

TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

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NEWS RELEASE

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TRPA GOVERNING BOARD VOTES TO RESOLVE TREE VIOLATION AND DISPERSES FUNDS TO PLACER COUNTY

Lake Tahoe, Stateline, NV – The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency’s Governing Board approved a settlement yesterday for \$50,000 regarding unauthorized tree damage on private property on the north shore.

A Lake Tahoe homeowner, John Fitzhenry, agreed to pay the \$50,000 penalty which was negotiated by TRPA following his admission to poisoning three Jeffery Pines located on his property near Tahoe City. In addition to paying the \$50,000, Fitzhenry will be required to implement a restoration plan to restore the natural vegetation.

“TRPA staff does not take pleasure in discovering violations and assessing fines,” said Joanne Marchetta, TRPA’s General Counsel. “We would prefer that everyone understand the fragile ecosystem at Lake Tahoe so that harmful acts for the exclusive enjoyment of individuals do not destroy the resource that can be enjoyed by all.”

Mr. Fitzhenry expressed remorse for his actions at TRPA’s Governing Board meeting. “We appreciate that Mr. Fitzhenry took responsibility for his actions and demonstrated a commitment to a restoration plan at his home,” said Coe Swobe, Governing Board member from Nevada.

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Also at the meeting, the TRPA announced the release of \$910,000 in mitigation funds – money obtained through project applications requiring mitigation – to help support a series of Environmental Improvement Projects (EIP) slated for Placer County. The funds will help to support important water quality improvement projects and the purchase of a new vacor truck – a vacuum-like truck designed to ingest fine roadside particles thereby reducing sediment. Fine particles have been proven to harm Lake Tahoe's water and air quality and are responsible for the lake's declining water clarity, according to Tahoe researchers.

In other business, board members heard presentations from TRPA staff related to Pathway 2007, a collaborative California grant proposal, the threat of invasive weeds at the lake and a project on the north shore.

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 Angela Moniot at 775-588-4547, ext. 235 or Julie Regan at x 237.

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