TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

February 25, 2026

TRPA/ZOOM

1. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Chair Ms. Williamson called the meeting to order at 10:55 a.m.

Members present: Ms. Aldean, Ms. Hebert (for Mr. Aguilar), Mr. Bass, Ms. Conrad-Saydah, Ms. Faustinos, Ms. Holloway (for Ms. Gustafson), Ms. Hill, Mr. Hoenigman, Mr. Kieckhefer, Ms. Laine, Ms. Leumer, Mr. Rice, Mr. Settelmeyer, Ms. Williamson

Members absent: Ms. Hays

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PUBLIC INTEREST COMMENTS – ON AGENDA ITEMS

Jim Drennan, Fire Chief for City of South Lake Tahoe and is the chair for the Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs Association. I'm in full support of the public safety training center at the Lake Tahoe Community College. In 2005, I was part of an ad hoc committee penciling out what the Academy might look like. I got to teach the academy early on and trained a number of firefighters who went on to teach at the academy. The value of that program can't be measured here in the region. It's something that some of the former chiefs that I worked underneath had been envisioning for decades. Having the public safety center here on the South Shore, especially right in the middle of South Lake Tahoe, where it's centrally located to three separate fire departments, and then regionally available to all the rest in the basin is incredible to see that coming forward. What they're able to build on that lot and the ability for our department and our neighboring agencies to be able to go and train as opposed to showing up to somebody's private residence and trying to throw ladders or pull hose. It provides consistent training. It provides a professional level teaching and educational experience and sets up the next generation of firefighters for the area.

Laura Patton, Natural Resource Director, League to Save Lake Tahoe/Keep Tahoe Blue is commenting on the threshold items. Keep Tahoe Blue appreciates the significant work by TRPA staff, the Tahoe Science Advisory Council, and all of the basin partners who have come together. That work has been reflected in both the water quality and forest health threshold updates that are before you today. We support the direction of these updates and the continued effort to update and modernize the thresholds so that they remain science-based, measurable, and outcome focused.

Clear outcome-based threshold standards help the public and the decision makers understand whether environmental goals are being achieved while maintaining protections through TRPA Code, the Environmental Improvement Program, and importantly, through the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation.

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We strongly support the Forest Health Threshold update, recognizing fire as a natural ecological process and managing forests for resilience rather than static conditions reflects the best available science and is essential to protecting our forests, watersheds, and water quality. At the same time, we encourage TRPA to commit to updating all of the remaining thresholds before the next threshold evaluation cycle. Evaluating basin conditions against outdated standards, some of them are from 1982 don't fully meet the Compact's mandate and risks limiting the effectiveness of the threshold program and the Environmental Improvement Program moving forward.

The forest health update shows that meaningful modernization is achievable, and we're encouraging TRPA to continue that momentum today and into the future across all of those resource areas.

In regard to the 2026 Watercraft Inspection Fee Schedule on the consent calendar, we are proud to support the work of TRPA in aquatic invasive species prevention overall, and we strongly support the Watercraft Inspection Fee Schedule updates.

We especially appreciate the simplified decontamination schedule and the 50 percent discount for vessels that arrive Clean, Drain, and Dry. That staggered approach creates a clear incentive for responsible boater behavior while ensuring the program can sustainably cover the costs of mandatory decontaminations, with the threat of Golden Mussel knocking on our door here in Tahoe.

Bob Larsen, Program Officer for the Tahoe Science Advisory Council, and works with the California Natural Resources Agency, is commenting on the Forest Health and Wildfire Threshold Standards.

As part of the process, TRPA engaged with the Council to coordinate an independent peer review of the proposal package. A full summary of the review and the detailed comments are available online.

First, I want to thank Drs. Hugh Safford and Patricia Manley for their time and thoughtful feedback during the process. They both reviewed early draft proposals. They met with staff several times and were able to share their ideas, express some concerns, and offer suggestions for improving the package.

I want to stress that the proposal today before you are a very important step forward. Both reviewers found that the updated thresholds are consistent with current science, and both agree that the selected metrics reflect the core drivers of forest health and wildfire risk. These standards represent a long overdue update of the current system.

That said, the reviewers did identify a number of opportunities to strengthen the program in the future. They emphasized the need to refine project performance metrics so TRPA and its partners can assess other ecosystem benefits such as old growth quality, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration.

Furthermore, the reviewers encouraged TRPA to consider complementary metrics such as stand density indices, and the reviewers noted the importance of investing in regular monitoring to support the adaptive management process in the face of climate change.

Taken together, the peer review findings support moving forward now while offering guidance for further refinement.

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TRPA did reach out to staff from the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force to ensure that the new standards align with statewide forest health and wildfire resilience priorities.

There are obvious differences in scale, but the Tahoe Basin efforts are consistent with and will contribute to the broader California forest management strategies. This alignment both strengthens the scientific credibility and the relevance of these proposed standards moving forward.

I encourage the board to approve the proposed updates as a strong foundation for scientific accountability and continued improvement in our forests. As Ms. Patton mentioned, there are more standards to update in the future, and I look forward to further science-management dialogue on that effort.

Q (Electronic Voice Generated) – In audible.

Ann Nichols, North Tahoe Preservation Alliance said I appreciate the effort to modernize and align threshold standards with adaptive management principles. However, the proposal before you appears to do more than administrative restructuring. Removing 26 existing water quality threshold standards, particularly pollutant load reduction and discharge standards, materially changes how environmental carrying capacities are defined and enforced under the Compact. Pollutant load is not merely a management input; it's the direct causal driver of Lake Tahoe Clarity decline. These load reduction standards have served as measurable enforceable benchmarks that provide early detection when we are off track. Reclassifying them as performance standards or code provisions lowers their legal structure and potentially narrows the scope of compact level protections. Before adopting a finding of no significant effect, I urge the Board to consider whether this restructuring could be viewed as a substantive amendment to environmental carrying capacities. Given the history of litigation surrounding threshold standards and Regional Plan amendments, proceeding without a clear and defensible legal record may expose the agency to avoidable challenge. And more broadly, after more than 350 amendments to the 2012 Regional Plan, it may be time for a comprehensive review rather than incremental structural revisions to the environmental baseline.

