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 it's 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 official 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