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MEMORANDUM

Date: March, 17 2010  
To: TRPA Governing Board (GB)  
From: TRPA Staff  
Subject: Action on Proposed 2010 Watercraft Inspection Fees

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Requested Action: Governing Board adoption of the attached resolution (Attachment A), amending the Aquatic Invasive Species Inspection Fee (Resolution 2009-13), establishing a Blue Boating fee, and establishing two Watercraft Inspection Fee schedules incorporating both the Aquatic Invasive Species Inspection and Blue Boating Fees.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Governing Board adopt the proposed resolution, establishing the watercraft fee structure in Attachment A, Exhibit 1.

APC Recommendation: The APC was not asked to make a recommendation on this resolution, however the proposed fees were presented to the APC and the comments from that discussion are reflected below:

- The APC voiced concern that the proposed fee which will not eliminate the need for supporting grants was not going to fund the program in its entirety.
- The APC requested that staff prepare a spreadsheet showing the fees as part of the total program budget and other funding sources.

Required Motion: In order to approve the proposed Resolution the Board must make the following Motion: 1) A motion to adopt the proposed resolution (Attachment A) approving the watercraft inspection fee structure effective April 2010 through March 2011. In order for the motion to pass, an affirmative vote of any 8 members of the Board is required.

Project Description/Background: The aquatic invasive species (AIS) watercraft inspection program was initiated to prevent the spread of AIS into the waters of the Lake Tahoe Region, and to facilitate compliance with TRPA Code of Ordinances Chapter 79.3. At the September 2008 Governing Board meeting, staff was directed to look into a long-term funding source to remove the dependence of the current program on grant funding. In March of 2009 the Governing Board amended Chapter 79.3 to include an inspection fee and adopted a resolution setting the fee structure in its current form.

At the time of adoption of the current fee structure, it was estimated that it would generate \$654,000 of funding for the program. Due in part to a dramatic decline in the number of watercraft launched from the 1998 data that was used for calculating the fee schedule, revenue fell far short of projections. The proposed changes to the AIS fee structure contained in Attachment A, Exhibit 1 reflect revised estimates of the number of boats, the need to simplify the fees and a move to a yearly fee while maintaining equitability. The move to a yearly fee is needed to incorporate the AIS fee and the proposed Blue Boating fee into a single fee structure to avoid burdening the boating public with having to pay separately for each.

The Blue Boating Program, as articulated in TRPA Code of Ordinances Chapter 54.15, requires the issuance of a sticker indicating the certification of a motorized watercraft as compliant with the Program. As with other Shorezone subprograms, Blue Boating is self-funded. TRPA will collect fees with the watercraft inspection, certification and stickers. A portion of the fees collected will be directed into the Blue Boating mitigation fund for supplemental mitigation projects in the future. The remainder will be used to cover inspection, outreach and other Program costs.

The proposed schedule of fees was discussed with public and private partners. Based on this input, TRPA staff determined that two different annual registration stickers would be implemented for the 2010 season:

- **Tahoe Boat:** This sticker will be provided to those vessels which are only used in the lakes of Lake Tahoe Region and are not transported to or operated on any other waterbody. Vessels with Tahoe Boat stickers will not be required to pay for an AIS Inspection fee, as long as they maintain intact AIS inspection seals. Tahoe Boat sticker fees include an annual Blue Boating fee and an annual AIS processing fee.
- **Traveling Boat:** This sticker will be provided to those vessels which do not have an intact AIS Inspection seal, and therefore require an inspection. Traveling Boat sticker fees include an annual Blue Boating fee, an annual AIS Inspection fee and an annual AIS processing fee. Vessels with Traveling Boat stickers are entitled to unlimited watercraft inspections each year.

In addition to the two annual fee structures staff is proposing 3-day Pass for visiting boats, which would be offered at a \$20 discount from the Traveling Boat fee schedule. The reduced fee would pay for inspection and mitigation.

Fees will be assessed annually for adequacy; modification beyond inflationary adjustment may be made with TRPA Governing Board approval.

Issues/Concerns: The following issues and concerns have been brought up by launch facility operators and other private and public agency partners and have not had complete resolution:

- The cost of traveling boat inspection fee as currently proposed may turn boaters away from Tahoe, particularly when combined with launching fees, gas prices and weak overall economic conditions.

- Fees as proposed will not completely fund the AIS inspection program which still requires use of grant funds.

For a complete discussion of issues and concerns please see Attachment B.

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 Chapters 6 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances.

Contact Information: If you have any questions, please contact Ted Thayer, Aquatic Invasive Species Program Manager at [tthayer@trpa.org](mailto:tthayer@trpa.org) or 755-589-5301.

