



Chapter 7 Recreational Resources

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The following chapter is an analysis of the location, ownership, and types of publicly- and privately-owned lands used for parks and recreational activities within the city of South Lake Tahoe, as well as a discussion of partnerships and cooperative relationships of recreational facilities within the city.

This chapter is organized into the following sections:

- Introduction (Section 7.1)
- Recreational Activities and Facilities (Section 7.2)
- Partnerships and Cooperative Relationships (Section 7.3)

7.2 RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES

Introduction

Lake Tahoe is one of the world's most popular tourist attractions. From the picturesque mountains in the backdrop, to the numerous recreational opportunities at the lake and at facilities surrounding the lake, there are activities for almost anyone. There are also restaurants, casinos, and retail shops for indoor activity lovers. However, outdoor recreation and visitation associated with Lake Tahoe is the primary economic engine of the city. As of 2005 there were approximately 3,600,000 annual visitors to the Tahoe Region.

This section identifies the major park and recreation facilities that are operated and maintained by the City of South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Department. This section also discusses State and Federal parks located within the city and General Plan Area.

Major Findings

- The Tahoe Basin is known worldwide for its dramatic scenery and many recreational opportunities.
- There is a mixture of recreational opportunities within the city and General Plan Area, with plenty of winter and summer activities.



Existing Conditions

The City of South Lake Tahoe has identified four classes of parks with associated service standards. These park standards provide a guide for the allocation of recreational space and facilities for people in a given area. Each class of parks provides different amenities, resources, and capacities. These classifications and standards are outlined below.

Existing City Recreational Facilities

The City of South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains seven recreational facilities and one visitor center:

- **Bijou Community Park.** Bijou Community Park is located at 1201 Al Tahoe Boulevard at the corner of Johnson Boulevard and Al Tahoe Boulevard. This park is known mainly for its 27-hole championship disc golf course. The park has other features including a skateboard park, group picnic areas, a gazebo/bandstand, a playground, a game court area, sand volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, a fitness trail, and a central concession/restroom building.
- **Bijou Municipal Golf Course.** The Bijou Municipal Golf Course is located at 3464 Fairway Avenue. The nine-hole executive course is open between the months of April and October. Golf course facilities include a clubhouse, snack bar, putting green, and pro shop. Golf club and pull cart rentals are available. The green fee is discounted for El Dorado County residents.
- **Campground by the Lake.** Campground by the Lake is located at 1150 Rufus Allen Boulevard. The campground is open to the public between the months of April and October and includes overnight sites for tent campers as well as for recreational vehicles (RV) campers with or without electric and water hookups. There is also one cabin for rent. The additional amenities on the site includes a camp store, a horseshoe pit, a dog walking area, a bike path around a portion of the perimeter of the site, a group camp site, and restrooms, showers, and water faucets throughout the campground. The site is near a boat ramp that provides free boat launching.
- **Connolly Beach.** Connolly Beach is a small beach located along US 50 behind Timber Cove Lodge. There are restrooms and picnic areas on site.
- **El Dorado Beach.** El Dorado Beach is located several hundred yards east of Regan Beach. This site includes a boat launch and a number of barbecues. There is no charge to use this site.
- **Explore Tahoe Visitors Center.** The City of South Lake Tahoe owns and operates this interagency visitor center. The center was developed and is run in partnership with the California Tahoe Conservancy and the United States Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. The center is located on the ground floor of Heavenly Village's Transit Center, and is named "Explore Tahoe: An Urban Trailhead." The center was designed to display exhibits detailing the importance of alternative transportation, such as the BlueGo and Amtrak systems, to protect Lake Tahoe's natural resources.



