

Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The Lake Tahoe Basin is world renowned for its scenic beauty and extraordinary living and recreational opportunities. Effective planning for and management of the resources that have made it so attractive to residents and visitors is critical to the long term environmental, social and economic viability of the region.

In 2001, four agencies with responsibilities for resource planning in the Lake Tahoe Basin - the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region, (Lahontan Water Board) and the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) - recognized an opportunity to align their management direction and policies as they began three major resource planning efforts. The Pathway 2007 program was developed as a means to collaborate with one another and with other interested parties to establish a common vision and desired conditions for the resources of the Lake Tahoe Basin for the future. Since 2001, extensive efforts have been dedicated to identify the direction and goals for future resource management in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The Pathway 2007 agencies appreciate the efforts of their staff, other resource management agencies, other technical experts, the Pathway Forum and other representatives of the varying interests and communities of the Lake Tahoe Basin in addressing the important and complex needs of the region into the future.

The Pathway Agencies are pleased to present this report to summarize the collaborative recommendations for future management of the resources of the Lake Tahoe Basin. These recommendations have been developed based on a comprehensive evaluation of available technical information, legal review and public input. The recommendations presented here will serve as the basis for future resource planning efforts of the Pathway agencies.

1.1 Pathway 2007 Overview

Pathway 2007 is a collaborative planning program with the intent of establishing the long term direction and goals for resource management within the Lake Tahoe Basin. This program was initiated by four agencies tasked with managing Lake Tahoe Basin environmental resources. These four agencies came together as they began to develop significant resource management plans per their individual mandates. The Pathway agencies and their respective planning documents are:

- The United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS), Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) manages over 80 percent of the land area in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) is scheduled to be revised in 2008.
- The bi-state Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) is responsible for protecting all environmental resources as well as land use and transportation planning for the overall Lake Tahoe Basin. The existing Regional Plan covers a 20-year period, with some authorities ending in 2007 (unless extended such as allocations for new development). An updated Regional Plan is anticipated for adoption in 2008.

Pathway 2007 Evaluation Report

04-05-07 draft document – for discussion purposes only – do not cite

- The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region, (Lahontan Water Board) is responsible for protecting the water quality in the California portion of the Lake Tahoe Basin. The Lahontan Water Board, working with the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, is developing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for pollutants that reduce the clarity of Lake Tahoe. The TMDL will advance implementation planning and serve as the foundation for comprehensive policy and program development for the effective restoration of Lake Tahoe's famed clarity.
- The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) is responsible for protecting all environmental resources in the Nevada portion of the Lake Tahoe Basin. The NDEP is working cooperatively with the Lahontan Water Board to develop the TMDL.

These agencies recognize that there are many other agencies, organizations and the public with responsibilities and interests related to resource management in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Pathway 2007 has provided numerous opportunities for these interested parties to provide invaluable input in the development of the resource management visions and goals.

The intent of the Pathway 2007 collaborative process is to establish common long-term visions and goals for the intrinsic resources of the Lake Tahoe Basin to serve as a basis for development of the individual plans of the four Pathway agencies.

The Pathway 2007 process was established with four major tasks:

1. Establish a desirable future for the environment and community values of the Lake Tahoe Basin, expressed as vision and desired condition statements for each of ten resource areas. (Note: All four Pathway agencies did not participate in the development for all resource areas – only those resources for which those agencies have a mandate.)
2. Determine the “indicators” that effectively measure the environmental, social and economic conditions related to the desired conditions.
3. Determine the measurable standards that will best represent the desired conditions.
4. Determine how these standards should be used within the legal framework of the individual agencies' planning requirements.

This report presents the recommendations of the Pathway agencies for the first three tasks listed above. These recommendations will serve as the basis for the planning documents of the individual Pathway agencies. Task four will be implemented through the further development of the individual agency planning processes.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of the *Pathway 2007 Evaluation Report* is to present the recommendations of the Pathway agencies regarding the long term management goals for the Lake Tahoe Basin. The Pathway vision, desired conditions, indicators and standards are recommended for ten key resource areas of the Lake Tahoe Basin. These recommendations are based on a comprehensive review of the technical, legal and public interest information compiled to date.

Definition of Important Pathway Terms

Desired Condition

Desired conditions describe the ecological, economic, physical, and social attributes that characterize or exemplify the outcomes of land management and, or land use regulations.

Indicator

A measurable parameter or an index of multiple measurable parameters used to track progress toward achieving a desired condition and/or standard. Indicators are measures that change in response to human activity and can be used to assess the quality of resource or experience conditions.

Standard

A numerical target related to an indicator that defines successful achievement of a desired condition. For purposes of this document the term standard does not imply that the numeric target is legally binding or enforceable.

