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STAFF REPORT

Date: December 16, 2020
To: TRPA Governing Board
From: TRPA Staff
Subject: Proposal for the 2021 Boat Inspection Fee Schedule and Proposed Watercraft Inspection Operations

Requested Action: Adoption of the attached Resolution (Attachment A) containing the 2021 Watercraft Inspection Fee Schedule and proposed watercraft inspection operations.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Governing Board adopt the proposed Resolution (Attachment A).

Required Motion: To approve the proposed 2021 Watercraft Inspection Fee schedule and proposed watercraft inspection operations, the Governing Board must make the following motion:

- I. A motion to adopt the proposed Resolution (Attachment A) approving the 2021 Watercraft Inspection Fee schedule and proposed watercraft inspection operations.

In order for the motion to pass, an affirmative vote of any 8 members of the Board is required.

Project Description/Background: In 2008, TRPA initiated the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Watercraft Inspection Program (Program) to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) into the waters of the Lake Tahoe Region. The program serves as a national model and is a tremendous success with no new invasions detected since the program began.

TRPA Code allows for the collection of fees from the boating public as a long-term funding source for the Program which complements public funds. TRPA approved the current fee schedule in March 2019. The Program utilizes two different stickers to indicate that a boat has paid the appropriate fee for that season—one for boats that are exclusively used on Lake Tahoe (“Tahoe Only”) and one for boats launching on Lake Tahoe and in other bodies of water outside of the Region (“Tahoe In and Out”). The Program also allows for a Single Inspection Pass with a reduced rate that is valid for one inspection at the inspection station and seven consecutive days of seal inspections at launch ramps. In addition to the annual sticker fees, the Program charges for each decontamination performed. The decontamination fee can be avoided if boaters adhere to the “Clean, Drain and Dry” practice the Program promotes.

For the last few years, labor rates have risen creating increases in programmatic costs associated with performing inspections and decontaminations. In addition, current circumstances are creating uncertainty on funding and budget cuts are predicted.

The proposed fee schedule includes adjustments to the Tahoe In & Out boating sticker, Single Inspection Pass, and decontaminations to cover labor rates associated with performing the associated services. Cost saving measures are also being implemented, most notably by reducing the number of inspection stations from four to three. Historically, the Truckee Inspection Station performs the fewest number of Lake Tahoe watercraft inspections and is being merged into the Alpine Meadows inspection station. Program staff project the increase in volume at the Alpine Meadows inspection station can be absorbed with additional equipment available for use, while needing fewer staff to maintain operations.

In reaction to the coronavirus pandemic, all 2020 watercraft inspections were done by appointment for the first time in the program's history in order to help ensure the safety of staff and the public, and to comply with regional COVID-19 requirements. While the 2020 season was difficult, it presented an opportunity for Program staff to learn from the challenges that were experienced. The appointment system created a controlled setting for COVID-19 protections, but also having a set amount of inspections per day greatly increased employee morale, while not impacting productivity. There was also an increased amount of boater education as the inspectors had more time with each boater with many boaters appreciating the ability to have a set date and time to obtain the required inspection.

To take advantage of what was learned and add additional customer service, Program staff are proposing a hybrid inspection operational plan which incorporates the ability to make an appointment as well as continuing to have an on-demand option. Each inspection station has the ability to inspect and decontaminate two (or four with Alpine Meadows capacity being doubled) watercraft at a time which allows one line available for walk-in customers and one for those that make an appointment. Inspection stations would maintain the daily operations of 8:30 am – 5:30 pm from May through September. The proposed fee schedule includes an inspection fee surcharge for the convenience of making an appointment and to cover the cost of administering the appointment system. Appointments also provide a predictable amount of work as inspections can be spread out through the course of the week rather than the majority of inspections occurring on the weekends. The programmatic advantages of the appointment system include maintaining a controlled setting for COVID-19 concerns should they continue, spread the flow of boats between stations and throughout the week, and minimize no shows. In return, the boater is assured a specific time and can avoid waiting in lines during peak periods.

The proposed fee schedule shown in *Exhibit 1* does not include the \$12 Shoreline Program fee approved by the Governing Board in October 2018. The shoreline fees do not cover costs of the AIS inspections, rather it contributes to, among other items, control activities of existing species in the lake that can be spread by boats to other areas of Lake Tahoe. The Shoreline fees will be collected at the time of sale of the AIS sticker.

Environmental Review: None necessary.