Steve Teshara on behalf of Tahoe Chamber, urging the board to approve the Lake Tahoe Community College Public Safety Training Complex. I join Chief Drennan in support of that great project. The Chamber has had an opportunity to work hand in hand with the college over the years to secure funding for that important complex in our in our community. Also, I urge your support for the updates to the Water Quality Environmental Threshold Carrying Capacities Standards and the Forest Health and Vegetation Preservation. I say that not only as a representative of the Chamber, but as the community member on the TRPA Threshold Update working Group.

Annabelle Monti, Tahoe Fire & Fuels Team Program Manager for the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team. I've previously submitted support and various comments through other meetings for the Forest Health Threshold updates. I want to reiterate that support today from a basin wide implementation perspective, these updates represent a necessary evolution for the threshold standards, specifically for forest health concerns. The language that's currently there no longer reflects the realities that we are seeing on the ground. This includes changing wildfire dynamics, climate pressures, and the need for landscape scale restoration. The proposed revisions that the TRPA staff has worked very hard on better align with policy as well as the current science and with the management objectives that partners are already working towards in the Tahoe Basin. The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team partners were engaged throughout this process and want to express how much we appreciate that

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the partner feedback and the operational experience from the professional foresters, as well as the fire professionals were incorporated into the draft standards. The clear, measurable thresholds that these are being proposed as help strengthen the accountability. They also improve adaptive management, and they create a stronger connection between the policy direction and the real-world implementation for the projects that are happening on the ground. In short, these standards that are being updated help ensure that the forest health policy remains relevant and defensible. And it also supports the long-term wildfire resilience for the Lake Tahoe basin. I encourage the adoption by the Governing Board for these updates as they're proposed.

Kennith (Electronic Voice Generator) – In audible.

Doug Flaherty, speaking as a private citizen and as President of Tahoe Clean Air Coalition. I personally and the Tahoe Sierra Clean Air Coalition adopt Ann Nichols' comments as if they were our own and my own. And repeat those comments here for the record.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Regan said at the request of the applicant, we are removing Agenda Item 7.A, Appeal of Denial of Moody Boat Ramp/Pier Conversion and Transfer Project, 181 Yellow Jacket Road, Douglas County, Nevada; APN 1418-10-401-004, TRPA File Number ERSP2023-1834; Appeal File Number ADMIN2025-0016.

Ms. Williamson deemed the agenda approved as amended.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Aldean moved approval of the January 28, 2026 minutes as presented.
Motion carried unanimously-voice vote.

6. TRPA CONSENT CALENDAR

A. January Financials
B. Proposed Watercraft Inspection Fees for the 2026 Season
C. Lake Tahoe Community College (LTCC) Public Safety Training Complex, including a tarmac, training tower, and storage building, 1 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA, APN 025-041-023; TRPA File ERSP2025-1434

Ms. Williamson said Item 6.A and 6.B were reviewed by the Operations and Governance Committee and Item C was not reviewed by any Governing Board Committee.

Ms. Laine said the Operations and Governance Committee recommended approval of Items 6.A and 6.B. The Agency continues to track where we expected to be seven twelfths of the way through the year. Both revenues and expenses are within that. We also received an analysis regarding the TRPA budget. We had received some questions by committee as well as some public comments that there was an appearance that the general fund was significantly growing compared to around 2020. Mr. Cox showed through a graph that that's mostly been driven by grant funding for different project implementations. It's not a significant growth in the general fund.

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Item 6.B was an update on the 2025 program with regards to Watercraft Inspection Fees for 2026. Staff and the committee are recommending a simplified fee structure with a discount. If you show up clean, drain, and dry, you get a 50 percent discount of the normal fee. About 50 percent of the watercraft that showed up last year was clean, drain, and dry but they were still paying the full fee. We're hoping to incentivize that behavior and get more people to show up clean, drain, and dry.

Board Comments & Questions on Items 6.A and 6.B

Ms. Williamson asked if we lose any program funding with that discount.

Ms. Regan said no. We believe we have enough to continue to do cost recovery and to make sure that we're staying commensurate with the increases in the program.

Board Comments & Questions on Item 6.C

None.

Motion:

Mr. Kieckhefer made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar.

Ayes: Ms. Aldean, Ms. Hebert (for Mr. Aguilar), Mr. Bass, Ms. Conrad-Saydah, Ms. Faustinos, Ms. Holloway (for Ms. Gustafson), Ms. Hill, Mr. Hoenigman, Mr. Kieckhefer, Ms. Laine, Ms. Leumer, Mr. Rice, Mr. Settelmeyer, Ms. Williamson
Motion carried.

7.A Appeal of Denial of Moody Boat Ramp/Pier Conversion and Transfer Project, 181 Yellow Jacket Road, Douglas County, Nevada; APN 1418-10-401-004, TRPA File Number ERSP2023-1834; Appeal File Number ADMIN2025-0016

(Continued)

8.A Update to the Water Quality Environmental Threshold Carrying Capacities (Threshold Standards).pdf

Ms. Regan said at our Governing Board retreat last spring we had a lot of conversations around achieving our threshold goals and standards, accelerating progress in that arena and how we can best work together efficiently to get that done. One of the things that you asked us to do was make a priority over the next year in increasing pace and scale of the work around thresholds, and we did that in our 2025 Work Plan. Today we're bringing you two sets of threshold updates that collectively will bring the total number of thresholds reviewed and updated in the last two years to about a third of all standards. If you think in terms of 140 standards in ten different categories, we're touching in some way about 50 just in this action today. And then in the previous actions that you've taken in the last couple of years around things like extreme environment zones and invasive species, and that is clearly an accomplishment. I wanted to put a fine point on the work of our staff who are doing the data collection, working day to day, behind the scenes all the policy work, our community, all the work that you've put forward in working groups and service to this. A big thank you to getting us to this point over the last couple of years. But there is a lot more work to do. As

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public comment indicated from the League to Save Lake Tahoe-Keep Tahoe Blue. Some of our existing standards on the books go back to the 1970s and the 1980s. So a lot of work remains.

