



# Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan

## 6. OPEN SPACE, TRAILS AND RECREATION

### 6.1 Open Space, Trails and Recreation Concepts

The centerpiece of the MVWPSP Open Space program is the preservation of the East Parcel, over 6,300 acres, as permanent open space. Ultimately, this preservation of the cornerstone of the Martis Valley conservation lands will connect 50,000-acres of contiguous undeveloped forested land from SR 267 through the Mount Rose wilderness which spans the California/Nevada boundary with over 24,000 acres in the Tahoe Basin. The East Parcel has been coveted by numerous conservation groups since the acquisitions of Waddle Ranch, Siller Ranch and the Jones parcel, making the eastern side of SR 267 a conservation mecca and nucleus of high-Sierra recreation.

The entire 6,376-acre East Parcel will be either acquired via a fee simple acquisition and held by a qualified conservation entity, such as the Truckee Donner Land Trust, or by recordation of a conservation easement. Either mechanism will eliminate the possibility of future residential or retail commercial development of this land. In addition, the 670 acres within the East Parcel that are designated for residential and commercial development will be re-designated Forest and will be rezoned Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) upon approval of the Specific Plan and the immediate withdrawal of the TPZ of the West Parcel by both the Board of Supervisors and the Board of Forestry. Approximately 390 acres of the West Parcel will be designated Forest.

The land use plan for the West Parcel is designed to take advantage of the outstanding recreational opportunities within the MVWPSP site by providing trails throughout the development that can be used for walking, biking, snow shoeing, cross-country skiing, and other recreational activity. This internal trail system will connect to the broader regional trail network that extends throughout the Northstar, Martis Valley and Tahoe Basin areas.

Public recreation and parks are an important component of the MVCP, and that importance is reflected in the MVWPSP. The MVCP identifies standards for parkland within Martis Valley, calls for a wide range of recreational opportunities, encourages development of private recreation facilities, and seeks to protect significant historic resources. The MVCP also calls for a system of interconnected hiking, riding and bicycle paths. The MVWPSP supports these goals by ensuring that the 6,376-acre East Parcel is pre-

served as open space, and by providing for a range of private recreational facilities to serve homeowners, as well as private and public trails within that plan area that connect to existing and planned regional trails. The MVWPSP area does not contain substantial historic sites, but does include policies to protect subsurface prehistoric or historic resources where present (see Chapter 7).

### 6.2 Open Space, Trails and Recreation Overview and Context

The MVWPSP is nestled adjacent to Northstar Resort and is composed of a picturesque natural amphitheater, forested hillsides and mountain peaks. Much of the area to the west, south and east of the MVWPSP is designated for forestry. Notably the two largest land owners are the United States Forest Service and Trimont Land Company. The area east of SR 267 is largely undeveloped, and tens of thousands of acres are owned by land trusts or governmental agencies (see Figure 6-1). Lake Tahoe can be viewed from a few select points within the MVWPSP.

Winter sports dominate the area, with thousands of snow-sport enthusiasts traveling from the Central Valley, the Bay Area and beyond to ski and snowboard at local resorts, including Northstar immediately north of the MVWPSP, and to snowshoe and cross-country ski on the trails that crisscross the area. During the summer, hiking and biking are popular recreational activities.

There are several existing and planned trail systems near the MVWPSP: the future Martis Valley Trail, or MVT, the Tompkins Memorial Trail, or TMT, and the Tahoe Rim Trail (see Figures 6-2 and 6-3). The MVT will be a Class 1 trail beginning near the Truckee Airport and crossing the Martis Valley into the Northstar community. The trail will continue south ascending into the mountains and terminate at Sawmill Flats. Sawmill Flats, also known as Four Corners, is on the paved Fibreboard Freeway, providing access to the trail system that connects with Tahoe City. The MVT will be a 10-foot wide paved trail with 2-foot running paths on both sides that will parallel SR 267. Existing trails and dirt roads would be used.

The East Parcel contains approximately 40 miles of trails (see Figure 6-3).

