

AQUATIC INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL PILOT PROJECT

Recommended Action: Adopt Resolution 17-03-04 (Attachment 1) authorizing up to \$260,128 for a grant to the Tahoe Resource Conservation District for the Aquatic Invasive Plant Control Pilot Project (Project).

Location: The Project is located in the southeastern part of Lake Tahoe, at Lakeside Beach and Marina (Attachment 2).

Fiscal Summary: Staff recommends up to \$260,128 in capital outlay funding from the Lake Tahoe Science and Lake Improvement Account for award at this time.

Overview

Description of Recommended Action

Staff recommends the Board authorize a grant to the Tahoe Resource Conservation District (Tahoe RCD) for the Project. Tahoe RCD will use the funding to conduct and monitor an aquatic invasive species (AIS) control pilot project at Lakeside Beach and Marina.

Tahoe RCD leads AIS plant control efforts in the Lake Tahoe Basin and continually seeks innovative technologies and methods. New research indicates that using ultraviolet C (UVC) light to kill AIS plants could be an effective new control method, as laboratory tests resulted in complete mortality.

The Project uses UVC light in two lake environments, marina (Lakeside Marina) and open water (Lakeside Beach). The Project will determine the efficacy of this technology in eradicating AIS plants, Eurasian watermilfoil and Curlyleaf pondweed, at various durations and intensities of UVC light. Project effectiveness monitoring will include pre- and post-project monitoring to determine the mortality of AIS plants and regrowth

of treated plants. The Project will help the Tahoe RCD determine the optimum intensity and duration of treatment necessary for eradication of AIS plants.

AIS plant control efforts result in improvements to water quality, native fish habitat, and recreational access for swimming and boating. The Project would provide a significant regional benefit because it increases the variety and application of methods available for controlling AIS plants, potentially at greater efficiencies and less cost.

Staff intends to enter into a grant agreement with Tahoe RCD in spring 2017. The Project will begin in spring 2017 and be completed by November 2018.

History

In fall 2013, the California Legislature and Governor approved Senate Bill 630 (SB630), establishing the Lake Tahoe Science and Lake Improvement Account (Account) and defining the purposes for expenditure of these funds. The funds deposited into the Account come from rental income collected by the State Lands Commission for surface uses on Lake Tahoe. These funds are to be expended for establishing a bi-state science-based advisory council, near-shore AIS projects or public access projects, and near-shore water quality monitoring. Since 2014, the Conservancy Board has authorized \$350,000 in SB630 funding for Lake Tahoe AIS efforts.

SB630 requires matching funds for projects and monitoring. In 2016, the Conservancy awarded a Proposition 1 grant to the Tahoe RCD for AIS control that provides match for the Project. SB630 also requires the Conservancy to coordinate the selection of projects to be funded through a collaborative process that involves agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private landowners who pay the rental income.

Currently there are two known species of invasive aquatic plants in Lake Tahoe, Eurasian watermilfoil and Curlyleaf pondweed. These species are considered invasive in Lake Tahoe due to their impacts to recreation, navigation, and ecosystem dynamics. Eurasian watermilfoil is thought to have been introduced to Lake Tahoe in the 1960s or 1970s and was formally identified along the south shore in the late 1980s and 1990s. There are approximately 20 locations, including over 150 acres in the Tahoe Keys, with Eurasian watermilfoil. Curlyleaf pondweed was first identified in the south shore of Lake Tahoe in 2003. Since its discovery, this species has spread along the south shore and in some areas has outcompeted and replaced infestations of Eurasian watermilfoil.

AIS control is a high priority for the Lake Tahoe Basin. The *2015 Lake Tahoe AIS Implementation Plan* identified Eurasian watermilfoil and Curlyleaf pondweed treatment

as one of the highest priority AIS efforts. In addition, the Implementation Plan ranked Lakeside Beach and Marina as one of the top five locations for AIS plant control.

Previous AIS plant control efforts in Lake Tahoe used bottom barriers and diver assisted hand and suction removal in a phased approach. While this combination of methodologies has been successful in an open water setting such as Emerald Bay, limitations do exist. Wave action, lake-bottom morphology, high boater use areas, and turbidity can impede the effectiveness of these methods. The proposed grant furthers the use of a new and promising technology to treat AIS plants.

