



SANTINI-BURTON MODERNIZATION ACT



Lake Tahoe
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Photo by: Jarvis Photography

The 1980 Santini-Burton Act was essential to Lake Tahoe's early conservation success story. Under the law, funds were appropriated to the USDA Forest Service to acquire more than 16,000 acres of land in the Tahoe Basin. Today, 90 percent of the Tahoe Region is publicly owned. Through conservation and ongoing management, these public lands protect Lake Tahoe and offer world-class recreation opportunities. Changes to the Santini-Burton Act in the 2000s inadvertently limited the law's scope so funds could only be used to acquire land, but not to manage those lands.

If enacted, modernization would free up existing funds for ongoing management, allowing the Tahoe Basin to complete more lake-saving Environmental Improvement Program projects to protect Tahoe's famed clarity, improve recreation access, manage forests, reduce wildfire risk, and expand the presence of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California.

Specifically, the Santini-Burton Modernization Act:

- Maintains the USDA Forest Service's existing authority to facilitate land acquisitions in the Tahoe Basin.
- Allows existing funds to be used for land management, prioritizing water quality, forest health, and recreation.
- Designates the Washoe Tribe as an eligible entity to receive transfer of acquired land for environmental purposes, a designation already afforded to state and local governments.

- Maintains the 1980 federal land sale boundaries in Clark County, Nevada.
- Adds no new costs to taxpayers.

The Santini-Burton Modernization Act is the product of a multi-year collaboration by Tahoe's state and local governments, the bi-state Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, non-profits, and the private sector.

Thanks to Santini-Burton, Tahoe's unique character continues to be of national significance, but the threats to the lake require bold solutions. Modernization would free up existing, but currently restricted, resources to manage public lands and address visitation impacts at Tahoe.



Photo by: First Track Productions. Mountain bikers ride the ridge above the East Shore of Lake Tahoe. The Santini-Burton Modernization Act would help maintain and improve public lands in the Tahoe Basin.