

Trails & Open Space Committee • Regular Meeting Minutes - FINAL

April 5, 2023 @ 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM Board Room & Zoom

(all agenda times are tentative and subject to change)

Committee Members

Karen Aaron Scott Bauhs VJ Bonnard	Richard Bothwell Gayle Dana Lorna Dobrovlny	Carol Lindsay Livia Quan Ellen Raynor	Graham Reid Peter Sawyer Julie Thornton
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Staff, Staff Leads, & Liaisons

John Groom (Staff) Leslie Loveland (Staff)	Benjamin Levine (Board) Patricia West (Staff)	Laura Lindgren (Liaison)
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I. Opening Business (3:00 pm)

- **Call to Order/Quorum Call:** The meeting was called to order with a quorum at 3:01 pm
- **Member Comments:**
 - Carol Lindsey (13800 Hansel Road, Truckee) wanted to encourage Leslie and the Trails and Open Space Committee (TOS Committee) to work on specific dog signage at Tahoe Donner Amenities to remind members and the public that dogs need to be leached in these areas.
 - Lorna Dobrovlny (11705 Baden Road, Truckee) wanted to express her feelings with regards to a phone conversation that she had with the Chair of the TOS Committee, Peter Sawyer. She stated that she felt that her public opinions were either not heard or misrepresented. She felt “bullied, misunderstood, and oppressed” by the conversation and contemplated resigning from the Committee. She also stated that she would like to be forgiven for her missteps, but would also like her opinions encouraged and respected. She stated that she had taken offense to Peter’s statement in an email reminding members of the TOS Committee that John Groom (Director of Land Management and Open Space) and Leslie Loveland (Trails Manager) are the experts in trail design and implementation, stating that she feels members of the Committee are experts in the Tahoe Donner trails as well. After her conversation with Peter, she feels her opinions are no longer “welcome or respected.” She hopes that can change. She offered an olive branch as a way of apology.
 - In his brief clarifying comments, Peter Sawyer apologized for the interaction and reminded the Committee that as Chair he needs to make sure that the best interests of the Association as a whole are taken into account.

- **Report from the liaison to Tahoe Donner's Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC)** (*Peter Sawyer mistakenly recognized Laura Lindgren (member of the LRPC) to give this report. In the future he will call on Julie Thornton (TOS Committee Liaison to the LRPC).* Laura stated that the LRPC is focused on the Northwoods Campus and that they are planning on soliciting member input over the coming summer and fall.
- **Approval of the previous meeting minutes (March 1, 2023).** Benjamin Levine pointed out that David Mickaelin's name was misspelled in the minutes. Peter Sawyer stated that he would fix this mistake. With that, the minutes were approved by consensus.

II. Summary from John Groom and Leslie Loveland Regarding Winter Activities (3:10 pm)

Leslie Loveland stated that she has been working on her California Department of Motor Vehicles Class A license and that she will be going to two weeks of truck driving school. She will also be attending an upcoming Trails Conferenc. The diesel pick-up truck that Tahoe Donner ordered will be available at the beginning of May.

John Groom stated that they are working on tree removal close to Northwoods Blvd., that the upcoming Tahoe Donner News has a large article featuring Tahoe Donner Trails and Open Space, and that the Forestry Department's loader will be replaced with an excavator, giving them more flexibility. He has also been working on the Nevada County Recreation Committee's resiliency plan in regards to community input on sustainable recreation. Tahoe Donner has a seat on the Committee for that mission. He is also working on the 2024 budget. In response to a question from the Committee, John informed us that Tahoe Donner's rotary snowplow is broken and that that is the reason that the Glacier Way trailhead hasn't been plowed. There is no snow storage in that area and the loader can't lift the snow high enough. The suggestion was made that this information should be communicated to Membership. He also shared that permitting is underway for the Glacier Way Trailhead parking lot redesign and that it has been budgeted and should be constructed in 2024

III. Update from the Dog Management Subcommittee (3:20) *Peter Sawyer reminded the TOS Committee that it is our responsibility to keep the Dog Management Subcommittee on task and that their task is to "research and report to the Committee on the factors relevant to developing a responsible, balanced, and effective dog management policy."*

Carol Lindsay provided a report from their recent meeting, stating that they discussed the Nevada County and Town of Truckee Dog "incidents." Laura Lindgren updated the Subcommittee on the legal implications of the Tahoe Donner's Covenants and Restrictions (C&R's) and the Committee discussed their meaning. The Subcommittee is in the process of soliciting all of the Subcommittee member's personal views in order to keep things in perspective.

