

A scenic view of a forest with a snow-capped mountain peak in the background. The foreground is filled with lush green trees, and the background shows a large, rugged mountain peak covered in snow, partially obscured by the branches of trees in the foreground. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

THE BLENDING OF TAYLOR CREEK
VISITOR CENTER WITH NATURE

SOMMER ST. MICHEL
JUNE 12, 2009

ADVISORS

The Blending of Taylor Creek Visitor Center with Nature

A Senior Project presented to the Faculty of the Program of Landscape
Architecture in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree
of Bachelors of Science of Landscape Architecture

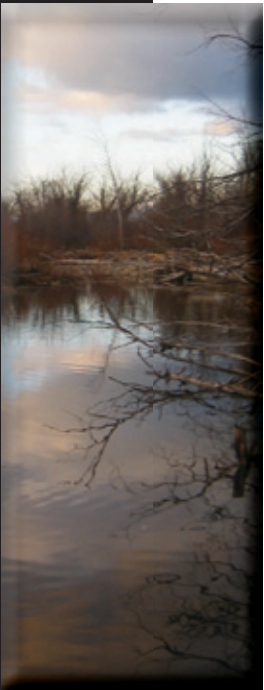
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June 12, 2009



PREFACE

For my senior project I am taking on the re-design of the South Lake Tahoe Taylor Creek Visitor Center. Growing up in South Lake Tahoe I have visited and spent a lot of time at this site over my entire life. My dad, Mike St. Michel, works for the Forest Service in the Lake Tahoe Basin and took my brother, sister, and I to the Taylor Creek area often when we were children. We were free to run around, explore the area, and play hide and seek in the upper half of the Visitor Center.

This project is important to me because I know this site very well, and the unique teepee shaped Visitor Center that currently exists is significant to me. It is a very distinctive facility that unfortunately, due to the need for space and fire hazard issues with the upper half, needs to be expanded and re-developed. My goal for this project is to create a new Visitor Center that will blend well with the serene beauty of the landscape that surrounds the site. At the same time I want this new facility to have an individual identity that provides character to the site, just as the teepee does.

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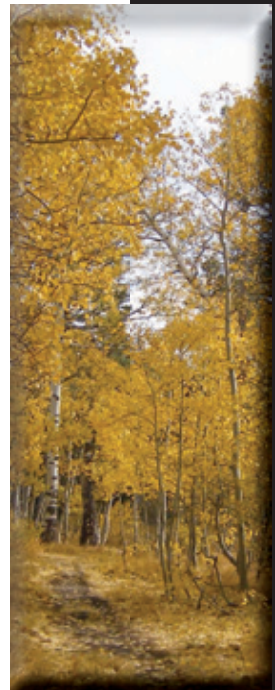
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DEDICATION

To my parents, the inspiration behind everything I do.

Thank you for always being there and supporting me every step of the way.



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I would also like to thank my fellow classmates who have taught me everything I know about computers. Without you guys all nighters at studio and sleep deprived presentations could not have happened. It has been a fulfilling four years of college with much needed support. Thank you all for being there, it has been fun.

CHAPTER ONE



Figure 1.1

INTRODUCTION

Location

Located just off of scenic corridor Highway 89 (Figure 1.2) in South Lake Tahoe, the Taylor Creek Visitor Center sits in a small opening surrounded by National



Figure 1.2 - Location Map

Forest, and is within a minutes walk of the lake shore. The facility is situated within the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, part of the US Forest Service, and is also part of El Dorado County in Northern California. The Visitor Center's connection to Highway 89 and close proximity to South Lake Tahoe make it easily accessible, especially to day users in the Lake Tahoe Basin, visitors staying in the South Tahoe area, and vacationers coming from all across the country (NFMA Project Initiation, 2007).

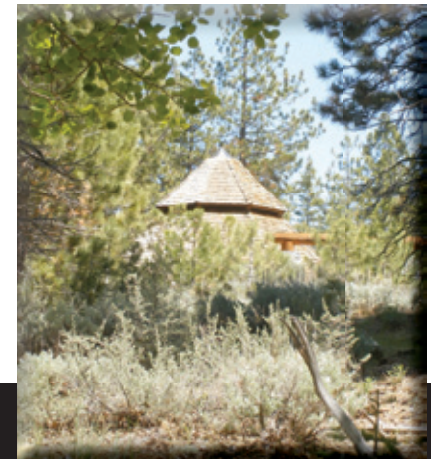


Figure 1.3

Background

Built in 1967, the “teepee” shaped building that today serves as the Visitor Center for the Forest Service at Lake Tahoe, was originally designed as a storage and restroom facility. The teepee was initially constructed to accommodate the anticipated new Visitor Center that was to be built shortly after. The proposed Visitor Center, however, was never built when funding for construction dissipated. The teepee has since been modified to act as the Visitor Center, accommodating an estimated 110,000 visitors entering the building each year. The site itself attracts around 400,000 people every year, from Memorial Day weekend through the end of October when the Visitor Center is open. According to the Forest Service, visitors to the site stay for an average of 45 minutes, but unless they are seeking specific information most of this time is spent out on the self guided interpretive trails, exploring on their own.

Two other significant amenities to the Taylor Creek site, both of which were built in the late 1960's around the same time as the teepee, are the Stream Profile Chamber and Lake of the Sky Amphitheater. The Stream Profile Chamber allows visitors to explore an underground section of Taylor Creek through large



glass windows, and the amphitheater provides programs during the summer. After construction of these two attractions however, the budget had expired. With no funding for the Visitor Center building, the Forest Service worked with the teepee to turn it into what they thought would be a temporary fix.

