

REMEMBERING ANGORA

10 *years later*



Photo: Tahoe Daily Tribune

ANGORA FIRE COMMEMORATION  
JUNE 24, 2017

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# THE ANGORA FIRE

Years of fire suppression, hazardous fuels accumulation, drought, and a warming climate have made Lake Tahoe's forests extremely vulnerable to catastrophic wildfire. On June 24, 2007, embers from an illegal and abandoned campfire ignited one of the most destructive fires in Tahoe's history. The Angora Fire, stoked by strong winds and overgrown forests, destroyed 254 homes and structures within hours and burned 3,100 acres. The fire was fully contained in just four days thanks to firefighting efforts.

Angora showed that wildfires can and will happen at Lake Tahoe, and can have devastating impacts. Today, more than 20 agencies are working together as the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT) to reduce wildfire risk, improve the health of Tahoe's forests, and partner with residents to help them take important steps to become fire adapted communities.

## FOREST HEALTH *by the numbers:*

Within the burn area:

**1,100**  
acres of reforestation

**2,000**  
feet of stream channel  
restoration

More than

**48,000**

acres of treatment to clear  
forests of hazardous fuels  
since the Angora Fire

**1,000**

annual homeowner requests for fire chipping services  
supporting defensible space compliance

**27,500**

defensible space inspections completed

**50%**

of forest in the wildland urban  
interface treated to reduce  
hazardous fuels

*Note: all statistics above are since the  
2007 Angora Fire unless otherwise noted.*

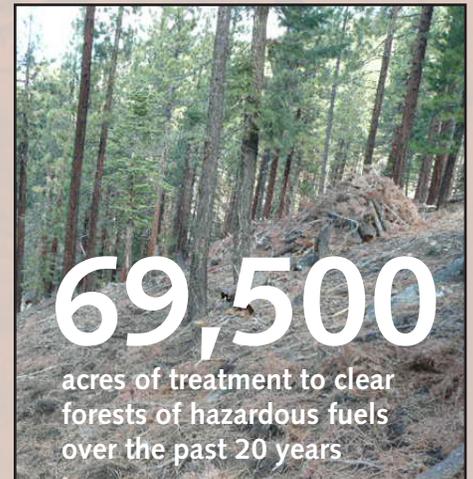


Photo: U.S. Forest Service



Photo: Tahoe Daily Tribune



Photo: Tom Loshaw

# ANGORA FIRE LESSONS LEARNED

Intense logging during the Comstock era in the late 1800s clear cut almost the entire Lake Tahoe Basin and left the forest decimated. While the forests grew back over the next 100 years, they grew back in an unnaturally thick and even-aged state. By 2007, Tahoe's forests were in a state of emergency. Years of fire suppression and hazardous fuels accumulation left Tahoe's forest extremely vulnerable to catastrophic wildfire. The Angora Fire raised critical awareness about the need to thin and treat forested areas in the wildland urban interface (WUI) where our forests and communities meet.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Formed the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team that represents 20 partner agencies charged with reducing catastrophic wildfire risk and creating fire adapted communities.
- Updated the Lake Tahoe Basin Community Wildfire Protection Plan and the 10-year Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy—road maps for implementing projects that improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk.
- Completed all restoration projects in the Angora burn area, including 1,100 acres of reforestation and 2,000 feet of stream channel restoration.
- More than 48,000 acres of forest fuel treatments to reduce wildfire risk in the most dangerous wildland urban interface areas since 2007.

- Following the Angora Fire, the pace and scale of treatments across all jurisdictions were increased, due to the success of U.S. Forest Service fuel treatments implemented prior to the fire.

## PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES

Unprecedented challenges threaten progress on restoring resilient landscapes and creating fire adapted communities around Lake Tahoe. Catastrophic wildfire continues to pose a risk, and prolonged drought and bark beetles could cause massive tree die-offs. To address these challenges, the TFFT is focused on:

- Implementing a landscape-scale approach to forest restoration and watershed health.
- Completing initial treatment of the WUI while maintaining effectiveness of previous treatments.
- Streamlining regulations across jurisdictions to increase the pace and scale of projects that strengthen our forest's resilience to wildfire, climate change, drought, insects, and disease.
- Monitoring forest conditions and developing strategies to address drought-related tree mortality.
- Completing pre-attack and evacuation planning in high-risk communities.
- Adopting building code standards to improve structure fire resistance and reduce flammability in the WUI.
- Increasing water capacity and delivery for fire suppression activities.

## 10 YEARS LATER

Following the Angora Fire, an Emergency Bi-State Fire Commission was formed by the Governors of California and Nevada. The Fire Commission developed 90 recommendations to reduce the risk of wildfire in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Most recommendations have been completed.

Ten years later, through the diligent work of multiple agencies and the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, thousands of acres of hazardous fuels adjacent to communities have been treated, fire agencies are actively conducting defensible space inspections around homes, and public education and outreach continue through the Tahoe Network of Fire Adapted Communities and Living With Fire programs.



Photo: David Safanda

From the early stages of the Angora disaster, a generous and resilient Lake Tahoe community rose to meet the challenges of rebuilding. Residents, community leaders, land managers, and fire agencies recognize the similar threats faced throughout the Tahoe Basin and have taken action to prepare for the next wildfire.

## FUNDING

Tahoe Basin forests in both California and Nevada have benefited largely from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act White Pine amendment. Since the Angora fire, \$58.5 million in federal funding has supported forest health restoration projects. This includes \$25 million awarded in 2016.

## PARTNERSHIPS MOVING FORWARD

### Lake Tahoe West Restoration Partnership

The goal of the Lake Tahoe West Restoration Partnership is to build the resilience of West Shore forests, watersheds, recreational opportunities, and communities. The partnership will develop and implement a multi-jurisdictional, landscape-scale strategy to restore and protect private, state, federal, and tribal land totaling approximately 59,000 acres on the California side of the Tahoe Basin—from Emerald Bay to Squaw Valley.

### Fuel Reduction in the Wildland-Urban Interface

TFFT organizations are planning thousands of acres of projects to reduce fire behavior and improve forest health in the areas at greatest risk of catastrophic wildfire. One such project—the West Shore WUI Project—will result in nearly 5,000 acres of restoration and connect previously treated areas on both federal and non-federal lands.

### Tahoe Network of Fire Adapted Communities

The Tahoe Network, spearheaded by the Tahoe Resource Conservation District, is strengthening the partnerships between residents and fire agencies to create defensible space and prepare for emergency action.

### The Fire Public Information Team (FIRE PIT)

The FIRE PIT keeps the public informed and engaged in forest health activities by coordinating outreach campaigns, events, and materials, and is the Lake Tahoe clearinghouse for prescribed fire information.

### Lake Tahoe Basin Tree Mortality Task Force

The Task Force was formed to build forest resilience to large-scale bark beetle infestations. The Task Force integrates with the existing work in the Region focused on widespread tree mortality, improving forest health, and removing dead and dying trees.

*The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT) consists of representatives of Tahoe Basin fire agencies, CAL FIRE, Nevada Division of Forestry and related state agencies, University of California and Nevada Cooperative Extensions, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, the U.S. Forest Service, conservation districts from both states, the California Tahoe Conservancy and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. Our mission is to protect lives, property, and the environment within the Lake Tahoe Basin from wildfire by implementing prioritized fuels reduction projects and engaging the public in becoming a fire adapted community. For more information, visit [www.tahoefft.org](http://www.tahoefft.org).*

*Published by the Tahoe Fire & Fuels Team – June 2017*

