



Media Release

Lahontan Water Board authorizes testing of chemical methods to control invasive weeds in Lake Tahoe

Efficacy of non-chemical and chemical treatment to be evaluated at Tahoe Keys Lagoons

January 18, 2022

Contact: [Edward Ortiz](#) – Public Information Officer

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE – In an effort to control invasive aquatic weeds that could threaten water quality in Lake Tahoe, the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board took action last Thursday to allow for the testing of chemical and non-chemical treatment methods on aquatic weed infestations within the Tahoe Keys Lagoons.

“The Tahoe Keys Lagoons holds the largest infestation of aquatic invasive weeds in Lake Tahoe,” said Mike Plaziak, executive officer of the Lahontan Water Board. “The board’s decision today will help experts determine the most effective means of weed eradication before the infestation outpaces our ability to deal with the issue.”

The board adopted a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association and an exemption to the aquatic pesticide discharge prohibition in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Lahontan Region. The authorization is narrow, allowing for the discharge of the herbicides triclopyr and endothall on a one-time basis only to reduce weed populations to levels that can be managed with non-chemical methods.

Conditions of the exemption to the Water Quality Control Plan include the certification of a final environmental impact report and the execution of a mitigation monitoring and reporting program.

“In reaching its decision, the board considered input from many stakeholders and ultimately made a decision that supports a forward-looking approach using the best available science, while upholding our duties to protect water quality in Lake Tahoe,” said Plaziak.

Aquatic plant surveys show that invasive aquatic weed populations present in the Tahoe Keys Lagoons since the 1980s now infest 85 percent to 90 percent of the available wetted surface. The Lagoons are bordered by the Tahoe Keys residential development



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 • Mailing Address: P.O. Box 100, Sacramento, CA 95812-0100 • www.waterboards.ca.gov



in South Lake Tahoe with an artificial waterway to Lake Tahoe through which the weeds have become established in the lake.

The permit enables the Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association to conduct a three-year project that includes the one-time application of the aquatic herbicides followed by non-chemical treatments such as Ultraviolet-C light and laminar flow aeration. Several methods suited for small-scale treatment, including bottom barriers and suction-assisted diver hand pulling, will be employed to address weed re-emergence. Treatment during the second and third years of the project will consist of non-chemical control methods only.

The board reached its decision following two days of hearings that included testimony from interested citizens, environmental organizations, local jurisdictions, water purveyors, governmental organizations, and other stakeholders. Due to the high level of public interest, the board conducted multiple informational workshops on various aspects of the project and responded to hundreds of written and oral comments. More information on the [Tahoe Keys Aquatic Weeds Control Project](#) is available on the Lahontan Water Board website.

It is the mission of the Lahontan Water Board to restore, enhance, and preserve the quality of the Lahontan Region's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, from the mountain crests to the valley floors.