

TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

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NEWS RELEASE

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TRPA HIGHLIGHTS FOREST FUELS AS A CONTINUED PRIORITY AND RELEASES FUNDS FOR TAHOE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Stateline NV -- Lake Tahoe -- The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency presented the draft Fuel Reduction and Forest Restoration Plan at today's Governing Board meeting. As the possibility of a catastrophic wildfire continues to be a concern, TRPA has been proactive in developing a Basin-wide fire plan to tackle the issue and reduce fuel hazards facing Lake Tahoe.

"The agency's fuel reduction and forest restoration plan represents a crucial step toward implementing Basin-wide actions that address fuel hazards and community protection," said Angela Moniot, TRPA Communications Representative. "Following the completion of the seven fire districts' community wildfire protection plans last year, we've been working to encompass each of those plans into a greater, overarching fire protection plan for the Basin."

The 10-year plan focuses on reducing fuel hazards and restoring ecosystem health by using the most cost effective methods while working to preserve community safety. Collaboration between local environmental, government and community agencies is an important component of the plan. TRPA sought out and received grant money to be used in the planning effort. The report calls for treating approximately 12,740 acres of forest disbursed among the seven local fire districts and public land management agencies. Treatment methods would include thinning, controlled burns and mulching.

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During today's Governing Board meeting the TRPA also announced the release of mitigation funds – money obtained through project applications requiring mitigation – to help support a series of Environmental Improvement Projects (EIP) throughout the Basin. Nearly \$3 million will be spent on water and air quality improvement projects, as well as on Stream Environment Zone (SEZ) restoration projects over the next year.

“It's extremely important for the community to know where mitigation funds are being spent and to see that these dollars are going directly back into Lake Tahoe to help preserve and restore the environment,” said Angela Moniot, TRPA Communications Representative.

Placer County is slated to receive \$260,000 for water quality projects in the Sunnyside/Skyland area in addition to a new vactor truck – a vacuum-like truck designed to ingest fine roadside particles. Instead of sweeping the roads and dispersing dust, vactor trucks reduce airborne sediment which pollutes the air and water at Lake Tahoe.

Washoe County will receive nearly \$142,390 for SEZ projects in the Third, Lower Mill and Middle Rosewood Creeks, and El Dorado County is set to receive \$2,484,500 for multiple EIP projects including air and water quality and SEZ projects.

For additional information, contact TRPA Communications Representative, Angela Moniot at 775-588-4547, ext. 235. 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.

Governing Board officials also hear updates on the Pathway 2007 planning effort. For more information, visit www.pathway2007.org

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