A counter was constructed (Figure 1.4) to help manage visitors seeking information and to help answer questions. The small second story loft of the teepee was accessed by a trap door and used to help deal with storage issues as the first level (the area that was originally meant for storage) quickly became the Visitor Center. A narrow staircase unfolded to allow employees to ascend to the upper half of the teepee (Figure 1.5), where maps and program information was stored. Later, a very steep permanent staircase was built as the upper half became more frequently accessed. The upstairs quickly became a makeshift work space for employees, where meetings could be held, interpretive program preparation could take place, and cleaning supplies such as toilet paper and publications could be stored.

The small teepee currently has two, double door glass entrances, one directed towards the Stream Profile Chamber, and the other towards the amphitheater and Lake Tahoe. With



Figure 1.4 - Counter/ Sales Area



Figure 1.5 - Staff Space/Top of Teepee



Figure 1.6 Information Counter

minimal space for visitors to view maps, displays, and merchandise, visitors may be deterred from entering the Visitor Center and getting the information they want. In the late 1990's, a temporary trailer was needed on site during the summer months to help issue Desolation



Figure 1.7 - Temporary Trailers

Wilderness permits, and provide wilderness etiquette. In 2007, the small upstairs of the teepee was declared unsafe due to the lack of ventilation, no alternative escape routes in case of a fire, and the presence of mice and bats which present a health risk. With staff use restricted, a second trailer (Figure 1.7) was added to the site during the peak months to provide yet more space

for staff to work and operate. These trailers are placed closer to the parking lot than the Visitor Center, and are the first visual that people see when entering the site.

Surrounding amenities, such as interpretive exhibits, parking lot, and infrastructure, have been modified in the past ten years and meet current needs. The parking lot currently has 160 spaces and was recently modified to accommodate bus and RV pull through spots with adequate turning space for them to maneuver. The Stream Profile Chamber and 350 seat outdoor amphitheater have been revamped and currently act as Taylor Creek's main attractions, winning awards from the National Association for Interpretation, and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. Two recently constructed viewing decks have also been added to the site, and there are plans to upgrade several new self guided trails with new interpretive signs, in the spring of 2009 (NFMA Final Report, 2009).

Recent Activity

With everything else updated, the most prominent need now for the Taylor Creek site is a new Visitor Center. The Forest Service addressed this issue in 2003, proposing a 12,000 square foot building that would provide more space for current uses, and introduce new amenities such as a classroom, theater, trip planning area, and a reception lobby. Compliant with the needs and wishes of the Forest Service, the 12,000 square foot building would be approximately ten times larger than the 1,300 square foot teepee that currently exists.

The 2003 building proposal was designed at this scale with the idea that the Visitor Center could be open for additional weekends in the winter instead of just the summer months. By providing more space and information for visitors the new facility would most likely attract thousands more every year, as the 1,300 square foot teepee already attracts 110,000 every year. Although the location is relatively secluded, has no immediate neighbors, and sits fairly out of sight from Highway 89, the idea of creating more traffic and

attracting more visitors to this scenic environment was strongly opposed by community members and local agencies. With no concrete funding for the project at this time, and minimal community support, the Forest Service decided to put the 2003 plans for a new Visitor Center on hold.

In the summer of 2008, the Forest Service restarted their efforts to design a new facility that would fulfill their need for space, eliminating the temporary trailers, and at the same time keeping the scale relatively small. They are currently looking at designing a Visitor Center that would simply support the current functions of the site. They have decided against adding new amenities such as a classroom and theater, which they originally proposed in their 2003 plans. New plans for development are in the first stages, focusing on the development of a three to four thousand square foot building that would be LEED certified as silver, to meet sustainability requirements (NFMA Final Report, 2009).

Community Input

Local agencies such as the League to Save Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency did not like the proposed design from 2003 because of the idea of possibly bringing more people to the site each year. The location of the Visitor Center is within minutes of Lake Tahoe and Taylor Creek, and is surrounded by natural ecosystems. The actual footprint of the new facility, proposed on already disturbed land, may only require a few trees to be removed and most likely will not cause a lot of immediate damage to the surrounding environment, but the amount of people it would attract is of concern to the community.

In response to the communities concerns, the Forest Service replied that while a new facility may spark interest within the first few years, the parking lot will not be enlarged, limiting the number of visitors to the current amount. The Forest Service also pointed out that a new Visitor Center will provide more room to educate the public about the natural environment, encouraging them to leave as minimal an impact as possible.

The following responses given by community members and organizations were compiled by the Forest Service in the summer of 2008, pertaining to the development of a new scaled down visitor center from the 2003 proposal. The input given by the following organizations is key information that I will use to design a new master plan that will accommodate the Forest Service as well as community members.

Jameson Beach Homeowner – A small gated community located one mile down the beach from the Visitor Center; an active community member, also in the local Sierra Club chapter and League to Save Lake Tahoe, was among the most apposed to such a large new Visitor Center. The individual interviewed was strongly against the 2003 proposal, and still disliked the idea of any new development, but was more supportive of the possibility of a smaller scaled building.

Camp Richardson Resort – A year round resort within minutes of Lake Tahoe, providing historic lodging, camping, marina facilities, dining, biking, and cross-country skiing. Located within one mile of the Taylor Creek Visitor Center, the resort was optimistic about the idea of a new large Visitor Center. Visitors going to the Taylor Creek Area from south shore, have to pass by Camp Richardson to get there, so any new facility that would attract people and possibly bring more guests by the resort would be beneficial to them.

