



# California Tahoe Conservancy

## Managing Forest Health and Wildfire Risk on Conservancy Lands

The California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) owns and manages nearly 4,700 properties, totaling around 6,500 acres within the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin. Most Conservancy properties are small, undeveloped parcels—a half acre in size or smaller—located among homes in neighborhood subdivisions. Since the early 1990s, the Conservancy has managed vegetation on its lands to maintain forest health, reduce wildfire risk, and protect public safety. To date, the Conservancy has completed at least one hazardous fuels reduction treatment on all of its neighborhood lots. Additionally, at its larger properties adjacent to neighborhoods—for example, the 500-acre Upper Truckee Marsh on the south shore—the Conservancy has completed strategic vegetation and hazardous fuel treatments. The Conservancy will continue to treat fuels on these properties on a regular rotation (see below).

### How the Conservancy Manages Wildfire Risk and Forest Health on its Land

The Conservancy manages vegetation on its lands to modify fire behavior so that if fires occur, they will burn with less intensity and be easier to control. The Conservancy designs vegetation treatments on its smaller neighborhood parcels to complement State-mandated defensible space requirements on residential properties. The Conservancy designs hazardous fuels reduction projects on its larger properties adjacent to neighborhoods to protect communities from fires originating in the wildland that could move into the neighborhoods, and vice versa.

For properties that must be thinned by hand, the Conservancy schedules treatments about every ten years. The Conservancy mechanically treats less sensitive and more accessible properties on a 15-to-20-year cycle. Fuels management is an ongoing process and site-specific conditions—such as available sunlight, water, nutrients, and growing space—drive the timing of actual treatments. In some cases, parcels may require maintenance treatments prior to the ten-year mark.

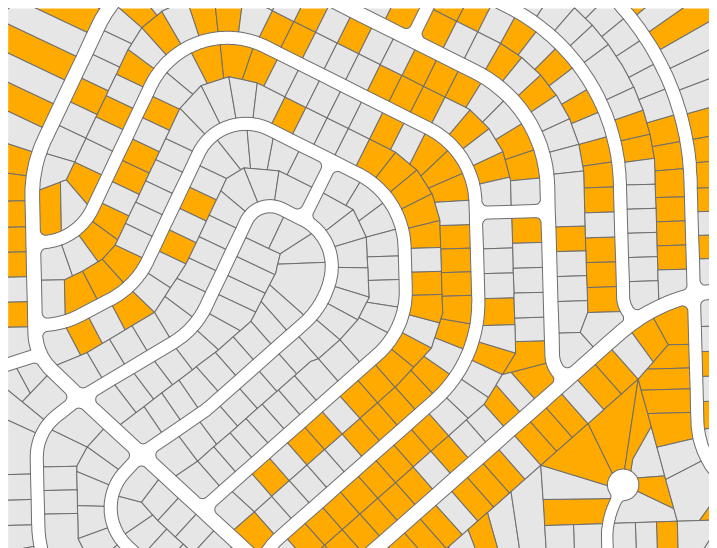
### Inspections Every Two Years

The Conservancy inspects all its parcels at least every two years for management issues, including the buildup of hazardous fuels and potentially-hazardous dead, diseased, or dying trees. Three circumstances can initiate a fuel hazard reduction project on Conservancy-owned land.

1. Ten years have passed since the Conservancy last treated a parcel,
2. The Conservancy identifies excessive hazardous fuels during regular inspection, or
3. A community member reports concerns about vegetation and the Conservancy verifies that conditions warrant treatment.



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**Report a Hazard Tree or Other Issues  
on Conservancy Lands**

[tahoe.ca.gov/report](http://tahoe.ca.gov/report) • 530-542-5580

For emergencies, please first call 911



With support from CAL FIRE Amador-El Dorado Unit, California Conservation Corps members conduct pile burning on Conservancy land near the Upper Truckee River in El Dorado County, helping to reduce wildfire risk while improving forest health and restoring floodplain meadow habitat.

## Ensuring Fire Safety and Forest Health

Site-specific conditions can also govern the type of vegetation targeted for removal.

- In an upland forest environment, the Conservancy typically removes ladder fuels comprised of small conifers and shrub species (such as greenleaf manzanita), due to their flammability and ability to carry fire from the ground into the forest canopy.
- Vegetation along streams—particularly willow and alder species—is less flammable than upland vegetation due to its greater moisture content. To maintain the beneficial environmental functions of riparian zones while ensuring fire safety, the Conservancy removes encroaching conifers and dead/decadent portions of willow, but does not remove live willow and alder.

## Improving Forest Management Partnerships

For over three decades, the Conservancy has successfully reduced hazardous fuels while enhancing forest health on its lands. The State of California and federal agencies have prioritized forest management and provided increased funding available for projects.

The Conservancy will strengthen its partnerships with other members of the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, which formed in 2008 to reduce fuels in the wildland-urban interface and prepare communities for wildfire. The partnership includes 21 federal, tribal, state, and local fire, conservation, and land management agencies. Such partnerships allow the Conservancy to improve how it plans and implements forest health treatments, including operational and financial efficiencies, while addressing State and federal mandates.



Thinning trees by hand on Conservancy land. The Conservancy designs and implements treatments to modify fire behavior on approximately a ten-year cycle for hand-treated areas.



The Conservancy plans treatments for mechanically-treated areas on a 15-to-20-year cycle.

The California Tahoe Conservancy is a State agency, established in 1985, with a mission to lead California's efforts to restore and enhance the extraordinary natural and recreational resources of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

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