

Trails & Open Space Subcommittee
July 25, 2019 • Meeting Minutes

<i>Association Members</i>			<i>TD Staff</i>
VJ Bonnard Richard Bothwell Dave Cohen Sue Crum Gayle Dana Kathy Englar Jayne Hahn Jennifer Jennings	Guy Joaquin Benjamin Levine (Co-Chair) Paco Lindsay Carole Mahoney Nan Meek (GPC) Steve Miller (GPC) Scot Nicol Bill Phelps	Marina Phillips Lynette Powell Livia Quan Charlene Simmons Michael Sullivan (GPC) Susan Terrell Julie Thornton	Robb Etnyre Annie Rosenfeld (Co-Chair) Christina Thayer Brian Yohn
<i>Guests:</i> Kevin Barrett, Alec Leonardini, Daniel Mirkin			

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At this meeting the Trails & Open Space Subcommittee (TOS) took the following actions:

1. The TOS approved the 06/27/19 meeting minutes with one correction.
2. The TOS was updated on the status of the Nature Trail and Bermgarten Trailhead projects.
3. The TOS was notified that in June 2019 the USFS announced that the Tahoe National Forest “will be extending opportunities for Class 1 E-MTB riders to use recommended non-motorized trails across the forest.” These recommended trails include five non-motorized trails within the Truckee and Sierraville Ranger Districts: Hole In The Ground, Sawtooth, Mount Lola Trail, Cottonwood Overlook, and the Commemorative Overland Emigrant Trail. The last trail listed intersects Tahoe Donner’s trail system.

Additionally, because association members have recently been asking TOS members for clarification about Tahoe Donner’s current ebike policy, the TOS will update the ebike backgrounder draft it originally produced in February 2019 for publication on the TOS’s Tahoe Donner webpage.

4. First Discussion: TOS Commentary On The 2013 Tahoe Donner Trails Master Plan.

Drawing from TOS meeting minutes and reports, the TOS has compiled a lengthy draft commentary on the 2013 Tahoe Donner Trails Master Plan. The commentary is intended for use by an outside trails master plan consultant, and it is also expected to be released to the Tahoe Donner members as a whole on the Tahoe Donner website. The TOS discussed the draft, and subcommittee members were invited to provide additional written feedback.

5. Second Discussion: 2019 Trails and Open Space Survey.

The TOS reviewed the latest survey draft, making several updates in the process. Before being put in the field, the survey will be validated by an independent professional consultant. The subcommittee agreed that it would like to add a thank you page at the end of the survey with a link to the TOS's commentary on the 2013 Tahoe Donner Trails Master Plan.

6. Third Discussion: The Absence of Tahoe Donner's Trails From Regional Maps, Topographic Maps, and Digital Navigation Tools.

As discussed at the TOS's June meeting, under its current "no outside promotion/no outside invitation" practices, if the Town of Truckee, the Chamber of Commerce, the US Forest Service, or a similar outside organization were to produce a regional trail map to be published for public purposes, Tahoe Donner would ask that its trails not be shown or mentioned.*

Because of this practice, Tahoe Donner's trails are actively excluded from commonly used topographic maps, and information about Tahoe Donner's trails on various popular navigational websites and mobile apps is frequently incomplete and inaccurate. Some of the most popular digital navigational services even show trails within Tahoe Donner that have been built illegally. These unsanctioned trails may be unsustainable and unsafe.

The TOS is concerned that Tahoe Donner is ceding control of its trail system by not taking a more active role to ensure that the information presented on digital mapping services is safe and accurate. For example, the association could provide GPS data for Tahoe Donner's sanctioned trails to digital navigation services. Some app providers have already indicated that they are willing to work with Tahoe Donner to ensure accuracy and safety.

Further, Christina Thayer reported that navigational difficulty is now the most common complaint she receives about the trails, and TOS members regularly encounter lost trail users in need of directions. To ensure member enjoyment and safety, Tahoe Donner has an interest in helping members navigate the trails. The current restrictive mapping practices may be undermining that interest.

If the goal is to provide members with effective navigational tools, then Tahoe Donner may wish to support those navigational tools that the members are already using. By failing to support those navigational tools, Tahoe Donner may be doing its members a disservice by making it more difficult for them to navigate the trails using the digital navigation tools with which they are most familiar and find most effective.

For example, if we knew that a significant portion of Tahoe Donner members are trying to use the Trailforks mobile app to navigate the trails, then Tahoe Donner may have an interest in serving those members by ensuring that Trailforks features complete and accurate mapping of Tahoe Donner's trails. In its upcoming survey, the TOS will ask members about their preferred navigational tools.

Ultimately, the TOS makes a distinction between 1) marketing activities aimed at promoting Tahoe Donner's trails to the public, and 2) navigational tools that provide useful information to members using the trails. Navigational tools used by members should not be governed by the same practices or policies governing public-oriented promotional activities.

As a service to its members, and as a means to better control its trails, the TOS believes that Tahoe Donner has an interest in ensuring that its trails are mapped accurately on various navigational services, including mobile apps. As such the TOS recommends that Tahoe Donner's restrictive mapping practices be reconsidered.

* These restrictions do not extend to advertisements for Bikeworks and other public amenities. Hence, in the same publication in which Tahoe Donner may have asked that its trails and trail system connections not be mapped, mentioned, or highlighted, it may regularly place an advertisement for its public amenities. If promoting Bikeworks, that advertisement may include a photograph of mountain bikers on the trails.

7. Fourth Discussion: Proposal: A Blue Ribbon Equestrian Panel Style Analysis For The Trails.

The TOS considered undertaking a Blue Ribbon Equestrian Panel (BREP) style financial performance analysis of the trails. The idea had come up in the course of TOS discussion, both in February and in June 2019. The GPC's Golf Subcommittee has already chosen to undertake a similar financial performance review for the golf course. The subcommittee concluded, however, that the time is not yet ripe for such a project. We would first need additional background information, including results from the upcoming trails survey. Before the TOS undertakes this type of analysis, it would also be both preferable and helpful to first have either a fully updated trails master plan, or at least a near final draft of that document. Though the TOS believes it is premature to begin a BREP style analysis for the trails at this time, the subcommittee will revisit the idea at a later date.

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Next TOS Meeting

TOS Regular Meeting: August 22, 2019, Time & Location TBD.