Regional Plan Compliance: The proposed action complies with all requirements of the TRPA Goals and Policies, Plan Area Statements, and Code of Ordinances, including all required findings in Chapter 6 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances.

Contact Information: For questions regarding this Agenda item, please contact Thomas Boos, at (775) 589-5240 or tboos@trpa.org.

Attachments:

- A. Resolution
 - Exhibit 1 – Fee Schedule and Operational Plan

Attachment A

**TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY
TRPA RESOLUTION NO. 2020 –**

**RESOLUTION AMENDING THE WATERCRAFT INSPECTION FEE
AMOUNT AND SCHEDULE, EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 2020 THROUGH DECEMBER 2021**

WHEREAS, the introduction of aquatic invasive species such as quagga and zebra mussels pose a threat to the integrity of the Lake Tahoe Region’s ecosystem, recreation, water purveyance systems and economy in general; and

WHEREAS, Subparagraph 63.4.2.E of the TRPA Code of Ordinances as amended April 2011 requires that an owner and/or operator of a Boat Ramp (excluding Marine Railway Systems) or other Boat Launch Facility shall close any ramp or facility if the provisions of Subparagraphs 63.4.2.(A)-(C) are not met in order to prevent the launching of motorized watercraft; and

WHEREAS, Subparagraph 63.4.2.A of the TRPA Code of Ordinances as amended April 2011 further requires that all motorized Watercraft shall be inspected by TRPA or its designee prior to launching into the waters of the Lake Tahoe Region to detect the presence, and prevent the introduction of, aquatic invasive species; and

WHEREAS, Subparagraph 63.4.2.B of the TRPA Code of Ordinances as amended April 2011 further requires that all Watercraft inspected pursuant to Subparagraph 63.4.2.A shall be subject to decontamination if determined necessary by the TRPA or its designee; and

WHEREAS, Subparagraph 63.4.2.D of the TRPA Code of Ordinances as amended April 2011 further states that Inspections and decontaminations performed pursuant to Section 63.4 are subject to a fee related to the costs of performing such services and other Watercraft inspection program costs; and

WHEREAS, Subparagraph 63.4.2.D of the TRPA Code of Ordinances as amended April 2011 further states that the TRPA Governing Board will review and approve the fee amount and schedule annually; and

WHEREAS, during the April 2011 Board meeting, the TRPA Governing Board adopted Resolution 2011-07 making watercraft subject to a fee for inspection, decontamination and other program costs; and

WHEREAS, the Watercraft Inspection plan for 2021 requires a combination of public and private funding currently estimated at \$1,800,000 to inspect and decontaminate motorized watercraft; and

WHEREAS, state funding from both California and Nevada has been secured to support aquatic invasive species inspections for 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Board of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency on September 24, 2008 directed staff to bring to the Board for consideration an equitable fee schedule; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Governing Board of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency that

the amount and schedule of the aquatic invasive species inspection fee effective December 2020 through December 2021 be as shown in Exhibit 1; (Attached)

PASSED and ADOPTED by the Governing Board of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency this 16th day of December 2020, by the following vote:

Ayes:
Nays:
Absent:

William Yeates, Chair
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
Governing Board

ATTACHMENT A, EXHIBIT 1

Staff Proposed Fees for 2021 Boating Season (effective December 2020 through December 2021) and Operational Plan

<u>2021 Sticker Fee Schedule</u>		
Tahoe Only Stickers	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
All Sealed Vessels	\$33.00	\$33.00
Tahoe In & Out Stickers	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Personal Watercraft (PWC)	\$43.00	\$48.00
Vessels 0.1 ft. - 17.0 ft.	\$43.00	\$48.00
Vessels 17.1 ft. - and Greater	\$83.00	\$88.00
Single Inspection Passes	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Personal Watercraft (PWC)	\$38.00	\$43.00
Vessels 0.1 ft. - 17.0 ft.	\$38.00	\$43.00
Vessels 17.1 ft. - and Greater	\$63.00	\$68.00
Decontamination Fees	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Decontamination (single system)	\$15.00	\$20.00
Complex Decontamination (multiple systems or wet ballasts)	\$40.00	\$50.00
Attached mussels	\$200.00	\$250.00
Projected Inspection Revenue Increase		\$57,000
Appointment Surcharge		\$15/appointment
Projected Appointment Revenue Increase		\$73,000
Total Projected Revenue Increase		\$130,000