- **Recreation and Swim Pool Complex.** The Recreation and Swim Pool Complex is located at 1180 Rufus Allen Boulevard. The complex consists of one 25-yard year-round indoor/outdoor swimming pool, a gymnasium, a weight room, a kitchen, a crafts room, meeting rooms, changing/shower facilities, outdoor volleyball and basketball courts, a picnic area, and the Parks and Recreation Department offices. The Recreation Complex hosts the Morning Toddler program, Kids Club, Friday Evening “Parents Night Out,” and middle school dances, as well as other programs.
- **Regan Beach.** Regan Beach is located at the corner of Lakeview Avenue and Fresno Avenue. The site which is not located directly at the waterfront is more of a lakeside park than a beach, but there are stairs to get down to the beach. The site includes a volleyball court, a playground, a snack bar, and a grassy area that is mostly used for weddings. There is no fee to use the volleyball court, playground, or snack bar facilities, but there is a fee for weddings.
- **South Lake Tahoe Community Playfields.** The South Lake Tahoe Community Playfields are located at 1300 Al Tahoe Boulevard. The 110,000-square-foot facility has synthetic turf multi-use playfields, a warm-up area, a parking lot, and restrooms.
- **South Tahoe Ice Arena.** The South Tahoe Ice Arena is located at 1176 Rufus Allen Boulevard. The ice arena contains a regulation National Hockey League (NHL) size ice rink, locker rooms, a snack bar, a retail store/pro shop, an arcade, and party rooms. The arena hosts many activities such as public skate sessions and ice skating and hockey lessons, programs, tournaments, and exhibitions/competitions.
- **South Tahoe Senior Center.** The South Tahoe Senior Center is located at 3050 Lake Tahoe Boulevard. The senior center is a 10,000-square-foot facility with meeting rooms, an arts and crafts room, a dance room, a library, a computer lab, a lounge, and a commercial kitchen. The senior center offers services such as free health screenings, free legal services, a nutrition program, and exercise classes. Activities at the senior center include painting classes, line dance classes, bridge groups, bingo, a dominoes group, and other support groups. The senior center also provides transportation around South Lake Tahoe on Tuesday through Friday. Big Band Dances are also held approximately once a month at the senior center.

Existing Regional Recreational Facilities

Please see Section 5.4 Bikeways.

Existing State Recreational Facilities

The State of California operates two recreational facilities within the General Plan Area:

- **Lake Valley State Recreation Area.** The Lake Valley State Recreation Area (SRA) is located at 2500 Emerald Bay Road (US 50) and is approximately 155 acres in size. The SRA includes a championship 18-hole golf course open from May to October, with amenities such as a clubhouse, a driving range, practice greens, and power carts. There are also facilities that can host weddings and banquets. Between November and April, the SRA has snowmobile rentals and



cross country skiing. According to the California State Park Statistical Report for the fiscal year 2006-2007, the Lake Valley SRA earned \$498,664 in concessions.

- **Washoe Meadows State Park.** The Washoe Meadows State Park is located at Sawmill Road and Lake Tahoe Boulevard. The 627-acre park site is currently undeveloped. The site includes meadows and woodlands at the base of the escarpment leading to Echo Summit. There are some hiking trails and water features on site.

Existing Federal Recreational Facilities

Federal agencies operate two recreational facilities within the General Plan Area:

- **Pope Beach.** Pope Beach is a one-mile long, 300-foot wide strip of sand separating Truckee Marsh and Lake Tahoe. The entrance is located approximately two miles from the junction of US 50 and SR 89, just southeast of the Camp Richardson entrance. There are parking facilities, as well as restrooms along the beach. There are barbecues, but they are occasionally removed by the Forest Service. Since the beach is operated by the U.S. Forest Service, there is a \$5 entry fee (2007).
- **Sawmill Pond.** Sawmill Pond is located just east of Lake Tahoe Boulevard, north of Sawmill Road, approximately two miles west of the intersection of US 50 and SR 89. It is open from May to September. Open only to children under the age of 14, the El Dorado County Fish and Game Commission maintains the program for children to experience fishing away from adult anglers.

