

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Dá?awOther names/site number: Lake Tahoe, Lake BiglerName of related multiple property listing: N/A**2. Location**Street & number: N/ACity or town: N/A State: CA and NV Counties: El Dorado and Placer (California);
Carson City, Douglas and Washoe (Nevada)Not For Publication: ☒Vicinity: ☒**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title:

**State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: ☐

Public – Local ☐

Public – State ☒

Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s) ☐

District ☐

Site ☒

Structure ☐

Object ☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	Buildings
1	0	Sites
0	0	Structures
0	0	Objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use Historic Functions

Historic Functions

OTHER: Traditional Cultural Place

RELIGION: ceremonial site

DOMESTIC: camp

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: fishing site

LANDSCAPE: natural feature

LANDSCAPE: underwater site

Current Functions

OTHER: Traditional Cultural Place

RELIGION: ceremonial site

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: fishing site

LANDSCAPE: natural feature

LANDSCAPE: underwater site

LANDSCAPE: conservation area

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

Principal exterior materials of the property: N/A

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Dá?aw (Lake Tahoe) is a large, high-elevation freshwater lake in the Sierra Nevada along the California–Nevada border. For the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, the lake is the cultural and spiritual center of the ancestral homeland. As defined for this nomination, the Traditional Cultural Place includes the waters and submerged lands of Dá?aw within the natural rim at 6,223 feet, Lake Tahoe Datum. Shoreline development and other changes since the mid-nineteenth century have altered portions of the lake's setting and affected traditional access, but the nominated property retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association sufficient to convey its significance.

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Narrative Description

Dá?aw is a deep, freshwater alpine lake located near the crest of the Sierra Nevada along the western edge of the Great Basin. Spanning roughly 22 miles north to south and 12 miles east to west, with a recorded maximum depth of 1,645 feet, the lake holds approximately 120 million acre-feet of water. The lake is fed by 63 perennial and ephemeral creeks and tributaries and drains through a single outlet, Dewbeyumewe (Truckee River), which flows northeast from the lake before terminating in A' waku da ow (Pyramid Lake). At the Truckee River outlet in Tahoe City, the US Bureau of Reclamation's 17-gate concrete slab-and-buttress dam, completed in 1913, rests on the lake's granite sill at 6,223 feet above sea level. The structure regulates the upper 6.1 feet of the lake to a statutory ceiling of 6,229 feet, providing 744,600 acre-feet of storage. Water releases are managed by the Federal Water Master pursuant to the Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA); when the lake falls below the natural rim, flow to the Truckee River ceases (US Bureau of Reclamation 2015). The natural sill defines the boundary used for this nomination.

For the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, Dá?aw is their most sacred place and is central to Washoe lifeways and cultural identity. The lake is not simply a body of water or a seasonal destination. Washoe accounts identify Dá?aw as the place where the Maker placed the Washoe at Creation, and the lake remains central to spiritual, social, and cultural life and Tribal well-being (Nevers 1976; Washoe Tribe 2009; Cruz 2025). Archaeological, ethnographic, historical, and oral-history sources document the long and continuing relationship between the Washoe and Dá?aw.

The nominated Traditional Cultural Place includes the waters and submerged lands of Dá?aw within the lake's natural rim at 6,223 feet, Lake Tahoe Datum. It does not include shoreline above the natural sill, tributaries, creeks, streams, or associated upland features. Shoreline and upland places discussed below provide cultural and historical context but are outside the nominated boundary.

Today, the lake straddles two states and five jurisdictions: Placer and El Dorado Counties in California, and Washoe and Douglas Counties and Carson City in Nevada. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) provides bi-state regional planning authority. Roads, communities, residences, resorts, marinas, and recreational facilities have substantially altered portions of the shoreline and surrounding basin since Euro-American settlement. Much of this development lies outside the nominated boundary. As discussed under Integrity below, these changes affect aspects of setting and access but do not sever the continuing Washoe association with Dá?aw.

For the Washoe, Dá?aw lies at the geographic center of their ancestral homeland and traditional territory, which prior to Euro-American settlement extended over 10,000 square miles from Honey Lake in the north to Sonora Pass in the south, and from the Sierra crest in the west to the Pine Nut and Virginia ranges in the east (Lindström 2000; Nevers 1976). Ethnographic accounts describe seasonal movement among family camps and resource areas as foods and other resources became available. Winter camps were often established in lower-elevation valleys such as Carson Valley, Eagle Valley, and Truckee Meadows, although Washoe families also wintered in higher valleys during relatively mild years. In spring, many families traveled to higher elevations for fish runs and other resources. At Dá?aw, families used established lakeshore camps near productive

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fisheries and gathering areas. In autumn, many families moved east to piñon groves in the Pine Nut and Virginia ranges for the pine-nut harvest, while acorn gathering and exchange with neighboring groups also formed part of the broader seasonal round. These patterns were not rigid, and family decisions varied with local conditions and need (d'Azevedo 1986; Lindström 2000; Cruz 2025).

Wa She Shu (The People)

The Washoe are a Hokan-speaking people who refer to themselves in their own language as Wáʃiw, or collectively as Wa She Shu, translated as “the people from here.” Washoe oral histories and Tribal accounts identify the Washoe as the original inhabitants of Dáʔaw and the surrounding homeland (Nevers 1976; Washoe Tribe 2009). Today they are known as the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, a federally recognized sovereign nation headquartered in Gardnerville, Nevada. The Tribe maintains communities at Dresslerville, Nevada; Stewart Community, Nevada; Woodfords, California; and Carson City, Nevada, and continues to assert stewardship responsibilities across its ancestral homeland. Washoe elders and leaders emphasize that they “are still here, and will always be here,” carrying forward language, cultural teachings, and traditions for future generations (Bachelor 2022).

The Washoe homeland was divided among four regional groups: Wélmelti (northern Washoe), Háŋaleltʻi (southern Washoe), Péwlelti (valley Washoe), and Tánleltʻi (western Washoe), although many published sources discuss only the northern, central, and southern groups (Jaffke and Younie 2025). These regional groups were not strictly bounded; relationships were maintained through kinship and movement across the homeland (Bachelor 2022).

Family formed the core of Washoe social organization because household members lived and worked together and relied on one another. Historical accounts describe households that commonly included a married couple and children but could also include parents, siblings, nieces and nephews, other relatives, or unrelated friends. Household composition varied, and winter residence in a shared galais dungal (winter house) was one way a family group was identified (Nevers 1976; Washoe Tribe 2009).

Washoe tradition emphasizes a spiritual relationship with the land. Stories passed between generations explain relationships among people, places, and other beings and teach appropriate conduct. Accounts involving Coyote, Lizard, Pewetseli (also spelled Pawetsile), Damalali, and other figures are tied to named places throughout Washoe country and to teachings concerning behavior and responsibility (Nevers 1976). Many of these accounts are associated directly with Dáʔaw and with places around the lake, underscoring the lake’s place within Washoe cultural geography.

The Early Contact Period brought major disruption. John C. Frémont’s expedition of 1844 was among the earliest documented Euro-American intrusions into Washoe lands. The discovery of gold in California in 1848 and the subsequent Comstock silver strike in 1859 drew thousands of settlers, miners, and loggers into Washoe territory. Logging operations clear-cut large portions of the Tahoe Basin to supply the Comstock, altering the watershed and fish habitat. Grazing, ranching, commercial development, and private land claims further displaced Washoe families

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from traditional camps around Dáʔaw (Lindström 2000; Nevers 1976). The Washoe never signed a treaty with the United States and did not receive reservation lands during the treaty era. Washoe families nevertheless maintained language, cultural practices, and spiritual observances under increasingly restricted conditions (Cruz 2025).

By the late nineteenth century, Washoe families continued to work seasonally around the lake, often employed as laborers or domestic workers, while also gathering basketry materials and maintaining ritual practices in adapted forms. Nevertheless, discriminatory state and federal policies limited their ability to sustain traditional lifeways. Resort development along the lake's shorelines curtailed free access to Dáʔaw, while federal land management regimes imposed restrictions on gathering and camping. The Tribe endured further cultural disruption through forced assimilation policies, including Indian boarding schools, which targeted Washoe language and cultural practices.

Despite these hardships, the Washoe persisted. Oral histories recount families who returned annually to the lake, continuing to fish, gather, and pray at traditional sites, even when doing so risked confrontation with landowners or authorities. Basketry, in particular, became both a symbol of cultural resilience and an economic strategy, with Washoe weavers gaining national recognition in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Downs 1966; Makley 2018; Nevers 1976).

Washoe advocacy for land, access, and cultural rights continued through the twentieth century. Communities at Dresslerville, Nevada; Woodfords, California; and Carson City, Nevada, became important centers of Tribal government and community life (d'Azevedo 1996). Tribal leaders and elders continued to assert rights in the ancestral homeland and the cultural importance of Dáʔaw. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the Tribe developed cultural preservation programs, language revitalization efforts, and partnerships with land-managing agencies to restore access to traditional resources and places (Rucks 1999; Wallace 1997; Washoe Tribe 2025).

Contemporary Tribal programs include youth education, basketry, language revitalization, and cultural activities at Dáʔaw and elsewhere in the homeland. Jo Ann Nevers described the lake as "the life sustaining water, the center of the Washo world" and wrote that its waters "breathed life" into the land, plants, fish, birds, animals, and people around it (Nevers 1976:5). Washoe people continue to gather at Dáʔaw for prayer, teaching, family activities, and other cultural practices (Cruz 2025).

In addition to ceremonial, subsistence, and cultural uses, the Washoe Tribe participates actively in stewardship and cleanup events around Dáʔaw and the Tahoe Basin. For example, the Washoe Environmental Protection Department reported that Tribal members collaborated with the League to Save Lake Tahoe for a beach cleanup at Meeks Bay, removing approximately 13 pounds of trash from the shore (Washoe Tribe 2023). Meeks Bay Resort, operated by the Washoe Tribe, has also become a participant in the Tahoe Blue Beach program, implementing enhanced trash receptacles, improved restroom servicing, citizen-science training, and increased stewardship presence during peak visitor periods (Carson Now 2025). The Tribe is also formally part of the League to Save Lake Tahoe's network of volunteer cleanup groups, Tahoe Blue Crews, taking part in organized cleanups that distribute gloves, trash-pickers, and record data about litter (Davis 2024). In addition, Washoe Tribal members have partnered with Clean Up The Lake in underwater surveys and debris removal,

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further extending their environmental stewardship from the shoreline to the waters of Dáʔaw itself (Peterson 2023). These projects are contemporary examples of Tribal stewardship at the lake and in the surrounding Tahoe Basin.

Character-Defining Features

Water is central to Washoe relationships with place and to ceremonial and healing practices. Washoe accounts treat water not only as necessary to life but as spiritually powerful and requiring respect.

Traditional protocols also included blessings on arrival at camps. At the outlet, the water was “asked to keep running and not cause suffering,” linking the lake with downstream life and responsibility (Blanchard and Lindström 2003).