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA)
– Works to protect Lake Tahoe from human impact and sustain the natural beauty of the area for future generations. They reported that they could not foresee any concerns that the TRPA would have with the development of a new facility. The TRPA would need to be involved with the planning of a new building, to help implement best management practices.

Former TRPA Executive Director – Referred to the Forest Service by the TRPA as still having a significant role concerning construction projects around south shore. He was also supportive of a new facility offering to be a spokesman to anyone with doubts of a new building.

Washoe Cultural Committee – Tribal member present at this meeting were very supportive of a new Visitor Center, and were interested in presenting interpretive programs. They also want to inform visitors about the Washoe, and offered a variety of display ideas.

Tahoe Heritage Foundation – Works to preserve and protect the culture and natural past of Lake Tahoe by informing the public about local history, through restoration, interpretation, and education. Individual board members were all very positive and supportive about the idea of a new Visitor Center.

Fallen Leaf Lake Homeowners – Located across Highway 89 from the Taylor Creek Visitor Center, two long time homeowners interviewed liked the idea of a new visitor center, but felt the uniqueness of the teepee would be beneficial to keep.

Fallen Leaf Tract Association – Another homeowners association around Fallen Leaf Lake. The president of the Association didn't want to see any development at all that would be larger than the current 1,500 square foot building.

League to Save Lake Tahoe – A private non-profit organization that strives to prevent damage to Tahoe's sensitive watershed, and promotes to Keep Tahoe Blue. The spokesperson for the organization was supportive of a scaled down building that would be LEED certified, and serve as a model for "green" construction on the south shore.

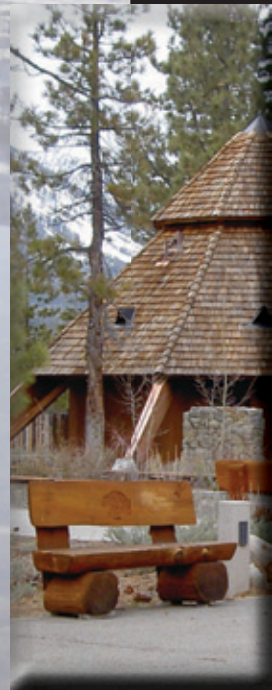
Sierra Club – Agency made up of community members to protect wild places. Members involved with this discussion provided the most controversial meeting the Forest Service encountered. These members first proposed moving the new facility to a completely new site, perhaps near the "Y" in South Lake Tahoe. With a fair amount of people seeking trail heads and recreating in the Taylor Creek Area however, they agreed that bringing people into town to receive permits and get recreation information just so they could turn around and head back out to their destinations, would not help alleviate traffic and congestion. In the end, the Sierra Club members were supportive of a new down sized visitor center, and felt that the Forest Service should further look into transportation issues and how a new Visitor Center could act as a transportation hub.

Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care – An independent, nonprofit volunteer organization that will take injured and orphaned wild birds and animals, and raise,

rehabilitate and release them back into the wild. Although a meeting with this organization was informally conducted over the phone, they expressed interest in a new Visitor Center facility, and felt that it would cause no major concerns for the wildlife in the area.

School District - District Superintendent, felt that a new interpretive program at the Visitor Center would be very beneficial to the community. He expressed disappointment that the 12,000 square foot building was being scaled back, and that it would not become open year round (NFMA Final Report, 2009).

With the apparent and overdue need for a new Visitor Center facility, it is time for a fresh design for this outdoor space that is accommodating, sustainable, and unique. The main factor I will address is the issue of blending this new structure in with the surrounding area. The Visitor Center is a place for education and information, revolving around the importance of the environment. So, it is my interest through this project, to create a building and surrounding outdoor area that intrigues visitors to go beyond the building and explore the outdoor wilderness that the surrounding site offers.



CHAPTER TWO



Figure 2.1

SITE INVENTORY

Surrounding Context

The Taylor Creek Visitor Center is part of the Pope Baldwin Recreation Area (Figure 2.2). Being the largest recreational site in the Lake Tahoe Basin this area consists of neighboring facilities to the Visitor Center, all of which are on Forest Service land. Near by Kiva, Baldwin, and Pope beaches, Desolation Wilderness trail heads, the bike path, Pope Estate, Vahalla, Camp Richardson Resort and Corral, Fallen Leaf Lake Campground, and the Tallac Historic Site all make up the Pope Baldwin Recreation

Area. These attractions provide various recreation opportunities for the public, and are concentrated within a mile radius of the Visitor Center (Recreation Activities, 2009).