Regional Recreational Areas

There are numerous regional recreational areas surrounding the General Plan Area. The following are the major areas:

- **Camp Richardson Resort.** Camp Richardson Resort is one of Lake Tahoe's premier year-round recreation resorts. It provides both summer and winter activities. There are over 300 tent and RV campsites, the 28-room historic Camp Richardson Hotel, the 7-bedroom Richardson House, the Beachside Inn, and the Marina Duplex. The full service marina includes boat, waverunner, and kayak and paddleboat rentals, sport fishing, boat launching facilities, guided tours, waterski school, and fishing charters. The Camp Richardson Corral has riding lessons, guided trail rides, wagon and hay rides, and sleigh rides during winter months. The Mountain Sports Center has mountain bike rentals, ski and snowshoe rentals, and information about hiking, biking, and cross-country ski trails. The Tallac Historic Site with interpretive walks and a stream profile chamber is also part of Camp Richardson. There is access to a number of beaches, including Baldwin Beach, Kiva Beach, Tallac Beach, Camp Richardson Beach, and Pope Beach.
- **D.L. Bliss State Park.** D.L. Bliss State Park is located approximately two miles north of Emerald Bay along SR 89. The State park has approximately 165 campsites, and includes the self-guided Balancing Rock Nature Trail. There is also a picnic area near Lester Beach on the very north end of the park.



- **Echo Lake.** Echo Lake is located just outside the southwestern boundary of the General Plan Area. Echo Lake can be accessed off US 50, just west of the southwestern edge of the General Plan Area. Facilities at the lake include a full service marina with boat rentals, two boat launches, and a small store. Water skiing is only allowed in the lower part of the lake. Fishing is limited to rainbow trout, brook trout, cutthroat trout, and Kokanee salmon.
- **Emerald Bay State Park.** Emerald Bay State Park is located on a peninsula between the southwestern edge of Lake Tahoe and the eastern edge of Emerald Bay. The State park features 100 campsites at Eagle Point Campground, and 20 boat-in campgrounds located along the western edge of Emerald Bay. Other major features at the state park include Vikingsholm, a historic home built with materials from Scandinavian architecture; Fannette Island, an old tea house built at the same time as Vikingsholm; and the Underwater Park, the resting place for the boats, launches, and barges used to bring materials to build Vikingsholm.
- **Fallen Leaf Lake.** Fallen Leaf Lake is located just outside the western boundary of the General Plan Area. Fallen Leaf Lake is accessed off Fallen Leaf Road. The lake facilities include a marina with boat rentals, a boat launch, and a small store. The main types of fish caught at the lake are Mackinaw trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, and Kokanee salmon.

Private Recreational Facilities

In addition to the numerous public recreational opportunities in the General Plan Area, there are also private recreational resources. These include the following:

- **Heavenly Gondola.** The Scenic Gondola Ride at Heavenly departs half a block west of the California/Nevada state line, and rises 2.4 miles up the mountain to an elevation of 9,123 feet. There are two stops along the route: The Deck, with a store, restaurant, high-powered telescopes, and picnic tables; Adventure Peak is the final stop at the top with a restaurant, snow equipment rentals, a climbing wall, and access to hiking trails.
- **California Base Lodge.** The California Base Lodge, located at the base of the Heavenly Ski Resort, offers food drink, ski and snowboard rental and equipment sale, shops, lockers, and ski lessons to patrons of the resort.
- **Lakeside Marina.** Lakeside Marina, located on Lakeshore Boulevard in the northeastern portion of the city, offers rentals of kayaks, canoes, power boats, jet skis, parasailing, and passenger boats.
- **Ski Run Marina.** The Ski Run Marina, located at the end of Ski Run Boulevard, offers boat and jet ski rentals, parasailing, cruises on the Tahoe Queen, sport fishing charters, dining and shopping opportunities, and winter activity gear rentals.
- **Tahoe Keys Marina.** The Tahoe Keys Marina, located in Tahoe Keys, offers boat and jet ski rentals, parasailing, sport fishing charters, dining and shopping opportunities, and winter activity gear rentals.



Park Classifications and Service Standards

Mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community/city-wide parks, and regional parks are the four types of parks within the city limits. Each of these park types has size standards, location requirements, and differing amenities.

