

Trails & Open Space Committee Meeting Minutes

June 4, 2025 @ 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM Alder Creek Adventure Center

(all agenda times are tentative and subject to change)

Note: These minutes are extremely detailed in response to a member request.

Committee Members

Karen Aaron (3:30 pm) VJ Bonnard Richard Bothwell	David Cahill Gayle Dana Eric Lawrence	Carol Lindsay Kevin O'Neil Livia Quan	Graham Reid Peter Sawyer Julie Thornton
---	---	---	---

Staff, Staff Leads, & Liaisons

Denise Gauncy (Board) John Groom (Staff)	Laura Lindgren (Liaison) Leslie Loveland (Staff)	Annie Rosenfeld (GM)
--	---	----------------------

Guests

Merle Fajans	Michael Fajans	Benjamin Levine
--------------	----------------	-----------------

I. Opening Business (3:00 pm): *Peter Sawyer*

- Meeting called to Order at 3:05 pm with a quorum of 9 committee members present.
- There were no member comments
- Peter Sawyer (Committee Chair) submitted the following report in writing prior to the meeting.

As we wrap up the writing of the 2025 Trails Implementation Plan (thanks go out to staff and the Working Group for all of their effort) our focus will shift to what we love best about our amenities, our trails and open space. There will be many opportunities to help with stewardship events, two of which (the Guided Wildflower Tour on June 27 and the Guided Birding Trip on July 9) are already “sold out.” I encourage you to look at the [SignUp Genius website](#) and find the ones that you might be interested in.

Our summer meetings will focus on getting out and seeing what is being accomplished on our trails, beginning with our tour of the area surrounding the Alder Creek Adventure Center. If you haven't had a chance to get up to the Glacier Way Trailhead lately, the vault toilet has just been installed and it looks great! There will be other opportunities to get out and see the positive changes that the Land Management and Trails Department are making throughout the summer.

Beginning in the fall our focus will shift to the writing of the 2025 Land Management and Forest Management Plans. We will do this with a Working Group similar to the one that worked on the 2025 Trails Implementation Plan this spring.

- Laura Lindgren (LRPC Liaison) submitted the following report in writing prior to the meeting.

The LRPC continued discussing the three primary tasks we are focused on right now: review of capital projects, survey questions and strategy for and components of a Long Range Plan for Tahoe Donner. This last task is ongoing and will take time to develop and work is ongoing over the summer, and includes a review of other long range plans from other HOAs, towns or organizations that may face similar issues. The task of most immediacy is developing survey questions, hopefully with some geared towards long range planning issues, for the fall survey.

- Denise Gauny submitted the following report in writing prior to the meeting.

At the May 23rd Regular Board Meeting, Miguel Slone made a presentation on the EQ Center Summer Program and Operations. He reported that our herd has been reduced from 22 to 10 horses as many of those horses were older and needed to be retired; all went to good homes. Boarding began on June 1 and camps and classes will begin in mid-June. We will continue with many special EQ events and clinics, including our partnership with Achieve Tahoe. We will not be offering horse leases or trail rides this season. There was some discussion about the capital investment in an amenity that is not that popular. More discussions to come.

John Groom presented the Summer Trails Update + the status of the Trails Implementation Plan. Highlights include increase in specific trails designations and zones for safety and enjoyment of our lovely trails system. He also highlighted the 2025 Capital Projects to enhance our system; the Euer Valley Phase I Project, the Glacier Way Interpretive Loop, some adjustments to the lower Flying Squirrel, some adjustment to Nature Loop, and the Cinnamon Twist “missing link” were highlighted. Some questions were raised about moving up the Moondance Hut parking project which might alleviate some of the parking problems in the ACAC/EQ area. Staff will take a look at the sequencing of that project and provide more information.

There was also an update on the DHSL, which is on track for the December 2025 opening, and an update on the Marina Deck expansion, which had a very successful opening on May 23rd.

- The May 7 meeting minutes were approved by consensus.

II. Update of the DRAFT 2025 Trails and Open Space Implementation Plan (3:15 pm)

John Groom briefed the Trails and Open Space Committee on the final DRAFT 2025 Trails Implementation Plan (TIP). He stated that he, Leslie, and Joey tried to answer all of the questions that the Trails and Open Space committee had last year by putting them into policy. Staff ultimately decided to take the policies out of the TIP and they will refine them and put them into the 2025 Land Management Plan. It was decided that it would be best not to ask the board to approve 13 new policies as well as the TIP itself. John will be sending out the latest draft, based on the feedback from the Working Group, which also clarifies the designated use of the trails and the years the designations go into, or went into, effect. The goal is to bring the TIP to the June 27 Board meeting. The document is now all project based. Feedback from the board allowed projects in the plan to be moved up from the 10 year plan to the 5 year plan. The major project that fits this description is taking a second look at whether or not we should create a trailhead (with parking) near the Moondance Hut. Peter Sawyer informed the TOS committee to expect a Special Zoom meeting to recommend that the board accept the 2025 TIP. Gayle Dana commented that staff should be careful what they ask for considering what happened with the policy section. Peter Sawyer stated that the lessons learned in the TIP Working Group will carry over to the Land Management Plan Working Group.

