

STAFF REPORT

Date: October 16, 2019

To: TRPA Forest Health & Wildfire Committee

From: TRPA Staff

Subject: Update of TRPA Code of Ordinances Chapter 61 (Vegetation Management and Forest Health)

Summary and Staff Recommendation:

Chapter 61 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances addresses vegetation management and forest health. Staff will present a short overview of the Committee's approved revisions to Prescribed Fire section of the code from September, and a discussion and direction regarding potential approach to changes to Section 61.1. Tree Removal.

Motion:

A motion to approve the proposed approach to changes to Code of Ordinances Section 61.1 (Tree Removal).

Proposed Revisions to Section 61.1. (Tree Removal):

Most forests within the Lake Tahoe Basin are overly dense from decades of fire suppression and historic patterns of timber harvest. Dense, even aged forests are at greater risk from insects and disease, drought, and potential catastrophic wildfire. Thinning and tree removal within dense forests can increase structural heterogeneity and complexity, increase habitat diversity, and make forests more resilient to disturbance. Additionally, tree removal allows for critical protection of homes, infrastructure, and fire fighter safety, while allowing for the potential reintroduction of fire post-treatment.

Many TRPA partner agencies have MOUs that exempt or qualify exempt various tree removal activities. With this in mind, the proposed tree removal code update will aim to streamline the code to facilitate user efficiency while ensuring TRPA requirements are met. The proposed revisions focus on:

1. Moving sections that reference protections to a more logical section of Chapter 61.
2. Refining code language to reflect recommendations from partner land management and regulatory agencies that focus on current practices and increased pace and scale of forest restoration.
3. Reorganizing Section 61.1. Tree Removal to a facilitate a logical flow.

Contact Information:

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