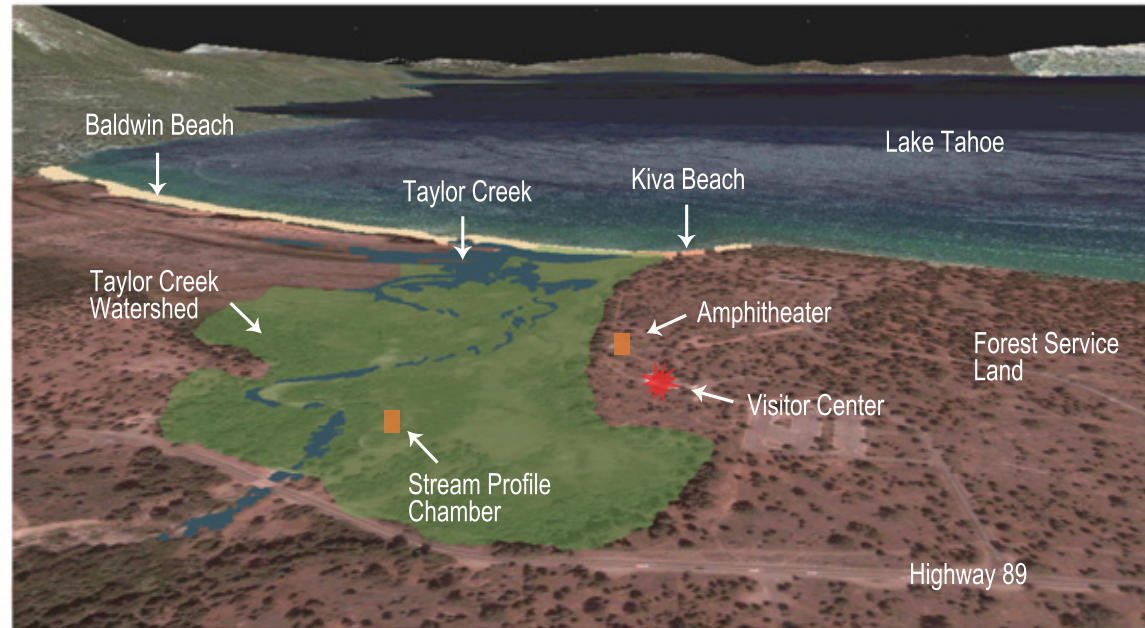


Figure 2.2 - Context Map

Environment

The Taylor Creek watershed is a very important aspect of Lake Tahoe that harbors several wildlife species. Every fall thousands of Kokane Salmon can be found swimming up Taylor Creek after being out in Lake Tahoe for two to three years, spawning, and dying off. The abundant amount of fish also attracts bears which can often be spotted along the creek. Closer to Lake Tahoe, at the mouth of Taylor Creek, bald eagles are seen hunting.

When the project for a new and larger Visitor Center was proposed in 2003, the environment was closely examined by all who were involved. An environmental assessment was conducted to analyze the impacts a larger building would have on the site. Results determined that a new structure would have minimal stress on the environment, seeing as the building would be constructed on land that was already disturbed. Wildlife usually keeps its distance from the Visitor Center, and a new facility to help educate and teach the public about this unique habitat is what the Forest Service is hoping to accomplish with a new building.

Vegetation immediately around the Visitor Center consists



Figure 2.3 - Entrance Planter



Figure 2.4 - Rainbow Trail



Figure 2.5 - Behind the Facility

primarily of Jeffrey Pine, White Fir, Lodge Pole Pine, sage brush, bitter brush, native grasses, and native wildflowers (Figure 2.5). A large display in front of the existing building surrounded by a seat wall is planted with a variety of plants common to the Tahoe area, such as wild rose, quaking aspen, and service berry (Figure 2.3) There are a few large and mature pine trees located very close to the current teepee, which may be beneficial to maintain, to help screen the new facility and provide shade. Aspen trees are dominant as one moves down the rainbow trail (Figure 2.4), which also add beautiful color to the site in the fall (Recreation Activities, 2009).

Circulation

Users of the Taylor Creek Area access the site by foot, bike, trolley, bus, and car. Nearby visitors staying at Camp Richardson Resort or Fallen Leaf Campground can easily make their way to Taylor Creek within minutes, using a well maintained bike path that spans from the “Y” to Baldwin Beach. Several Bike rental

businesses adjacent to the bike path off of Highway 89 in south shore provide bike rentals throughout the summer months. Taylor Creek is one of the stops along the bike trail that is well marked and people can easily access.

The Nifty Fifty Trolley is also a source of public transportation to get people to the Taylor Creek Area, running daily around the South Shore of Lake Tahoe. This trolley makes stops approximately every half hour, adjacent to the parking lot that serves the Visitor Center. This parking lot can also accommodate bus parking and turnaround areas, to provide for school children and tour busses. Although many coming to Lake Tahoe are looking to experience outdoor recreation, there are also those that come to the Visitor Center in personal vehicles.

When people reach the Visitor Center, there are five connecting trail heads that lead to short interpretive walks (Figure 2.6). The Rainbow Trail is the most popular of the trails, being a half mile loop through a meadow and marsh area along Taylor Creek, leading



Figure 2.6 - Circulation Map

to the Stream Profile Chamber. Smokey's Trail is a short 1/8 mile childrens interpretive walk on safe campfire construction, and the Forest Tree Trail is a short 1/4 mile walk exploring the life of Tahoe's most prominent tree, the Jeffrey Pine. Visitors can make their way down to the lake via the 3/8 mile Lake of the Sky Trail, which passes by the amphitheater on the way. There is also the Tallac Historic Site Trail which connects the

Visitor Center by a 3/8 mile trail to the Tallac Historic Site (Recreation Activities, 2009).

Special Events

Kokanne Salmon Festival

Every fall for the past nineteen years, during the first weekend of October, the Forest Service hosts a festival to educate the public about the life cycle of the

Kokanne Salmon. Unique to Taylor Creek, these salmon find their way into Lake Tahoe after hatching in the stream, and then return two to three years later. They turn a vibrant red as they migrate up stream to spawn, where they will also die a few weeks after laying their eggs. Booths are set up around the Visitor Center for exhibits, information, fish painting, and t-shirt sales. The Kokanne Salmon Half Marathon, 10k, and 5k run also take place the weekend of the festival, attracting even more visitors to the site for the weekend. A run for kids that spans the length of the Rainbow Trail takes place the morning of the half marathon as well (Figure 2.7, 2.8 on pg. 17).

