This project should be complete by February 2009.

Installing Glenbrook Groundwater Monitoring System

NTCD initiated a stream water quality monitoring program with Placer County in April 2007 that should continue through July 2009. This program will provide the pre-restoration data set for the Lake Forest restoration project. Two auto samplers and three other sites with continuous flow monitoring have been deployed. NTCD is working with DRI, UNR (graduate student), and TRCD to complete this effort.

The BMP inventory is largely complete in that project data has been collected for all entities around the lake. Some ground truthing efforts will receive additional USFS funding and extend the project until mid 2009.

BACKYARD CONSERVATION PROGRAM

BACKYARD CONSERVATION PROGRAM and CONSERVATION PLANNING GROUP

Program Overview:
The Nevada Tahoe Conservation District, in cooperation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) provides private landowners with conservation education, technical assistance, and whole parcel conservation plans through the Backyard Conservation Program (BCP). Conservation plans for private parcels include recommendations for runoff management and stormwater treatment, slope stabilization, soil protection, noxious weed removal, re-vegetation with native and adapted plants, water and fertilizer management, pest management, wildlife habitat improvements, forest management and reduction of fire hazards. NTCD promotes the program through a Community Watershed Planning process in individual communities that include workshops, educational publications, and on-site visits with homeowners.

The Backyard Conservation Program enables property owners to implement effective land management, reducing sediment and nutrient impacts on water quality in Lake Tahoe. The program also assists landowners to comply with local ordinances and Basin-wide water quality strategic plans such as the Environmental Improvement Program's project number 16: Best Management Practices (BMP) Retrofit Program.

Fiscal Year 2008 Accomplishments:
During FY 2008 the Backyard Conservation Program continued to expand the technical assistance and services provided by the program. A number of program goals were achieved during the year.

The BCP has been successful in securing funding for the 2009 fiscal year. Primary sources of funding include USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and Nevada Division of State Lands (NDSL).

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) has mailed a total of 172 enforcement letters to residents within the priority one watershed in Incline Village. In accordance with our agreement with the TRPA, NTCD's BCP provides technical assist with enforcement properties for the 2008 field season. BCP staff has assisted 109 properties with full BMP Site Evaluations and 26 properties with Technical Assistance. The BCP has assisted 135 enforcement properties in all and visited some of these properties several times.

One of the important accomplishments was the continued development of the North Lake Tahoe Demonstration Garden (NLTDG). During the past fiscal year in 2008, NTCD organized many classes and events at the garden. NTCD is currently working with the NLTDG to plan next season's activities and to finish some of the garden's development. This last season several different turf demonstration plots were planted and are currently showing different types of grasses that can be used. The garden is now close to being complete and offers visitors great physical examples of properly installed and maintained BMPs

The Conservation Planning Group has also been working on deliverables for the "Invasive Weed Abatement" grant from the Nevada Division of State Lands' "Lake Tahoe License Plate Program". Through this grant the NTCD hired a private contractor to conduct the treatment and mapping of invasive weeds with in the right of way on the Nevada side of the Lake Tahoe Basin. The BCP has worked with the contractor over the past two field seasons to successfully treat large areas of invasive weeds within the "right of way" on the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe's basin

Invasive Weeds - Bull Thistle and Oxeye Daisy

Another achievement was NTCD's BCP, within the Conservation Planning Group (CPG), has been working and planning for the National Fish and Wildlife foundation (NFWF) grant. The funds were used for education/ outreach, training, control and eradication of invasive weeds.

The CPG was awarded a contract with the Sierra Nevada Alliance for a grant that provided funds to conduct a non-point source control training. The CPG organized a one two-day training event in October of 2007. The objective was to train ~30 watershed coordinators from the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range on the need, design and proper implementation of BMPs (non-point source control).

This summer BCP staff taught a Best Management Practices Course at Sierra Nevada College and a separate class at the Lake Tahoe Community College. These courses examined the regulations, importance, and implementation of Best Management Practices in the Tahoe Basin. The classes were well received with future classes are being looked into.

The BCP staff helped coordinate and present information at the 2008 Contractors Workshop at Lake Tahoe Community College and the Contractors Refresher Workshop at TRPA. Presentations were given to contractors on the correct techniques and technology for proper installation of BMPs. The target audience is professionals who install BMPs. The Contractors Workshop had 81 Participants, 9 Vendors, 35 Speakers, Agency Staff and Comps = 125 total. The Refresher Workshop had 61 Participants, 3 Vendors, 8 Speakers & panel, 2 Agency Staff = 74 total

Another important accomplishment of the past year includes completion of **224** BMP site evaluations (erosion control and storm water), facilitation of BMP implementations on **215** private residences resulting in a Final Certificate issued from TRPA, **281** homeowners received technical assistance over the phone and the delivery of technical assistance to **320** homeowners on a variety of conservation issues. The total assistance provided through over **1040** contacts with homeowners.

