



Response to Comments for Environmental Review and Permitting for Control of Warm Water Fish in Lake Tahoe Request for Proposal

1. *RFP Task 1.1 states that the consultant would “Review new technologies available for fish control and evaluate their value for current work.” Does this mean that the consultant would be tasked with identifying approaches or methodologies for fish control beyond those or different from those included in the Implementation Plan for the Control of Aquatic Invasive Species within Lake Tahoe (Implementation Plan)? If so, would these additional technologies be amended into the Implementation Plan?*

Yes. Tahoe RCD would like the consultant to research any additional methods that may have been overlooked in the development of the Implementation Plan, not to include any chemical control techniques, only mechanical control methods.

2. *Has TRCD had any conversations already with USACE or USFWS regarding this project and potential for those agencies to be the lead agency for NEPA? Or has TRCD identified any other likely candidates for NEPA lead agency? The Corps of Engineers acted as NEPA lead agency for the aquatic plant control plan; is it expected that the Corps would be NEPA lead for implementing the warm water fish control plan?*

Tahoe RCD has not engaged with USACE or USFWS regarding serving as the potential lead agency for NEPA. Tahoe RCD has discussed lead potential with US Forest Service since the release of the RFP. This project was originally intended to be implemented by TRPA, with CDFW as the lead CEQA agency. However, CDFW does not take action on this type of work and therefore could not be the lead agency for CEQA. Tahoe RCD, along with our partners, decided to shift the funding and project to Tahoe RCD. Due to the tight timeframe and hard completion deadline, Tahoe RCD wanted to get the RFP out as soon as possible and identify the NEPA lead as the project kicks off. Tahoe RCD will continue to work with the selected consultant to identify the correct NEPA lead.

3. *Permitting: Task 1.3 of the RFP indicates that consultant shall coordinate with permitting agencies to identify types of permits anticipated.” Do you want our scope to also include permitting for the project in addition to identification of expected permit types required?*

Yes, Tahoe RCD staff will be available to assist with permit applications. However, we would like the consultant to identify the necessary permits and coordinate the application process with Tahoe RCD staff.

4. *Cultural Approach. Subtask 2.2 on page 5 of the RFP describes preparing a cultural resources report. Given that all of the control methods involve treatments within Lake Tahoe, its tributaries, or the Truckee River that would result in little to no ground disturbance outside the watercourses, there would appear to be little potential for the project to result in an adverse effect to cultural resources. Is there a specific purpose you could clarify for the stand-alone cultural resources report and expectations for its contents? Could it be eliminated with coverage of the cultural resources issue in the environmental document instead?*

Yes, potentially. The Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for Lake-wide Aquatic Plant Control Project (2014) required a cultural resources report and associated mitigation



TAHOE

RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

870 Emerald Bay Road Suite 108, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150 530.543.1501 PH 530.543.1660 FAX TahoeRCD.org

measures. We expect the impacts of this project to be less than that of the plant control project with little to no disturbance of the lake or river bed.

5. Permitting. *The RFP title Environmental Review and Permitting for Control of Warm Water Fish in Lake Tahoe suggests the scope of work might include permitting. Based on the description in Subtask 1.3 on page 5 of the RFP, it appears that permitting work is limited to coordinating with permitting agencies to identify the types of permits anticipated. Please clarify whether the scope of work includes additional permitting support, such as preparation of permit applications and regulatory agency coordination beyond what would occur with environmental document preparation.*
[Yes, see answer 3 above.](#)
6. Scope of Environmental Review. *Page 3 of the RFP describes that the project area includes suitable habitat areas within Lake Tahoe, its tributaries, and the Truckee River in California. Please clarify whether the NEPA and TRPA components of the environmental document should be limited to California, or whether they should be lake wide, instead.*
[California only, as required by our funding which is limited to California.](#)
7. *Task 1.3 states, "Coordinate with permitting agencies to identify types of permits anticipated..." Is the intent of this task to obtain the project permits simply generate a list, based on conversations with permitting agencies, the required permits for the project?*
[No, see answer 3 above.](#)
8. *Has TRCD or other agencies had preliminary discussions with any of the federal agencies about being the NEPA lead (USFWS, USACE, USDA, or others)?*
[See answer 2 above.](#)
9. *How will the proposed project be funded? Federal, state or local dollars? Which agencies or grants?*
[This project is being funded by California Tahoe Conservancy through Proposition 1 funding.](#)
10. *Please elaborate on the rationale for preparation of an IS/IEC and perhaps an EA for NEPA. Is there justification that activities such as electrofishing, gill netting, angling, seining, fyke netting, and minnow trapping for AIS, as well as water level manipulation or dewatering will have no effect to Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) and their habitat? Federally listed amphibian species such as the Southern mountain yellow-legged frog and Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog are also within the project area. Are there other known reasons why the activities would not have any effects to these listed species and their habitats?*
[In the RFP Tahoe RCD indicates that it is expected at this time that an Initial Study/ Negative Declaration \(IS/ND\) pursuant to CEQA, an Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact \(EA/FONSI\) and an Initial Environmental Checklist \(IEC\) pursuant to TRPA requirements will be the appropriate level of environmental review. We believe that it will be possible to perform the proposed control methods without significant impact to Lahontan cutthroat trout, other protected species, and their habitat. Though some temporary adverse effects may take place, they are expected to be minimal and conclude with an overall, long-term benefit to protected species. However, it is important to understand that we have not gone through formal avenues or performed an exhaustive review to justify these measures.](#)



TAHOE

RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

870 Emerald Bay Road Suite 108, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150 530.543.1501 PH 530.543.1660 FAX TahoeRCD.org

This expectation is based on informal conversations with TRPA, Tahoe Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Forest Service agency members and our own understanding of the selective nature of the proposed control methods. It is possible that further investigation by the chosen consultant will reveal a need for an increased level of environmental review.