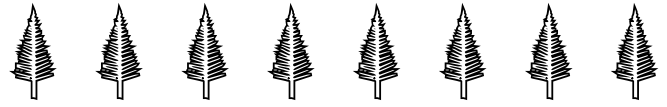


# URBAN LOT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM – Lake Tahoe Basin



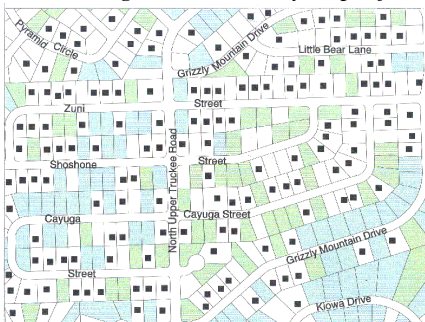
## Why does the Forest Service own urban parcels in your neighborhood?

In the 1960s an alarming decrease in lake clarity was recognized as being attributed to factors caused by accelerated development. In 1980 Congress passed the Santini-Burton Act, which authorized the Forest Service to acquire environmentally sensitive lands to protect Lake Tahoe. Since 1982, under the Santini-Burton Purchase Program, the Forest Service has acquired over 3,500 parcels totaling 13,000 acres. Around the same time, both the states of California (California Tahoe Conservancy) and Nevada (State Division of Lands) developed similar land acquisition programs.

## BENEFITS OF URBAN INTERMIX PARCELS

Acquiring environmentally sensitive lands helps to mitigate the negative impacts of development on Lake Tahoe's watersheds by reducing the amount of impervious surfaces (roads and buildings) and maintaining the natural hydrologic function of undisturbed forest areas. These lands also increase the amount of valuable, less fragmented habitat necessary for the proliferation of Lake Tahoe's native plant and animal communities. Acquired urban parcels provide open space amongst development, enhancing Tahoe's renowned scenic beauty, great recreational opportunities, and quality of life. Consequently, these urban parcels also have a positive impact on private property values.

## Which neighborhood do you prefer?



Top: Map showing the (2002) ownership pattern in the North Upper Truckee area, (South Shore of Lake Tahoe). Shaded parcels are National Forest or California Tahoe Conservancy acquired lots, and white parcels are privately owned lots with black squares representing developed parcels. Note: the average lot size is 0.25 acres.



Bottom: Map showing what the same North Upper Truckee area would look like with all available parcels developed.

## MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Forest Service management on urban intermix parcels is limited to activities that are appropriate for residential areas, with an emphasis on protecting water quality and community open space. The following is a list of current management activities occurring on National Forest urban intermix parcels:

### Hazard tree abatement

Trees that have been identified as a hazard to life or property are removed.

### Fuels/Fire hazard reduction and Forest health thinning

- Reduces potential fire behavior (rate of spread and fire intensity) through removal of dead fuels and modifying fuel continuity and arrangement.
- Improves forest health and promotes species diversity through removal of dead, dying, and diseased trees and thinning of overcrowded conifer stands.
- Provides improved defensible space and fire protection to adjoining private lands.



Top: Shows National Forest urban parcel located in Rubicon Bay, CA (West shore of Lake Tahoe). This heavily forested urban parcel is directly below several homes.



Bottom: Shows the same urban parcel after a fuels reduction thinning project.

\*a red "x" marks the same point in each picture

### Noxious Weed Prevention and Control

Noxious weeds are non-native, invasive plants that can out-compete native vegetation. The Forest Service controls the spread of weeds by monitoring and hand-treating known populations, and employing prevention techniques (weed-free materials & equipment cleaning).

## Resource and Public Lands Protection

National Forest urban lots are public lands not to be claimed by individuals for private exclusive use. The effects of encroachments on urban parcels are detrimental both publicly and environmentally. Public access is denied anytime National Forest System lands are modified to resemble private property, through landscaping, lawns, and fenced areas. In addition, encroachments often have the potential to cause damage to soils and vegetation, leading to the degradation of the hydrologic function these lands are intended to serve. In many cases, trespasses interfere with planned hazardous fuels or hazard tree abatement projects and must be resolved prior to management.

Common encroachments or unauthorized uses include:

- Temporary or permanent storage of personal property (wood piles, boats, trailers, swing sets, tree houses, etc...)
- Unauthorized vehicular access and parking
- Construction of temporary and permanent structures (driveways, fences, sheds, etc...)
- Landscaping including rock work, non-native plants, lawns, etc...
- Disturbing land by cutting or removing trees and other vegetation, rocks, or other natural features (without a permit)
- Construction of trails and roads
- Refuse dumping
- Posting private property and no trespassing signs
- Snow removal (blading, pushing, or dumping snow outside dedicated easements)



Above: Shows National Forest urban parcels in Meyers, CA (South shore of Lake Tahoe) where neighboring property is using lot for access to back side of home. Continued use has created a well defined compacted road bed which has damaged the soils, preventing vegetation growth.

Management Activities continued...

## Watershed Restoration Projects

These projects are aimed to improve soil and water resources and may include:

- Obliteration of unauthorized roads and trails
- Erosion control and soil stabilization
- Re-vegetation and reforestation of disturbed or barren areas
- Barrier construction to prevent unauthorized uses

## Monitoring Research and Adaptive Management

The Forest Service monitors urban parcels to determine their existing conditions. Data collected includes forest health conditions, soil and water quality conditions, presence of noxious weeds, encroachment activity, and management needs. The data collected during these monitoring visits helps to determine the effectiveness of completed project work and the need for management in the future.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP!

- **Help fuels reduction:** Get a permit to clean up dead wood, downed trees, forest debris, and thin small trees – since 1991 the Forest Service has worked with adjoining property owners to reduce hazardous fuels and improve defensible space.
- **Protect resources:** Be a good neighbor by ensuring that the use of your private property does not extend onto adjoining National Forest System lands.
- **Participate in our monitoring activities:** Help us collect data on parcels in your neighborhood.
- **Let us know about problems:** If you see potentially hazardous trees, noxious weed infestations, encroachments, or other conditions on National Forest System lands you feel we should know about, please call our office.



Left: Shows a hazard tree (dead tree in center of photo) on a National Forest urban parcel located in Carnelian Bay, CA (North shore of Lake

**For more information please visit our website:**

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/lbmu/about/urban-lots/index>

**If you have any questions please visit or call us at:**

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(530) 543-2600 (main)

(530) 543-0956 (TTY)

(530)543-2759 (Hazard Tree line)