Mini-Parks/Playlots

Mini-parks are 2,600 square feet to three acres in size, and serve apartment, medium- or higher-density complexes. They are usually located within 1/8 mile of users, or within easy walking distance. Facilities at mini-parks may include play apparatus, sand pits, wading pools, game areas or tables, paved areas, or just open space landscaped areas. There are currently (2008) two mini-parks in the city.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks range in size from 4 to 12 acres, and are intended to serve between 3,000 and 5,000 people and users within a quarter-mile. Neighborhood parks are often located adjacent to elementary schools, to supplement rather than duplicate facilities at the school. Parks located next to schools are between 4 and 6 acres where school courts and fields may be used as part of the park; parks are between 8 and 12 acres if not located adjacent to a school or where school play areas cannot be used or supervised as a part of the park. Neighborhood parks usually provide for three types of recreation: passive areas with picnicking and summer shade for relaxation; active areas for field and court sports, children's play equipment areas, and other activities; and smaller indoor facilities used for neighborhood daytime classes and activities, restrooms, recreation equipment, and maintenance storage. There are currently (2008) 16 neighborhood parks in the city.

Typical neighborhood park amenities may include the following:

- Tot play areas (2 to 5 or 6 years old)
- Children's play area (7 to 11 years old—separated from tot play areas for safety and social reasons)
- Open, free-play, turf areas (soccer, touch football, softball, kite flying, frisbees, etc.)
- Shaded area and shade trees (quiet areas, viewing areas, relaxing, etc.)
- Paved courts (basketball, tennis, tetherball, volleyball, hopscotch, etc.) and cement multi-use slabs (skating, court games, dancing, etc.)
- Wall for bouncing balls, paddleball, handball practice, etc.
- Jogging areas, fitness course (exercise stations and apparatus)
- Sports fields (children's and youth multiple-use)
- Instructional pool, spray pool, wading pool
- Individual, family, small group picnic areas
- Senior citizen facilities



- Neighborhood recreation center building
- Off-street parking (primary transportation should be walking or biking)
- Undesignated open space for buffer areas, landscaping, or future expansion
- Pathways, circulation, and accesses
- Restrooms, storage, and recreation leader facilities (may be part of neighborhood building)
- Miscellaneous amenities (drinking fountains, benches, refuse containers, security lighting, etc.)

Community/City-Wide Parks

Community parks are usually 50 to 60 acres in size, and serve a three to five neighborhoods or the same area served by a junior or senior high school. The community park supplements the neighborhood park by providing for activities that require more space and special facilities that serve a larger and older population. Similar to neighborhood parks, community parks may be located adjacent to secondary schools where school fields and courts can be used as a part of the park. These parks are typically night-lighted. There are currently (2008) four community parks in the city.

Typical community park amenities include the following:

- Tot play area (preschool to 5 or 6 years old)
- Children's play area (7 to 11 years old)
- Paved multiple-use courts (basketball, etc.)
- Cement multi-use slab (for dancing, skating, volleyball, etc.)
- Nature area, outdoor classroom, numerous shade trees
- Large, open, free-play, turfed meadows (kite flying, frisbee, catch, races and relays, temporary soccer fields, special events, etc.)
- Sports fields (baseball, softball, soccer, football, etc.)
- Softball complex
- Aquatics/swim complex (instructional, recreational, and competitive swimming pool, wading pool, including large sunbathing area)
- Small lake or other special feature/attraction
- Picnic areas (individual, family, small group, and large group picnic areas and barbecues)
- Senior citizen facilities (shuffleboard, lawn bowling, patio, and other areas)
- Community center complex (offices and clerical facilities, storage, restrooms, dance instruction and practice, arts and crafts studios, theatre and drama facilities, class and meeting rooms, game rooms, exercise rooms, vending machines, large multi-use room with kitchen and banquet facilities, and appropriate outdoor patio and facilities)
- Community Theatre (performing arts, may be part of community center complex)



- Tennis complex
- Racquetball/handball complex
- Volleyball courts (sand)
- Horseshoe courts, shuffleboard courts, bocce courts
- Outdoor amphitheater, special events areas, viewing facilities)
- Track (where part of a secondary school complex)
- Off-street parking
- Restrooms, concession, and other refuse and convenience amenities
- Walking and jogging paths (bicycle paths and trails)
- Physical fitness course (grouped exercise stations)
- Undesignated, open space buffer and expansion areas

Certain community parks may have special features, as they may be located next to a river, lake, or other natural feature. Also, in winter there are other activities such as snow play areas, snowmobile tracks, ice skating rinks, or cross-country ski trails.