The Washoe name Dáʔaw means “the lake,” indicating the lake’s central place in Washoe cultural geography. Cruz explained, “Although there are many lakes in Washoe territory, but when we say Dáʔaw, it is commonly known [assumed] as Lake Tahoe” (Cruz 2025). Dáʔaw and the surrounding basin provided fisheries, edible and medicinal plants, game, and other resources important to Washoe families (d’Azevedo 1986; Lindström 2000). Washoe accounts also point to the distinctiveness of the Washoe language and the long relationship with the Tahoe Basin when discussing cultural continuity in the homeland (Nevers 1976; Cruz 2025).

Ecological Health and Balance

Ethnographic and oral-history sources document the use of water in cleansing, healing, and other spiritual practices. Ritual bathing continues to connect contemporary practice with earlier teachings and contributes to the integrity of feeling and association at Dáʔaw (Freed 1963; Walsh 2004; Cruz 2025).

Water clarity has also become a central focus of contemporary conservation at Lake Tahoe. For the Washoe, however, the condition of the water cannot be separated from the health of fisheries and other resources or from responsibilities toward the lake (Lindström 1992; Wallace 1996). Fish are more than subsistence resources in the ethnographic record, and accounts of activities at the outlet link prayers and offerings with the continued flow of water and the return of fish (Blanchard and Lindström 2003).

Modern water-quality protections at Lake Tahoe reflect broad concern for the condition of the lake. For the Washoe, care for the water is part of a longer relationship linking people, fisheries, plants, animals, and downstream places. As accounts of blessing practices at the outlet record, the water was “asked to keep running and not cause suffering” (Blanchard and Lindström 2003).

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The Interconnected Cultural Landscape of Washoe Homelands

Archaeological, ethnographic, and oral-history sources document the long history of Indigenous use of the Tahoe Basin and the continuing Washoe relationship with Dá?aw. Washoe oral traditions place the Washoe at Dá?aw from Creation and do not describe migration into the Tahoe Basin from another homeland (Nevers 1976:3; Washoe Tribe 2009). Creation accounts involving Damalali and Pewetseli and other figures are tied to places around the lake and across the homeland and are discussed in greater detail under Criterion B. Darrel Cruz described the same relationship: “Because we originated from the lake, our spiritual being is manifested to Dá?aw ... Our identity directly comes from the lake” (Cruz 2025:8).

Washoe families returned regularly to Dá?aw, occupying family camps, traveling established routes, fishing and gathering, and taking part in cultural and ceremonial activities. Many places associated with these practices, including camps, springs, promontories, and De?ek Wadapush (Cave Rock; NRIS 100000610), lie outside the nominated boundary but help document the wider cultural setting of the lake (Lindström 1996; Rucks 1999). Washoe accounts describe relationships among people, water, plants, animals, and landforms rather than treating these as separate parts of the homeland. Euro-American settlement and later development disrupted access and land use, but Washoe families continued to maintain ties to the lake and surrounding territory (Hammett et al. 2004; Rucks 1999; Washoe Tribe 2009).

Integrity

Dá?aw retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a Traditional Cultural Place. Because the nominated property is a natural feature rather than a constructed property, integrity is expressed principally through location, setting, feeling, and association. Design, materials, and workmanship are not directly applicable to the lake. The physical and cultural changes that have occurred around Dá?aw since the mid-nineteenth century have affected access, shoreline use, water levels, fisheries, and views from portions of the lake, but they have not removed the lake from its cultural setting or severed its association with the Washoe people.

Location

Dá?aw remains in the place identified in Washoe tradition as the center of the Washoe homeland. The lake occupies the same basin within the Sierra Nevada, and the nominated boundary follows the lake’s natural rim at 6,223 feet, Lake Tahoe Datum. Lake levels have fluctuated naturally through time and have also been affected by operation of the dam at the Truckee River outlet, but these changes have not altered the location of the lake or its position within Washoe cultural geography. Dá?aw therefore retains integrity of location.

Setting

The setting of Dá?aw includes the large expanse of open water, the surrounding Sierra Nevada mountain landscape, and the lake’s position at the center of the Tahoe Basin. Development around the shoreline has substantially changed portions of this setting. Roads, residences, resorts, marinas,

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recreation facilities, and communities are now visible from many parts of the lake, and historic logging, grazing, commercial fishing, water management, and later urban development altered the surrounding environment. These changes are important parts of the history of Washoe displacement and restricted access to Dá?aw.

The nominated property itself, however, remains a large mountain lake enclosed by the surrounding Sierra Nevada. Its waters, submerged lands, open-water setting, and relationship to the surrounding mountain landscape remain legible. Shoreline development occurs primarily outside the nominated boundary and does not prevent Dá?aw from conveying the physical setting associated with its significance to the Washoe. The property therefore retains integrity of setting, although that setting has been altered by historic and modern development.

Design, Materials, and Workmanship

Design, materials, and workmanship are not directly applicable to Dá?aw because the nominated property is a natural lake rather than a constructed building, structure, object, or designed landscape. Human alterations have affected the lake, particularly regulation of the upper portion of its water level at the Truckee River outlet, but the lake basin, natural sill, waters, and submerged lands remain the defining physical components of the nominated property.

Feeling

Dá?aw continues to convey the sense of place associated with its role in Washoe cultural and spiritual life. Washoe people continue to return to the lake [REDACTED]. These activities occur in a setting that has changed substantially since Euro-American settlement, but the lake itself remains the place to which those practices and teachings are directed. Darrel Cruz described this continuing relationship when he stated, "Even amongst the thousands of newcomers, Dá?aw will recognize me. That's our connection to this place" (Cruz 2025:9). Dá?aw retains integrity of feeling because the physical lake continues to provide the setting in which the Washoe relationship with the place is experienced and maintained.

Association

Dá?aw retains a direct association with the Washoe history, traditions, beliefs, and practices for which the property is significant. Washoe Creation accounts place the Washoe at Dá?aw from Creation. Ethnographic and historical records document continued use of the lake for fishing, family camps, gathering, prayer, teaching, and other activities through the historic period, while contemporary Tribal accounts document the continuation of cultural [REDACTED] relationships with the lake (Nevers 1976; d'Azevedo 1996, 2008; Rucks 1999; Washoe Tribe 2009; Cruz 2025). Changes in land ownership and shoreline development restricted access to many traditional places but did not end the Washoe relationship with Dá?aw.

The lake also retains its association with the persons and spiritual beings addressed under Criterion B. Washoe accounts continue to identify Dá?aw with Damalali and Pewetseli, Metsún, and Ang,

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including events and places located within or beneath the waters of the nominated property. The continuing transmission of these accounts maintains the association between the physical lake and the Washoe traditions connected with it.

For Criterion D, archaeological integrity is not assumed to be uniform across the entire lakebed. Recorded archaeological features in inundated settings and former terrestrial surfaces below the natural rim demonstrate that portions of the submerged property retain archaeological and paleoenvironmental contexts. The integrity of individual deposits will depend on location, preservation, stratigraphic context, and degree of disturbance. This variation is expected within a property of this size and will need to be considered as individual submerged resources are identified and evaluated.

Dá?aw retains the aspects of integrity necessary to convey its significance under Criteria A, B, and D. The lake remains in its traditional location and physical setting, continues to be recognized and used by the Washoe as a culturally [REDACTED] important place, and retains both documented and potential submerged contexts relevant to its archaeological significance.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☒ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☒ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

Ethnic Heritage – Native American
Conservation
Religion
Archeology – Prehistoric

Period of Significance

Creation to Present

Significant Dates

Tahoe Reach/Spooner Phase (ca. 10,000–5000 BP)
Martis Complex (ca. 5000–1300 BP)
Kings Beach Complex (ca. 1300 BP–Historic Contact)
Present

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Significant Person(s)

Damalali and Pewetseli
Metsún
Ang

Cultural Affiliation

Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

Architect/Builder

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Dáʔaw is eligible for listing in the National Register at the local level under Criteria A, B, and D. Under Criterion A, the lake is significant in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Native American and Conservation for its central role in Washoe identity, family and community life, cultural practice, and a continuing tradition of stewardship. Under Criterion B, Dáʔaw is significant in the area of Religion for its direct association with Damalali and Pewetseli, Metsún, and Ang, who figure in Washoe Creation accounts and traditional beliefs tied to the lake. Under Criterion D, the submerged lands of Dáʔaw have yielded, and are likely to yield, archaeological and paleoenvironmental information important to understanding long-term human use of the Tahoe Basin, changing lake levels, settlement and subsistence, and the development and continuity of Washoe lifeways. The period of significance is Creation to Present, reflecting Washoe accounts that place the Washoe at Dáʔaw from Creation and the continuing cultural, spiritual, and historical relationship with the lake. Criteria Consideration C applies because Washoe tradition identifies Dáʔaw as the place where the Maker placed the Washoe people at Creation.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Cultural Affiliation

Cultural affiliation is with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. Washoe oral traditions and Tribal histories identify Dáʔaw as the center of the Washoe homeland and as a place the people have known and cared for since Creation (Nevers 1976; Washoe Tribe 2009; Cruz 2025). Ethnographic accounts document continued Washoe use of the lake for family camps, fishing, gathering, prayer, and teaching into the historic period, while archaeological studies around the lake provide additional evidence for the long time depth of Native use of the Tahoe Basin (Freed 1966; d'Azevedo 1986; Lindström 2000).

Dáʔaw lies at the center of the Washoe homeland and has long been central to seasonal movement, subsistence, and cultural practices. Washoe families traveled to the lake during the warmer months as

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snow receded and spawning fish became available, although use of the lake was not limited to a strictly seasonal pattern. Washoe settlement, mobility, and resource use within the Tahoe Basin have been addressed through archaeological studies (Bloomer et al. 1997; Bloomer et al. 2002, 2003; Elston 1971, 1982; Elston et al. 1977; Heizer and Baumhoff 1962; Heizer and Elsasser 1953; Martin 1998), ethnographic research (Downs 1961, 1963, 1966; Siskin 1941; d'Azevedo 1956, 1986, 2008; Freed 1966; Freed and Freed 1971; Griffin 2013; Rucks 1995, 1996; Lindström 1992, 1996; Lowie 1939), and linguistic studies (Jacobsen 1966).

Jo Ann Nevers's *Wa She Shu: A Washo Tribal History* records the Washoe return to Dá?aw through an account by Amy James, who described the spring trip to the lake as the "most important gathering for the whole tribe." James recalled that her family returned each year to a camp near Tahoe City between about 1915 and 1930. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. James also remembered living in tents with windbreaks and described the family's fishing camp along the shoreline: "you lived there [Dá?aw] to fish and they [Washoe] had boats docked right there [at the family camp shoreline]. They'd [her aunt and uncle] go from there every morning and go fishing. No permanent structures, just had a camp site and every year you went to the same camp site" (James 1984).

Washoe return to Dá?aw is grounded in the continuing relationship with the lake and in customs and traditions associated with that relationship. Darrel Cruz described the return as part of "observing the customs and traditions related to our connection with Dá?aw" [REDACTED] (Cruz 2025).

Darrel Cruz (2025) addressed the common characterization of Washoe use of Dá?aw as limited to summer and described the annual return to the lake as a return home:

Contrary to the common story that we only visited Lake Tahoe in the summer, we originated from Dá?aw, therefore we are from there, and that is our home. After all, our creation story tells us we originated from Dá?aw. We left Dá?aw for the lower elevations during the harvest season, late fall, to begin the age-old tradition of preparing for winter. When we return to the lake every year, it was a celebration of renewal after a long winter. It is with great exhilaration to be home again, the place of our birth. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (Cruz 2025:2-3).

