

TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

128 Market Street
Stateline, Nevada
www.trpa.org

P.O.Box 5310
Stateline, NV 89449-5310

(775) 588-4547
Fax (775) 588-4527
Email: trpa@trpa.org

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Dennis Oliver, Communications Representative, 775-589-5235

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TRPA CONSIDERS MOVE TO EXPAND DEFENSIBLE SPACE INSPECTIONS; 2008 RESIDENTIAL ALLOCATIONS ALSO BEFORE TRPA GOVERNING BOARD

Lake Tahoe, Stateline, NV – To help improve fire safety efforts in the Tahoe Basin, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board Wednesday will consider an ordinance change which would expand the number of trained professionals authorized to conduct defensible space inspections for local property owners.

Currently, TRPA code requires that tree marking performed during defensible space inspections be conducted by a qualified forester. The proposal being considered Wednesday would authorize defensible space assessors to also conduct such inspections and mark trees for removal. The assessors would receive training approved by TRPA and fire agencies and would work as fire agency designees.

“This change would make it possible for the fire agencies to get more staff on the ground conducting defensible space inspections,” said Mike Vollmer, TRPA Vegetation Program Manager. “This is just one more tool to fast track the process property owners should undertake to maximize fire safety.”

The proposal is part of a suite of code changes and policy shifts undertaken by TRPA to help streamline defensible space and fire safety efforts in the Tahoe Basin. On November 28, the TRPA Governing Board increased from six to 14 inches the diameter size of trees that may be removed without a permit for defensible space purposes. That rule change becomes effective January 27.

Also Wednesday, the TRPA Governing Board will consider the release of residential building allocations to local government jurisdictions for the 2008 calendar year.

Allocation levels are established for the City of South Lake Tahoe and the surrounding Tahoe Basin counties based on progress each has made in implementing Environmental Improvement Program projects, reaching best management practices compliance level goals, encouraging use of public transportation and overall permit issuance and compliance. Based on this performance criteria, 212 residential allocations have been recommended by TRPA staff: 35 for the City of South Lake Tahoe, 14 for Douglas County, 76 for El Dorado County, 50 for Placer County and 37 for Washoe County.

Both the defensible space assessor code change and the housing allocation items have been recommended for approval by the TRPA Advisory Planning Commission.

The TRPA Governing Board will meet beginning at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday at the TRPA administration building, 128 Market Street, Stateline, Nevada. Public hearings are scheduled for both items.

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. To view the full meeting agenda, visit www.trpa.org under meetings and notices or call Dennis Oliver, 775-589-5235.

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