We also talked about vetting technical information in committees to be efficient with the Governing Board's time and empowering our committees and working groups to do that heavy lifting to be efficient with your time. We provided you with an overview of work at the October 2025 Governing Board meeting. In the last five months, we have worked to refine our proposals before you today with our Advisory Planning Commission, the Environmental Improvement Program Committee just last month, and the Threshold Update Initiative Stakeholder Working Group. All three of those bodies have made their unanimous recommendations to move this forward.

Mr. Segan, Chief Science and Policy Officer with TRPA, provided the presentation.

There are two major components of our Threshold Update Initiative, which we first chartered a little over seven years ago.

The initiative includes two primary efforts. The first is the administrative cleanup of our standards, which involves bringing the standards into alignment with how the Science Advisory Council directed that standards should be structured. The second involves substantive updates to the standards. revisiting what we are trying to achieve and revising those goals to ensure they reflect modern concerns within our region and the targeted direction of the partnership.

The water quality updates discussed today will fall within the administrative side of this work. After that, Mason Bindl will discuss the substantive updates to our forest standards.

The work began about seven years ago with a report from the Science Advisory Council. The council examined different programs around the country to see how they structured their standards and then provided broad recommendations on how we should proceed with updating ours. The vast majority of our standards date back to 1980.

One of the council's first recommendations was that we take stock of where we currently stand using the SMART criteria. Using this framework, we assessed each of our 170 standards at the time against these criteria. That assessment set the stage for the administrative updates that followed.

Several issues emerged from that assessment. First, we identified standards that overlapped or duplicated one another. For example, we had standards within Vegetation Preservation, Wildlife, and Soil Conservation that all directed us to protect the same resources. The Science Advisory Council advised that we could say this once instead of repeating it three different times, which could create confusion. As a result, the board adopted modifications that removed the redundancy while retaining the protection and intent of those standards. Another part of the effort involved reorganizing our standards. A central component of that reorganization was assigning numbers to each standard. Without clear numbering, it is difficult to reference which specific standard is being discussed. Those were the relatively straightforward parts of the reorganization. The next step, according to the Science Advisory Council, was to discuss where different types of information belong within our system and what role threshold standards should play. The Bi-State Compact is clear about the role of threshold standards. They represent the environmental outcomes we are working toward as a region, conditions necessary to maintain and protect the things we value about Lake Tahoe. In that sense, threshold standards sit at the top of the system.

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However, there are many other types of information that are also important when managing toward large environmental goals. We need to track the work we are doing in terms of implementation. We need to monitor results on the ground to confirm that the actions we are taking are producing the expected outcomes. Finally, we need to share and report that information with decision-makers and with the general public in a transparent way.

To address this, we established a relatively simple structure. Threshold standards represent our ultimate outcomes. Other metrics such as the work we are doing and the results of that work are tracked as performance measures. These are equally important, but they serve different roles within the system. We then codified this adaptive management structure within the Regional Plan and Thresholds documents. Under that framework, the agency committed that any future modifications to threshold standards must be specific, measurable, and outcome-based, which means focusing on the end goal rather than an intermediate product. With that guidance in place, we began the next phase by examining each existing threshold standard and determining where it fits within this information system. For each standard we asked whether it represented an ultimate outcome, an intermediate result or tactic used to reach that outcome, or a strategy or activity implemented on the ground.

The Science Advisory Council suggested that if a standard described a strategy or tactic, an input or intermediate outcome, it should be recast elsewhere in the system. In practice, implementing that recommendation proved challenging because a large number of our threshold standards fell into those categories.

Over the past several years, TRPA, the Science Advisory Council, and our partners have worked together to apply that recommendation to the water quality threshold standards. The proposal before you today reflects that work.

Together, we reviewed each individual water quality standard and determined where it currently resides within the system and where it should reside in the future. For example, our discharge limits are controls and, in many cases, regulatory requirements embedded within our Code of Ordinances. Whenever construction occurs in Tahoe, projects must comply with these requirements. These requirements help protect water quality, but they are not the ultimate environmental outcomes. Instead, there are actions we require to achieve our broader water quality goals, such as preventing runoff from individual properties. In that sense, they function similarly to other regulations within our code.

We are also proposing to move our load reduction standards to another part of the system. I want to acknowledge the public comments we received on this topic and briefly clarify the intent of this change. On page 224 of the packet, the Threshold Update Initiative Stakeholder Working Group asked us to document our rationale for each decision we are recommending for individual threshold standards. That documentation explains why particular standards are being moved or modified. For example, Water Quality Standard 34 states: “Reduce fine sediment particles and inorganic particles less than 16 micrometers in diameter of load to achieve long-term pelagic water quality standards, Water Quality 1 and Water Quality 2.” This language does not define a specific, measurable outcome that can be evaluated annually. Instead, it describes an activity we should undertake in service of achieving other water quality goals. The standard does not contain a defined endpoint. It directs us to reduce loads until those other water quality goals are achieved.

We also heard concerns that moving load reduction standards could weaken environmental protections. This is not the case. Many of you, particularly those representing local jurisdictions, know that Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)reduction targets are embedded within our allocation

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process. Each year we evaluate whether a jurisdiction has met its load reduction targets. If it has not, that jurisdiction receives fewer residential allocations for that year. We are not proposing to modify that system through this action. Those controls will remain in place within the appropriate part of the framework. The purpose of this change is simply to organize the system more clearly so that everyone understands what our ultimate environmental goals are and what actions and activities we are taking to achieve them.

