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NEWS RELEASE

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2009 GRADING SEASON BEGINS AT LAKE TAHOE

Lake Tahoe, CA/NV – Construction kicked into gear this week at Lake Tahoe marking the beginning of the grading season in the Basin. To protect from widespread erosion, open digging and grading projects are limited to dry months between May 1 and October 15 at Lake Tahoe.

Grading is limited to times that soil is the most stable and activity likely to cause the least amount of potential polluted runoff. With minimal snow on the ground this spring, conditions are suitable for construction activity, said TRPA officials.

Grading is the cutting or moving of soil for construction of a driveway, parking area, utility line, building or other structure. Grading also includes filling, excavation and clearing of soil and is not permitted during periods of precipitation or when a building site is covered with snow.

Any project involving more than three cubic yards of soil disturbance requires a grading permit.

With the beginning of the grading season, it is anticipated that property owners will begin to ramp up defensible space work and installation of erosion control projects on their parcels.

As such, Lake Tahoe fire agencies are offering programs to help homeowners and the Nevada Fire Safe Council will again provide rebates to eligible homeowners for tree removal and defensible space measures.

With regard to erosion control or “best management practices” (BMPs), all statutory deadlines have passed for BMP work and properties that haven’t been issued a certificate are now due.

“BMPs and defensible space work go hand-in-hand and should be integrated,” TRPA Community Liaison Jeff Cowen said. “Doing this work together means homeowners can make their property more fire safe while helping to protect the environment from unnecessary polluted runoff.”

Homeowners can request a free BMP site evaluation from local resource conservation districts. These are non-regulatory agencies offering free advice and BMP plans to homeowners through on-site evaluations. For homes in Nevada, contact the Nevada Tahoe Conservation District at (775) 586-1610. In California, contact the Tahoe Resource Conservation District at (530) 543-1501.

The Nevada Fire Safe Council serves California and Nevada homeowners in the Tahoe Region by offering free evaluations and a rebate program for vegetation removal. Contact the council at (530) 543-FIRE (3473). Your local fire agency can also assist with defensible space evaluations.

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 Jeff Cowen at (775) 589-5278 or email to jcowen@trpa.org.

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