Earlier ethnographic accounts also documented continued Washoe use of Dá?aw. Kroeber noted that the lake "is central to Washo territory, and was and is still resorted to in summer" (Kroeber 1953:570). Read alongside the accounts of Amy James and Darrel Cruz, Kroeber's statement documents continued use of the lake but should not be taken to define the Washoe relationship with Dá?aw as exclusively seasonal.

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The nomination draws on several decades of Washoe consultation and oral history, together with Tribal archival materials, archaeological reports, ethnographic literature, and ecological studies. Oral history interviews conducted for the Dáʔaw nomination in 2025 add contemporary Washoe perspectives to this larger record. Together, these sources document the sacred character of the lake and the continued Washoe relationship with Dáʔaw despite substantial changes in access and use following Euro-American settlement. Darrel Cruz described both the spiritual relationship with the lake and the effects of these changes:


After the American take-over of Dáʔaw, they tried everything to keep us from Dáʔaw. We cannot freely come and go as we have from time immemorial, disrupting our relationship with Dáʔaw. But that relationship is still there, even though they tried to remove us, it was through laws and policies and a disrupted lifestyle, loss of habitat, that's the big thing right there. But we never entirely left [...] Washoe still observed customs and traditions related to our connection with Dáʔaw (Cruz 2025:3).

The central importance of water in Washoe belief has also been described by Brian Wallace:

Water has always had a special significance to the Washoe people. All life is derived from water in Washoe beliefs, and water is considered sacred [...] Water – whether in springs, streams, rivers, or lakes – has such a defining and profound role in the culture of the Washoe people that it could be described as the essence of the Washoe people (Wallace 2002).

Period of Significance

The period of significance is Creation to Present. Washoe accounts place Dáʔaw at the beginning of Washoe history and identify the lake as the center of the Washoe homeland. Jo Ann Nevers wrote that the Washoe “were here in the beginning and have always lived here” (Nevers 1976:3; Washoe Tribe 2009). Archaeological investigations in the Tahoe Basin document Native use extending into the Early Holocene, while the ethnographic and historical record documents continued Washoe use of Dáʔaw through the historic period and into the present (Elston et al. 1977; Martin 1998; Lindström 2000; Nevers 1976; d’Azevedo 1996).

Euro-American settlement beginning in the mid-nineteenth century greatly altered Washoe access to the lake, family camps, fisheries, and other traditional resources. It did not end the Washoe relationship with Dáʔaw. Families continued to return to the lake, maintain cultural and spiritual practices, and pass knowledge of Dáʔaw between generations. During the twentieth century, the Tribe also continued efforts to protect access, cultural places, and resources associated with the lake (d’Azevedo 1996; Rucks 1999; Washoe Tribe 2009).

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Darrel Cruz described the time depth and continuity of this relationship:

Dáʔaw is our heart and soul, the center of the universe for Washoe. Our creation story tells us we originated from Dáʔaw. It is central to our existence. Without it, we would have never come to be, and that transcends thousands of years and into the future. (Cruz 2025).

The period of significance begins with Creation, as understood in Washoe tradition, and extends to the present because the relationships and practices for which Dáʔaw is significant continue today. The archaeological phases identified under Significant Dates provide chronological reference points for the archaeological record; they do not divide the broader period of significance.

CRITERION A

ETHNIC HERITAGE – Native American

Significance Level: Local

Dáʔaw is significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage, Native American for its central and continuing role in Washoe cultural identity, community life, and traditional lifeways. The Washoe name Dáʔaw means “the lake,” reflecting its central place within Washoe cultural geography. The lake lies at the center of Washoe ancestral territory and has long served as a place of return, gathering, subsistence, teaching, [REDACTED] and interaction among families from throughout the Washoe homeland (d’Azevedo 1956, 1986; Nevers 1976; Washoe Tribe 2009). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Nearly fifty years later, Darrel Cruz described the same relationship in contemporary terms: “we originated from Dáʔaw, therefore we are from there, and that is our home.” Returning each year was “a celebration of renewal after a long winter” and a return to the [REDACTED] (Cruz 2025:2–3). Together, these accounts speak to a relationship with the lake that extends beyond seasonal resource use. Dáʔaw is home and remains fundamental to Washoe identity and well-being.

Washoe use of Dáʔaw was organized around family camps, fisheries, and resource areas distributed around the lake. Ethnographers working with Washoe consultants documented numerous named camps and fishing places, with families returning to favored locations over generations (d’Azevedo 1956; Freed 1966; Nevers 1976). Fishing was particularly important during spring and early summer spawning runs, when families converged on productive tributaries and deltas around Dáʔaw. The Upper Truckee River, Trout Creek, Blackwood Creek, Taylor Creek, and other fisheries supported family camps, communal and individually held fishing places, fishing houses, nets, traps and weirs, food-processing areas, and nearby bedrock milling stations (Freed 1966; Siskin 1937–1941; Lindström and Rucks 2002; Rucks 2002). Fishing places were not interchangeable. Some of the most productive locations were associated with particular men or families and passed between relatives, while other facilities were constructed, operated, and

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shared by several related families (Siskin 1937–1941; Rucks 2002). These shoreline camps and tributary fisheries lie outside the nominated boundary, but they document the ways in which the waters of Dá?aw structured Washoe movement, subsistence, family relationships, and community life.

The importance of these family places continued well into the twentieth century. Washoe families remained at camps around the lake where access allowed, including extended occupations near Trout Creek into the 1940s and continued use near Incline and Third creeks prior to later subdivision development (Rucks 1996; Lindström 2000). Recalling the lake in 1997, Washoe elder Dabert Wyatt explained the relationship simply: “Lake Tahoe has a special meaning to the Washoe, because each family had a special place where they camped and summered” (Washoe Tribe 1997:2). These places provided much more than access to fish or other resources. They were settings where relatives gathered, knowledge was transmitted, children learned about the lake, and relationships among families and with Dá?aw were renewed.

Euro-American settlement beginning in the mid-nineteenth century substantially disrupted these patterns without severing the Washoe relationship with Dá?aw. Commercial fishing, logging, grazing, settlement, and later tourism and resort development transformed the Tahoe Basin and depleted resources on which Washoe communities depended. By 1880, commercial operators shipped tens of thousands of pounds of Tahoe trout each year, while dams, logging-related pollution, introduced species, and intensive harvest contributed to the eventual loss of the lake's native Lahontan cutthroat trout fishery (Lindström 2000). At the same time, laws governing fishing increasingly restricted traditional Washoe methods, and private ownership limited access to camps, gathering areas, and the water itself (d’Azevedo 1996, 2008; Lindström 2000; Washoe Tribe 2009). The contrast was not lost on Washoe people. Wyatt recalled, “Because we believe it is still Washoe country, we didn't give it up, we were pushed off,” adding that family places disappeared as land was purchased and “no trespassing” signs appeared (Washoe Tribe 1997:2).

Washoe families adapted to these changes while continuing to maintain connections to Dá?aw. People worked at ranches, resorts, and in nearby communities while continuing to camp, fish where possible, gather medicines and basketry materials, speak the Washoe language, visit relatives, and maintain cultural and ceremonial practices (d’Azevedo 1996; Nevers 1976; Rucks 1996; Lindström 2000; Washoe Tribe 2009). Rather than representing the end of traditional life at the lake, these adaptations allowed Washoe people to remain within their homelands under increasingly constrained circumstances. Darrel Cruz described this continuity in relation to the lake: “We cannot freely come and go as we have from time immemorial, disrupting our relationship with Dá?aw. But that relationship is still there. . . . But we never entirely left” (Cruz 2025:3).

The continuing relationship with Dá?aw remains an important expression of Washoe identity. Elders continue to bring younger generations to the lake, share family and place-based knowledge, gather traditional resources, pray, and maintain cultural practices associated with its waters (Washoe Tribe 1997, 2009; Cruz 2025). The importance of renewed access was especially apparent in 1997, when federal agreements opened several Tahoe-area parcels to Tribal use. Washoe elder Marie Kaiser, who had camped at Tahoe with her family as a child and continued

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returning with her grandchildren, observed that by then “almost no place is open that doesn't cost money” (Washoe Tribe 1997:2). Dabert Wyatt placed restored access in an explicitly intergenerational context, explaining that elders would again have a place to bring Washoe children and teach them what they had learned at the lake (Washoe Tribe 1997).

Dá?aw therefore represents more than the setting of a former seasonal subsistence pattern. The lake remains the cultural center around which Washoe family history, traditional knowledge, community relationships, memory, spirituality, and identity continue to be maintained. Changes in land ownership and access have altered how and where Washoe people can practice these traditions, but they have not diminished the significance of Dá?aw or ended the pattern of return. The persistence of this relationship through the Early Contact Period and into the present establishes the local significance of Dá?aw under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage: Native American.

CONSERVATION

Significance Level: Local

Dá?aw is also significant under Criterion A in the area of Conservation for its association with a longstanding and continuing Washoe tradition of stewardship, resource protection, and responsibility for the lake and the life it sustains. In the Washoe worldview, stewardship is not separate from cultural or spiritual life. In his 1996 declaration concerning the protection of Lake Tahoe resources, Washoe Chairman A. Brian Wallace explained that recognition of the interdependence of life “creates a life-long responsibility to be a caretaker or guardian of the natural world” and that this responsibility extends to cultural resources, sacred places, and the broader “web of life” (Wallace 1996:3). The Tribe further declared that those who now live upon or use Washoe ancestral resources should share in that guardianship, recognizing responsibilities that the Washoe had carried for generations (Wallace 1996).

The responsibility described by Wallace was expressed historically through specific management practices involving fisheries, wildlife, plants, and gathering areas. Ethnographic and oral-history records describe selective harvesting, rotation of collecting areas, maintenance of productive fishing locations, pruning and thinning plants, replanting or encouraging desired species, tending gathering beds, and using low-intensity fire to maintain productive landscapes (d’Azevedo 1986; Lindström 2000; Lindström and Rucks 2002; Rucks 1999). Washoe plant specialists described gathering in ways that simultaneously thinned stands, loosened soils, returned small bulbs or rhizomes to the ground, scattered mature seed, and maintained the physical qualities needed for basketry and other uses (Rucks 1995, 1999; Lindström 2000). The *Lake Tahoe Watershed Assessment* concluded that the ethnographic record provides compelling evidence for extensive and systematic Washoe resource management and identified these practices as potentially important to contemporary Tahoe ecosystem restoration (Lindström 2000).

Washoe testimony concerning fishing and hunting is particularly explicit about maintaining resources for future use. Manuel Bender recalled that children learned early that providers must leave reproductive stock, explaining that young hunters and fishermen were taught the importance of leaving “seed” for the next year and that a portion of fish in a pool had to remain to reproduce

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(Bender 1963, in Wright 1931–1972, as quoted in Lindström 2000:41). Mike Holbrook similarly recalled leaving female fish at spawning beds, while Hank Pete described selective hunting intended to maintain a balanced deer herd (Holbrook 1930s, in Siskin 1937–1941; Pete 1951, in Wright 1931–1972). These accounts describe practical rules governing harvest and resource use rather than a generalized conservation ethic.