In today's recommendation, eleven water quality threshold standards would be retained. I'll highlight one proposed modification that we consider substantive but believe improves the clarity of the existing standards document. Currently, Water Quality Standard 7 states that the Agency should "support actions to reduce the extent and distribution of algae in the nearshore." During discussions with the Science Advisory Council, they recommended removing the phrase "support actions." The intent is to clarify that the Agency's role is not simply to support actions taken by others, but to reduce algae in the nearshore environment. This revision aligns with how we have been evaluating the standard in our threshold evaluations, though it does clarify the intended meaning of the standard.

Board Comments & Questions

Ms. Aldean said you alluded to it as an objective in connection with water quality—reducing the extent and distribution of excessive periphyton. How do you quantify that term, "excessive"?

Mr. Segan said we have not defined that; it's not a specific and measurable standard. As part of the Threshold Update initiative we have been cautious in making changes and removing standards where we can't replace them with a specific and measurable standard. About three years ago now, we embarked on a new nearshore algae monitoring program that we think will allow us the information to set a quantifiable standard for nearshore algae.

Ms. Aldean asked if this is just an interim standard.

Mr. Segan said it's an interim standard that we've had on the books for 40 years to preserve that intent.

Mr. Bass said this is great work. I'm curious with the microplastics, and I know that there's some water sample tests done, but is there any threshold that's directly relating to microplastics?

Mr. Segan said there is not a specific standard right now related to microplastics. Microplastics factor into the fine particle discussion related to mid-lake and nearshore clarity.

Mr. Bass said the Secchi disc has been great in what we're using, but is science moving to where water tests and samples are starting to show what it is that is creating the clarity issue. And are we able to start tracking that or are we still quite a way out from a water sample defining what it is that's creating the clarity issue.

Mr. Segan said we measure the clarity of the lake in a number of different ways. Even though our standard is pegged as a Secchi disk, we also use a laser to more accurately measure the refraction of particles within the lake and its impact on clarity. Part of the measurements that our partners do and part of the augmented monitoring that we're considering as part of the Science Advisory Council Request for Proposal (RFP) is to do more detailed measurement on which particles are most responsible for clarity loss in which particular season, because we think that varies through time. We think sometimes the fine inorganic particles are more responsible for clarity loss. And we think during other seasons it's organic particles within the lake. I think that research is also examining other drivers that impact clarity. In the State of the Lake presentation, that changes in

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the water column, and specifically changes in the temperature and the gradient of different layers in the lake have a large impact on clarity. There are robust efforts to continue to refine our understanding of what most impacts clarity.

Motions:

Ms. Hill made a motion to approve the required findings (Attachment A) including a finding of no significant effect.

Ayes: Ms. Aldean, Ms. Hebert (for Mr. Aguilar), Mr. Bass, Ms. Conrad-Saydah, Ms. Faustinos, Ms. Holloway (for Ms. Gustafson), Ms. Hill, Mr. Hoenigman, Mr. Kieckhefer, Ms. Laine, Ms. Leumer, Mr. Rice, Mr. Settelmeyer, Ms. Williamson
Motion carried.

Ms. Hill made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2026-__, amending Ordinance 2019-03 (Attachment B), updating the water quality environmental threshold carrying capacities (Attachment C).

Ayes: Ms. Aldean, Ms. Hebert (for Mr. Aguilar), Mr. Bass, Ms. Conrad-Saydah, Ms. Faustinos, Ms. Holloway (for Ms. Gustafson), Ms. Hill, Mr. Hoenigman, Mr. Kieckhefer, Ms. Laine, Ms. Leumer, Mr. Rice, Mr. Settelmeyer, Ms. Williamson
Motion carried.

8.B Update to the Forest Health and Vegetation Preservation Environmental Threshold Carrying Capacities (Threshold Standards).pdf

Ms. Regan said going back to the science of our last threshold evaluation report, which the Governing Board acted on last year with data collected through 2023. I want to take us back in time to think of what was going on in terms of fire in our surrounding area. We have the Loyalton and Creek fires in 2020, Tamarack and Dixie fires in 2021, the Oak and Mosquito fires in 2022, and then the Caldor Fire of 2021, which burned about 10,000 acres in the basin and total of over 220,000 acres. Many members of our community had to evacuate, something we'll never forget. Science shows that forest thinning implemented by the Tahoe Fire and Fuels teams, meaningfully influenced the fire behavior and outcomes of that Caldor Fire.

The threshold evaluation highlighted how smoke from those other wildfires also affected air quality in Tahoe. It is no surprise that during the threshold evaluation, public engagement process, forest health, wildfire, and evacuation were among the top themes we heard from the public and that we should be focusing on that.

A major takeaway is that for the first time, we are addressing the concerns of the community. The Bi State Fire Commission that came after the Angora wildfire to consider a new threshold for Community Wildfire Protection. That standard, as well as the fire standard for the general forest, acknowledges that what we already know is that fire is a part of our ecosystem, and it is not a question of whether another fire will hit. It's a question of when and how we will be prepared.

I'd also like to thank the Tahoe Science Advisory Council. You heard testimony from Bob Larsen, the Program Officer, and many other additional scientists that participated in the scientific rigor behind the proposal before.

Mr. Bindl, Senior GIS Analyst with TRPA, provided the presentation.

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Many of these standards have been on the books for 45 years and the Vegetation Preservation Thresholds in particular, came about during a time of rapid growth, when the main concern was protecting vegetation from pressure of development. That framework succeeded in its goal in regional planning cap development and helped prevent the widespread loss of vegetation. But today, the greatest threats to forests are much different. Catastrophic wildfire, prolonged drought, beetle outbreaks, and rapidly changing climate are all threatening the integrity of our forests.

This update modernizes our Vegetation Preservation Thresholds to reflect these realities and clearly defines what a healthy, resilient forest should look like in the Tahoe Basin.