### 6.3 Open Space, Trails and Recreation Goals & Policies

**Goal OS-1: Preserve open space areas that offer a mosaic of natural and biological resources and that are contiguous to other undeveloped lands.**

**Goal OS-2: Emphasize an all-season pedestrian environment within the MVWPSP.**

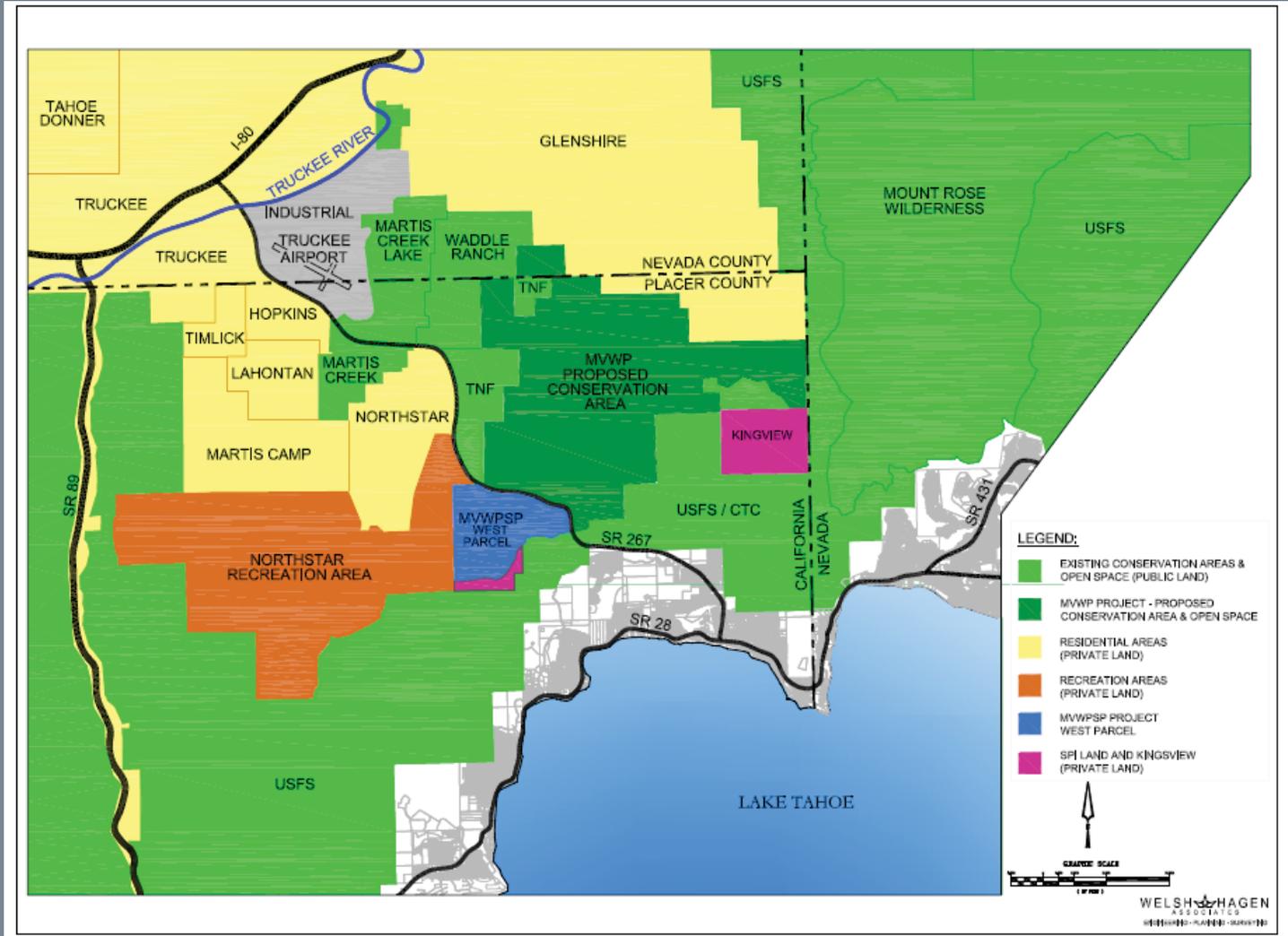


Figure 6-1 Regional Open Space

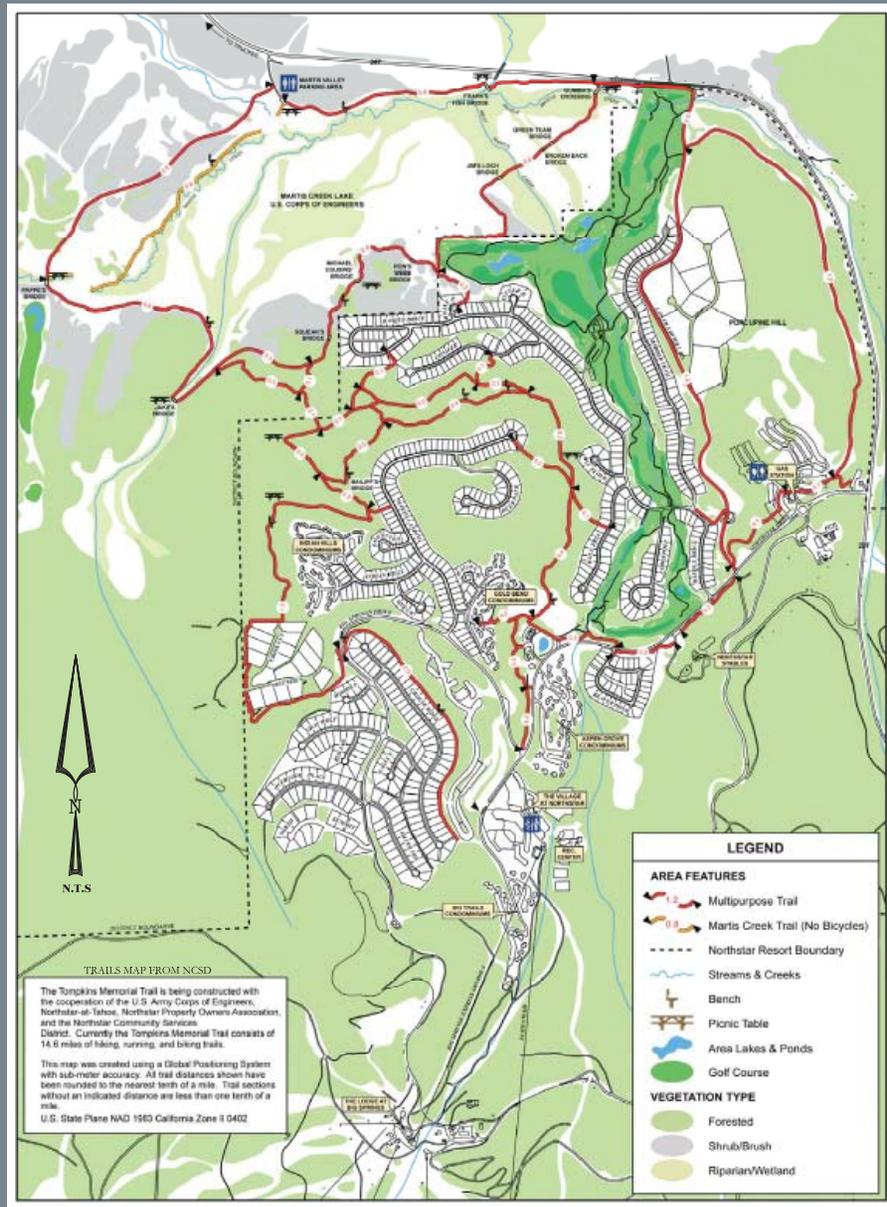


Figure 6-2 Local Trails System  
 Source: Northstar Community Service District

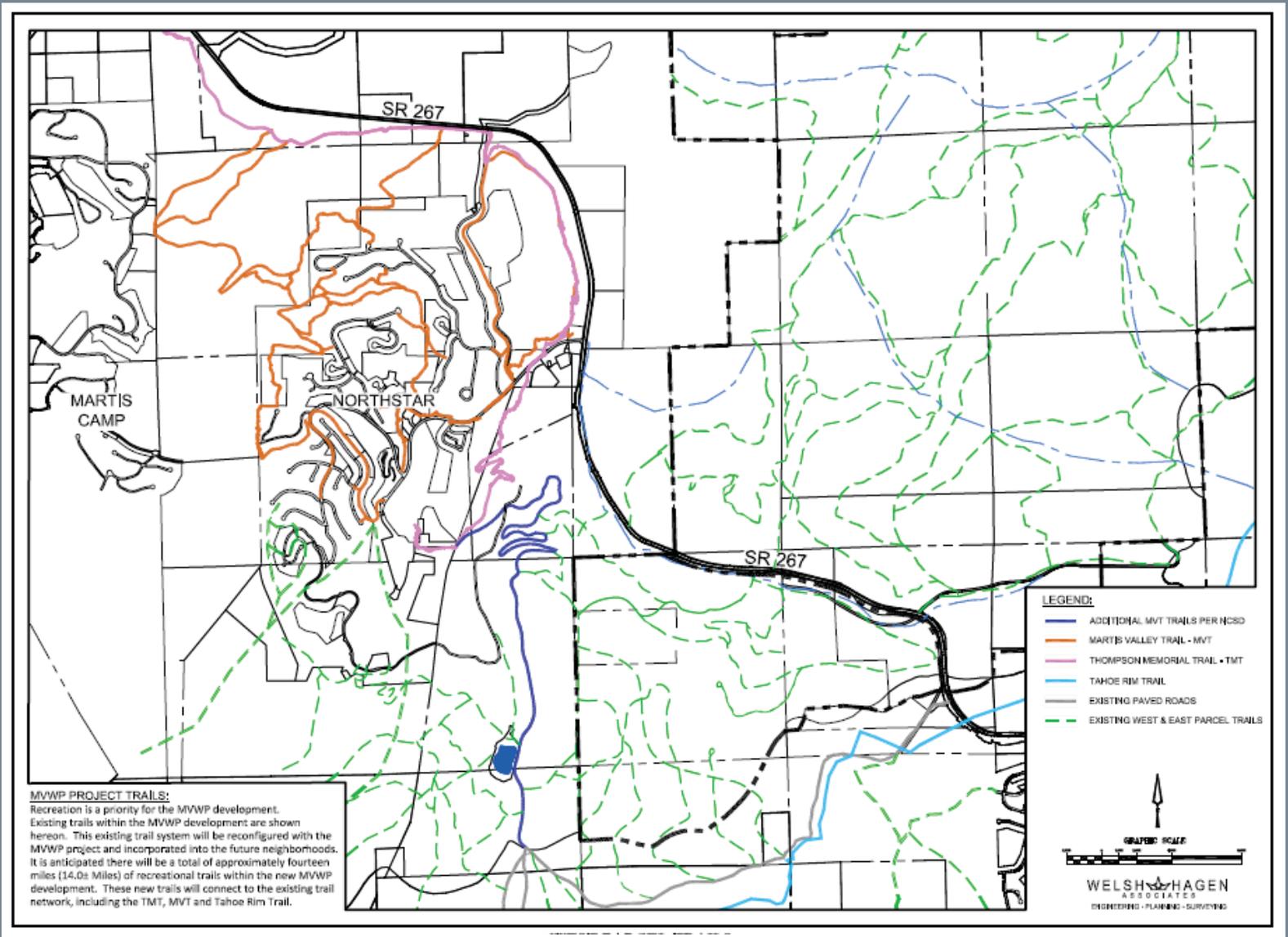


Figure 6-3 West Parcel Proposed Trails

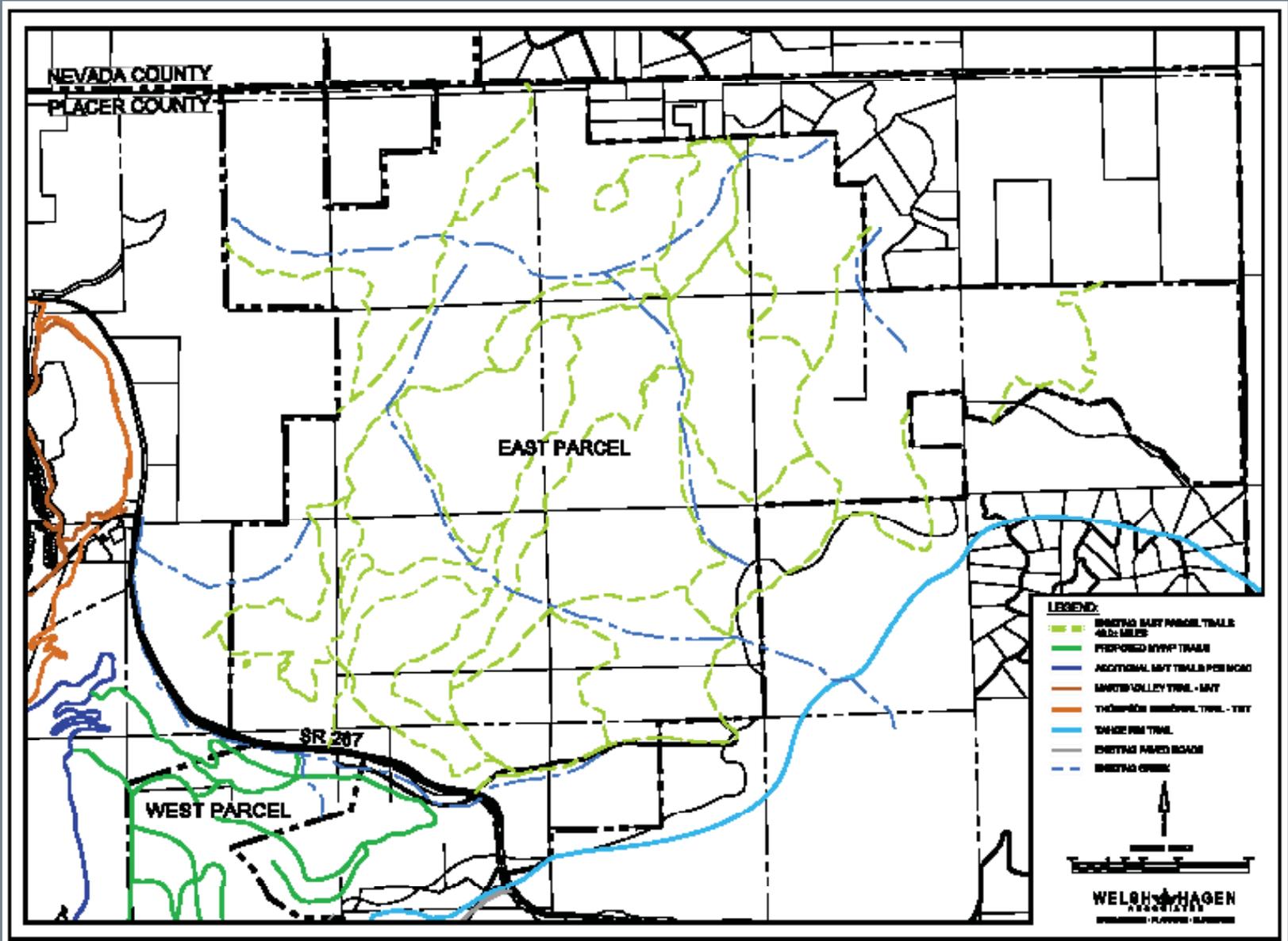


Figure 6-4 East Parcel Trails