Fire and plant management provide another example. Washoe elder Wes Barber recalled being told by his grandfather Tom Barber that people used fire to “keep the country clean,” burning downed wood and old meadow grasses so that repeated fires remained low to the ground and camps and surrounding areas remained open (Barber, as reported in Lindström 2007:5). Other Washoe accounts document pruning basketry materials, tending plant beds, burning gathering areas, and encouraging new growth (Lindström 2000; Rucks 1999; Lindström and Rucks 2002). These practices varied according to resource and place, but together document an active relationship in which harvesting and caring for resources were intertwined.

Euro-American settlement sharply constrained the Tribe's ability to carry out these responsibilities. Commercial exploitation of Tahoe's fisheries, extensive logging, livestock grazing, water development, private land ownership, and increasingly restrictive laws affected both the resources themselves and Washoe access to them (d'Azevedo 1996; Lindström 2000; Washoe Tribe 2009). Washoe leaders repeatedly responded through protest, petition, and efforts to protect access and resources. On April 11, 1880, Captain Jim, Captain Pete, and Captain Walker prepared a petition to Nevada Governor John H. Kinkead seeking an end to the destruction of pinyon resources and the depletion of fish in Lake Tahoe and asserting continuing Washoe rights to those resources (Petition from a Council of Washoe Indians 1880; Washoe Tribe 2009). The petition formed part of a longer history of Washoe resistance to resource loss and exclusion that continued through subsequent decades.

Protection of de?ek wadapush (Cave Rock) provides another Tahoe-specific example of that continuity. In 1951, Washoe representatives opposed proposals for an illuminated religious shrine at Cave Rock and instead sought preservation of the place because of its longstanding association with Washoe history and tradition (d'Azevedo 2008). Tribal concerns resurfaced in the early 1990s in response to climbing, alteration of the rock, and proposed work at the adjacent boat ramp. The Tribe elected to disclose sensitive cultural information to help protect the place, leading to formal consultation and a long-term resource-protection effort (Rucks 1999; d'Azevedo 2008; Rucks and Cruz 2012). Cave Rock, NRIS 100000610, lies outside the nominated boundary above the 6,223-foot natural sill and is not proposed as a contributing component of Dá?aw. Its history is relevant here because it documents sustained Washoe action to protect culturally important places associated with the lake despite limited ownership and authority over the surrounding Tahoe landscape.

By the late twentieth century, the Tribe increasingly formalized efforts to restore a Washoe presence at Dá?aw and renew opportunities to care for traditional resources. The 1994 *Washoe Comprehensive Land Use Plan* established goals for reestablishing a Tribal presence in the Tahoe Basin, revitalizing Washoe heritage and cultural knowledge, protecting traditional properties, and renewing the harvest and care of traditional plant resources (Washoe Tribal Council 1994; Rucks

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1999; Lindström 2000). In the following years, Washoe elders and plant specialists worked with the U.S. Forest Service to identify gathering locations and explore ways to restore traditional horticultural practices and resource-management techniques within the Tahoe Basin (Rucks 1996, 1999; Lindström 2000).

Wallace's 1996 *Declaration of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California Concerning the Obligation to Protect and Preserve Lake Tahoe Resources* placed these efforts within an explicitly Washoe framework. The declaration called for protection of ancestral resources and sensitive places, continuing Tribal access, prevention of pollution and damage, and recognition of Washoe laws and responsibilities in decisions concerning Lake Tahoe (Wallace 1996). Rather than presenting Washoe stewardship as a recently adopted environmental program, the declaration framed contemporary participation as the continuation of obligations that predated Euro-American control of the Tahoe Basin.

The 1997 Lake Tahoe Presidential Forum marked an important change in the Tribe's ability to act on those responsibilities. An agreement between the Washoe Tribe and U.S. Forest Service returned Tribal use of more than 400 acres within the Tahoe Basin through special-use permits, including approximately 350 acres at Meeks Bay Meadows and about 90 acres near Taylor Creek. Wallace described the objective as using the agreement to begin "codifying a Washoe presence" at Dáʔaw (Washoe Tribe 1997:2). The significance of that access was expressed by Tribal members themselves. Theresa Jackson recalled the exclusion that had preceded it: "It's about time we can at least go to the water and not see all the private property signs and keep outs. . . . We've waited a long time. We had felt like we weren't welcome" (Washoe Tribe 1997:3). JoAnn Martinez emphasized the ability to gather again, explaining, "Now we'll be free to go in and look for some of our medicinal plants" (Washoe Tribe 1997:3).

The 1997 agreement did not transfer ownership or broad management authority over the Tahoe Basin, but it restored access to places where cultural practices and resource stewardship could again occur. At Meeks Bay, the agreement designated the meadow as a Washoe plant-management and harvesting area. Washoe basket weavers worked with the Forest Service to identify suitable bracken-fern beds and examined how systematic harvesting, thinning, burning, and other traditional practices affected the quality and productivity of culturally important plants (Rucks 1999). Subsequent restoration planning along the Upper Truckee River similarly called for coordination between project botanists and Washoe plant specialists to reestablish plants of traditional importance and advance Tribal goals for renewed gathering and care of Tahoe resources (Lindström and Rucks 2002).

These twentieth-century efforts were not a new conservation philosophy imposed on an older cultural tradition. They represent the reassertion and application of longstanding Washoe responsibilities under changed political and land-management conditions. Dáʔaw is significant at the local level under Criterion A because it is the place at the center of this continuing history: traditional management of fisheries, plants, and other resources; resistance to the degradation and loss of those resources; repeated advocacy for protection and access; and the contemporary renewal of Washoe stewardship within the Tahoe Basin. The specific shoreline, meadow, and tributary locations discussed above are outside the nominated boundary, but the activities

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associated with them were and remain directed toward maintaining the cultural and ecological relationships centered on Dá?aw.

Criterion A Summary

Dá?aw is significant under Criterion A at the local level in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Native American and Conservation. Under Ethnic Heritage, the lake has remained central to Washoe identity, family and community life, subsistence, cultural teaching, [REDACTED] and the continuing relationship between the Washoe people and their ancestral homeland. Euro-American settlement greatly restricted traditional access and transformed the resources and landscapes surrounding the lake, but did not sever that relationship. Washoe families continued to return to Dá?aw and maintain cultural practices, knowledge, and family connections associated with the lake.

Under Conservation, Dá?aw is associated with a longstanding Washoe tradition of stewardship expressed through the management and selective use of fisheries, plants, wildlife, and gathering areas; nineteenth- and twentieth-century advocacy against resource loss and exclusion; and renewed efforts to restore Tribal access and apply Washoe resource-management practices within the Tahoe Basin. Together, these patterns demonstrate a continuing relationship in which Washoe cultural identity and responsibility for Dá?aw have persisted through substantial changes in land ownership, access, and environmental condition. This continuity establishes the local significance of Dá?aw under Criterion A.

CRITERION B

RELIGION

Significance Level: Local

Dá?aw is significant under Criterion B in the area of Religion for its direct association with specific persons and spiritual beings important in Washoe Creation accounts, traditional beliefs, and cultural history. National Register guidance recognizes that the persons associated with a Traditional Cultural Place may include ancestors, mythical figures, or spirits who feature in the traditions of a cultural group. The association must be with a specific person or spirit and must be significant from the perspective of the community that values the place (NPS 2024). The named figures associated with Dá?aw include Damalali and Pewetseli, the Metsún associated with their Creation account, and Ang (Ong). Their associations are not incidental to the lake. Their actions take place in and around Dá?aw, explain aspects of the lake and its cultural geography, and remain part of Washoe knowledge concerning the place.

Dá?aw in Washoe Creation Accounts

Washoe accounts concerning Creation take several forms, but they do not describe the Washoe as having come to Dá?aw from another homeland. Jo Ann Nevers stated that the Washoe “were here

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in the beginning and have always lived here” and that the prominent features of Washoe country are named and have stories associated with them (Nevers 1976:3; Washoe Tribe 2009).

A related Creation account shared by Nevers and presented in *The People From Here*, a public exhibit developed collaboratively by the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California and the Museum of Tahoe, describes the Maker distributing seeds that would become the different peoples. The final handful became the Washoe. With the other places already given, the Maker placed the Washoe at Dá?aw, a place he had reserved for himself, and entrusted them with its care (Museum of Tahoe n.d.). This account places Dá?aw at the beginning of the relationship between the Washoe people and their homeland and links that relationship directly with an obligation to care for the place.

The Tribe’s own history presents another version of the seed account, also retold by Nevers, in which the Maker divided seeds among the different tribes before West Wind scattered most of those intended to become the Washoe. The account explains why the Washoe are fewer in number than other peoples and is immediately followed by the Tribe’s identification of the Washoe as the original inhabitants of Dá?aw and the surrounding homeland (Washoe Tribe 2009). The accounts vary in their telling, but both identify the Washoe with Dá?aw from the beginning. They also provide the broader setting for the Creation accounts involving Damalali and Pewetseli, Metsún, and Ang discussed below.

Significant Persons

Damalali and Pewetseli

Damalali and Pewetseli, commonly referred to as the Weasel Brothers, figure prominently in a Washoe Creation account associated with the formation and naming of places throughout the Tahoe region. In the account recorded by Grace Dangberg, Damalali takes the hair of a Water Baby just south of Cave Rock. As he flees, the water follows and rises behind him. Pewetseli warns Damalali to return the hair, and when it is returned, the water recedes. Their struggle takes them around the lake, with places along the route named through events in the story, and the receding waters are associated with the formation of the mountain lakes (Dangberg 1927, 1968). Other recorded versions vary in some details, including one that places the encounter with the Water Baby near Emerald Bay (Price 1971; d’Azevedo 2008).

Dá?aw is central to these events. The rising and receding water, the movement of the Weasel Brothers around the lake, and the places named during their journey tie the account to the lake as well as to locations along its shore. De?ek Wadapush (Cave Rock), which is separately listed in the National Register, preserves one part of this cultural geography. Its documentation describes the Water Baby and Little Weasel account and the naming of places associated with their struggle (Rucks and Cruz 2012). Cave Rock itself is outside the boundary of this nomination, but the waters of Dá?aw associated with the account are within the nominated property.

For purposes of Criterion B, Damalali and Pewetseli are specific Creation-era persons whose actions are directly associated with Dá?aw. The accounts involving them also identify the lake as part of a larger named cultural geography that remains part of Washoe knowledge of the homeland.

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Metsún

Metsún, commonly translated as Water Babies or Water People, are powerful beings associated with water throughout Washoe country. The Washoe Tribe describes Water Babies as inhabiting bodies of water and possessing powers that can help people or cause illness and harm. Washoe healers visited De?ek Wadapush, where Water Babies were known to congregate, to consult with them, leave offerings of respect, and renew their powers (Washoe Tribe 2009).

For purposes of Criterion B, the specific Metsún involved in the Creation account of Damalali and Pewetseli provides the direct association with a particular spiritual being. In that account, Damalali takes the Water Baby's hair, setting in motion the rising waters and subsequent events associated with the lake and surrounding mountain landscape (Dangberg 1927, 1968). The broader Water Baby traditions help explain the importance of this being within Washoe belief.