We're all aware of the 2007 Angora Fire as a turning point in the basin. While the work to restore forest was already underway at that time, that fire really forced a hard realization and a fire dependent landscape like Tahoe. Stepping back from active management left our communities and forests more vulnerable. In response to the fire, the governors of California and Nevada formed the emergency Bi State Fire Commission to understand what went wrong and what needed to change. The commission engaged residents, firefighters, scientists, and land managers from across the basin before advancing solutions. TRPA was an active participant in this process, and the Commission's 90 recommendations laid the foundation for nearly two decades of policy reform and ushered in a new era of bi state cooperation on forest health and wildfire resilience work. S

Since then, more than 100,000 acres have been treated across the basin, with $270 million invested in on the ground forest restoration and wildfire resilience work. This update builds on that legacy helping us track the outcomes of that work and ensuring our thresholds reflect how tall forests are being managed today.

Following the Governing Boards direction and the feedback highlighted in the 2023 Threshold Evaluation, updating Vegetation Preservation Thresholds to address wildfire risk and support, forest health was elevated as a priority in the 2025-2026 Work Plan. This proposal updates the threshold system to reflect the risks we just talked about and aligns with ongoing work across the basin that are happening through our Environmental Improvement Program partnerships. These updates will help highlight the work TRPA supported through the Forest Restoration Program and Community Wildfire Protection Program from the Angora Fire and the Blue Ribbon Commission to the more recent forest restoration projects like the Lake Tahoe Restoration Project that's about to get underway on the on the West Shore. This will focus on tracking measurable outcomes for healthier forests and safer communities.

Today there will be a high-level overview of what the proposal consists of. We're introducing two new main subcategories under the Vegetation Preservation category, and each with two standards, plus a fifth standard that will help add protections for Subalpine conifers.

The first subcategory, fire dynamics, is modeled fire hazard to determine expected fire behavior so near our communities and evacuation routes in the Wildland Urban Interface defense zone. The standard aims to keep fires on the ground and manageable. Then across the broader landscape, the other standard in this category is going to set limits to prevent large areas of high severity fire that cause that lasting damage to the ecosystem.

The second subcategory for structure is going to set measurable targets for tree density and canopy closure. And the other standard that there will set targets for a healthy mix of developmental stages, those cereal stages that are in the packet. Those will help forest achieve that resilience against the drought, insects, and wildfire we talked about. The fifth standard will add protections for the ecological integrity of our subalpine forests; those threatened Whitebark Pine and the forests at the higher elevations at risk of climate change. Together, these standards will

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provide a way to measure both forest processes and condition and offer a clear target to track progress using the best available science.

These standards didn't come together overnight. Over the past eight months, we've conducted more than 20 briefings with partners and TRPA committees to share the proposal, gather feedback, and refine our approach. We work closely with the Tahoe Fire and Fuels team and the partner agencies to ground the proposal in the latest science and relevant land management policies. Earlier this winter, the proposal went through a formal peer review with the Threshold Update Initiative Stakeholder Working Group participating in many meetings over the last seven years on forest health thresholds and the Tahoe Science Advisory Council providing that backbone of peer review support. The result is a set of standards that are scientifically sound, operationally realistic, and aligned with the work already happening on the ground. This will be practical, specific, and measurable outcome-based thresholds.

An alignment was a priority throughout this process. We coordinated with the Tahoe Fire and Fuels team to ensure these standards were operationally realistic for the crews on the ground and the work they're trying to achieve. We coordinated with state and local land managers to ensure consistency with their land management plans, like the multi-jurisdictional fuel strategy that was adopted last year with the Tahoe Fire and Fuels team.

The takeaway is that these standards complement the ongoing work across the basin and provide a way for us and our partners to track that progress toward that healthy, resilient forest.

An independent peer review was a core part of developing these standards. We'd like to thank Dr. Patricia Manley and Dr. Hugh Safford for their thoughtful review, and Bob Larsen for facilitating that process through the Tahoe Science Advisory Council. The reviewers supported the proposal and the overall framework and helped refine the thresholds to account for a warmer, drier future. Setting our targets lower so that these standards remain germane into a warmer, drier future with climate change. And they also highlighted where additional metrics could help us track progress towards attainment and of these proposed thresholds. This feedback has already been incorporated into today's proposal. We'll also integrate that into future monitoring and performance measures, particularly in how we ground truth, the remote sensing data to track the forest conditions and the fire behavior over the long term.

It was equally important to us that the public understand these standards and why they matter. In addition to the technical memo in the packet, we prepared a public facing website on Forest Thresholds to explain the proposal and gather feedback from the community. Three key themes emerged with that feedback. The public generally supports active forest management. Wildfire mitigation remains the top priority, and people want to know how they can help, especially on their own properties. This engagement helped confirm not only that the science was relevant and these standards were operationally feasible, but that they reflected the community's priorities.

Staff are asking the Governing Board to consider five proposed standards detailed in Attachment B. VP8 is going to focus on protecting the ecological integrity of the Subalpine conifer forests like the threatened, endangered, or threatened federally listed Whitebark Pine. that gives us comprehensive protection from the ridge, our highest elevation forests down to the lake, the forests like the Yellow pine and the Sierra mixed conifer. VP9 will set a target of 75 percent of the forest being in that desired developmental stage. That healthy mix we need to be resilient to the stressors that the forests face. VP10 will aim for 50 percent of the forest to fall within the healthy stand density ranges, helping forests build resilience against that drought, insect, and wildfire threat. Under the Fire Dynamics category, VP11 will target surface fire behavior across 90 percent

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of the wildland urban interface defense zone, keeping fires manageable near our communities and evacuation routes. VP12 will aim to limit large, high severity fires to less than 5 percent of the broader landscape and that will help protect against those catastrophic ecological outcomes that we see with high severity fires. But it'll allow for natural fire to play its ecological role.

These standards are clear, measurable, and forward-looking. Giving us benchmarks to track that real progress toward that healthy, resilient forest, and safer communities.