**Goal OS-3: Create a community and destination that emphasizes the natural environment and the recreational opportunities offered in the immediate area, including regional trails and views of the Martis Valley and Lake Tahoe.**

Policy OS-1: Shift development opportunities from the East Parcel, which is now contiguous to a large expanse of open space, to the West Parcel, which is located in proximity to existing development, public utilities and recreational amenities. This will be accomplished by redesignating the 670 acres within the East Parcel that are current designated Low Density Residential and General Commercial to Forest and rezoning this acreage Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) upon approval of the Specific Plan and the immediate withdrawal of the TPZ of the West Parcel by both the Board of Supervisors and the Board of Forestry

Policy OS-2: Preserve the entire East Parcel and a portion of the West Parcel from future development in perpetuity through the use of a limited conservation easement and/or purchase of the properties by land trusts. The entire 6,376-acre East Parcel, including the 216 acres in Nevada County and 130 acres in the Tahoe Basin, shall be conserved as follows:

- If the MVWPSP has been approved by Placer County and the immediate withdrawal of the West Parcel from TPZ has been approved by Placer County and CalFire, then the East Parcel shall be preserved as permanent open space. This preservation outcome shall be achieved no later than August 2020 by one of the following mechanisms:
  - The East Parcel shall be acquired by a qualified conservation entity, such as the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and/or Tahoe Donner Land Trust (TDLT).
  - If TPL and/or TDLT do not acquire the land by August 2020, then a limited conservation easement (LCE) shall be placed on the entire 6,376 acres. The LCE shall prohibit residential or retail commercial development of the East Parcel.