These traditions are closely tied to Dá?aw itself. Accounts collected during the twentieth century describe Water Babies as living in or beneath the lake, moving through its waters and connected streams, and congregating at Cave Rock (Lowie 1939; Downs 1961; d'Azevedo 2008; Rucks 1999). One Washoe consultant described their geographic relationship directly: "The Water babies were all over the lake ... in all the streams and springs. But Cave Rock was their congregating place" (Rucks 1999:251). Earlier documentation of Cave Rock also records a white-sand path beneath the lake associated with Water Babies and Washoe Doctors, as well as other underwater routes connecting Cave Rock with places beyond the lake (LSA Associates 1998; Rucks and Cruz 2012). Although Cave Rock itself is outside the boundary of this nomination, the waters and submerged lands associated with these traditions are within the nominated property.

Washoe accounts emphasize respect for Water Babies rather than worship. Water Babies possess power and were approached by people with the appropriate knowledge and preparation. Nevers recorded an account in which a healer left a basket for the Water Babies and recovered from illness after receiving their help (Nevers 1976:55–56). Other accounts emphasize avoidance and the consequences of treating Water Babies or their places carelessly (Downs 1961; Rucks 1999). These traditions are consistent with the Tribe's explanation that the sacred and everyday are difficult to separate and that land, water, living things, and other parts of the environment are treated as sentient and deserving of respect (Washoe Tribe 2009).

Although Cave Rock is an important focus of these traditions, the association of Metsún is not confined to the rock. Their home and travelways extend into Dá?aw, and the lake is repeatedly identified as central to their presence and power. The specific Water Baby in the Damalali and Pewetseli account, together with the documented association of Water Babies with the waters of Dá?aw, supports the direct association required under Criterion B.

Ang (Ong)

Ang, also recorded as Ong, is a giant predatory bird associated directly with Dá?aw. Washoe accounts describe Ang as nesting on an island or nest within the lake and carrying people from the shore to that location. Although accounts vary concerning the precise location of the nest, they consistently place it within Dá?aw and describe it as submerged or no longer visible above the

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water (Lowie 1939; Freed 1966; d'Azevedo 1992; Nevers 1976; Washoe Tribe 2009). The Tribe's published history states that Ong nested in the middle of Lake Tahoe and that the nest remains submerged out of sight (Washoe Tribe 2009).

In the account retold by Nevers, Ang captures a Washoe man and carries him to the nest. The man watches Ang eat and notices that the bird closes its eyes while chewing. He uses this opportunity to throw arrowheads into Ang's mouth. A storm follows during the night, and by morning Ang is dead. The man then uses one of Ang's enormous feathers to return across the water to shore (Nevers 1976:17–19; Washoe Tribe 2009). Ang is killed in the account. The continuing association is with Ang as a figure in the story, the submerged nest, and the teachings associated with the account rather than with Ang as a living guardian of the lake.

Washoe tradition continues to associate Ang with the lake through the submerged nest and retelling of the account. In his 1992 discussion of Cave Rock and Lake Tahoe, d'Azevedo recorded the tradition that Ang may return if the Washoe forget their traditions or fail to respect the lake and its creatures (d'Azevedo 1992). The association is particularly relevant to this nomination because the place identified in the account is in the lake itself. Accounts place Ang's nest offshore and beneath the water, making the nominated waters and submerged lands the physical setting directly associated with this figure in Washoe oral tradition.

Criterion B Summary

Dá?aw is significant under Criterion B at the local level in the area of Religion for its association with Damalali and Pewetseli, the Metsún involved in their Creation account, and Ang. National Register guidance allows Criterion B to apply to a specific ancestor, mythical figure, or spirit when the person or being is important in the traditions of the community and has a direct association with the property (NPS 2024). Recorded Washoe accounts place all of these figures at Dá?aw. Damalali and Pewetseli travel around the lake during the events involving the Water Baby and the rising and receding water. The Metsún in that account is directly associated with the lake, and other accounts identify Dá?aw as the home of Water Babies and describe routes beneath its waters. Ang's story takes place on the lake, and several accounts place his nest beneath or within its waters (Dangberg 1927, 1968; Lowie 1939; Freed 1966; Nevers 1976; LSA Associates 1998; Washoe Tribe 2009).

These accounts continue to be part of Washoe knowledge and teaching concerning Dá?aw. The Washoe Tribe describes a worldview in which distinctions between sacred and everyday life are not easily made and in which land, water, plants, animals, and other beings are treated with respect (Washoe Tribe 2009). The lake itself is the place associated with the named persons and beings discussed above, supporting its significance under Criterion B.

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CRITERION D

ARCHEOLOGY – Prehistoric

Significance Level: Local

Dáʔaw is significant under Criterion D in the area of Archeology – Prehistoric for its potential to yield information important to understanding long-term human use of the Tahoe Basin and the development and continuity of Washoe lifeways. Archaeological investigations surrounding the lake and along its tributaries have documented human occupation of the Tahoe Sierra extending into the Early Holocene, followed by changing settlement, subsistence, technological, and land-use patterns through the Middle and Late Holocene and into the historic period (Elston et al. 1977; Martin 1998; Lindström 2000; Bloomer and Jaffke 2009). By comparison, systematic archaeological investigation of the submerged lands of Dáʔaw remains limited and localized. Existing work, however, demonstrates that archaeological features and activity areas extend into settings that are presently or periodically inundated and that former terrestrial surfaces occur well below the lake's natural sill of 6,223 feet. These findings establish a reasonable expectation that additional archaeological deposits may be preserved within the nominated property.

Archaeological evidence at the Lake Tahoe outlet provides one of the clearest examples. CA-PLA-718/H includes Locus B, an archaeological activity area on a gravel bar approximately 125 meters east of the present shore that is normally inundated by the lake. Numerous cores, tested cobbles, large tools, and flakes indicate use of the gravel bar as a toolstone procurement and reduction area, demonstrating that a landform now within the nearshore zone formed part of the archaeological landscape (Bloomer and Lindström 2002). Investigations at the outlet also documented two bedrock milling features within the outlet channel, one removed during the 1924 drought and another observed during the 1990 low-water period (Lindström et al. 2002). At Tallac Point, CA-ELD-184, archaeological investigations documented a bedrock milling feature submerged in approximately three feet of water about 75 feet offshore, along with a long sequence of occupation at the adjacent site (Lindström 1985; Bloomer and Jaffke 2009). At Black Point Into Lake, CA-ELD-2611/H, a bedrock milling feature containing seven mortars occurs in water immediately offshore from a substantial multicomponent archaeological site (Bloomer and Jaffke 2009). Although the relationship of individual nearshore features to the 6,223-foot contour varies, together these examples demonstrate that the archaeological landscape does not end at the modern shoreline.

The paleoenvironmental record provides additional evidence for archaeological potential within the nominated submerged lands. Radiocarbon-dated tree stumps rooted on the floor of Lake Tahoe document former terrestrial surfaces established during prolonged low-water intervals. During the Middle Holocene, forests extended onto areas now submerged as much as 20 feet beneath typical modern lake levels, with dated stumps indicating substantial lake regression between approximately 6300 and 4800 BP (Lindström 1990, 1997; Lindström 2000, 2002). Subsequent droughts also lowered lake levels during the Late Holocene. These changes repeatedly altered the location of the shoreline and the amount and character of land available for human use. At Tallac Point, underwater archaeological survey was specifically undertaken to correlate terrestrial and

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offshore portions of the site and identified submerged cultural and paleoenvironmental features relevant to reconstructing these changes (Lindström 1985).

Former shorelines and other landforms now below 6,223 feet represent a distinct archaeological environment within Dáʔaw. High-potential settings may include former stream mouths and deltas, low-gradient beaches and terraces, gravel bars, protected bays, benches, shoals, and other stable surfaces associated with known lake-margin occupations or resource areas. Preservation within these settings is expected to vary. Exposed materials may have been displaced or altered by wave action and erosion, while deposits buried beneath lacustrine, marsh, or deltaic sediments may retain stratified archaeological remains. Durable features such as bedrock milling stations may remain visible even where associated deposits have been affected. The limited number of recorded submerged resources likely reflects both the effects of inundation and the limited extent of systematic underwater archaeological investigation rather than an absence of archaeological resources.

Tahoe Reach/Spooner Phase (ca. 10,000–5000 BP)

The earliest well-documented archaeological evidence from the Tahoe Basin occurs at the Visitor Center Site near Taylor Creek. Investigations there identified a comparatively intact Early Holocene component dating approximately 10,000–7,500 BP. The assemblage led Martin (1998) to conclude that early use of the Tahoe Basin may have been more substantial and complex than the small number of recognized early sites had previously suggested. Early archaeological sites are nevertheless uncommon in the Tahoe Sierra, and basic questions remain regarding the timing and intensity of high-elevation occupation, the duration and seasonality of early use, the organization of settlement and subsistence, and the relationship between early populations and environmental change (Elston et al. 1977; Martin 1998).

The submerged lands of Dáʔaw have the potential to contribute directly to these questions. The shoreline has not remained static throughout the Holocene, and landforms available to early populations may no longer occupy the same relationship to the lake. Paleoenvironmental reconstruction can identify former shoreline surfaces that were exposed during periods of early human use. Where such surfaces retain intact soils or archaeological deposits, they may contain lithic assemblages, features, datable cultural material, or other evidence capable of expanding the limited Early Holocene archaeological sample.

Relevant research questions include:

- Did Early Holocene populations use landforms within the present submerged boundary of Dáʔaw, and if so, how does that evidence refine the timing and intensity of early high-elevation occupation in the Tahoe Basin?
- Do archaeological deposits associated with former shoreline surfaces provide evidence for the duration, seasonality, mobility, subsistence, or technological organization of Tahoe Reach and Spooner phase populations?

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Addressing these questions requires more than locating isolated artifacts on the lakebed. Useful data would include archaeological materials in association with reconstructable paleolandforms, temporally diagnostic artifacts, datable cultural features or remains, buried soils, and spatially or stratigraphically discrete assemblages. The relationship between the age of a former shoreline and the archaeological materials associated with it would be particularly important. The presence of early archaeological deposits in submerged settings is not assumed; rather, establishing whether such deposits exist is itself an important component of resolving the poorly understood character of early occupation in the Tahoe highlands.

Martis Complex (ca. 5000–1300 BP)

The Martis Complex encompasses a period of substantial archaeological visibility in the Tahoe-Truckee region, but important questions remain concerning chronology, settlement organization, subsistence, mobility, and the relationship between these changes and regional environmental conditions (Elston et al. 1977; Lindström 2000; Bloomer and Jaffke 2009). Martis assemblages generally include dart-sized projectile points, extensive use of locally available basalt, bifacial technology, groundstone, and evidence for hunting and plant processing. Sites range from small activity areas to repeatedly occupied seasonal bases and residential sites.

This interval is particularly important to the submerged archaeological potential of Dáʔaw because it overlaps major fluctuations in lake level. During the Middle Holocene drought, the lake receded substantially below its natural sill, exposing large areas that are now permanently submerged (Lindström 1990, 1997). Archaeologists working in the Tahoe-Truckee region have long recognized that the apparent scarcity or distribution of archaeological components from this period may be affected by inundation, burial beneath marsh or lacustrine sediments, erosion, and difficulties in recognizing Middle Holocene assemblages (Lindström 1985, 1992; Young and Rosenthal 2014). The return to cooler and moister conditions beginning late in the Middle Holocene subsequently raised the lake and inundated former shoreline surfaces.