Patio Talks

Currently, just outside the north-west entrance to the teepee, "patio talks" are conducted on a regular basis throughout the summer months. These short interpretive programs attracting on average around fifteen people, have become a prominent part of the interpretive program at the Visitor Center. The space where these programs occur however makes it feel

more like a "back door talk". Visitors currently sit on a rock wall or on the ground if all the space is taken. The area is not shaded or covered and can be very uncomfortable if conditions are too hot, windy, or rainy. The "patio" area also backs onto a frequently used path, which causes a lot of distractions as people are passing by (Figure 2.9, 2.10 on pg.17).

Evening Programs

Although the Visitor Center closes at 5:30pm, the attached restrooms are left open in the evening if a program is being conducted at the amphitheater (Figure 2.13). People in attendance are from nearby campgrounds, resorts, visitors to the city of South Lake Tahoe, and locals. Evening Programs are made up of natural history topics, as well as guest speakers such as a Mark Twain impersonator, astronomers, Native Americans, and a bat rehabilitator. These events are advertised in the local newspaper, as well as by flyer in areas around town such as grocery stores, resorts, and campgrounds (Recreation Activities, 2009).



Figure 2.7 - Stream Profile Chamber



Figure 2.8 Kokanee Salmon



Figure 2.9 - North-West Entrance



Figure 2.10 - Patio Area



Figure 2.11 - Main Entrance



Figure 2.12 - Rainbow Trail, Trail Head

Figure 2.13 - Lake of the Sky Amphitheater



Figure 2.14 - Stream Profile Chamber



Figure 2.15 - Lake of the Sky Viewing Deck

Needs

Broken down into separate sections, the desired 3,500 square foot Visitor Center would optimally be divided into the following sections in the inside:

- Restrooms
 - Men's
 - Women's
- Janitor's closet
- Education preparation room
- Work space for staff
- Information counter
- Permit counter
- Storage room
- Sales area
- Display area
- Electrical rooms

The surrounding outdoor space as shown in Figure 2.16 of the Visitor Center is also in need of re-design.

A larger area to conduct daily patio talks, in a setting that provides shade and adequate seating for visitors would be beneficial. The near by amphitheater is not shaded and is too large for small, 15-20 person talks. A larger patio area around the Visitor Center would allow people more comfort while listening to an interpretive program. When patio talks are not being conducted,





the shaded area will be a good space for people to sit and enjoy their lunch or a snack. This new patio area would be best located near the Visitor Center because of the centralized location to the site.

Creating a defined entrance from the parking lot to the Visitor Center would also make the site more inviting and draw people through the space more fluently. Currently, visitors entering from the parking lot and bike path are directed along a small concrete trail that parallels the access road. Most visitors however seem to spill over and walk on the access road which leads more directly towards the Visitor Center. This road therefore, only being used by service vehicles, is the entrance that people experience coming to the site.

The Visitor Center is also in a location with scenic view opportunities. Mt. Tallac in the distance is a stunning view of Desolation Wilderness that serves as the backdrop looking west from the Visitor Center. A new building that could frame this scene and direct the viewer's attention towards Desolation Wilderness would enhance the view the visitor's experience (Taylor Creek, 2004).