The above provisions shall be memorialized in the Development Agreement.

Policy OS-3: Provide an internal network of trails that enable residents and guests to travel to and from commercial and recreational amenities without relying on automobiles.

Policy OS-4: Work with NCSO and other organizations involved in trail development to identify the appropriate connection from internal trails to regional trail networks.

Policy OS-5: Provide public access to trails.

Policy OS-6: Offer opportunities for a variety of recreational activities for residents and guests, such as cross-country skiing, biking, hiking, swimming, and tennis.

Policy OS-7: Provide passive recreation facilities (e.g., parks, picnic areas, event lawns) in areas that are easily accessible to residents and guests, and take advantage of the natural environment and proximate amenities.



*The MVWPSP will provide public access to trails and identify the appropriate connection from on-site trails to regional trail networks.*



*Create and promote a multi-use trails system.*

Policy OS-8: Provide a combination of open space, parks and recreation facilities that meet the County General Plan requirements for parks and open space.

Policy OS-9: Pedestrian and bike trails shall be separated from primary roads unless where feasible while considering topography and other site constraints.

Policy OS-10: Provide open space and recreational amenities to meet, at a minimum, County standards for parks and recreation.

#### **6.4 Designated Open Space**

A total of approximately 6,700 acres of open space will be preserved through land use designations and zoning (Forest and TPZ, respectively) and the use of easements or purchase by land trusts. The majority of this land, 6,376 acres, will be on the East Parcel, which is the cornerstone of the 50,000-acre undeveloped area east of SR 267. In addition, approximately 390 acres within the West Parcel would be designated Forest. The 390 acres represent almost 37% of the total West Parcel acreage and almost 59% of total development parcel.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Land Use, the 670 acres within the East Parcel that are designated for residential and commercial development will be re-designated Forest and will be rezoned Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) upon approval of the Specific Plan and the immediate withdrawal of the TPZ of the 662 development area of the West Parcel by both the Board of Supervisors and the Board of Forestry. The entire 6,376-acre East Parcel will be conserved through one of two mechanisms, including the 216 acres in Nevada County and the 130 acres in the Tahoe Basin. The first is an option agreement for fee-simple acquisition by Truckee Donner Land Trust and the Trust for Public Land, and the second is a Limited Conservation Easement (LCE) which is executed and in escrow. If the TDLT and/or TPL are unable to acquire the East Parcel, then the LCE would be recorded as described in Policy OS-2.

The two parcels designated Forest within the West Parcel will remain undeveloped. A 325-acre parcel to the east of development parcel will be designated Forest, and will remain undeveloped. A 65-acre parcel to the northwest corner will remain designated forest and undeveloped except for utility infrastructure.

#### **6.5 Trails**

New multi-purpose trails will augment existing trails within the MVWPSP to provide connections between MVWPSP neighborhoods and MVWPSP commercial development and recreational amenities (see Figure 6-3). Approximately 14 miles of trails will be developed within the West Parcel. This trail system will provide a substantial recreational amenity in and of itself, and will connect to existing and planned trails at Northstar and the Northstar Village, providing access for residents and guests to the broader regional trails network. NCS D will be consulted regarding the location of internal trails and the most advantageous connections to trails outside of the MVWPSP. The NCS D may construct and/or maintain the trails as well. Existing access through the West Parcel's trails will be maintained.

## 6.6 Recreational Facilities

The primary recreational activities undertaken within the MVWSP residents and guests will be related to the multi-use trail system—winter sports such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing and summer sports such as hiking and biking. The MVWSP is also proximate to several ski resorts, such as Northstar, and residents and guests are expected to recreate at these resorts as well.

Additional recreational amenities will be provided within the MVWSP, and could include one or more of the following:

- Passive parks/open space areas,
- Event and yoga lawns,
- Swimming pool/swim, tennis and fitness center,
- Fitness center,
- Tennis courts, and/or
- Basketball or sports courts.

