

TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

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NEWS RELEASE

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TRPA GOVERNING BOARD CONSIDERS STEPPING UP BOAT INSPECTIONS

Lake Tahoe, Stateline, NV – Because of mounting concern that more should be done to prevent the introduction of destructive aquatic invasive species to Lake Tahoe, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board Wednesday will consider a rule requiring that boat launches at the Lake be closed when qualified inspectors are not present.

Inspections have been conducted at launch sites since May to help prevent boats infested with such invaders as quagga/zebra mussels and New Zealand mud snails from entering the Lake. The current program, however, does not prevent boaters from launching when inspectors are not present.

The proposal going before the Governing Board would make inspections mandatory, require ramps and launches be closed when inspectors are not present, require that suspect vessels be decontaminated and make civil penalties applicable in instances where these requirements are overtly violated.

Board members Wednesday will also be presented with information about the cost of implementing such a rule, along with details of an implementation plan being developed in cooperation with marina owners, ramp operators, the broader boating community and partner agencies.

“The goal here is to make sure every boat is inspected – not to close ramps and interfere with the boater’s recreational experience,” said Ted Thayer, TRPA Natural Resource and Science Team Leader. “This being the case, inconveniences in the short term would be a small price to pay compared to the long-term effects of an infestation.”

Quagga mussels in particular have invaded Lakes across the nation, including in the West and in high altitude settings. Once established, these mussels can reproduce

rapidly, damaging watercraft and drinking water intake systems, littering beaches with shells and touching off ecological collapse by throwing the food chain off balance.

The mussels are transmitted on boats that have been in infested waters and are not adequately cleaned, drained of bilge and live wells, and dried before entering another body of water. At some lakes in the West, boats coming from infested or suspected waterways are prohibited from launching altogether.

A public hearing on this matter will be held Wednesday at The Chateau, 955 Fairway Blvd., Incline Village, not before 10 a.m. All are encouraged and welcome to participate. Additionally, TRPA staff would like to hear concerns and suggestions from the boating public in advance of that date. Please contact Ted Thayer, at 775-589-5301 or by email at tthayer@trpa.org.

Following Wednesday's meeting, the Governing Board will conduct a daylong workshop at the TRPA administration building, 128 Market St., Stateline, Nevada, on proposed shorezone development ordinances being developed for Lake Tahoe. The shorezone proposal is currently scheduled to be heard by the TRPA Advisory Planning Commission and then brought to the Governing Board for final consideration in October. Thursday's workshop begins at 9 a.m. and is open to the public.

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 additional information, call Dennis Oliver at 775-589-5235.

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