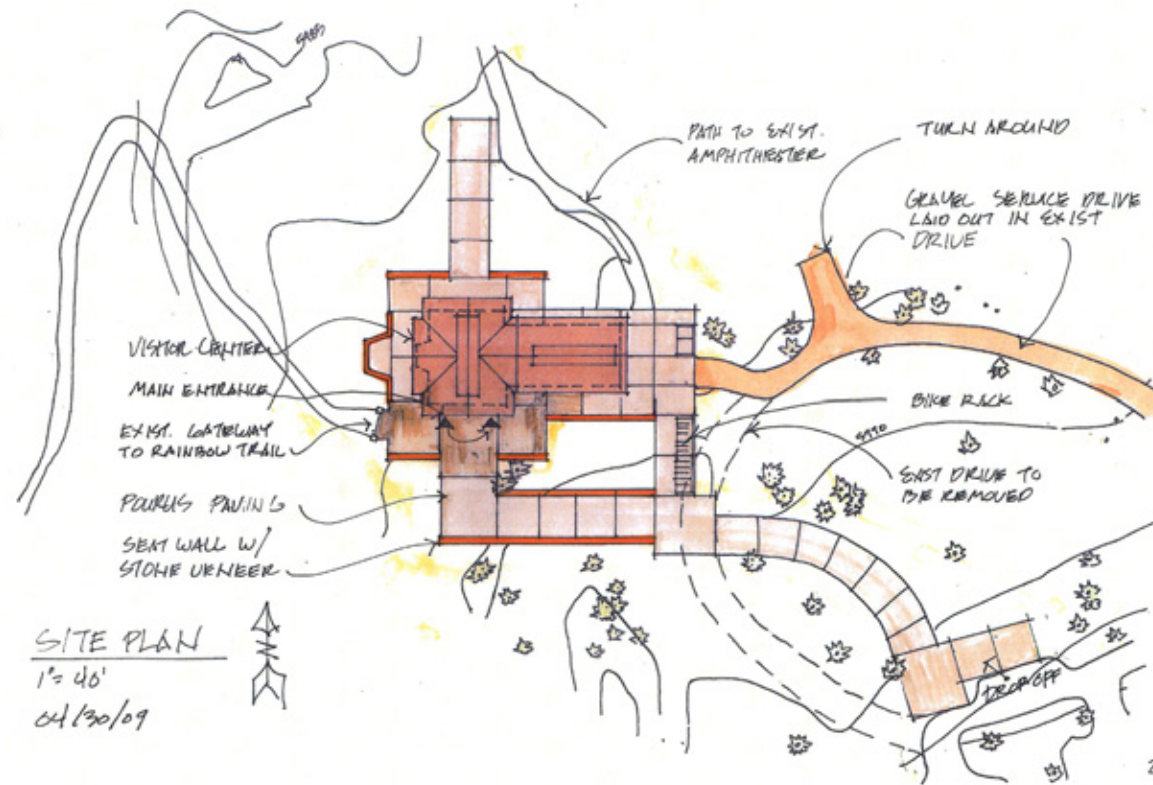


CHAPTER THREE



Figure 3.1

DESIGN



Proposed Conceptual Design

Figure 3.2 shows the current 2009, conceptual diagram that the Forest Service is in the process of planning. This 3,800 square foot building meets sustainable measures by implementing pervious pavement and solar paneled roofs. There is sufficient room on the inside according to the building layout where permits, information, book sales, and visitor

Figure 3.2

gathering can occur (the largest section of the building in figure 3.2). There is also an outdoor patio area to the west of the building, and a curved entrance walkway that directs the visitor's view away from the building. Comments have been made by the Forest Service that this proposal is too plain and typical for the site. Replacing the unique teepee with an ordinary square building would decrease the sense of place. This building encourages visitors to gather inside instead of outside by providing a large open space for people to group, and does not amplify any of the adjoining trail heads. Visitors entering the site would also be directed from the entrance walkway straight into the building (Drawing form US Forest Service).

Conceptual Design One

My first design (Figure 3.3), after several drafts, was to split the Visitor Center into two separate buildings. This would allow the visitors experience, even if they needed to come into the building to get information, to mainly remain outside. A visitor's view would be directed down the middle of the two buildings towards the amphitheater and Lake Tahoe. As an individual moves in-between the two buildings they are presented with outdoor displays mounted on the building façade. The area under the green roof of the north east building is open and also provides a covered area for outdoor exhibits and sheltered patio talks.

Feedback and analysis of this design concluded that it may present too much of a

large paved area that does not fit into the surrounding environment. The flow of the pathways is very jagged and abrupt and does not reflect the winding paths that currently exist around the site. The proximity of the two buildings to each other could also impose the feeling of being inside, which would counteract the main goal of encouraging people out into the site.

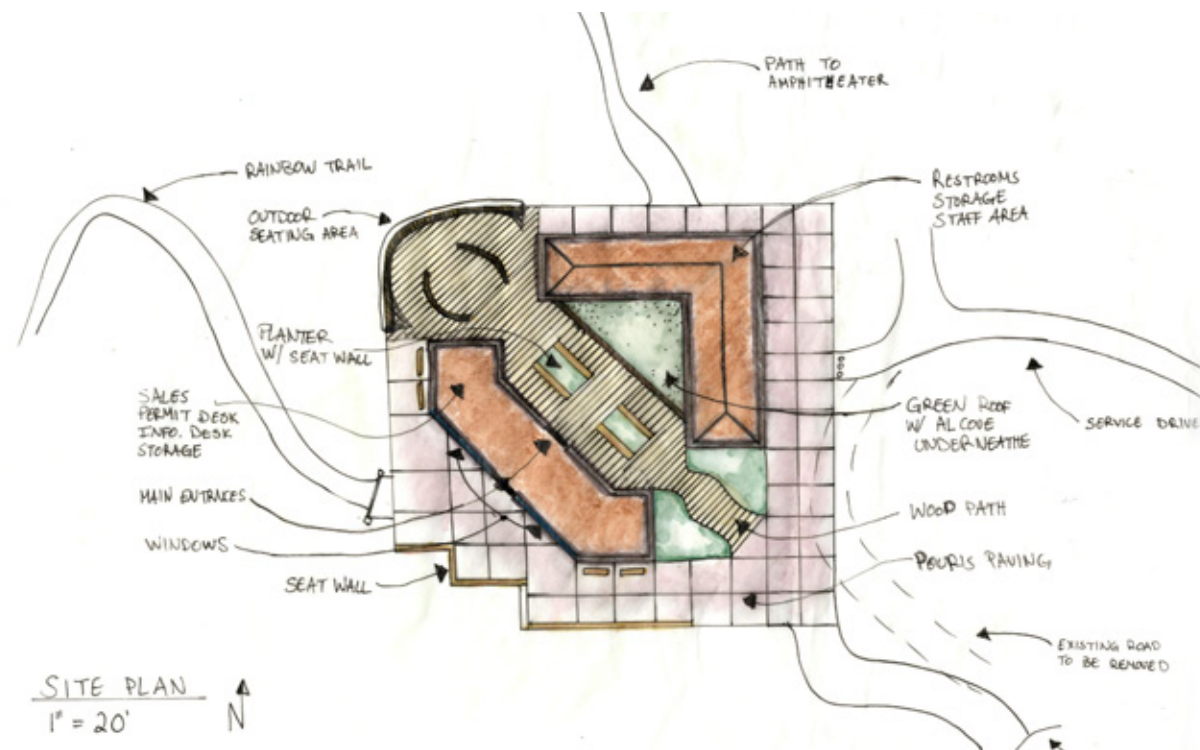


Figure 3.3

Conceptual Design Two

With the feedback from my first design, I focused on the idea of creating one building with multiple outlets (Figure 3.4). This would constantly be directing a person's view towards the outdoors and adjoining trails, so as to remind them of what the area has to offer. I also modified the path design to make it more fluid and meandering to match the surrounding trails. This design

presents more of a natural feel that is not so hard edged as the first design, and presents several different outdoor niche areas for people to use.