Financing

The funding for the Project will come from the Account.

The Project budget is as follows:

Field Testing	\$140,290
Monitoring	\$70,000
Analysis and Reporting	\$28,710
Administration and Operations	<u>\$21,128</u>

Total \$260,128

Please note that costs for individual budget items may vary from those shown above, but total expenditures will not exceed \$260,128.

Authority

Consistency with the Conservancy's Enabling Legislation

Implementation of this Project is consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation (Government Code Title 7.42). Specifically, section 66907.7 authorizes the Conservancy to award grants to local public agencies for purposes consistent with its mission.

Consistency with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan

The recommended action is consistent with the Strategic Plan because it would invest in a high priority Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) project (Strategy II).

Consistency with External Authorities

This recommended action is consistent with the authority given to the Conservancy through SB630 pursuant to section 6717.6.1(a) of the Public Resources Code. The Conservancy coordinated selection of this Project through a collaborative process that included participation of a stakeholder group consisting of public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and organizations that pay the rental income.

The recommended action is consistent with the EIP because it supports implementation of EIP project #01.04.02.0048. It is also consistent with the *2015 Lake Tahoe Aquatic Invasive Species Implementation Plan*, which lists Eurasian watermilfoil as a Tier 1 (highest priority) species and ranks Lakeside Beach and Marina as one of the top five priority locations for treatment over the next five years.

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.), certain classes of activities are statutorily exempt from CEQA or are exempt because they have been determined by the Secretary for Natural Resources to have no significant effect on the environment. Pursuant to Public Resources Code sections 21001(f) and 21082, the Conservancy has also adopted regulations to implement, interpret, and make specific the provisions of CEQA. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 12100 et seq.) Staff has evaluated this Project, and has found it to be exempt under CEQA. This Project qualifies for a categorical exemption under State CEQA Guidelines section 15306 (information collection), and the Conservancy's CEQA regulations, section 12102.6. A Notice of Exemption (NOE) has been prepared for the Project (Attachment 3). If the Board approves the grant funding, staff will file the NOE with the State Clearinghouse pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, section 15062.

List of Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Resolution 17-03-04
- Attachment 2 – Location Map
- Attachment 3 – Notice of Exemption

Conservancy Staff Contact:

Whitney Brennan
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ATTACHMENT 1

California Tahoe Conservancy

Resolution

17-03-04

Adopted: March 16, 2017

AQUATIC INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL PILOT PROJECT

Staff recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Government Code section 66907.7:

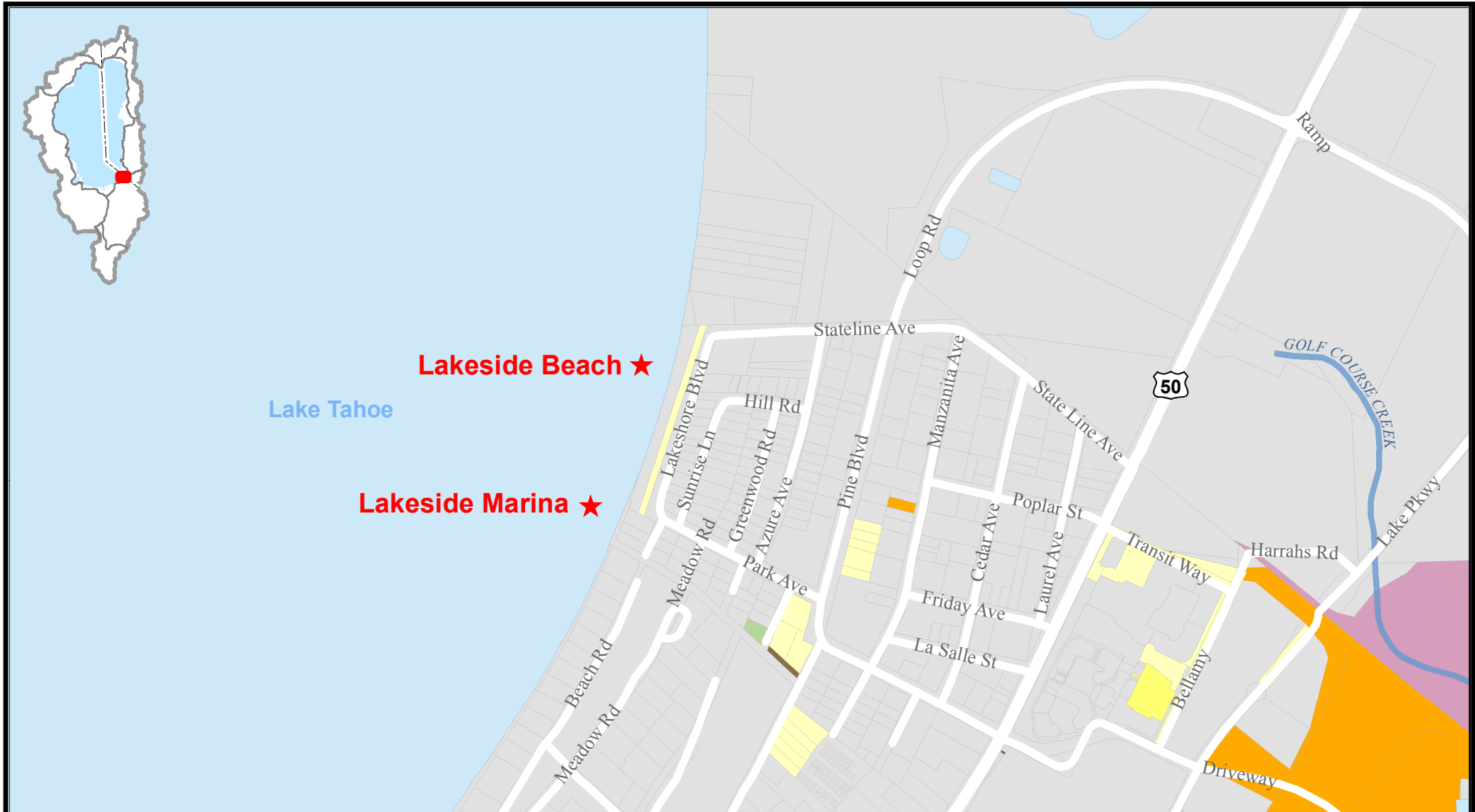
“The Conservancy hereby authorizes staff to award a grant in the amount up to \$260,128 to Tahoe Resource Conservation District for the Aquatic Invasive Plant Control Pilot Project and take all other necessary steps consistent with the accompanying staff recommendation.”

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution duly and regularly adopted by the Conservancy at a meeting thereof held on the 16th day of March 2017.

In WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 16th day of March 2017.

Patrick Wright
Executive Director

ATTACHMENT 2 Project Map Aquatic Invasive Plant Control Pilot Project



Proposed Items
★ Pilot Project Locations

Ownership	
 City of South Lake Tahoe	 South Tahoe Public Utility District
 CA Tahoe Conservancy	 South Tahoe Redevelopment Agency
 Nevada Division of State Parks	 State of California
 Private	 US Forest Service

Sources:
TRPA, CTC

**California
Tahoe Conservancy**

March 2017
*Map for reference purposes only.

ATTACHMENT 3

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Office of Planning and Research
1400 10th Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA. 95814

FROM: California Tahoe Conservancy
1061 Third Street
South Lake Tahoe, CA. 96150

Project Title:

Aquatic Invasive Plant Control Pilot Project

Project Location – Specific:

Lakeside Beach and Marina

Project Location – City:

South Lake Tahoe

Project Location – County:

El Dorado

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

This project will provide Tahoe Resource Conservation District with funding to work with its partners to perform a pilot study using UVC light to stunt growth of aquatic invasive plants, potentially resulting in their mortality.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project:

California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy meeting of 3/16/2017) (Agenda Item 8.c)

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

California Tahoe Conservancy

Exempt Status:

- Ministerial (§ 21080 (b)(1); § 15268)
- Declared Emergency (§ 21080 (b)(3); § 15269 (a))
- Emergency Project (§ 21080 (b)(4); § 15269 (b)(c))
- Categorical Exemption. Class 6, §15306 “Information Collection” (See also Cal. Code Regs., title 14, §12102.6)

Reasons Why Project is Exempt:

This project consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource.

Contact Person:

Whitney Brennan

Telephone Number:

(530) 543-6054

Date Received for Filing:

Patrick Wright
Executive Director