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## Incline Lake now in public's hands

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RENO (AP) — A scenic 750-acre enclave in the Lake Tahoe Basin, once a Nevada version of California's Bohemian Club for the rich and powerful, is now in the public's hands.

U.S. Forest Service officials said the government assumed ownership Wednesday of Incline Lake and surrounding forestland after paying \$46 million to the Incline Lake Corp.

Officials called it a landmark acquisition for conservation. The deal follows four years of negotiations involving Nevada's congressional delegation.

"Incline Lake is an exceptional acquisition both for the resource conservation values and for the recreational opportunities," Terri Marceron, supervisor of the Forest Service's Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, said in a statement.

The Forest Service will develop short- and long-term management plans for the property located above Tahoe's northeast shore in the Carson Range. The site also is next to the Mount Rose Wilderness Area.

"I anticipate that this land will be a popular destination for residents and visitors to our area," said Ed Monnig, supervisor of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

"It is a spectacular property. We are committed to working with the public on the appropriate management of this new addition to the National Forest System," he added.

Management of the property will be shared by the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

Since it was set up by Nevada power broker and developer Norman Blitz in the late 1930s, the Sierra retreat had generally been off limits to the public.

Forest Service officials said they don't expect the land to be open to the public until next year.

Most of the land will be closed to the public through November to allow for the removal and modification of structures, and restoration of the property to an undeveloped state.

The Incline Lake Corp. and the government still have not settled on a final price for the property.

A "friendly condemnation" proceeding in U.S. District Court in Reno will determine whether the government must pay more than \$46 million. Incline Lake Corp. has sought \$75 million.

The purchase was funded by the auction of federal land around Las Vegas.

Past visitors included some of Nevada's most prominent figures, including philanthropist and dairy king Max Fleischmann, longtime U.S. Sen Patrick McCarran, and Moya Lear, philanthropist and wife to Bill Lear, creator of the Lear jet.