The problem with this design, like the conceptual plan from the Forest Service, is that it presents no real unique features to the site. It is still a single building which imposes the force of drawing people inside. The

path layout might encourage people to go through the building instead of around, because it is more direct. The building layout also creates several large patio areas which may be excessive, creating the need to pave a lot of the site.



Figure 3.4

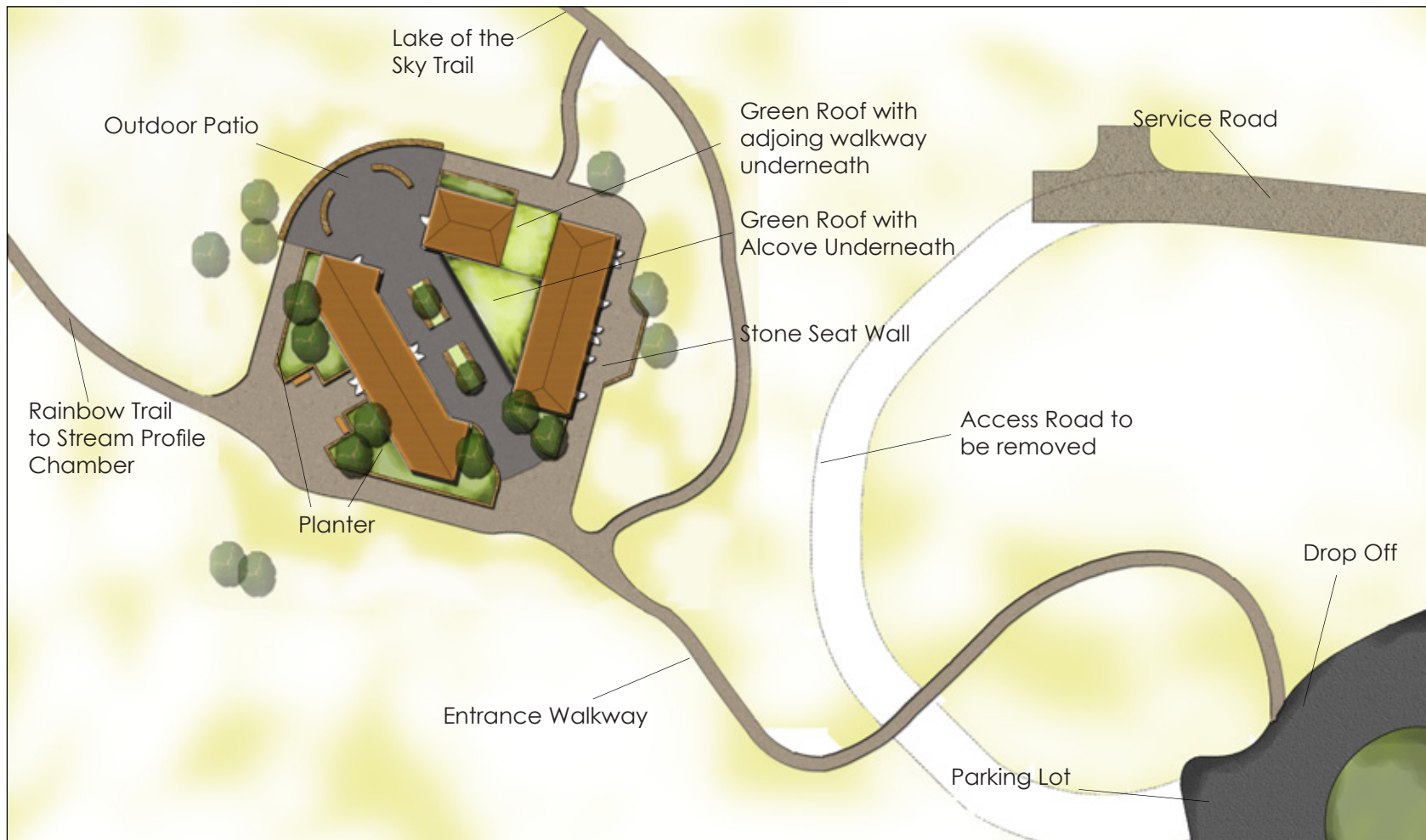


Figure 3.5 Final Conceptual Design

The Design

As a final design concept (Figure 3.5) I focused on my first idea, which presented the most unique aspects and compatibility to the site. Altering it, I

added another section of green roof to the north east building, which I opened up underneath as an access walk. Dividing the building would allow visitors to view the Lake of the Sky Trail and surrounding space, as well

as open up the space between the two buildings. The entrance path, with a re-designed drop off area in the parking lot, would meander loosely through the landscape, providing visitors with insight as to what the rest of the site has to offer. Planters situated directly in front of the two buildings would help blend them into the landscape and obstruct people's view of the building.