Regional Parks

Regional parks are usually 100 acres or more in size, and are designed to serve an entire district or county. Some regional parks are left in their natural state, while others may have a mixture of natural areas, passive recreation areas, and active or intense recreational facility development. Regional parks do not have to be owned by the recreation district as long as they are accessible to the public. There is currently (2008) one regional park in the city.

Typical regional park amenities include:

- Individual, small group, and large group picnic facilities
- Hiking trails
- Biking trails (winter cross-country ski trails)
- Large, turfied play meadows
- Lakes for boating and fishing
- Streams
- Nature center
- Nature study and nature interpretive areas
- Swimming pools
- Rest areas and vistas along trails



- Equestrian facilities
- Camping and/or day camping areas

Special features commonly found in regional parks include:

- Archery range/course
- Amphitheater/outdoor theater
- Arboretum
- Children's play areas
- Golf course
- Aquatic complex
- Tennis complex
- Softball complex
- Soccer complex
- Snow play complex/area
- Snowmobile track
- Tot play areas
- Sports play fields
- Water play features

Regulatory Setting

Topics in this section are regulated by the following agencies, laws, and ordinances.

Federal

National Trails System Act (1968)

The National Trails System Act (P.L. 90-453) was enacted by the United States Congress on October 2, 1968, in response to a 1960 survey conducted by the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC) indicating that 90 percent of all Americans participated in some form of outdoor activity and that walking for pleasure ranked second amongst all recreational activities. The Act established the Appalachian and Pacific Crest National Scenic Trails, and authorized a national system of trails in order to provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities and to promote the preservation of access to outdoor areas and national historic resources. The National Trails System was created by the National Trails System Act. The system designated the following four categories of trails:

- National Scenic Trails (NST) provide outdoor recreation and the conservation and enjoyment of significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities;



- National Historic Trails (NHT) follow travel routes of national historic significance;
- National Recreation Trails (NRT) are in, or reasonably accessible to, urban areas on Federal, State, or private lands; and
- Connecting or Side Trails provide access to or among the other classes of trails.

Regional (Bi-State)

Lake Tahoe Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

TRPA prepared the Lake Tahoe Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan as a blueprint for developing a regional bicycle and pedestrian system that includes both on-street and off-street facilities as well as support facilities and programs throughout the Lake Tahoe region. The plan includes goals and policies that were intended to provide direction on the necessary actions involved with the planning, designing, funding, and constructing of bicycle facilities.

TRPA Recreation Threshold

TRPA has established environmental carrying capacities, or thresholds, for recreational resources in the Tahoe Basin. These thresholds were established to preserve the scenic and outdoor recreational opportunities of the region. While the other thresholds established by TRPA are aimed to curb the effects of urban development, the recreation thresholds are designed to promote the development of recreation facilities that can support a multitude of opportunities for the general public. In addition, these thresholds require TRPA to reserve a fair share of the Tahoe Basin's resource capacities to facilitate the development of recreation facilities.

Regional Plan for the Lake Tahoe Region

Developed by TRPA, the Regional Plan for the Lake Tahoe Region (Regional Plan) provides policy guidance to decision-makers on issues affecting the Region's resources and remaining capacities. The Regional Plan also provides for the achievement and maintenance of the adopted environmental threshold carrying capacities (thresholds), while providing opportunities for orderly growth and development.

State

The California Parklands Act (1980)

Although a recreation element is not mandated by law to be included in a general plan, recreation resources are to be considered in the Open Space Element of the general plan (Government Code Section 65560). The California Parklands Act of 1980 (Public Resources Code Section 5096.141-5096.143) identifies "the public interest for the state to acquire, develop, and restore areas for recreation...and to aid local governments of the state in acquiring, developing and restoring such areas..." The California Parklands Act also identifies the necessity of local agencies to exercise vigilance in seeing that the parks, recreation areas, and recreational facilities they now have are not lost to other uses.



