

TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

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NEWS RELEASE

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TRPA Supports Firefighting Efforts Underway at Lake Tahoe

South Lake Tahoe, CA - Lake Tahoe agencies, including the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, have mobilized to support efforts underway to combat the Angora Fire which has burned more than 200 homes in a 2,500-acre area at Lake Tahoe.

“Our hearts go out to the families who have lost their homes,” said John Singlaub, Executive Director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. “Our first priority is to cooperate with fire agencies responsible for getting the blaze under control, Singlaub said. “We’re also trying to help homeowners who have re-building questions and we’re working with the Forest Service on a restoration plan to help offset environmental impacts from the fire.”

TRPA has been promoting defensible space on private properties for the last three years. “There’s an incorrect perception that TRPA doesn’t allow tree removal for fire safety,” Singlaub said. “I want the community to know that we actually **encourage** tree removal for forest health and have created agreements with local fire districts for this very purpose.”

Key Facts Related to the Fire

- For the last three consecutive years, the TRPA Governing Board has declared forest health and reduction of forest fuels as the Agency’s number one priority. Since then, the TRPA has combined forces with local fire districts, local chapters of the Fire Safe Council, the USDA Forest Service and other public agencies on the forest fuels plan to prioritize fuels projects. TRPA took the lead to prepare the

Lake Tahoe Basin-Wide Fuels Reduction Plan which assesses which areas are at greatest risk of catastrophic wildfire around the lake. The plan is available at www.trpa.org.

- Within the Angora Fire boundary area, at least 462 acres have already been treated for fuels reduction.
- TRPA has been working to attack the threat of catastrophic wildfire in the Tahoe Basin for more than 10 years. Beginning in 2002, the Agency entered into agreements with local fire protection agencies to streamline permitting for defensible space work on private properties.
- In 2006, 200 defensible space inspections were conducted by Lake Valley Fire Protection District, whose service area includes the fire location. During these site visits, 900 trees were marked for removal by fire professionals.
- Through the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program, which TRPA coordinates, 21,293 acres have been treated within the Tahoe Basin since 1997 at a cost of \$50 million. Approximately 67,214 acres remain to be treated at a projected cost of \$217 million.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is working closely with Lake Tahoe agencies to do everything currently possible to help the community during the Angora fire disaster. The Agency is working rapidly to offer the following solutions for property owners who have lost their homes:

- We will be working with the local building departments to streamline rebuilding efforts for those affected by the fire.
- Current rules allow for property owners to pursue the replacement of previously existing development for up to 18 months from the fire. TRPA will be discussing possible extensions to this timeline if needed.
- Existing documentation concerning the location and type of development that existed before the fire will be utilized to help property owners get through the rebuilding process.
- We anticipate organizing community workshops as soon as possible to answer questions and to present a streamlined process to aid in the rebuilding process.
- TRPA staff are donating clothing and other items to fire victims and coordinating with Red Cross and other local relief agencies to help address community needs.

For more information on what TRPA is doing to help regarding the Angora Fire disaster, please call 775-589-5316 or call the Forest Service's Angora Fire information number at 530-543-2694.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is a bi-state environmental planning and regulatory agency at Lake Tahoe. Our mission is to cooperatively lead the effort to preserve, restore, and enhance the unique natural and human environment of the Lake Tahoe Region now and in the future. The Agency regulates development at Lake Tahoe and spearheads an environmental restoration program for the Tahoe Basin.

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