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NEWS RELEASE

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LAKE TAHOE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT SHOWS POSITIVE TRENDS

Lake Tahoe, CA/NV– The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) released its five-year Threshold Evaluation Report today on the status of 36 environmental indicators, which shows that 21 indicators are moving in a positive direction, according to TRPA officials.

The Agency uses the five-year report to scientifically examine the condition of nine environmental threshold carrying capacities that TRPA is working to achieve. The thresholds are measurements of the quality of Lake Tahoe's air, water, soils, vegetation, fish, wildlife, recreation, noise and scenic resources. Each threshold area has a set of region-wide indicators, such as visibility for air quality, that are used to determine if the region is in attainment with standards that were set in 1987, the year the Regional Plan was adopted.

"We have a long way to go to reach our goals for Lake Tahoe, but overall environmental quality is improving," said TRPA Executive Director John Singlaub. "The key is to have a sustained investment that spans the generations because so much of the environment was harmed before we had conservation standards in place."

An executive summary of the 2006 Threshold Evaluation Report, as well as the full technical report and environmental assessment of updates to the thresholds are available at TRPA offices and on the Agency's website, www.trpa.org.

"We encourage everyone to review the report to see the challenges and opportunities we all face," Singlaub said.

Overall, 25 percent of the list of indicators are in full attainment and another 25 percent are near attainment. Attainment of a threshold indicator is achieved when 100% of all indicator components meet the standards, near attainment is achieved when 96% of components are in attainment, according to the report. One indicator in the water quality category was the only indicator to show a negative trend. Phytoplankton Primary Productivity is a measure of how fast certain algae in the lake process carbon. The report states that the Phytoplankton indicator continues to go beyond the standard rate of carbon processing that was set in the 1960s and may not be attainable because of a change in the kind of algae found in the lake.

The Phytoplankton indicator is one of 31 indicators that the Threshold Report identifies as being in need of re-evaluation or updating. The TRPA is working with the public and partner agencies to update standards for the Tahoe Basin in part to address changes in the environment and new scientific advances that have occurred since the standards were originally set.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency cooperatively leads the effort to preserve, restore, and enhance the unique natural and human environment of the Lake Tahoe region now and in the future. For more information, contact Julie Regan at 775-589-5237 or visit www.trpa.org.

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