

10 REASONS TO PROTECT WASHOE MEADOWS STATE PARK

1. RESTORATION SHOULDN'T BE HELD HOSTAGE TO A GOLF COURSE

Even though there is a far less damaging alternative in the Environmental Impact Statement that would restore the river and its environs and allow Washoe Meadows State Park to remain intact, State Parks and the golf industry claim that the river can't be restored unless half of the course is moved into Washoe Meadows State Park. We support Alternative 3, which would reconfigure the golf course where it is now, and restore the river and environs,

2. DOWNGRADING A STATE PARK SETS A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT

In order to legally build the golf course in the state park, Washoe Meadows State Park would need to be reclassified as a recreation area, affording it far fewer protections. Downgrading protection for a state park to allow development is precedent setting. It has far-reaching consequences for the future of California's parks. Which state park may be next?

3. PARKS ARE FOR PEOPLE, NOT CORPORATE PROFITS

Powerful lobbyists including the American Golf Corporation, which is owned by Goldman Sachs, are pushing to build the new golf course in the name of helping the economy. American Golf Corporation is lobbying officials to adopt Alternative 2. The corporation currently takes in \$1.5 million as concessionaire at the existing golf course, which operates on state land adjacent to the park, and stands to make even more by moving the golf course into Washoe Meadows State Park.

4. ALTERNATIVE 2 CUTS PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE PARK AND RIVER

Washoe Meadows State Park currently provides a range of passive, family-friendly recreation. Alternative 2, preferred by State Parks and the golf industry, would dedicate about 20 percent of the state park to a single use—golf. It also would cut off existing public access to the river to accommodate greens and fairways.

5. MOVING THE GOLF COURSE EXPANDS THE PROBLEM

The existing Lake Tahoe Golf Course, built in the 1950s, has caused erosion, killed fish, degraded spawning and wildlife habitats, and polluted Lake Tahoe with sediments and toxic runoff from the river. The planned river restoration seeks to reduce these problems. But moving the golf course to the park will extend the very problems the restoration project seeks to address. Alternative 2, which State Parks recommends, would remove some 1,600 trees; fragment wildlife habitat; reduce biological diversity; and imperil species found nowhere else in the Tahoe Basin.

6. GREENWASHING AND THE GOLF INDUSTRY

The golf industry has touted Lake Tahoe Golf Course as "Audubon certified." In

fact, it's certified by Audubon International, an organization formed by the golf Industry. The Audubon most people have heard of is the National Audubon Society, whose mission is "to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity." The National Audubon Society is not in any way related to the golf industry's Audubon International, and has never certified a golf course.

7. GOLF IS A SHRINKING SEGMENT OF THE "RECREATION ECONOMY"

Significantly, the state's economic analysis doesn't address what industry studies show--golf is declining as a recreational activity, while demand is increasing for family-friendly recreation such as hiking, camping, birding, river rafting, photography, and enjoyment of nature. The golf industry and Chamber of Commerce are proponents of reconfiguring and even adding to the length of the golf course. But trends clearly show family-centered recreation, eco-tourism, and shorter play golf courses are sources of future economic growth. The estimated \$10 million the developer would pay to relocate 9 holes to state parkland is said to be recoverable through higher green fees and favorable concession contracts. What remains unsaid is whether taxpayers would be responsible for any shortfall in the developers' investment.

8. WASHOE MEADOWS--A PARK WITHOUT A PLAN

More than 27 years after opening Washoe Meadows State Park, State Parks has yet to produce a General Management Plan for the park. This has made it impossible to properly manage the natural and cultural resources of the park, and has left the park vulnerable to threats, such as the golf course. State Parks itself has used the park as a dumping ground, removed trees, and built roads without public comment or accountability.

9. WE NEED A LONG TERM SOLUTION

California State Parks is caught in the budget squeeze, but the answer isn't to sacrifice a state park to development. Generating revenues isn't the mission of State Parks. But revenue generation is among the reasons cited by State Parks for turning much of Washoe Meadows State Park into a golf course. Washoe Meadows State Park can't be held responsible for fixing the state's budget deficit. A long-term funding source for parks is the only real solution—and that's what we should be working on together.

10. DOING THE RIGHT THING

State officials face a choice: Protect Washoe Meadows State Park for future generations and manage it for wildlife and low-cost, family-friendly recreation as intended when the park was created, or destroy its natural environment and replace it with a golf course.

To learn more: www.washoemeadowscommunity.org