CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Lahontan Regional Water Board

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **Contact:** **Chris Stetler**
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California Water News

California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region Applauds Work of South Lake Tahoe High School Class of 2000 Valedictorian and Salutatorian

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE — The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region applauds the recent accomplishments of South Lake Tahoe students Denise Bogard and Micah Hoffman as summer interns, working for Board's Leviathan Mine Unit. Bogard and Hoffman joined a team of engineers, geologists, and environmental specialists working to cleanup Leviathan Mine in Alpine County. Leviathan Mine is an inactive sulfur mine that was listed as a Superfund Site in May of 2000. Superfund status means that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency qualified Leviathan Mine as among the most contaminated sites in the country.

As summer interns, Bogard and Hoffman were involved in several types of site remediation work, including water quality monitoring, revegetation, and site maintenance activities. Most of their work, however, was related to the treatment of acidic mine drainage emanating from old underground mine excavations. The Board has successfully treated more than 10,000,000 gallons of acidic drainage since 1999, and is continuing this work through the 2001 field season. Chris Stetler, Chief of the Leviathan Mine Unit, said, "We were very fortunate to have such top-notch people join our team. Their work was critical to the overall success of this year's treatment effort and we look forward to their return next summer."

Bogard and Hoffman graduated from South Lake Tahoe High School in 2000 as the Class Valedictorian and Salutatorian, respectively. Bogart is attending the University of California San Diego and majoring in Chemical Engineering. Hoffman is attending California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo and majoring in Electrical Engineering.

The State of California acquired Leviathan Mine in 1984 in order to cleanup and abate water quality problems caused by historic mining. Historic mining at the mine included underground and open pit extraction of sulfur. These activities resulted in the exposure of pyrite, contained in the native soil, to air and water. Exposure of pyrite to air and water causes the generation of sulfuric acid, referred to as acid mine drainage (AMD). As AMD travels through the soil at the mine, it dissolves and carries metals contained in the native ground. The acidic and metal rich AMD eventually discharges to nearby creeks (Leviathan and Aspen) causing significant adverse impacts. Aspen Creek flows into Leviathan Creek, Leviathan Creek flows to Bryant Creek, and Bryant Creek flows across the Nevada state line and into the east fork of the Carson River.

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