Archaeological investigations immediately adjacent to Dáʔaw show that Middle and Late Archaic populations repeatedly occupied productive lake-margin settings. Tallac Point contains archaeological materials spanning Martis through Kings Beach times, with an associated milling feature now underwater (Lindström 1985). Black Point Into Lake (CA-ELD-2611/H) contains a substantial archaeological record extending from approximately the late Middle Archaic through the Late Archaic, including residential activities, milling features, faunal remains, hearth-related materials, and evidence for interaction across the Tahoe-Truckee region (Bloomer and Jaffke 2009). Although the principal terrestrial portions of these sites fall outside the nominated boundary, they provide locally documented expectations for the kinds of activities that may have occurred on contemporary shoreline landforms now submerged beneath Dáʔaw.

Research within the nominated submerged lands can address two longstanding problems. The first concerns the relationship between climate and settlement. If archaeological deposits are preserved on former shorelines dating to low-water intervals, their location, age, function, and duration can be compared with contemporaneous terrestrial sites to determine whether changing lake levels and

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resource distributions affected the intensity or seasonality of high-elevation occupation. The second concerns mobility and resource use. Lithic sources, reduction assemblages, milling features, faunal and floral remains, and other activity-specific data can help identify how people moved among lakeshore, upland, and trans-Sierran resource areas.

Relevant research questions include:

- How did Middle Holocene drought and subsequent changes in lake level affect the location, duration, and organization of settlement around Dá?aw?
- Do submerged archaeological loci preserve evidence for residential use, resource processing, toolstone procurement, fishing, or other activities that differ from or complement the known terrestrial Martis record?
- Can temporally discrete submerged deposits clarify changes in mobility and seasonal use during a period when archaeological sites are comparatively difficult to recognize in portions of the regional record?

Data capable of addressing these questions may include buried occupation surfaces, hearths or other datable features, lithic procurement and reduction areas, milling features, faunal and botanical remains, tool assemblages, and spatially discrete activity areas. The submerged toolstone procurement locus at CA-PLA-718/H illustrates the value of this type of evidence. The gravel bar itself was a resource location, and the distribution of cores and reduction debris identifies a specific activity that would be difficult to recognize while the landform is inundated (Bloomer and Lindström 2002).

Kings Beach Complex (ca. 1300 BP–Historic Contact)

The Late Archaic Kings Beach Complex is generally associated with the development of archaeological patterns most closely related to the ethnographically documented Washoe. Archaeological changes include the adoption of bow-and-arrow technology, changes in flaked stone assemblages, increasingly diverse resource use, intensive plant processing, and continued importance of fishing and other aquatic resources (Elston et al. 1977; Lindström 2000; Bloomer and Jaffke 2009). The relationship between earlier Martis populations and later Kings Beach and Washoe populations has been debated for decades, with archaeological and linguistic models variously emphasizing migration, replacement, continuity, or combinations of these processes. The available archaeological record does not fully resolve the transition (Elston 1971; Elston et al. 1977; Bloomer and Jaffke 2009).

Dá?aw is particularly important to this problem because the later archaeological record can be considered together with an unusually detailed ethnographic record of Washoe settlement, fishing, resource use, and cultural geography. Historic and ethnographic sources document family camps around the lake, many near tributary mouths and productive fisheries; inherited or family-associated fishing locations; communal and individual fishing facilities; bedrock milling stations; and repeated seasonal return to established places (Freed 1966; d'Azevedo 1986; Lindström 1992; Rucks 2002). These patterns provide expectations that can be evaluated archaeologically rather than simply projected backward in time.

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Late Holocene lake levels also continued to fluctuate. Droughts exposed areas that are now submerged, while subsequent rises in lake level inundated shoreline surfaces and altered tributary mouths, marsh margins, and shallow nearshore settings (Lindström 1990, 1997; Lindström 2000). Archaeological deposits associated with these former surfaces could therefore provide an unusual record of later prehistoric activities closely tied to the lake.

Research questions include:

- Do submerged archaeological deposits document continuity or change in settlement, technology, resource processing, fishing, and mobility between Martis and Kings Beach occupations?
- Can submerged deposits help clarify the development of the settlement and subsistence pattern documented ethnographically for Washoe families at Dá?aw?
- How were fishing, plant processing, tool production, travel, and other activities spatially organized in relation to former shorelines, tributary mouths, and lake-margin camps?
- What evidence within the submerged property can help explain Dá?aw's role as a subsistence center within the larger Washoe homeland?

Data capable of addressing these questions include temporally diagnostic artifact assemblages, datable features, faunal and botanical remains, fishing-related features or implements, milling features, lithic source data, and spatial relationships between archaeological deposits and reconstructed shorelines. Comparison of these data with terrestrial archaeological and ethnographic records could help evaluate continuity and change between Martis and Kings Beach occupations and clarify the development of later settlement and subsistence patterns associated with Washoe use of Dá?aw.

Dá?aw as a Cultural and Spiritual Landscape

Criterion D information potential at Dá?aw is not limited to the study of settlement and subsistence. Washoe oral histories and ethnographic accounts document cultural practices and places that extend into the water itself. These include offshore places associated with offerings, spiritual beings, travel, and other practices whose material expression may differ substantially from that of residential or resource-processing sites (d'Azevedo 1992; Bender 1997; LSA Associates 1998). These accounts establish that the submerged landscape was culturally used and understood rather than functioning solely as the space between terrestrial camps.

Cave Rock provides an important local precedent. Archaeological and ethnographic research there identified the associated Washoe cultural landscape as including not only the rock but also adjacent waters, offshore shoals and submerged landforms, a submerged island identified in Washoe tradition, and underwater travelways (LSA Associates 1998). The Keeper of the National Register subsequently determined Cave Rock eligible under Criterion D for archaeological and paleoenvironmental information in addition to its traditional cultural significance. The Cave Rock

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studies also recognized continued ethnographic and ethnohistoric research as an important source of information concerning Washoe cosmology, cultural continuity, and the cultural meaning of the place.

Washoe testimony provides additional evidence that culturally significant activity occurred offshore. Oral histories describe offerings intentionally placed in the water and at offshore shoals and identify culturally meaningful places that would not necessarily be recognized through archaeological survey alone (Bender 1997). Not all submerged cultural places are expected to contain archaeological deposits, and material evidence is not required to validate Washoe knowledge. These accounts nevertheless show that archaeological research within Dá?aw should not be limited to camps or subsistence sites.

Research questions concerning the spiritual and cultural dimensions of the submerged landscape include:

- Can archaeological documentation, considered together with Tribe-approved traditional knowledge, identify patterns of use within submerged portions of Dá?aw that are not represented by residential or subsistence deposits?
- Do the locations and character of submerged cultural materials or features correspond with culturally significant offshore landforms, travelways, or areas identified through Washoe oral history?
- How can archaeological and ethnographic information together improve understanding of the relationship between economic, social, ceremonial, and spiritual activities centered on Dá?aw?

These questions require close Tribal involvement. Traditional knowledge is necessary not only for identifying culturally meaningful places but also for determining whether archaeological observations can appropriately be interpreted, documented, or disclosed. Sensitive information and culturally restricted locations need not be made public to contribute to an understanding of the property's information potential.

Archaeological Visibility, Preservation, and Information Potential

The present inventory of submerged archaeological resources at Dá?aw is incomplete. Conventional pedestrian surveys of the surrounding Tahoe Basin cannot identify archaeological deposits beneath the lake, and only limited portions of the nearshore and submerged environment have been subject to archaeological investigation. The Tahoe Outlet studies provide a direct example of this visibility problem. The archaeological character of Locus B could be examined only when low lake levels exposed the gravel bar, but the same activity area is normally hidden beneath the water (Bloomer and Lindström 2002). Tallac Point likewise demonstrates the value of combining terrestrial archaeological study with systematic underwater survey to understand a site extending across the contemporary shoreline (Lindström 1985).

Submergence does not produce uniform preservation. Wave action, lake-level fluctuation, erosion, and redeposition can remove or alter archaeological materials in exposed settings. Conversely,

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lacustrine, marsh, deltaic, or other sediments may bury earlier land surfaces and isolate archaeological deposits from later disturbance. Bedrock features may remain recognizable after associated sediments have changed substantially. Consequently, future research should consider both archaeological sensitivity and geomorphic history when identifying areas most likely to retain informative deposits.

The strongest targets for future study are not the lakebed in general, but former landforms with a demonstrated relationship to human use. These include paleoshorelines and terraces, former stream mouths and deltas, shallow benches and gravel bars, protected embayments, shoals or former peninsulas, and submerged extensions of known archaeological landscapes. Geoarchaeological study, bathymetric and remote-sensing data, underwater survey, and carefully targeted subsurface investigation where appropriate can establish whether these landforms retain archaeological deposits and whether they have sufficient chronological and spatial integrity to address regional research questions.

Potential research contributions include refining the chronology and tempo of high-elevation occupation, clarifying the effects of climatic oscillations and changing lake levels on settlement, identifying differences in seasonal use and mobility, documenting the importance of fisheries and other lake resources, and evaluating relationships among Martis, Kings Beach, and later archaeological patterns associated with Washoe history. Submerged cultural places, considered together with Washoe oral history and traditional knowledge, may also contribute information concerning travel, ceremony, offerings, and the continuing spiritual relationship with Dá?aw.

National Register guidance for Traditional Cultural Places recognizes that Criterion D information potential is not limited to archaeological data and may include continuing cultural knowledge and identity (National Park Service 2024). At Dá?aw, archaeological and paleoenvironmental evidence can document human use and changing lake conditions, while Washoe traditional knowledge provides information about the meaning, use, and relationships associated with the lake that may not be evident in material remains. For the Washoe, that history begins with Creation and continues to the present.

Dá?aw therefore meets Criterion D at the local level because the nominated submerged lands have yielded, and retain the potential to yield, information important to regional prehistory and Washoe history. Archaeological features in inundated settings, former terrestrial surfaces documented below the natural sill, the long archaeological sequence surrounding the lake, and continuing Washoe cultural knowledge provide the basis for research on chronology, environmental adaptation, settlement and mobility, subsistence and fisheries, the development and continuity of Washoe cultural patterns, and the cultural and spiritual geography of Dá?aw.

Criteria Consideration C

Criteria Consideration C applies because Washoe tradition identifies Dá?aw as the place where the Maker placed the Washoe at Creation. The National Register form describes this consideration as applying to a “birthplace or grave.” In the Washoe account, Dá?aw is not a place to which the people later came. Jo Ann Nevers explained that the Washoe “were here in the beginning and have

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always lived here” and that places throughout Washoe country have names and stories associated with them (Nevers 1976:3; Washoe Tribe 2009). Darrel Cruz described the same connection:

We originated from Dá?aw. I just try to reinforce that all the time, because we originated there. It all ties back to there. We originated from Dá?aw so our roots come from Dá?aw. It is the center of the universe and our most sacred place (Cruz 2025).

