

Tahoe Keys Marina violating state permit



Tahoe Keys Marina is accused of not maintaining its best management practices for erosion. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

One week after Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board found 12 violations at Tahoe Keys Marina the infractions have not been corrected.

“That is significant,” Eric Taxer, water resource control engineer, told *Lake Tahoe News* of the ongoing problems.

Failing to maintain a pump so boaters can get rid of their sewage was one of the more serious violations. These pumps are required at all marinas so sewage does not wind up in Lake Tahoe.

“I was there (Monday) and it still was not working. And he assured me it would be by (Tuesday),” Taxer said. It wasn’t.

The "he" Taxer is referencing is Rob Spinnato, general manager of the marina. Spinnato was not available for comment.

Taxer said Spinnato told him the pump had been out for about a month before the inspection. He reportedly told Taxer getting parts could be a problem.

Another of the more serious violations was not having adequate supplies on hand in case there is a spill.

"They did have some oil absorbent booms on site, but an inadequate supply. There should have been more, especially for a marina that size," Taxer said.

Inspectors found an oil rag wrapped around one of the fuel nozzles to catch drips.

"However, the rag appeared to be completely saturated and of no use," the report stated.

Spinnato claimed more pads were on order. The order date, though, says July 22 – the same day as the inspection.

Other violations included:

- Failure to clean up anti-freeze and silicon spills in areas close to marina waters.
- Failure to maintain copies on site of all monitoring results.
- Failure to maintain copies on site of the inspection logs.
- Failure to maintain copies on site of the weekly printouts of the National Weather Station prediction reports.
- Failure to maintain copies on site of the daily recordkeeping of the rain gauge readings.
- Failure to maintain a copy of the permit on site.
- Failure to maintain stormwater runoff erosion control measures.
- Failure to perform all maintenance activities under cover, in bermed areas.

- Failure to properly dispose of soiled absorbent pads.



On July 22, Tahoe Keys Marina was told Styrofoam needed to be cleaned up; on July 29 it was still floating by rental boats and near the fuel docks.

“This one had the most amount of violations; some of which were significant,” Taxer said in comparing the Keys inspection to other marinas. “We will look at our enforcement options and consider what is most appropriate for the site.”

The ultimate goal of staff is for the marina to fix the problems. If the marina fails to do so, the Lahontan board could get involved with additional enforcement actions that could include a cleanup and abatement order that imposes specific deadlines and/or fines.

“Pulling a permit to operate does not stop the discharges nor does it assist us in getting reports or achieving compliance. They can continue operating,” Lauri Kemper, Lahontan’s assistant executive officer, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Leaving the permit in place allows us to impose penalties on the ongoing violations of the permit. Many of our fines are based on a per day violation of a permit requirement.”

This summer Taxer has conducted inspections at seven marinas in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The Keys in South Lake Tahoe has the

most egregious violations. These inspections are routine and are done every few years on a rotating basis throughout the basin. Every marina on the California side operates under a permit issued by Lahontan. They are updated every five years. The current one expires April 12, 2016.

There could be regulations from the state or Environmental Protection Agency that could change, or new technology introduced. New in the 2011 permit is marinas needing to ensure vessels have been inspected for aquatic invasive species.

The other marinas inspected by Lahontan this summer include:

- Sunnyside: No violations.
- Lakeside: Failed to maintain records on site and didn't have working rain gauge. Those infractions have been corrected.
- Ski Run: Needed updated version of the permit.
- Camp Richardson: There was an area where materials encroached on a stream environmental zone. The metal has since been removed.
- Meeks Bay: Some areas did not have appropriate erosion protections. Follow up still needed.
- Timber Cove: Oil containers were being stored in a box under the docks. This was corrected while inspectors were on site.