Building Footprint

The layout of the building is designed to best fit the needs of the site (Figure 3.6). The restrooms can be accessed from the outside which will allow them to stay open for evening programs, while the rest of the Visitor Center is closed down. Storage is located closest to the service road, while staff space and a preparation room is adjacent to the patio area for staff convenience during patio

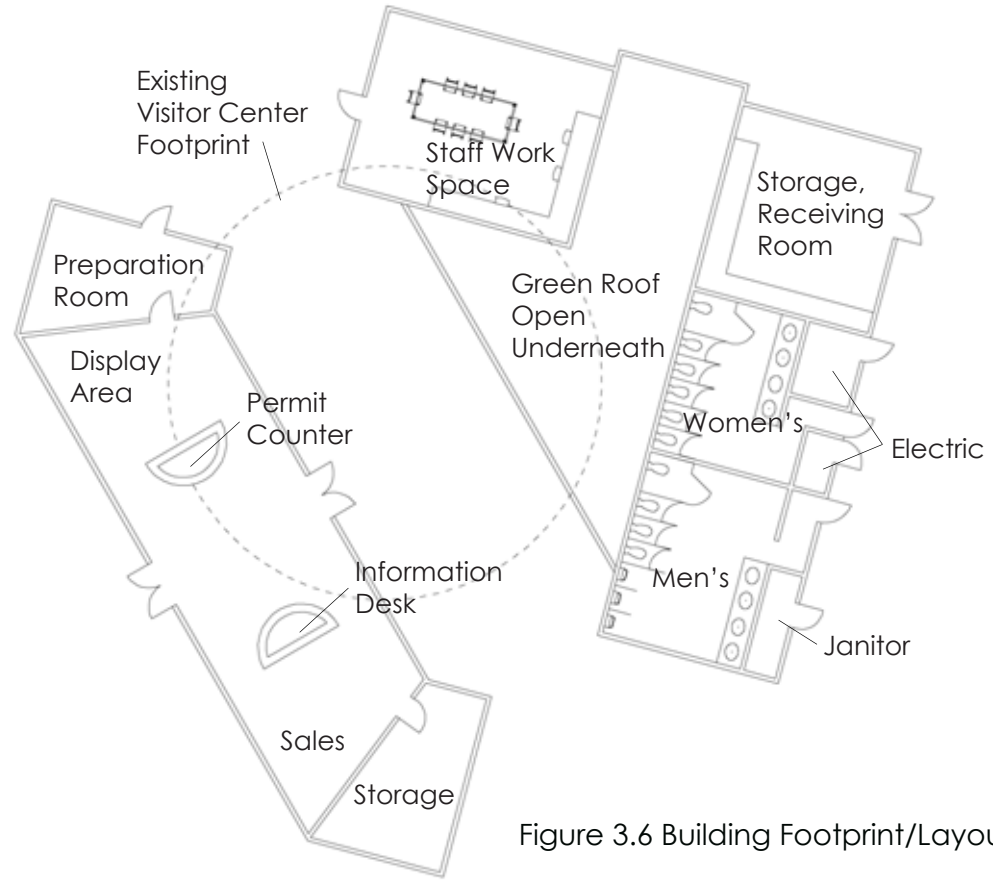


Figure 3.6 Building Footprint/Layout

talks. The southwest building is relatively open on the inside, with permit and information desks surrounded by displays and merchandise sales. There is storage near the sales area for materials, which could also provide a space for money counting and a safe.



Figure 3.7 Axonimetric

Perspectives

The building facade of the new Visitor Center would blend best if it were a dark wood finish, with a rock trim at the base. There should be several windows as well, opening up the building and directing peoples views outward. Solar panels would do best on the southwest building, and the green roof on the north

east building should be planted with native grasses. Native grasses would do best because they don't require as much soil as larger shrubs, and this roof is only supported on the sides by the surrounding building. Inspiration examples for the exterior of the Visitor Center can be found on page 29.



Figure 3.8 Entrance Perspective

Entering from the parking lot, people's view will be directed down the middle of the two buildings and out into the surrounding landscape, as shown in figure 3.8. The temporary trailers will no longer be the first facility that people see, and with the removal of the service road there will be more room for vegetation to replace the current entrance, which is dominated by concrete. A well developed drop off area and defined entrance connecting the parking lot to the area would also benefit the site by directing people in the direction of the

Visitor Center and near by trail heads. There is currently no kiosk or any signage that defines where to enter the site, which results in people walking on the service road instead of the walkway.

The open pathway underneath the north-east building will open up the corridor

between the two buildings as shown in figure 3.9, inviting visitors out onto the Lake of the Sky Trail. The green roof provides shade, offering a sheltered area for patio talks if conditions are not permitting to conduct them in the outdoor patio area. Placing the two buildings



Figure 3.9 Building Corridor



Figure 3.10 Window View

close to each other will also allow the Forest Service a concentrated area to set up booths during the Kokane Salmon Festival.

The southwest building depicted in figure 3.10 shows the picturesque view of Desolation Wilderness, looking out of the window. This building is oriented to frame Mt. Tallac with several large glass windows, reminding visitors of the recreational opportunities of the surrounding site. The entrance to this building also opens up directly onto the Rainbow Trail, encouraging people to venture down to the Stream Profile Chamber.

Figure 3.11 and 3.12 are two examples of existing Visitor Center facilities that provide a bases for what the new Taylor Creek Visitor Center exterior could potentially look like. Both of these buildings are dominated by windows, overhang entrances, and rock siding.



Figure 3.11



Figure 3.12

Conclusion

The Forest Service is currently in the stages of defining their conceptual design for the proposal of a new Visitor Center. They have recently received bids to do an environmental assessment of the site, which must be completed before they can proceed with any plans. They are hoping to have the environmental assessment done this summer so they can present their conceptual plans to the public for comments this coming fall. While no funding for this project currently exists, the Forest Service is hopeful that the plans for a down scaled facility will result in community support and possible funding

In giving a copy of this document to the Forest Service, my hope is to provide them with an alternative plan to their current design, which they are not fully satisfied with. I feel like the design of two adjacent buildings would fit nicely into the area and provide for the needs of the site. Visited by many, this site acts as a landmark for the South Tahoe Area, and is in need of a unique and memorable new design, which this conceptual plan presents.

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