One Creation account shared by Nevers describes the Maker distributing seeds that would become the different peoples. After the other peoples and places had been established, the final handful of seeds became the Washoe. The Maker placed them at Dá?aw, a place he had reserved for himself, and gave them responsibility for its care (Museum of Tahoe n.d.). The Washoe Tribe has published a related account in which the Maker divided seeds among the different tribes before West Wind scattered most of those intended to become the Washoe. That account is followed by the Tribe’s statement that the Washoe are the original inhabitants of Dá?aw and the surrounding homeland and “were here in the beginning and have always lived here” (Washoe Tribe 2009). The accounts vary in their telling, but each places the Washoe at Dá?aw from the beginning.

That relationship did not end with Creation. Washoe families continued to return to Dá?aw for fishing, gathering, family life, prayer, teaching, and other cultural practices, even after access to many traditional places around the lake was restricted following Euro-American settlement. Those connections continue today. Criteria Consideration C recognizes Dá?aw as the place where the Maker placed the Washoe at Creation. The property’s significance under Criteria A, B, and D is addressed separately in the preceding sections.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The properties discussed below provide examples of how the National Register has evaluated places important to living Indigenous communities. They differ substantially in size, physical character, history, and cultural use. The comparison focuses on the National Register criteria, level and areas of significance, period of significance, and the relationship between continuing cultural practice and the nominated place.

Pascua Cultural Plaza, Arizona

Pascua Cultural Plaza (NRIS 04001032) is a 1.7-acre ceremonial plaza within Old Pascua Village in Tucson, Arizona. The property was listed at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of Religion, Social History, Education, and Ethnic Heritage: Native American, with a period of significance of 1921 to present (2004). Criteria Considerations A and G also apply (Hartman 2004). The plaza has served as the center of Yoeme ceremonial and community activities since the village was established in 1921. The capilla, community kitchen, and fiesta ramada have been replaced over time, but their locations and functions continue the ceremonial organization of the plaza.

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Pascua Cultural Plaza provides a useful comparison for the continuing role of place in ceremony, community life, and intergenerational transmission. Its physical form differs substantially from Dáʔaw. Pascua is a constructed community space whose significance begins with establishment of the village in 1921, while Dáʔaw is a natural feature associated with Washoe history from Creation to the present. In both cases, continued cultural practice and community association are central to the significance of the property.

Doe-Kag-Wats, Washington

Doe-Kag-Wats (NRIS 100004076) is an approximately 300-acre estuarine wetland complex on the Port Madison Indian Reservation in Washington. It is listed at the local level under Criteria A, B, and D in the areas of Archeology – Prehistoric, Education, Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage – Native American, and Religion. Its period of significance is Time Immemorial to Present (Lewarch and Trudel 2019). The Suquamish have used the property for shellfish gathering, fishing, hunting, plant gathering, camping, recreation, teaching, and spiritual activities. Criterion B is based on associations with Suquamish elders Jack Davis, Jennie Davis, and Virgil Temple, while Criterion D includes the archaeological information represented by site 45KP35.

Doe-Kag-Wats provides a close National Register comparison for Dáʔaw because both are evaluated at the local level under Criteria A, B, and D and both draw upon archaeological, ethnographic, oral-history, and contemporary Tribal information. Doe-Kag-Wats also shows how a property used for subsistence and other daily activities can at the same time function as a place of spiritual importance and cultural teaching. The Criterion B associations differ. Doe-Kag-Wats is associated with documented historic Suquamish elders, while the Criterion B associations at Dáʔaw are with specific persons and spiritual beings identified in Washoe Creation accounts and traditional beliefs. The two nominations nevertheless demonstrate that the significance of a Traditional Cultural Place may be supported by several related lines of cultural and historical evidence rather than a single type of use.

Rice Bay, Michigan

Rice Bay (NRIS 15000353) encompasses the northeastern portion of Lac Vieux Desert in Gogebic County, Michigan. The property is listed at the statewide level under Criterion A in the areas of Agriculture, Conservation, and Ethnic Heritage: Native American. Its period of significance is ca. 1784–1965 (Boscarino 2015). Rice Bay is significant to the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa for the annual harvest of wild rice, a practice associated with Ojibwe settlement at Ketegitigaaning and the maintenance of community identity. Wild rice continues to be harvested at Rice Bay, although the National Register period of significance as entered on the nomination ends in 1965.

Rice Bay is particularly relevant to Dáʔaw because the nominated property is itself a body of water associated with continuing Indigenous cultural practice. Both nominations also use Ethnic Heritage: Native American and Conservation as areas of significance. At Rice Bay, the Criterion A argument centers on the annual wild rice harvest and its importance to the history and cultural identity of the Lac Vieux Desert community. Dáʔaw is associated with a wider range of documented Washoe activities and relationships, including fishing, gathering, family life, cultural

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teaching, prayer, stewardship, Creation accounts, and the archaeological information potential of its submerged lands. The comparison is useful because it shows that a natural aquatic feature can be the property through which cultural practice, resource stewardship, and community identity are expressed.

Synthesis

The comparison does not establish a hierarchy among these properties. Pascua Cultural Plaza, Doe-Kag-Wats, and Rice Bay differ in physical form, cultural history, National Register criteria, period of significance, and level of significance. Each was evaluated according to the relationship between the place and the history and cultural practices of the community for whom it is important.

Dá?aw is nominated at the local level under Criteria A, B, and D. Under Criterion A, its significance is associated with Washoe ethnic heritage and a continuing history of stewardship centered on the lake. Under Criterion B, the property is directly associated with Damalali and Pewetseli, the Metsún identified in their Creation account, and Ang. Under Criterion D, the submerged lands have yielded and retain the potential to yield archaeological and paleoenvironmental information, while continuing Washoe knowledge provides information concerning the cultural and spiritual geography of the lake. Its period of significance, Creation to Present, reflects the Washoe understanding of the beginning and continuity of their relationship with Dá?aw. Within this comparative context, the local level reflects the significance of Dá?aw within Washoe history, culture, and homeland and does not depend on the size of the property or comparison with the relative importance of other Traditional Cultural Places.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
 - ☐ Other State agency
 - ☒ Federal agency
 - ☐ Local government
 - ☐ University
 - ☒ Other
- Name of repository: Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property

Approximately 122,600 acres (surface water only)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Vertex	General Location	Latitude	Longitude
1	Griff Creek	39.235786	-120.030830
2	Third Creek	39.238540	-119.947029
3	Marlette Creek	39.164775	-119.933441
4	North Canyon Creek	39.099674	-119.947319
5	Glenbrook Creek	39.088207	-119.941154
6	Lincoln Creek	39.040012	-119.949645
7	Burke Creek	38.976406	-119.952262
8	Edgewood Creek	38.967662	-119.949935
9	Trout Creek	38.944980	-120.001480
10	Taylor Creek	38.941761	-120.057731
11	General Creek	39.055381	-120.112350
12	Blackwood Creek	39.106746	-120.157302
13	Ward Creek	39.128562	-120.155433
14	Truckee River	39.167839	-120.139701
15	Burton Creek	39.180316	-120.123092
16	Meeks Creek	39.036933	-120.121200

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of the waters and submerged lands of Dáʔaw within the lake's natural rim at 6,223 feet, Lake Tahoe Datum. The boundary does not include shoreline above the natural sill, tributaries, creeks, streams, or associated upland features within the Tahoe Basin. The natural rim provides a clear physical boundary for the nominated lake across California and Nevada and remains fixed despite short-term changes in lake level.

The property extends across El Dorado and Placer Counties in California and Washoe and Douglas Counties and Carson City in Nevada. The approximate geographic center of the nominated area is 39.096149° latitude and -120.033502° longitude (WGS84). The elevation-based boundary distinguishes the nominated waters and submerged lands from shoreline and upland settings discussed elsewhere in the nomination for cultural and historical context.

Boundary Justification

The nominated Traditional Cultural Place includes the entirety of the lake's waters and submerged lands within the natural rim at 6,223 feet, Lake Tahoe Datum. The boundary was selected because the natural sill defines the physical extent of the lake independent of short-term lake-level fluctuations and excludes shoreline and upland settings outside the nominated property.

Jurisdiction over Lake Tahoe is bifurcated between California and Nevada, with the state boundary running approximately north-south through the lake as defined in *California v. Nevada*, 456 U.S. 867 (1982). The States of California and Nevada each claim jurisdiction over the portion of the lake lying within their respective state boundaries. In California, primary oversight of the lake's submerged lands and waters is shared among the California State Lands Commission (CSLC), the California State Water Resources Control Board, and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. In Nevada, the Nevada Division of State Lands is responsible for the management of the lakebed and public trust lands, while the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection oversees water quality. Notably, the Nevada Division of Water Resources (NDWR) regulates surface and groundwater appropriations but does not assert jurisdiction over the publicly owned surface waters of Lake Tahoe.

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11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: William (Billyhawk) Enos; Denise Jaffke and Chloe McGuire

Organization: Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California;

Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc.

Street & number: 2727 Del Rio Place

City or town: Davis State: California Zip code: 95616

Email: denise@farwestern.com

Telephone: (530) 416-0265

Date: November 17, 2025; Revised September 22, 2026

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Dá?aw

City or Vicinity: Lake Tahoe (vicinity)

County: El Dorado, Placer State: California

Carson City, Douglas and Washoe State: Nevada

Photographer: Denise Jaffke

Date Photographed: November 2025

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Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 10 Aerial view of the north shore of Lake Tahoe, centered on the mouth of Griff Creek along the shoreline at mid-frame, looking south.

2 of 10 Aerial view of the north shore of Lake Tahoe, centered on the mouth of Incline Creek along the shoreline at mid-frame, looking south.

3 of 10 Aerial view of the east shore of Lake Tahoe, centered on the mouth of Marlette Creek along the shoreline at mid-frame, looking west.

4 of 10 Aerial view of the east shore of Lake Tahoe, centered on the mouth of Glenbrook Creek along the shoreline on right, looking north.

5 of 10 Aerial view of the southeast shore of Lake Tahoe, with mouth of Burke Creek along shoreline on lower left, looking northwest.

6 of 10 Aerial view of the south shore of Lake Tahoe, centered on Upper Truckee River marsh at mid-frame, looking north.

7 of 10 View of Taylor Creek along south shore of Lake Tahoe, looking west.

8 of 10 Aerial view of Meeks Bay of Lake Tahoe, with Meeks Creek on foreground right, looking west.

9 of 10 Aerial view of west shore of Lake Tahoe, looking north toward the mouth of Blackwood Creek.

10 of 10 Aerial view of Truckee River Outlet, looking east towards Lake Tahoe.

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Photo 1 (P01). Aerial view of the north shore of Lake Tahoe, centered on the mouth of Griff Creek along the shoreline at mid-frame, looking south.



Photo 2 (P02). Aerial view of the north shore of Lake Tahoe, centered on the mouth of Incline Creek along the shoreline at mid-frame, looking south.

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Photo 3 (P03). Aerial view of the east shore of Lake Tahoe, centered on the mouth of Marlette Creek along the shoreline at mid-frame, looking west.



Photo 4 (P04). Aerial view of the east shore of Lake Tahoe, centered on the mouth of Glenbrook Creek along the shoreline on right, looking north.

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Photo 5 (P05). Aerial view of the southeast shore of Lake Tahoe, with mouth of Burke Creek along shoreline on lower left, looking northwest.



