United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

Nevada Tahoe Resource Team

Nevada Division of Forestry

Nevada Division of State Lands

Nevada Fire Safe Councils

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

California Tahoe Conservancy

California State Parks

North Tahoe Fire Protection District

North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District

Tahoe-Douglas Fire Protection District

Lake Valley Fire Protection District

Meeks Bay Fire Protection District

South Lake Tahoe Fire Department

Fallen Leaf Fire Department

Lake Tahoe Basin

Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy

10 Year Plan

September 20, 2007 Draft

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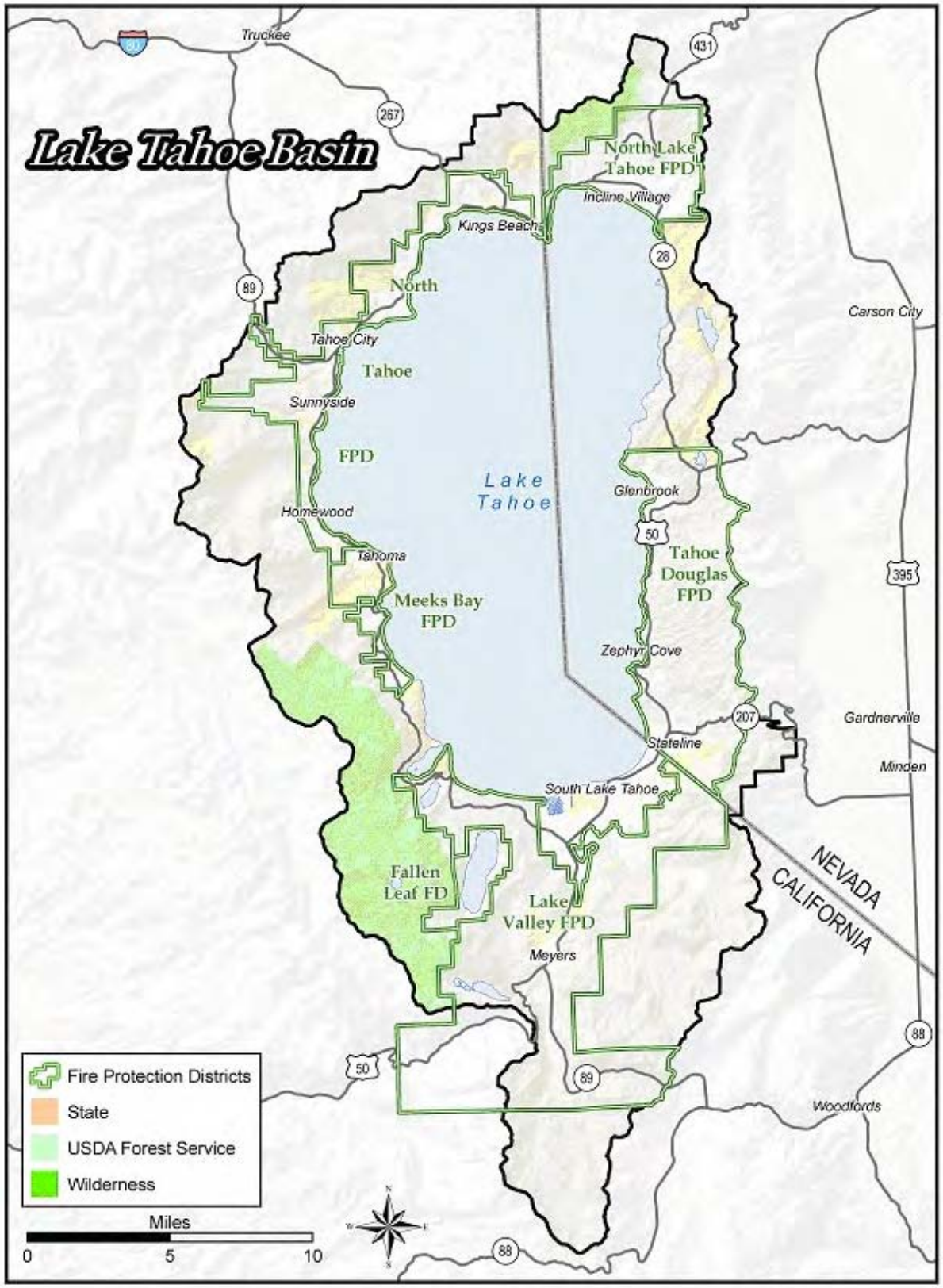