About a month ago, the final meeting of the Threshold Update Stakeholder Working Group was to recommend the proposal. Following that we brought the proposal to the Environmental Improvement Program Committee at the last Governing Board meeting. They unanimously recommended it as well. Two weeks ago, the Advisory Planning Commission recommended moving the proposal forward. We'd like to thank the Tahoe Fire and Fuels team, the Tahoe Fire Chiefs Association, and the League to Save Lake Tahoe who have all been supportive of this process and provided letters of recommendation and helped us shape the proposal.

Board Comments & Questions

Mr. Kieckhefer offered a compliment to the document in the packet starting on page 262, Forest Health Threshold Standards update. This was a very useful document to explain comprehensively, but also simply what we were doing, why we were doing it, and why it was going to be helpful.

Mr. Bindl said I struggled following the science, but that document that Mr. Segan and I put together was possible because of the scientific review through the Tahoe Science Advisory Council.

Mr. Kieckhefer asked whether, as part of the standards, particularly those addressing management of the urban wildland interface, there had been any review of challenges to accessing these areas, such as funding or property ownership, to ensure the outlined standards and goals can be achieved.

Mr. Bindl said we shape that standard by looking at the multijurisdictional fuel strategy that the Tahoe Fire and Fuels team put out last year. There's a lot of detail in that document about how they plan to achieve keeping surface fires the expected outcome within one quarter mile of structures and evacuation routes. We don't intend to be prescriptive with our standards here. We intend to just be outcome based and track the progress. The multijurisdictional fuel strategy has the details you're looking for.

Ms. Holloway said great science and effort on these standards. The connection then between that science and how it gets implemented is my question. As land managers, how is this information being translated to our regional partners? Also, I think as we look at property owners in the basin, we have defensible space inspection requirements, at least in Placer County on short term rentals. So, wanting to be able to take this science and digest it and then you know, bring it forward to those that are actually on the ground required to do the work or actively doing the work.

Mr. Bindl said what we're proposing here is directly in line with how they want to measure the outcomes of the work they're doing. So again, we don't want to be prescriptive on how they get it done. That's not the role for the threshold standards, but the tracking is the same data that they'll use to track those outcomes that they're looking to achieve through their project implementation. The thresholds build on what the Community Wildfire Protection Program under the Environmental Improvement Program umbrella aims to achieve, and the way that those funding mechanisms and projects get implemented is through the EIP. And the thresholds then are just the ultimate measure

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of the progress, status, and trend. Just the alignment between how we measure surface fire is the likely outcome in the defense zone. It aligns with how the projects aim to achieve that outcome.

Ms. Caringer said it's a good segue on the Environmental Improvement Program umbrella, because these standards set the trajectory and the goals for all of the implementers, the scientists, who all work together. The Tahoe Fire and Fuels team has 21 different entities working together and now they've got a good roadmap as far as achieving those thresholds. That group meets often on how much funding do we need? What are our biggest priorities? What is the best bang for our buck to achieve thresholds? We all work together to advocate for the funding to get that work done from many different sources federal, state, local, private. The threshold decision today will help make that roadmap clearer. And every year it's just working together to try to get the priorities, funding, and the work on the ground set.

Ms. Leumer said in looking through the air quality discussion and appreciated staff calling out the importance of doing like prescribed and cultural fire. While short term that does create a little smoke in the air, it's nothing compared to the mega fires that would come otherwise. These are important tools. We're seeing this conversation come up in California more. We're trying to pass legislation to make this easier to do. So, there have been liability funds and streamlining for burn bosses. There are two bills this year, codifying Governor Newsom's executive order on beneficial fire that came out last year, and trying to create more direct funding to do that. Happy to see that called out. All sorts of proactive forest management are important but having cultural and prescribed fire on the ground is going to be key as well.

Mr. Settelmeyer said there was a question dealing with stand density. I thought there was some conflict that we were discussing at the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and I'm trying to recall what that was with state lands. Do we have everything in alignment there? To the best of our knowledge.

Mr. Bindl said we reached out to the Forester at Nevada Division of State Lands to confirm that the targets were setting the way we measure our substantively different but aligned and not conflicting. We clarified that.

Mr. Settelmeyer said from what I'm reading is that for early seral Jeffrey Pine Forest, TRPA has proposed a set threshold of maximum of 200 trees per acre. Is that correct on page 270? The NRS requires a minimum threshold of 250 trees per acre no later than five years, post logging of trees at least six inches in height. Do we have a conflict with Nevada revised statutes compared to what we're proposing now?

Mr. Bindl said the devils in the details. The conversation got down to the diameter of tree measured. The Nevada Division of State Lands Measurement if I'm correct is up to four-inch trees. Our maximum measure is 6 to 10 inches. We're fundamentally measuring different things because of the remote sensing tool we're using to assess this standard. I don't think it conflicts and it is where we landed with their forester, Anna Higgins.

Mr. Settelmeyer said correct. That's what I'm trying to raise to make sure that those issues are addressed. We could always try to adjust our NRS after the fact but it is not great. So, basically it was a measuring issue the way we measure it compared to you.

Mr. Segan said the NRS is a minimum stocking density that's measured as the forester walks the site. As a result of walking along the site, they have greater ability to measure every stem so that 250 stem stocking density that you need to achieve to achieve that minimum stocking density. Because we're using regional scale data sets and regional scale measurements, we're generally not

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even picking up trees that small. When we reviewed it, it looked like they were strangers in the night because we wouldn't pick up all those trees within our measurement. There could still be 250, those are relatively small trees that wouldn't even show up in our 200 count that we're looking at for the overall density.

Mr. Settelmeyer appreciated that clarification. In essence, Nevada does a much better job of counting trees.

Ms. Aldean said the Late Seral and Old Growth Forest Ecosystems section on page 237 has been eliminated. Then on the previous page there's three categories of trees in the late seral stage. Do those account for the old growth in the basin? And does that include the Ponderosa Pine?

