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Kempthorne Approves \$140 Million in Conservation, Recreation and Capital Improvements for Nevada and Lake Tahoe

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, Nevada -- Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne today announced more than \$140 million in conservation, restoration, wildfire protection, recreation and capital improvement projects for Lake Tahoe and Nevada, approving the ninth round of funding under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act.

“As we enter the second decade of funding under this historic legislation, we face new threats from global warming, drought and catastrophic wildland fires,” Kempthorne said. “But we are confident that our unique federal-state partnership has the expertise, public support and flexibility to effectively respond to these challenges.”

“The Department of the Interior remains committed to working with federal, state and local leaders, private landowners and the public to improve landscapes, restore wildlife habitat, protect vital water resources, and develop new recreational facilities in Nevada and around magnificent Lake Tahoe,” Kempthorne said.

Speaking at the twelfth annual Lake Tahoe Summit, Kempthorne noted that Round 9 includes \$24 million for Lake Tahoe restoration projects and a \$30 million set aside for the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program as well as more than \$72 million for projects in Southern and Eastern Nevada.

Kempthorne joined U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Harry Reid, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Nevada Gov. Jim Gibbons and other federal and state leaders in an Environmental Forum that focused on reducing wildfire risks and addressing global warming’s impacts on Lake Tahoe’s clarity.

The \$140,629,915 approved under Round 9 will fund 71 projects across the state. A number of them addressed the Environmental Forum’s themes:

- \$11,091,654 million for hazardous fuels reduction projects at Lake Tahoe (\$6.6 million) and the Carson Range in Nevada (\$4.4 million).
- \$3,025,000 for the Eastern Nevada Restoration Seed Warehouse in Ely, Nevada, which will provide grass and shrub seed to conduct emergency stabilization and rehabilitation of public lands burned by wildfires in eligible geographic areas.
- The \$24 million for Lake Tahoe restoration projects includes \$19 million for watershed and habitat improvement, \$270,000 for air quality and transportation, more than \$500,000 for recreation and scenic, and \$3,750,000 for science and research.
- The \$30 million set aside will fund future rounds to ensure that the full \$300 million federal funding commitment will be met for the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement program. Almost \$200 million has been approved for Lake Tahoe restoration projects through Round 9.
- More than \$61 million for development of parks, trails and natural areas, conservation initiatives, capital improvement projects, and landscape restoration projects in Clark, Lincoln and White Pine Counties and acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands in Douglas, Washoe and Lyon Counties.

“The funds for Lake Tahoe will help improve the health of the surrounding forests, continue scientific research to improve water and air quality, and support ongoing hazardous fuels reduction projects,” Kempthorne said. “The hazardous fuels reduction projects at Lake Tahoe and the Carson Range will help reduce fuels from around houses and in forested areas near communities.”

Since the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) was enacted in 1998, more than \$3 billion has been generated from the sale of U.S. public land in the Las Vegas Valley to fund land conservation, water improvements and capital projects in the state. Under the Act, about 85 percent of the revenue is invested in projects that benefit and protect the citizens of Nevada. Ten percent of the revenue goes to the Southern Nevada Water Authority and five percent to the State of Nevada General Education Fund.

Federal agencies within the Lake Tahoe Basin receiving Round 9 funding include the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Highways Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Forest Service. Information regarding all the SNPLMA-approved projects may be found at <http://www.nv.blm.gov/snplma/index.htm>.