In an effort to be consistent with recommendations the NTCD, NTCD, NRCS and TRPA - BMP evaluators worked toward collaboration with the Fire Protection Districts and Fire Safe Council Chapters. Together we have identified different options for working together and for delivering the same message to homeowners and public on current Fire Defensible Space recommendations. BMP Evaluators and Fire Defensible Space Evaluators are now using the current "Living with Fire" Guidelines when making recommendations for Fire Defensible space and BMPs. Conservation Districts now put

information of Site plans about the 0'-5' noncombustible zone and deliver the message that widespread use of mulch as a ground cover is no longer acceptable.

The CPG is working on the BMP Monitoring Program. The CPG examines BMP effectiveness of private residential BMPs. This project is designed to test the construction of BMPs, long-term effectiveness of BMPs and the physical hydrology metrics within these systems. Three main questions to be answered through monitoring are: (1) Was the BMP constructed and installed according to the recommendations given by NTCD? (2) How effective was the BMP at capturing, infiltrating and treating storm runoff? (3) What maintenance needs and requirements are necessary to uphold BMP functionality through time?

During FY 2008 the program continued to emphasize the importance of multi-resource conservation planning. The following are examples of projects and priorities implemented by the District during Fiscal Year 2008:

- Community Watershed Planning in the Kingsbury General Improvement District and Glenbrook communities.
- Presentations to several homeowners associations and community groups
- Implementation of the North Lake Tahoe Demonstration Garden activities
- Continued expansion of Program to shift focus from stormwater BMPs to Conservation Planning and forest health
- Helped with the Coordination of a Joint Training w NTCD, TRCD, NVFSC, STUPID and public

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

During Fiscal Year 2006, funding was provided by each of the three local county governments within NTCD's boundaries to support NTCD's conservation efforts. The funds provided by Douglas and Washoe Counties, and Carson City has and will continue to be essential to NTCD operations.

DOUGLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

NTCD applied for a community grant from the Board of Douglas County Commissioners. This grant has been deferred until an audit occurs to determine if their budget can support the grant. In addition, the county was successful in transferring $20,000 to the district from TRPA to support the stormwater utility district project.

CARSON CITY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

NTCD also applied for and received a community grant from the Carson City Board of Supervisors. Although there are very few developed areas within the Carson City Rural Area, the Board of Supervisors has recognized the benefits of protecting Lake Tahoe Basin natural resources, for the thousands of residents and visitors who vacation and recreate in the basin. The District has contacted the City regarding supporting their engineering department with residential BMP information.

WASHOE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Washoe County Commissioners also granted NTCD funding. Along with a financial award Washoe County also provides NTCD with legal support through its District Attorneys office. During the past year the District worked closely with the District Attorney's office to develop cooperative agreements and contracts which were used to provide funding to many of our local partners.

THE FUNDING PROVIDED BY WASHOE AND DOUGLAS COUNTIES AND CARSON CITY IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE NEVADA TAHOE CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S ABILITY TO CONTINUE OPERATIONS AND WE CAN NOT THANK THEM ENOUGH FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

LOCAL SUPPORT

Several GIDs and HOAs provided financial support to assist with a special study regarding the creation of a stormwater district. Those supporters included Kingsbury GID, Roundhill GID, Skyland GID, Cave Rock GID, Logan Creek HOA and Glenbrook HOA.

OTHER PARTNERS

NTCD is involved in several other partnerships in addition to our Community Partnerships. NTCD currently has Memorandums of Understanding with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, the Nevada Division of State Lands, and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. We are fortunate to have such a diverse and engaged group of partners who are dedicated to natural resource issues at Lake Tahoe.

Working groups are also an important partnership NTCD is actively involved with. Our current participation includes:

- Lake Tahoe Interagency Monitoring Program
- Lake Tahoe Environmental Education Coalition
- Lake Tahoe Weed Coordinating Group
- Stormwater Quality Improvement Committee
- Nevada Tahoe Water Suppliers Association
- TRPA Pathway Technical Working Groups
- TRPA Pathway Forum
- Lake Tahoe Federal Advisory Committee
- Nevada Stormwater Association
- Tahoe Interagency Executive Committee
- Nevada Fire Safe Council
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada
- UNCE
- Parasol Foundation
- Bonanza Community Meeting Forum
- Nevada Biomass Working Group

FUNDING

Nevada Tahoe Conservation District funding during FY 2008 was provided by Local, State and Federal partners including:

LOCAL
Washoe County
Douglas County
Carson City
Lake Village HOA
Placer County, CA
Glenbrook HOA
Cave Rock, GID
Round Hill, GID
Kingsbury, GID

STATE
NV Division of State Lands
NV Division of Conservation Districts
NV Division of Environmental Protection

FEDERAL
USDI Bureau of Reclamation
USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service
USDA Forest Service

Private
Sierra Colina
Stateline Stormwater Association
Private Agreement

A comprehensive overview or the District's finances is available in our FY – 2007 annual audit. A copy of which is available at the district or the offices of the Nevada Division of Conservation Districts