Mr. Bindl said yes, they do. Jeffrey Pine covers all of the Yellow pines, including Ponderosa. The intent of those standards that are going away are now folded into the seral stage and canopy cover standard as a more holistic picture of the entire mix of developmental stages we want. Not only late seral but what proportion should be mid or what proportion should be early young trees, as Director Settelmeyer mentioned. The ranges changed a bit, but overall there's what we feel is more protection for late seral which is recommended on the landscape based on the science. That standards intent is folded in.

Motions:

Mr. Settelmeyer made a motion to approve the required findings, including a finding of no significant effect, as shown in Attachment A.

Ayes: Ms. Aldean, Ms. Hebert (for Mr. Aguilar), Mr. Bass, Ms. Conrad-Saydah, Ms. Faustinos, Ms. Holloway (for Ms. Gustafson), Ms. Hill, Mr. Hoenigman, Mr. Kieckhefer, Ms. Laine, Ms. Leumer, Mr. Rice, Mr. Settelmeyer, Ms. Williamson
Motion carried.

Mr. Settelmeyer made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2026-__, amending ordinance 2019-03 (Attachment D), updating vegetation preservation environmental threshold carrying capacities as presented in Attachment B.

Mr. Settelmeyer said I'm grateful that the clarification was made and that this is not in conflict with the Nevada revise statues.

Ayes: Ms. Aldean, Ms. Hebert (for Mr. Aguilar), Mr. Bass, Ms. Conrad-Saydah, Ms. Faustinos, Ms. Holloway (for Ms. Gustafson), Ms. Hill, Mr. Hoenigman, Mr. Kieckhefer, Ms. Laine, Ms. Leumer, Mr. Rice, Mr. Settelmeyer, Ms. Williamson
Motion carried.

9.A Executive Director Status Report

9.A.1 2025 TRPA Annual Report

Ms. Regan started by thanking all of you for your dedication in helping us move through these threshold updates over the past couple of years. I also want to thank the community members who have engaged constructively in this process, and those members of the public who offered respectful comments today. Civil discourse is increasingly challenged across the country, so that was especially appreciated. I would also like to thank the representatives from the Douglas County

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Sheriff's Office who was present today. As policy leaders in the basin, your safety, the safety of our staff, and the safety of community members who participate in these meetings are our top priority.

This time last week, we received a tremendous amount of snow in a very short period of time, not only here but across the entire region. After a relatively dry month, it was quite a turnaround. We received about five feet of snow in just 30 hours in Christmas Valley.

Many in the TRPA community have been deeply affected by the tragic avalanche that occurred on the North Shore. Tahoe is a small community, especially among backcountry enthusiasts, and some of our staff know survivors. The impact of this tragedy has been felt widely across the region. Our hearts go out to the families and everyone affected. It also reminds us that we live in a place defined by extremes—from dry periods to major storms in a matter of days.

The photo on the left side of Slide two was taken from an airplane on approach to Reagan National Airport. It's rare to get a perfectly aligned approach where you can see the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Reflecting Pool all lined up. The irony of that day (February 10) was that Washington had more snow on the ground than Lake Tahoe.

While I was in Washington, I had the opportunity to testify regarding the Santini-Burton Modernization Act. Many of you have been engaged in this effort through Team Tahoe, our regional partnership advocating at the national level. I want to thank our congressional delegation, particularly Senator Cortez Masto, who is leading Senate Bill S.3695. The Santini-Burton Act dates back to 1980. It was named after Jim Santini, who represented Nevada in Congress when the state had a single at-large district, and Phil Burton from California.

Their vision was that sales of excess federal land in southern Nevada could generate funding to support environmental protection at Lake Tahoe. Through this program, the Forest Service acquired approximately 16,000 acres for conservation, reducing development pressure in the basin. However, a later amendment tied to the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act created a problem: funds from those land sales cannot currently be used for maintenance of those acquired properties. As I noted in last month's Director's Report, funds are sitting in an account that the Forest Service cannot access for maintenance. This legislation aims to fix that issue.

Another important update is that the Washoe Tribe was not mentioned in the original 1980 legislation. We have been working closely with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California to ensure they are included in this modernization effort, and they have been supportive. While introducing the bill and holding a hearing are important milestones, there is still a long path ahead before it becomes law. This effort reflects two to three years of collaboration among Tahoe partners.

Switching to another major issue of invasive species, I want to thank the Operations and Governance Committee and Member Laine for the excellent report earlier today. This map on Slide 3 illustrates detections of Quagga Mussels across North America. Even a single detection can place an entire state on the map. As you can see, only a handful of states remain free of detections. Boats entering Lake Tahoe come from all over the country, even as far away as Alaska, so the risk is real.

Our inspection and prevention program is widely recognized as the national gold standard. Dennis

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Zabaglo is in Washington this week and participated in a congressional briefing yesterday with the Invasive Species Caucus to discuss partnerships among western states. While Tahoe is a leader, we are only as protected as the waters around us, so collaboration is essential.

I want to thank the board for taking the bold step last year to require decontamination for visiting boats. We are continuing that policy and have adjusted the fee structure to incentivize boaters to arrive clean, drain, and dry. Importantly, these adjustments will not compromise the program schedule and should move us closer to full cost recovery.

This program is supported through a combination of federal funding, appropriations from California and Nevada, TRPA resources, and boater fees. It truly represents the heart of a public-private partnership to protect the lake. Our collaboration with the Tahoe Resource Conservation District is especially important, as they operate inspection stations and deploy roving teams to inspect non-motorized watercraft at beaches.

I want to thank you for your action on the Lake Tahoe Community College Tahoe Basin Public Safety Training Complex. The images on Slide 4 show what that facility could look like. The City of South Lake Tahoe is familiar with the project, which will play an important role in workforce development and provide a pipeline of cadets who will go on to serve in fire services. The project is receiving significant funding from the State of California. Unlike many projects in the state, however, construction here must contend with six months of snow each year, which creates pressure to move quickly. Our staff, including Brandy McMahon and others, worked diligently to conduct a thorough review while keeping the project on schedule for a summer groundbreaking. This is an exciting development for the South Shore and the entire region.