Figure 1. Lake Tahoe Basin Comprehensive Fuels Plan planning area

Executive Summary

This Multi-Jurisdictional Fuels Plan for the Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin) facilitates the strategic decisions that must be made by land management, fire, and regulatory agencies to reduce the probability of a catastrophic fire in the Basin. It was developed to comply with the White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-432 [H.R.6111]). It comprehensively combines all existing plans that have been developed within the Basin, and provides a framework for participating agencies to identify priority areas and a strategy to work collaboratively on accomplishing those priorities. In addition, it builds upon fuel reduction projects that have already occurred on more than 13,000 acres and the efforts of community-based fire departments and fire safe chapters that are actively treating fuels around residences.

The plan incorporates approximately 208,800 acres, including portions of Placer, El Dorado, and Alpine Counties in northeastern California; and portions of Carson City, Washoe, and Douglas Counties in western Nevada. It includes nearly 42,000 homes or buildings in the communities of Incline Village, Crystal Bay, Sand Harbor, Glenbrook, Kingsbury, South Lake Tahoe, Homewood, Tahoe Pines, Sunnyside, Tahoe City, Dollar Point, Carnelian Bay, Tahoe Vista, Meeks Bay, Rubicon, Tahoma, and Kings Beach.

Studies in the Basin indicate that current wildland fuels conditions could support high-intensity wildfires that are difficult to suppress. Most communities in the Basin, as part of the National Fire Plan, were designated in the *Federal Register* (2001) as high risk to damage from wildfire. In addition, values uniquely associated with the Basin are also at risk. These include its entire commercial and public infrastructure, the clarity and beauty of Lake Tahoe and its scenic landscapes, its tourism-based economy, and the ecological values of its surrounding forests. Based on this, and because of the recent Angora Fire there, it is commonly acknowledged that the attributes that make the Basin a special place are at an unacceptably high risk of loss from wildfires and that something urgently needs to be done to reduce that risk.

The plan recognizes that wildfire protection in the Basin requires three components:

1. Buildings and homes in the Basin should be built of fire-resistant materials and have effective defensible space;
2. Accumulations of hazardous vegetative fuels must be reduced in the areas directly adjacent to communities (Community Defensible Space); and
3. Accumulations of vegetative hazardous fuels surrounding the Community Defensible Space should be reduced in the general forest.

To accomplish these needs, the plan proposes a continued public involvement strategy to work with homeowners on making their residences fire safe. In addition, the plan proposes 49,000 acres of first-entry vegetative fuel treatments and 19,000 acres of maintenance treatments across multiple jurisdictions to create Community Defensible Space and reduce fuels in the general forest. The treatments are designed to reduce potential fire behavior and facilitate conditions that will ensure safe and effective fire suppression. They are prioritized to protect communities and people in areas

that are most at risk. Final implementation of the plan will ultimately result in greater protection of the unique values at risk in the Basin including its people, infrastructure, and natural resources.

Implementing all of the proposed projects and maintenance treatments will increase annual accomplishments by 280 percent in the Basin. Implementation of this plan is predicted to cost from $206,000,000 to $234,000,000 over 10 years with annual predicted expenditures of $18,500,000 to $25,500.000. These activities will increase the availability of biomass, wood-based products, and jobs associated with vegetation removal. To ensure its success, cooperating agencies will focus on several key factors. These include addressing current staffing levels and the availability of qualified mechanical operators, collaborating with regulatory agencies, and identifying pathways to implement projects with multiple ownerships. While each responsible agency may have its own prescriptions, guidelines, philosophies, and principles, all agree to the overall priorities and strategic guidelines of this plan. It is recognized that unforeseen events, such as wildfires, may affect the priority, scheduling, size, timing, or implementation of any given proposed treatment; consequently, the plan will be reviewed annually to meet changing conditions within the Basin. The Federal, State and local land managers, Lake Tahoe Fire Agencies and Nevada Fire Safe Council will meet annually to review the results of the prior year fuels reduction efforts and identify fuels reduction projects and priorities, within the scope of this Strategy, for each upcoming year. Future projects identified by this group will meet the intent of this Strategy and meet the intent of all the underlying Implementation Plans including the Community Wildfire Protection Plans for the Lake Tahoe Basin. Projects will be prioritized for funding submission consistent with this Strategy and current direction and intent. Where projects cross jurisdictional boundaries, the group will collaborate on implementing the project with the goal of reducing environmental compliance, permitting and contracting costs.