Attachments:

- A. Resolution and Exhibit 1
- B. Issues/Concerns Discussion

TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY  
RESOLUTION 2010 –  
RESOLUTION AMENDING THE AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES INSPECTION FEE  
AMOUNT AND STRUCTURE, EFFECTIVE APRIL 2010 THROUGH APRIL 2011

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, Sections 79.3.B of the TRPA Code of Ordinances require that an owner operator of a Boat Ramp or other Boat Launch Facility (exclusive of single family residences) shall close the ramp or facility to launching of watercraft at all times when the provisions of subsection (2) have not been or cannot otherwise be provided or met, as specified in Sections 79.3.B of the TRPA Code of Ordinances, and

WHEREAS, Sections 79.3.B of the TRPA Code of Ordinances further requires that all watercraft, motorized and non-motorized, including but not limited to boats, personal watercraft, kayaks, canoes and rafts, shall be subject to an inspection prior to launching into the waters of the Lake Tahoe Region to detect the presence, and prevent the introduction, of aquatic Invasive Species. Inspections shall be conducted by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency or its designee, and

WHEREAS, during the March 2009 Board meeting, the TRPA Governing Board adopted new Ordinances and Resolution 2009-13 making watercraft subject to a fee for inspection, decontamination and other program costs, and

WHEREAS, the Blue Boating Program was designed to maintain the Outstanding Natural Resource Water status of Lake Tahoe, mitigate the effects of motorized boating on Lake Tahoe and Shorezone Development, and

WHEREAS, Sections 54.15 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances requires a Blue Boating certification program, sticker and mitigation fee, and

WHEREAS, Sections 54.13 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances provides for an annual fee to be assessed to implement the Blue Boating Program as outlined in Section 54.15 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances, and

WHEREAS, the Lake Tahoe Aquatic Invasive Species Program and the Blue Boating Program will be conducting joint Watercraft inspections, and

WHEREAS, the Watercraft Inspection Plan requires a combination of state, federal and private funding currently estimated at \$950,000 per year to inspect motorized watercraft, and

WHEREAS, federal and state funding is currently being secured to support aquatic invasive species inspections for 2011, and

WHEREAS, the Blue Boating Program shall contribute to the costs of performing joint watercraft inspections, 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 structure, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Board of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency that the amount and structure of the aquatic invasive species inspection fee adopted by Resolution 2009-13 be amended and a Blue Boating fee be added effective April 1, 2010 through March 30, 2011 as shown in Exhibit 1.

Passed and adopted by the Governing Board of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency at its regular meeting held on March 24, 2010 by the following vote:

Ayes:

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent:

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Allen Biaggi, Chair  
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency  
Governing Board

## 2010 Fee Schedules for Watercraft Inspections

This document outlines the 2010 watercraft inspection fee schedule. The watercraft inspection fee is comprised of fees for the support of the Blue Boating Program and the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Inspection Program. The combined fees for both programs are applied in two fee schedules. One fee schedule is for motorized watercraft that only are used in Lake Tahoe, and the other is for motorized watercraft that are used in other waterbodies and are not sealed for launch in Lake Tahoe. The descriptions of the individual program fees and the two fee schedules follow.

### **Amended AIS Inspection Fees:**

The fees collected for the support of the AIS Inspection Program will differ from those adopted by TRPA Governing Board Resolution 2009-13. Those changes to the fees are summarized below and shown in Table 1:

- The fee is currently a per-inspection fee.
  - This will be changed to a yearly fee.
- The fee structure currently has all watercraft under 16 feet in length in a single fee category.
  - Personal watercraft will be separated from other watercraft under 16 feet in length and charged \$5 more per year.
- The fee structure currently charges an additional \$10 for watercraft that contain bladders/ ballast tanks and livewells.
  - This charge has been removed and replaced by adding \$5 to all watercraft categories over 16 feet in length.
- The fee structure currently does not charge a fee for watercraft that have an intact inspection seal that shows they last launched in Lake Tahoe.
  - Watercraft regardless of whether they have an intact seal will be charged a flat \$10 per year for sealing and unsealing and other processing costs associated with launching.

**Table 1: Yearly aquatic invasive species inspection fees. These fees would be used to support the inspection of motorized watercraft for invasive species prior to entering Lake Tahoe.**

<b>Aquatic Invasive Species Inspection Fees</b>		
<b>Watercraft Category</b>	<b>Inspection Fee</b>	<b>Processing Fee</b>
Non-Motorized Watercraft	\$0	\$0
Watercraft up to 16 feet	\$10	\$10
Personal Watercraft	\$15	\$10
Watercraft 16 feet to 25 feet	\$35	\$10
Watercraft 26 feet to 39 feet	\$45	\$10
Watercraft over 39 feet	\$65	\$10
<b>Total Anticipated Funding:</b>	<b>\$460,320</b>	

**Blue Boating Fees:**

The fee collected for the Blue Boating Program will go to inspections, mitigation, outreach and other program support. The fees are based on total horsepower and shown in Table 2.

