

Tahoe Resource Conservation District/Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

NOTICE OF INTENT

Release of an Initial Study and Proposed Negative Declaration/Initial Environmental Checklist and Finding of No Significant Effect for the Target Invasive Fish Control Program at Lake Tahoe

The Tahoe Resource Conservation District (Tahoe RCD) has released for public review the joint California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) Initial Study and Proposed Negative Declaration (IS/ND)/Initial Environmental Checklist and Finding of No Significant Effect (IEC/FONSE) for the Target Invasive Fish Control Program at Lake Tahoe (program). Target invasive fish species are species that are contributing to declines in native and recreational non-native fish, alterations in food-web dynamics, and impairment of water quality. Recreational non-native fish species (i.e., rainbow trout [*Oncorhynchus mykiss*], brown trout [*Salmo trutta*], brook trout [*Salvelinus fontinalis*], lake trout [*Salvelinus namaycush*], and kokanee salmon [*Oncorhynchus nerka*]) are not targeted by the proposed program. The proposed program would authorize a selection of mechanical fish control methods that can be implemented in locations of suitable habitat for the target species over the next 20 years and beyond. Target invasive species include Smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*), Largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), Bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), Black crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*), Brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*), and goldfish (*C. auratus auratus*). No chemical control methods would be implemented under the proposed program. The control of target invasive fish in Lake Tahoe would result in improvements to native fish distribution and abundance by reducing known predators and competitors. Control and removal of these species would increase the quality and quantity of habitat for desirable aquatic species and improve water quality and overall ecosystem health.

Program Location: The program area includes all tributaries and shallow areas of Lake Tahoe where invasive fish species could occur. The program area has been divided into Tier 1 and 2 areas to prioritize treatment locations. Tier 1 areas are those most likely to contain larger populations of target invasive fish species. Tier 2 areas represent areas where invasive fish could be present but with smaller populations.

Environmental Effects: Tahoe RCD has prepared an IS/ND pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15063 and 15071. Tahoe RCD has studied the effects the proposed program may have on the environment. Based on the IS, the proposed program would not result in significant environmental impacts. Therefore, an IS/ND is proposed for compliance with the requirements of CEQA. An IEC/FONSE is proposed by TRPA for compliance with TRPA regulations.

Where You Come In: Tahoe RCD and TRPA are releasing the IS/ND and IEC/FONSE for public review and comments. The document is available for a 30-day public review period from January 23, 2020 to February 24, 2020.

Where to Review the Environmental Document and Provide Comments: Comments regarding the IS/ND and IEC/FONSE may be submitted in writing via U.S. mail or email any time during the public review period. Written comments regarding the scope and content of information in the IS/ND and IEC/FONSE or any questions regarding the document should be submitted no later than February 24, 2020. Comments may be sent to:

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Copies of the IS/ND and IEC/FONSE, and the documents referenced in the IS/ND and IEC/FONSE, are available for public review during regular business hours at the addresses listed below:

Tahoe RCD 870 Emerald Bay Road, Suite 108 South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150	Tahoe City Library 740 N. Lake Blvd. Tahoe City, CA 96145	Tahoe Regional Planning Agency 128 Market Street Stateline, NV 89449
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Digital copies of the IS/ND and IEC/FONSE are available online at: <https://tahoercd.org/tahoe-aquatic-invasive-species-resources/>.

Public Hearing: A public hearing on the proposed program, where adoption of the proposed Negative Declaration and program approval will be considered, is scheduled during the Tahoe RCD Board of Directors meeting that will begin at 10:30 a.m. on April 14, 2020 located at the Tahoe RCD office at 870 Emerald Bay Road, Suite 108, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.