Photo 6 (P06). Aerial view of the south shore of Lake Tahoe, centered on Upper Truckee River marsh at mid-frame, looking north.

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Photo 7 (P07). View of Taylor Creek along south shore of Lake Tahoe, looking west.



Photo 8 (P08). Aerial view of Meeks Bay of Lake Tahoe, with Meeks Creek on foreground right, looking west.

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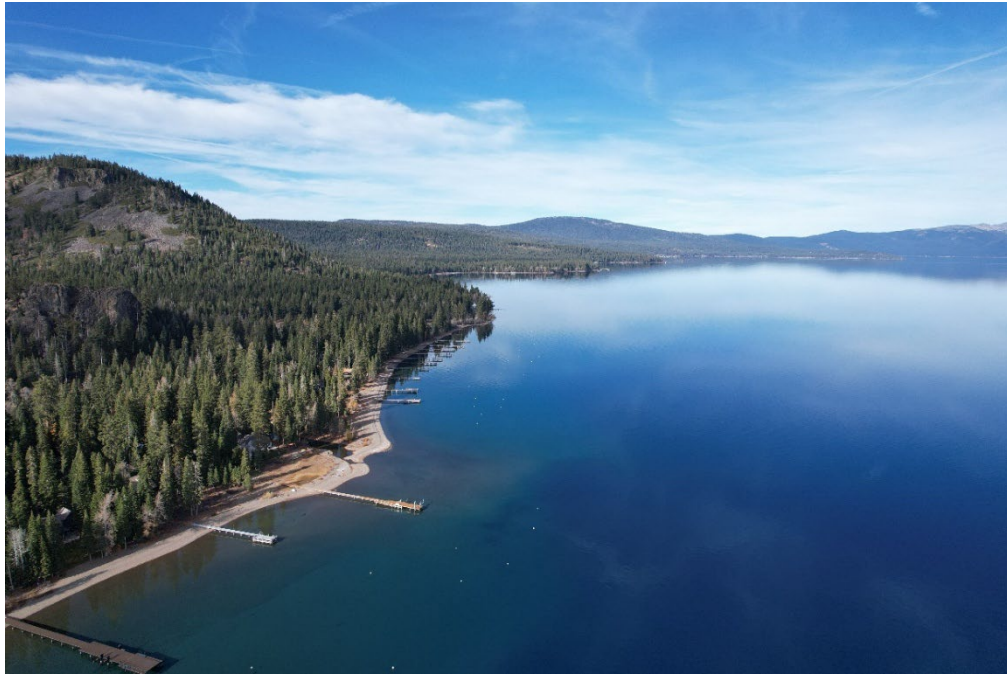


Photo 9 (P09). Aerial view of west shore of Lake Tahoe, looking north toward the mouth of Blackwood Creek.



Photo 10 (P10). Aerial view of Truckee River Outlet, looking east towards Lake Tahoe.

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Figure 1. Washoe women and *Galidungal* (winterhouse) at the edge of Lake Tahoe.



Figure 2. Washoe couple, Mr. and Mrs. Merrill with trout caught in Lake Tahoe.

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Figure 3. Teddy James with fish catch.



Figure 4. Washoe woman with traditional baby carrier (*bikus*) at the shore of Lake Tahoe.

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Figure 5. President Clinton and A. Brian Wallace, Tribal Chair, Lake Tahoe.



Figure 6. Washoe member Melba Rakow and Governor Sandoval at Lake Tahoe Summit.

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Figure 7. Tribal leaders at Lake Tahoe Summit.



Figure 8. President Clinton and Vice President Gore with Washoe delegation.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

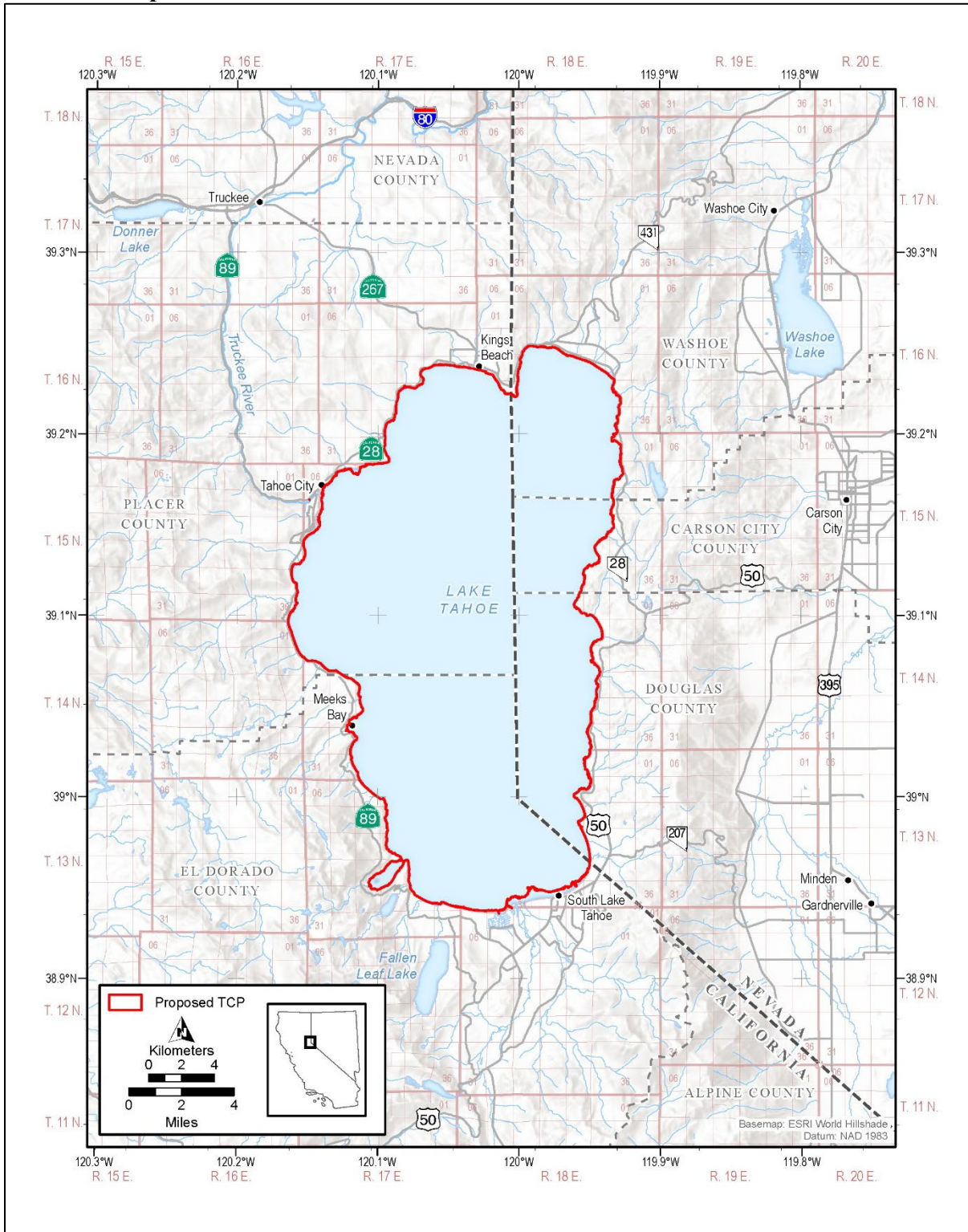
The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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Location Map

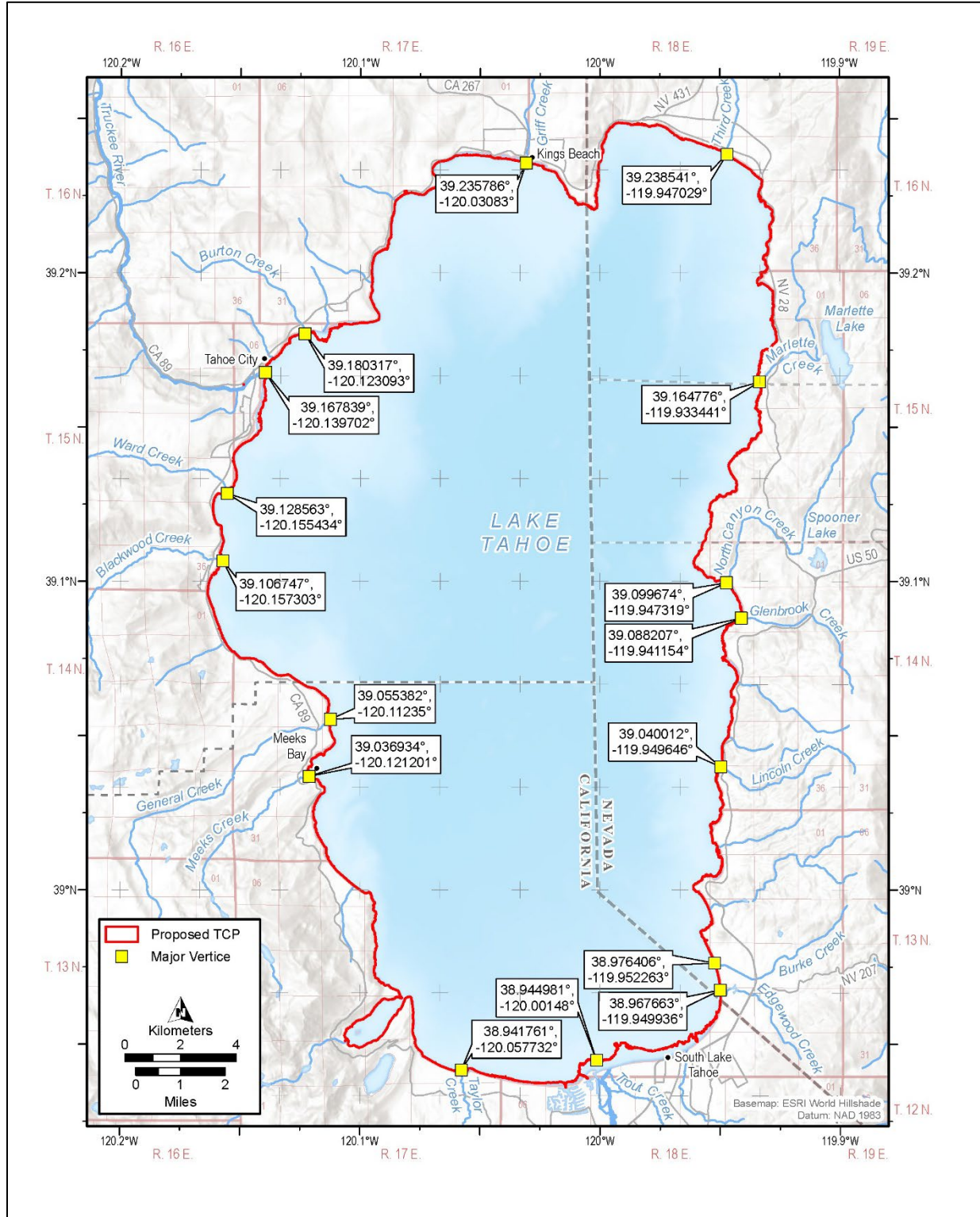


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Boundary Map



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Photo Key: Overview

