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NEWS RELEASE

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WORKSHOPS HELP KEEP AQUATIC INVADERS OUT OF LAKE TAHOE

Lake Tahoe, CA/NV – To protect Lake Tahoe from aquatic invaders like Eurasian Water Milfoil and the quagga-zebra mussel threat, Basin agencies are gearing up for the summer boating season with a workshop May 3 and a boat inspection training May 15.

The community is invited to the May 3 workshop from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences in Incline Village, which is aimed at educating citizens with input from experts from here in Tahoe and around the country. The workshop will also serve to provide input on strategies to the Aquatic Invasive Species Working Group and Basin agencies as they finalize a management plan for species already in the Lake as well as others that are a threat. The registration deadline is April 30 and costs \$15, which includes lunch.

“The workshop is a great opportunity for everyone to participate and contribute to our management plan for the Tahoe Basin,” said Jenny Francis, leader of the Aquatic Invasive Species Working Group. “This is also the first workshop of its kind at Lake Tahoe and the presentations will be highly interesting for everyone who lives and visits here.”

Following up on the workshop will be a boat and trailer inspection training May 15 at the Tahoe Keys Marina in South Lake Tahoe. Marina employees and managers, boat owners, and persons interested in volunteering at boat ramps this summer to help protect Lake Tahoe from invasive aquatic species are invited to the free training that will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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Invasive Species

Milfoil, the non-native water weed, continues to clog harbors and is spreading to other parts of the Lake, including Emerald Bay. Meanwhile a new threat is moving across the West on the hulls of boats and on boat trailers—the quagga mussel. The quagga is a relative of the zebra mussel—made famous by the extensive damage it has caused to native populations and to water intakes in the Great Lakes. Quagga mussels were discovered in Lakes Mead and Havasu last year and may be spreading further this summer, although it is unclear whether Lake Tahoe is in danger of colonization by quagga due to certain conditions here. Quagga and Zebra mussels have a high reproduction rate and can wipe out native food sources of plankton and algae while also clogging water intakes at enormous cost to repair. Across the U.S. invasive aquatic species cost more than \$1 billion annually to manage.

“It’s important to get involved so that we can take appropriate action now against the current quagga-zebra threat and against the spread of invasive species that are already here,” Francis said.

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.

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