It is the intent of the Pathway agencies to incorporate recommendations for the resource areas over which they have purview into their respective planning documents. However, not all resource areas or elements thereof fall under the purview of every Pathway agency. Therefore, not all recommendations will be adopted by each agency. Furthermore, while Pathway agencies may express general support of recommendations for resource areas under their purview, they may choose not to pursue adoption of specific recommendations determined to be inconsistent with existing regulations and/or not in the best interest of their agency, state or constituency.

It is important to note that each of the agencies' planning processes are subject to further public input and to adoption by each agencies' respective board, commission or agency official. Changes may be made during those proceedings. In addition, the authorities for implementation of the recommendations may overlap between agencies. In those cases, a lead agency may be identified to avoid multiple agency programs intended to implement the same recommended resource goals.

While the recommendations presented herein are based on the best information available to date, the Pathway agencies note that some resource parameters are still under development. These recommendations may be adapted as they are further evaluated and developed.

Pathway 2007 Evaluation Report

04-05-07 draft document – for discussion purposes only – do not cite

This report also presents the framework for an adaptive management system to track progress and adapt the goals and measures as new information becomes available. The adaptive management system will continue to be developed through further collaboration among the Pathway agencies.

1.3 Content and Document Organization

Chapter 1-Introduction provides introductory information including a brief introduction of the Pathway 2007 planning process. The intended purposes of the Pathway process and this document are also identified.

Chapter 2-Background provides important background information regarding the Lake Tahoe Basin. A detailed overview of the Pathway planning process is also presented.

Chapter 3-Management Systems presents the purpose and function of the management system being developed as part of Pathway 2007.

Chapters 4 through 13 present the Pathway agencies' recommendations regarding each of ten key resource areas and a summary of the basis for those recommendations:

- Chapter 4 – Water Quality
- Chapter 5 - Soils/ Stream Environment Zones
- Chapter 6 – Air Quality
- Chapter 7 – Noise
- Chapter 8 – Transportation
- Chapter 9 – Wildlife and Fisheries
- Chapter 10 – Vegetation
- Chapter 11 – Scenic Quality
- Chapter 12 – Recreation
- Chapter 13 – Socio-Economics

The report provides a discussion for each resource area. The format for the chapter for the Water Quality resource is presented below as an illustration for all resource chapters.

Resource Chapter Formats

The cover sheet for each resource area chapter provides a summary diagram of the proposed vision, desired conditions, indicators and standards for the resource area. This diagram provides a single point of reference for the recommendations regarding the resource.

Section 4.0 provides introductory and background information related to the resource area. The existing framework for planning regarding the resource is presented. Public input regarding the resource area is also presented.

Section 4.1 presents the Vision statement for the resource and describes overarching issues related to the resource area.

Section 4.2 addresses the need for changes to current management direction for the resource area.

Pathway 2007 Evaluation Report

04-05-07 draft document – for discussion purposes only – do not cite

Section 4.3 presents the first set of recommended desired condition, indicators and standards for the resource area. This section is broken down as follows:

- 4.3.1 Proposed indicator that measures the condition of concern.
- 4.3.2 Current condition and trends for the resource.
- 4.3.3 Technical feasibility discussion related to the desired condition.
- 4.3.4 The recommended desired condition and proposed standard.

Section 4.4 to 4.X present additional desired conditions, indicators and standards in the same format as that described under Section 4.3.

Section 4.Y identifies the need for further considerations regarding the resource area as planning efforts move forward.

Each resource chapter in the *Pathway 2007 Evaluation Report* is a summary based upon a detailed technical companion – the *Pathway 2007 Technical Supplement*. The resource chapters of the *Technical Supplement* present detailed technical information and discussion related to each resource area. The *Technical Supplement* also addresses the information needs of technical reviewers and informed members of the public that require more detailed information than is presented in the primary report. The *Technical Supplements* will be posted to the Pathway 2007 web site: www.pathway2007.org.

Chapter 14 provides a glossary for acronyms and terms used in the report.

Chapter 15 presents the acknowledgements.

1.4 Future Planning

The recommendations presented in this *Pathway 2007 Evaluation Report* are the result of extensive effort and investment by the Pathway 2007 agencies' staff, contractors and technical advisors, the Pathway Forum and numerous other agencies and public interest groups. These recommendations make significant progress towards establishing unified management direction between the Pathway 2007 agencies that is consistent with public concerns. It incorporates the best available science to date and identifies those instances where further scientific investigation is needed.

The Pathway agencies will now focus their attention on the development of their individual planning processes, as discussed above.

The Pathway agencies are committed to continue to collaborate with one another as the individual agency documents are developed to ensure consistency between those separate plans. The Pathway agencies will also continue to collaborate on the development of additional programs necessary for effective management of the Lake Tahoe Basin, including:

- Adaptive Management System
- Resource Monitoring Plan
- Environmental Improvement Program Update
- The Science Plan