**Table2: Yearly Blue Boating fees by total vessel horsepower.**

<b>Vessel Category</b>	<b>Yearly Fee: Blue Boating</b>
1-100 Horsepower	\$10
101-300 Horsepower	\$20
301-500 Horsepower	\$30
501-1000 Horsepower	\$40
1000+ Horsepower	\$50
Grand Total	
<b>Total Anticipated Funding:</b>	<b>\$322,000</b>

**Combined Fee Schedules:**

The “Tahoe Boat” fee schedule applies to watercraft which are only used in Lake Tahoe and are not transported to or operated on any other waterbody. Vessels with Tahoe Boat stickers will not be required to pay for an AIS Inspection fee, as long as they maintain intact AIS inspection seals. Tahoe Boat sticker fees include an annual Blue Boating fee and an annual AIS processing fee (Table 3).

The “Traveling Boat” fee schedule applies to watercraft which do not have an intact AIS Inspection seal, and therefore require an inspection. Traveling Boat sticker fees include an annual Blue Boating fee, an annual AIS Inspection fee and an annual AIS processing fee. Vessels with Traveling Boat stickers are entitled to unlimited watercraft inspections each year (Table 4).

**Table 3: Tahoe Boat fee schedule for watercraft that only launch in Lake Tahoe. This fee schedule combines the Blue Boating fee and the AIS processing fee but does not include a fee for AIS inspections.**

<b><u>Vessel Category</u> <u>(Total Horsepower)</u></b>	<b>Yearly Blue Boating Fee</b>	<b>Yearly AIS Processing Fee</b>	<b>Total Yearly Tahoe Boat Fee</b>
<b>1-100 Horsepower</b>	<b>\$10</b>	<b>\$10</b>	<b>\$20</b>
<b>101-300 Horsepower</b>	<b>\$20</b>	<b>\$10</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<b>301-500 Horsepower</b>	<b>\$30</b>	<b>\$10</b>	<b>\$40</b>
<b>501-1000 Horsepower</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>\$10</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>1000+ Horsepower</b>	<b>\$50</b>	<b>\$10</b>	<b>\$60</b>



**Table 4: Traveling Boat fee schedule for watercraft that have not launch only in Lake Tahoe. This fee schedule combines the Blue Boating fee and the AIS processing fee and a fee for AIS inspections. The total fee per vessel is indicated in the shaded cells for any given total horsepower and length combination.**

AIS Inspection Fee (inc processing)	Traveling Boat Watercraft Yearly Fee	Blue Boating Fee (Total Horsepower)				
		1-100 HP (\$10)	101-300 HP (\$20)	301-500 HP (\$30)	501-1000 HP (\$40)	1000+ HP (\$50)
	Watercraft up to 16 ft (\$20)	\$30	\$40	\$50	\$60	\$70
	Personal Watercraft (\$25)	\$35	\$45	\$55	\$65	\$75
	Watercraft 16 ft to 25 ft (\$45)	\$55	\$65	\$75	\$85	\$95
	Watercraft 26 ft to 39 ft (\$55)	\$65	\$75	\$85	\$95	\$105
	Watercraft over 39 ft (\$75)	\$85	\$95	\$105	\$115	\$125

In addition to the yearly Traveling Boat fee schedule, a three-day temporary pass will be available that will be available at a \$20 discount from the assessed yearly Traveling Boat fee per total horsepower and length.

## Issues and Concerns Related to the 2010 Watercraft Inspection Fee Schedule

### Issue 1:

Cost of Traveling Boat yearly inspection fee as currently proposed may turn boaters away from Tahoe, particularly when combined with launching fees, gas prices and weak overall economic conditions, thereby hurting the regional economy.

### Staff Response Issue 1:

Adoption of a reduced cost three-day temporary pass for Traveling Boats should reduce or eliminate this issue as it provides an option only slightly more than the per inspection fee for aquatic invasive species (AIS) that was in effect last year. In addition, the cost of additional AIS infestation and/or degraded water quality from boating would be a far greater impact to the regional economy.

### Issue 2:

Fees as proposed will not completely fund the AIS inspection program which still makes use of grant funds.

### Staff Response Issue 2:

As proposed the watercraft inspection fees pay for the implementation of the Blue Boating Program and provide approximately one-half of the \$950,000 total annual cost for inspecting motorized watercraft for AIS. The total AIS inspection program costs including non-motorized inspection are estimated at \$1,300,000 annually, therefore, the proposed fees contribute approximately one-third of that total. Federal grants make up the majority of the other funding for the program. Currently the inspection program is fully funded for 2010. The AIS fees collected in 2010 would be used to cover the cost of inspections in 2011. The outlook for continued federal funding is very good. Should we enter the 2011 boating season without enough grant funds for the year, we would be able to revisit the fees in April of 2011 and adjust the fees as needed.