IV. Update from the Equestrian Subcommittee (3:50 pm) *Peter Sawyer reminded the TOS Committee that it is our responsibility to keep the Equestrian Subcommittee on task and that their task is to “support the development, maintenance, and implementation of a responsible and effective staff-developed Equestrian Management Plan.”*

Karen Aaron stated that the Equestrian Subcommittee represents the totality of equestrian users of our trails and that safety is at the forefront of their concerns, as well as the environmental impact of horses on the trails. She stated that trail user education needs to be a priority, which includes improved signage on the trails. The equestrians are struggling with the purpose of the “family flow trails” and would like to see these trails at the Downhill Ski Lodge rather than the Alder Creek Adventure Center. They also briefly discussed the purpose of the fencing at around the Equestrian Center and that they would like it to delineate the area, making it look like a well-maintained facility. They also discussed:

1. A dog-horse socialization day (*not part of the Task*)
2. The proposed designated use trails.

In response to a question from the TOS Committee, access to the Equestrian Center was discussed. It was made clear that Tahoe Donner Members should be able to access the Equestrian Center, but there will be two boardwalks, one to the east and one to the south of the Equestrian Center which should move most user traffic away from (and not through) the Equestrian Center

Benjamin Levine commented that the Equestrian Subcommittee was organized to give a small community of users a greater voice in trail management. The Trails and Open Space Committee is the “check” on the Equestrian Subcommittee. “Tasks” will always be narrower than “Purposes.” Both the TOS Committee and the Equestrian Subcommittee shouldn’t get hung up with the differences between the words “plan” and “policy.” We may eventually need to have a policy. For example, the Dog Management Subcommittee is in the process of providing information to the TOS Committee that may lead to development of a new policy. It is also fair to say that it might be beneficial to have a *no change* plan. One of the questions that will need to be answered is whether or not we need new plans or policies, and if we do, what will be the responsibility of staff to carry them out? There is no time frame on when the Subcommittee Tasks need to be completed

Karen Aaron asked the TOS Committee to keep the Equestrian Subcommittee on task. They are finding their way around the process.

Benjamin Levine made the Dog Management and Equestrian Subcommittees aware that if they are working with outside groups (like Trial Partners) they should run these contacts through John and the TOS Committee before they reach out.

If there is a staff led initiative toward safety, it needs to come back to the TOS and John Groom.

Peter Sawyer reminded the Subcommittees that one of the “Tasks” of the TOS Committee is “Working with staff and covenants to develop dog and equestrian management plans (Task #1). He suggested that the Equestrian Subcommittee develop this plan with staff and that it is through this plan that an educational component can be suggested to the TOS Committee as a whole.

Karen Aaron summarized the discussion by stating that as representatives of Tahoe Donner we cannot bring outside organizations in without first clearing it with Tahoe Donner (i.e. John Groom)

V. Update on Possible Stewardship Subcommittee/Working Group (4:20 pm)

Peter Sawyer withdrew the idea of a Stewardship Subcommittee, but rather that we might want to start a discussion amongst the members of the TOS Committee (with the help of staff and Benjamin Levine) as to how we can bring a more refined and dedicated stewardship program to Tahoe Donner. This would be a preliminary discussion as to whether or not we actually need a Subcommittee.

VI. Update Regarding Designated Use Trails (4:25)

Livia Quan began the discussion by reminding the TOS Committee that we need to determine what we want our trails to look like. Among the points made in her prepared statement were:

1. A discussion on what are “Tahoe Donner Trails.”
2. What level of control do we want to see?
3. Do the Tahoe Donner Trails support “wandering?”
4. What are we to different user groups?

She continued by stating that Tahoe Donner Trails should be defined by etiquette and the trails themselves, with safety being paramount. We should be transparent and intentional about why trails are designated the way they are. She also suggested that we look at subgroups of our major user groups (Hikers, Bikers, and Equestrians – with and without dogs) and that we make sure that there is something for everyone. A user document including goals, limitations, desired trails would be informative.

Carol Lindsay asked how the designated trails discussion got started and was told that it started with reasonable trails and open space surveys, as part of the Completion of the 2022 Trails Master Plan, written by consultants. Safety, etiquette, and designated trails were all important to the community. The 2013 Trails Master Plan stated that we needed to move toward designated trails, but the Tahoe Donner Board of Directors at the time balked at the idea. This time around the Trails Master Plan, with the support of the Board, gave staff the ability to designate trails for sustainability and an overall enhanced user experience. The genesis of designated trails at Tahoe Donner goes back to the early 2010’s.

The remainder of the meeting focused on the conflict between designating trails and not restricting users from their favorite trails. The new Trails Master Plan is designed to give people

tailored experiences in different areas of the trails system which addresses both safety concerns and experience concerns.

John Groom and Leslie Loveland are looking at both safety and user experience as they go through the process. Leslie is working on a “Trails Management Objectives” document that will help inform the Trails and Open Space Committee as to what trails are best for each user group. There will be some trails where staff will know what the designated use should be, whereas there are other trails where adaptive management will be used. They want “family friendly” trails and improved opportunities for all users.

XII. Upcoming Meetings and Meeting Adjournment (5:05pm)

After reminding the Trails and Open Space Committee that our next meeting would be May 3 in the Northwoods Clubhouse Board Room (and on Zoom), without objection the meeting was adjourned.