III. Tour of the Area Surrounding the Alder Creek Adventure Center (3:30 pm)

John pointed out that the horses have to come through the gate area to get from the arena to the Equestrian Center (EQ Center), that the road to the EQ Center may need to be paved, and that the boardwalk is the only way in and out of the Alder Creek Adventure Center (ACAC) currently for hikers and cyclists. John showed us the rope 'fence' that delineates the meadow from the EQ and pointed out that previously the horse trailers were backed up to that fence. Staff has now cleared an area to the north of the pumphouse, which used to be turnout for the horses, but can now be used to park trailers. This could leave a lane open between the meadow and the EQ Center for access for hikers and bikers. The EQ Center will need to find another area to turn out horses, but with the herd being reduced from 22 to 10 animals, they don't need quite as much space. Staff will have to find a way to get cyclists to walk through this 'chute' so that it would be safe for all users. The proposed boardwalk from the ACAC would have been very expensive and would probably not have been approved by the Lahontan Water Board. The current boardwalk was a trade-off when the old Alder Creek trail was decommissioned. Annie Rosenfeld explained that the mitigation fees for a new ACAC boardwalk would probably be over 1 million dollars.

The group moved to the realigned end of Flying Squirrel. The end of the trail has been moved about 20 feet to the west (uphill) of where it was last summer and as such, the trail now takes a slight uphill and comes out at Wild West Uphill (which riders can now loop with Flying Squirrel) and away from the roads that come together. While we were looking at the reroute, two mountain bikers came down Flying Squirrel and it was noticeable how much

their speed decreased as they got to the road that then intersects with Wild West Uphill. It also then acts as a meeting spot if they choose to go slightly downhill to where a number of roads intersect. The TNT Kids Bike Team helped with the reroute on Thursday, May 29. John informed the TOS that if we have groups that have been given permission to use our trails that they are then asked to help maintain those same trails. The Land Management department is concentrating on safety changes this summer. There is more work to be done on Flying Squirrel, but this is the first step.

John mentioned that our previous General Manager wanted everyone to go in and out of the backside of the ACAC. Annie Rosenfeld is more sensitive to the congestion at the back side of the ACAC. Projects go year to year with a short building season. As usage changes, plans will change. Truckee has a very short trail building season, which probably is only June and July. When you build a trail, is it the appropriate traffic pattern? If it isn't, the trail can be rerouted later on. These changes aren't huge investments. Doing one project at a time doesn't solve all of the projects. We have to figure out step by step improvements.

Once we moved out to the Moondance Hut area, Annie Rosenfeld brought us up to speed regarding the Association's use of the area and possible uses over the years. When the subdivision was being built the Public Utilities District used both sides of the road around Moondance as a staging area. When they were doing pipeline changes, both sides of the road were used as an asphalt 'temporary storage area.' You can still find asphalt in the meadow to the west (left looking toward Euer Valley) of Alder Creek Road (to the north of the gate). A series of restorations have been done in the area to bring back the meadow and these restorations to the west of the road have been successful. The ones to the east of the road, is where homeowners used to bring their yard waste to be burned (as recently as ten years ago). The board made it very clear at that time that the area to the east of the road would never be used as a staging area or slash pile again. The area to the east of the road has been tilled and hydroseeded several times, but the area has not been restored. It is doubtful that this area will be restored in the foreseeable future. This site was looked at when the Association thought that they would have to build a new Forestry Site. Since the Association was able to acquire the Rosemond (at the end of Teewinot Road) that property already had a building on site which Forestry has taken over and works well for them.

John stated that it would be hard for him to argue against using the Moondance area as a major trailhead, to move users away from the ACAC. Use patterns show that there is heavy use in this area by all trail users. John also mentioned that Euer Valley Phase II (which is not mentioned in the 2022 Trails Master Plan, has the potential of creating an area that many more users will want to access. John shared a map that shows the 'spaghetti bowl' both around the ACAC and also in the area of Moondance Hut. Should the number of users significantly increase as a result of Euer Valley Phase II, a parking lot and trailhead at Moondance would spread the users out to a different area. There were questions regarding gates and paving. It would be important to think about how putting a trailhead in this area would impact the Cross Country Ski area. The TOS discussed the impact a trailhead would have on the homeowners along Alder Creek Road (probably positively) and whether or not we should be building another big parking lot when we already have parking at the ACAC.