I also want to thank our team for producing this year's annual report, which you have at the dais today. When I joined the agency in 2003, we did not have a document that compiled our progress and challenges in this way. This year's report, led by our new team member Thea Schwarz, brings together information from every department and presents it in a visually accessible format rather than a lengthy technical document. It highlights not only TRPA's work but also the contributions of more than 80 partner organizations across Team Tahoe.

Under the Bi State Compact, our role is to establish environmental thresholds and ensure they are achieved and maintained. However, most implementation happens through the partners represented by this board. We will discuss the report further at our Governing Board retreat in a couple of months.

It is also Best in the Basin season, so please encourage your staff and constituents to submit nominations. The program recognizes outstanding projects across the region. After the Angora Fire, we added a category for forest health and defensible space to recognize homeowners and associations that invest significant resources in making their communities safer. We also continue to recognize innovation and scientific advancement.

Next, I want to thank the team for modernizing our board agenda format. The graphic on Slide 7 shows the new design. The agenda on the left may look recent, but it is from 1978. Remarkably, the format had changed very little since the 1960s. This update reflects our commitment to transparency, accessibility, and community engagement. I want to thank Kim Caringer, the communications team, and many others who worked on the project. They also incorporated feedback from community members who regularly follow our meetings. One

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suggestion was to include a QR code that could be posted throughout the basin at places like post offices so residents could quickly access the latest meeting information online. Thea Schwarz also produced a short video explaining how to make a public comment. For many people, participating in a public meeting can feel intimidating, so the goal was to demystify the process. We also want to remind people that written comments are always welcome and can be submitted online, by email, in person, or through Zoom.

Looking ahead, in March the Regional Planning Committee will receive a briefing on the Tahoe Keys Marina redevelopment project, which several of you recently toured. We will also hear from El Dorado County regarding updates to the Tahoe El Dorado Area Plan.

Our legal and compliance teams have also been working on several appeals that will be coming before the board.

Please also mark your calendars for a two-day meeting in May. We will conduct regular board business on Wednesday and hold our strategic planning session as well. The retreat will likely take place at the Granlibakken. The outcomes of that retreat will inform our work plan and budget development, which we will bring back to the board in June for consideration and action.

I want to thank Member Hill, chair of the Transportation Committee, and the committee's vice chair, Mr. Bass for leading an important discussion about transportation funding. Transportation is closely tied to our Regional Plan policies related to vehicle miles traveled and related standards. We will continue that conversation in the coming months and bring potential actions back to the board.

9.B General Counsel Status Report

Mr. St. Michel said on Monday, we were served with a lawsuit filed in the Federal District Court of Nevada by Mr. Doug Flaherty, who's representing himself. It challenges the board's approval of the amendments to the Washoe Tahoe Area Plan that we did in December. This petition alleges that TRPA did not adequately analyze wildfire and evacuation impacts and challenges the environmental documentation supporting that approval. We'll begin coordinating our response and keep the board updated as the case progresses. And with any litigation, it's always our responsibility If there's litigation pending to preserve records, that may be relevant. As our staff begins preparing an administrative record, we will need to reach out and make sure that we've received records from the Board members that might exist.

The following is an update on our other three active litigation cases. Last year, the board upheld a denial of a request for a non-littoral buoy permit. Mr. Bryan is also representing himself. He's sued the agency for that denial, and it's his second go around. He made some motions for discovery that would have gone beyond the administrative record and wanted to depose TRPA's executive director and myself. We defeated those motions and will be moving for summary judgment soon.

The other case that we're in the defendant setting is the Eisenstecken case. We've had discussions about settlement since late last summer. I'm optimistic about a potential settlement. I hope to have something more in the near future. If we don't settle, our briefing schedule kicks it back up in April.

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The one case where we are a plaintiff is the enforcement action against the unauthorized boat rental operators. We had hired a new private investigator and we finally were successful in serving the last remaining party at his house in Folsom. Today they're due to answer our complaint. In the past, a different but closely related case, the defendants didn't respond and we moved for default.

Our legal staff has been working with the online platform that the operators have been using to rent their boats and they have been very cooperative and have shown a willingness to work with us on getting those boats off that platform to help us to enforce the court's order.

7. GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Ms. Leumer said the California Legislature is back in session. The deadline to introduce bills was last Friday. As folks get a chance to read them, we'll see a lot of bills impacting the Tahoe Region. There are already a dozen bills on wildfire, home hardening, and beneficial fire. Also, there's going to be one on wildlife coexistence. In the next month we'll have more to report back on that. Budget hearings will start this week. The Governor proposed his budget in January. The legislature now begins its process to start reviewing and considering their positions, we should have somewhat of a finalized budget by the end of June.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Local Government Committee

None.

B. Legal Committee

None.

C. Operations & Governance Committee

None.

D. Environmental Improvement Program Committee

None.

E. Transportation Committee

None.

F. Regional Planning Committee

None.

G. Tahoe Living Working Group

None.

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9. PUBLIC INTEREST COMMENTS – ON ANY ITEM

Mr. St. Michel said I've advised the Chair to cutoff comments that are not audible. If you're trying to make a comment from a bad connection and your audio is not audible that's the reason we're going to cut off the comments.

No public comments.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Williamson adjourned the meeting at 12:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marja Ambler
Clerk to the Board

The above meeting was recorded in its entirety. Anyone wishing to listen to the recording of the above-mentioned meeting may find it at https://www.trpa.gov/meeting-materials/. In addition, written documents submitted at the meeting are available for review. If you require assistance locating this information, please contact the TRPA at (775) 588-4547 or virtualmeetinghelp@trpa.gov.

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