The California Recreational Trails Act of 1974

Assembly Bill 3594 created the California Recreational Trails Act. The act included two major components—the reauthorization of the California Recreational Trails Committee and the requirement to develop a California Recreational Trails System Plan.

The California Recreational Trails Act (Public Resources Code Section 5070.5) declares:

- Increase accessibility and enhance the use, enjoyment, and understanding of California’s scenic, natural, historic, and cultural resources.
- Encourage hiking, horseback riding, and bicycling as important contributions to the health and welfare of the state’s population.
- Provide for the use of recreational trails by physically disabled persons, the elderly, and others in need of graduated trails.
- Increase opportunities for recreational boating and use of recreational vehicles.
- Encourage the development by cities, counties, districts, and private groups of recreational and interpretive trails, including heritage corridors.

Quimby Act

Cities and counties are authorized through the 1975 Quimby Act (California Government Code Section 66477) to require developers to set aside land, donate conservation easements, or pay fees for park improvements. Revenues generated through the Quimby Act are not to be used for the actual operation or maintenance of park facilities. A 1982 amendment (AB 1600) requires agencies to clearly show a reasonable relationship between the public need for the recreation facility or parkland and the type of development project upon which the fee is imposed. Cities with a high ratio of park space to inhabitants can set a standard of five acres per thousand residents for new development. Cities with a lower current ratio can only require the provision of up to three acres of park space per thousand residents. The calculation of a city’s park space-to-population ratio is based on a comparison of the population count of the last Federal census to the amount of city-owned parkland.

Local

City of South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Master Plan

The City of South Lake Tahoe adopted the Recreation Facilities Master Plan in June 1992 to identify the existing recreational facilities and future needs of the residents and visitors of Lake Tahoe. The plan also identifies existing service standards and park requirements. The plan also identifies policies and programs to help initiate enhanced environmental thresholds for recreational facilities in the city.

Key Terms

The following key terms are used in this section:



Mini-parks/Playlots. Mini-parks/Playlots are 2,600 square feet to three acres in size and serve apartment or medium-or higher-density complexes. They are usually located within one-eighth of a mile of users or within easy walking distance.

Neighborhood Parks. Neighborhood parks range in size from 4 to 12 acres. These parks are intended to serve between 3,000 and 5,000 people and users within a quarter-mile. Neighborhood parks are often located adjacent to elementary schools, to supplement rather than duplicate facilities at the school

Community/City-wide Parks. Community parks/City-wide parks are usually 50 to 60 acres in size and serve three to five neighborhoods or roughly the same area served by a junior or senior high school.

Regional Parks. Regional parks are usually 100 acres or more in size and are designed to serve an entire district or county.

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7.3 PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction

This section describes the major cooperative relationships held by the City of South Lake Tahoe's Park and Recreation Department.

Major Findings

- The City of South Lake Tahoe has partnerships and cooperative relationships with outside agencies, in order for groups and organizations to use the City's facilities and to obtain more of a mixture of activities at each location.

Existing Conditions

The City of South Lake Tahoe's Parks and Recreation Department maintains many cooperative relationships and partnerships with outside entities. However, because they frequently change, only the key cooperative relationships are discussed here.

The Parks and Recreation Department currently (2008) maintains cooperative relationships for use of the City's facilities with the Kiwanis Club of Lake Tahoe, the South Lake Tahoe Optimist Club, Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe, and the Rotary Club of South Lake Tahoe. These organizations have donated to the Parks and Recreation Department to fund programs and facilities for the community. The Recreation and Swim Pool Complex specifically maintains key relationships with the Community Athletic Coordinating Council, the South Tahoe Swim Club, and the Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe. The South Tahoe Ice Arena also specifically holds relationships with the South Tahoe Amateur Hockey Association, the South Tahoe Figure Skating Club, and the Tahoe Blizzard Women's Hockey Association.

Regulatory Setting

There is no regulatory setting for this section.

Key Terms

There are no key terms applicable to this section.

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