The next steps are to list out the opportunities and challenges with the projects that we have looked at today (congestion around the ACAC, Flying Squirrel realignment, and a Moondance Trailhead). Then we can look at what's viable and what is not. Other options often come out of these discussions. One of the biggest challenges that Tahoe Donner has is that we have a lot of great access and lots of people (not just members) using our trails. Benjamin Lavine shared that what's developing at the board level are six or eight major projects that are all interconnected. The projects start with the moving the equestrian arena and repurposing that space. Then how do you deal with the EQ Center and situating it on the land so that it fits in with all of the other users? What are we doing with Flying Squirrel to situate mountain bikers in an area on the trail system that makes sense to them and the other users? What do we do to solve the parking issues on Alder Creek Road? So, if the board decided to start any of these projects, what would the sequencing look like and would any 'falling dominoes' influence other possible projects (both known and unknown)? Construction and member experience is important to take into account. "If we built this trailhead, would that help solve some of the problems down at the ACAC?" Benjamin also shared the idea that if we move the arena, we would no longer need the path in front of the patio, so could we expand the patio, put in grass where the arena is (for both a play area and a possible wedding/party venue). There are lots of moving parts and no one knows what would make the most sense. It will be up to the TOS and other committees to help guide the board as to what makes sense and how we sequence all of the puzzle pieces together. So far these discussions are being made at the board and general manager level. The board is discussing capital expenditures in regards to the EQ Center now and that is why all of these projects are being discussed. Redistributing trail users was a big part of the 2022 Trails Master Plan, and that is one of the reasons that the Moondance Trailhead was a recommendation of that plan

A discussion of what constitutes a "trailhead" took place. Benjamin explained that there are lots of different types of trailheads, from Teton Way, which only has a few parking spaces on a dirt patch near the road, to Glacier Way trailhead which is paved, has 45+ parking spaces and a vault toilet. Annie Rosenfeld further explained that there are many trailheads (Hansel Mailboxes and Crazy Horse off of Skislope Way being two examples) where people are parking on the street to access Tahoe Donner trails. The Bermgarten Trailhead is a good example of a roadside trailhead that was eventually turned into a off street trailhead with paved parking. The Palmer's, who live on the cul de sac at the end of Bergarten Way, championed the project because of the number of cars that were parking on the street, and the project went from a 'rustic' unpaved parking lot just off the cul de sac, to a paved parking lot at the trailhead with approximately 15 spaces. The original unpaved parking is still available for overflow should the paved parking lot get full, without putting more cars on the street. This parking lot gives people access to the Tahoe Rim Trail, and the Association didn't know how much greater the usage was going to be as the Donner Lake Rim Trail was being built, so rather than waiting, the Association built a parking lot in anticipation of the increased use. That decision has proven to be wise, and the parking lot, while well utilized, is rarely full.

Benjamin anticipates that there will be increased use of the Euer Valley as the Euer Valley Phase II project comes to fruition. He recommended that the TOS take a field trip down there to get an idea as to the full extent of the project. Annie shared that the Truckee Donner Land Trust is scheduled to start building the southern section of the Donner Lake Rim Trail (23 miles along Shellenberger ridge connecting Donner State Park with the Pacific

Crest Trail). They have also just acquired 691 acres of the Upper Carpenter Valley, hoping to build a trail from the Lower Carpenter Valley to Frog Lake. The easement for that trail is through Tahoe Donner's Crabtree property. This trail will probably be built in the next couple of years, and in response to a question from a committee member, Annie stated that she did not know if horses would be permitted on that trail. The Forest Service is also planning on building trails in the Prosser area. There is also lobbying taking place to build more trails (possibly mobility trails) to the east of Truckee. The overall point is that we need to look at these projects in the long term. One committee member asked if a Moondance Trailhead makes sense in relation to other high value projects (snowmaking in particular) and whether or not a paved road is necessary for this trailhead.

John will think about the best ways to capture member comment about projects (in much the same way that staff did the ebike analysis). John would like to have more tours like the one we did today to see the complexities of the decisions that need to be made down the road.

Tentative meeting schedule 'field trips' for the summer

July 2, 2025: Miscellaneous Trail and Forestry Projects

August 6, 2025: Euer Valley Project - Phase II

September 3, 2025: Euer Valley Project - Phase I

IV. Peter Sawyer adjourned the meeting by consensus. (5:01 pm)