

# Urban Lot and Forest Health Management in Lake Tahoe Communities

The areas surrounding Lake Tahoe are heavily forested and intermingle with communities and neighborhoods, requiring forest management projects to continuously take place in order to maintain forest health, reduce wildfire risk, and protect public safety.

## Agency Background

**California Tahoe Conservancy** is a state agency, established in 1984, with a mission to lead California's efforts to restore and enhance the extraordinary natural and recreational resources of the Lake Tahoe Basin. The Conservancy manages nearly 4,700 state properties, totaling around 6,500 acres on the California side of the Basin. Much of this land consists of small lots located among homes in neighborhood subdivisions. To date, the Conservancy has completed at least one hazardous fuels reduction treatment on urban lots and is involved in larger scale landscape projects through their Forestry Program. Hazardous fuels reduction treatments consist of modifying or removing vegetation that can fuel severe wildfire. The Conservancy continuously schedules these treatments per location on a rotating basis.

**The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU)** of the USDA Forest Service is responsible for conservation, preservation and restoration of the Lake Tahoe ecosystem within National Forest lands in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The LTBMU works diligently to protect Lake Tahoe's natural resources and restore its ecosystems to their natural state. Established in 1973 to protect the Lake Tahoe watershed, the LTBMU encompasses over 156,000 acres of lands around Lake Tahoe. These lands are adjacent to homes, neighborhoods, and communities. LTBMU collaborates with partners to implement environmental improvement projects including restoration, forest health, and fuels reduction. There are similarities between the LTBMU and the Conservancy regarding urban lot management and partnerships on many ongoing projects.

## Ongoing Work in Fuels Reduction

**Both agencies carry out hazardous fuel reduction on their lands through actions like forest thinning and prescribed fire, important management tools used to decrease wildfire risk and restore forests to their natural state. Many forests around the basin are currently very dense and overstocked presenting extreme fire hazards for local communities.**

- The Conservancy and the LTBMU are members of the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, which formed in 2008 to reduce fuels in the wildland-urban interface (the zone where human development and wildland meet) and prepare communities for wildfire.
- The LTBMU and the Conservancy work together on urban lot hazardous fuels reduction projects through a Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) agreement. This agreement allows the Conservancy to manage hazardous fuel reduction projects on National Forest urban lots, while also managing fuels on state lands. Performing this work on both federal and state lands at the same time allows for more cohesive fuels treatments on public lands within neighborhoods. Forest thinning, prescribed burns, and pile burning, are important components of this work.
- The Conservancy uses contractors, local fire protection districts, and other agencies like California Conservation Corps (CCC) to implement most of its forestry projects. Partnerships like these allow for the Conservancy and the LTBMU to improve inter-agency communication and collaboration on forest health projects throughout the Basin, which increases the pace and scale of projects.
- The Conservancy and the LTBMU are consistently working to manage lands adjacent to homes and neighborhoods.
- The Conservancy inspects each of its open space lots at least once every two years for management issues, including the buildup of hazardous fuels and potentially hazardous dead, diseased, or dying trees.

## Stewardship Agreements

The LTBMU has a stewardship agreement that allows homeowners to conduct low-impact defensible space treatments on National Forest System land within 100 feet of their building footprint. These activities include removing pine needle and surface litter, pruning trees, and removing brush (specific guidelines are provided in the agreement). On behalf of the LTBMU, local fire district staff can meet with residents through this agreement, assess their property, and discuss its terms. For more information on initiating a stewardship agreement, use the contact information below. Local fire district staff may issue a stewardship agreement for interested residents.

To learn more about the specific projects that the LTBMU and the Conservancy are involved in, the protocols they follow, or how to contact them directly, please see the list of resources below:

### USDA Forest Service

If there is an urban lot owned by the LTBMU that you are concerned about, contact their urban lot line and then provide them with your address. You can enter into an agreement to work on their land if the lot is adjacent to your property. They can provide you with more information surrounding the agreement.

#### **Contact:**

Phone: (530) 543-2759

Learn more on their website:

<https://tinyurl.com/23tdrptp>



### California Tahoe Conservancy

If you have a concern about the condition of a Conservancy lot, please contact them using the information below. This is especially important if a "hazard tree" is located on the lot. A hazard tree is one with a structural defect that makes it likely to fail in whole or in part. Such trees pose a risk to people or property.

#### **Contact:**

Phone: (530) 543-5580 Email: [info@tahoe.ca.gov](mailto:info@tahoe.ca.gov)

Visit their website for more info:  
<https://tahoe.ca.gov/report-an-issue/>



LTBMU & Conservancy  
Informational  
Publications



Map of Current Fuels  
Reduction Projects



LTBMU Current  
Projects



The Conservancy's Forestry  
Webpage