

Future of Tahoe's shore zone being debated

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – What if motorized boats were no longer allowed on Lake Tahoe? That's what one table at a workshop proposed.

That idea was one of many discussed Thursday night when the public got together to work on the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's shore zone plan.

Piers and buoys have long been controversial at Lake Tahoe. When the bi-state regulatory agency adopted the shore zone plan in 2008 the League to Save Lake Tahoe and the Sierra Club that same month filed a lawsuit challenging it. Two years later TRPA challenged the court's ruling which had sided with the conservation groups. Then in **2012 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals** partially ruled in favor of each side.

That in part is why the TRPA is conducting more outreach and is in the process of updating this segment of the Regional Plan



Shore zone issues are discussed Nov. 3 in Stateline. Photo/LTN

Sitting at tables, the more than 30 people on Nov. 3 discussed piers, low lake adaptation, access, boating and marinas. Their comments along with those from the more than 70 people who attended a similar meeting on the North Shore in September will be considered as the bi-state regulatory agency moves forward.

Many of the issues are interrelated. Several of the 14 marinas (12 are in California, two in Nevada) are struggling to provide access to boaters because of the low lake level. Piers can't be extended per current rules, but floating docks could be the answer.

Marinas are dealing with slips that no longer fit boats as they keep increasing in length. Piers-docks are inaccessible because the lake is so low.

While being able to be on the lake itself is an economic driver for the entire basin, protecting this national treasure from an environmental standpoint is also a concern. Part of the shore zone plan components will be to balance those two issues which at times can be conflicting.

Suggestions that came out of the discussion Thursday night included:

- Needing to allow marinas to expand;
- Enforcing the 600-foot TRPA mandated no wake zone, and the 200-foot California zone;
- Storage for watercraft on and off the water;
- Signs talking about rules of the water and pointing to where access is;
- Multi-use piers, including ones that can accommodate water taxis;
- Paying attention to public health and safety;

- Reviving the bus that went around the lake so people can get to the water without driving themselves;
- Figure out how low the water level must get before people stop trying to adapt to it;
- Making sure non-motorized boats have access;
- Education;
- Streamline permitting process;
- Speed limit on the lake;
- Working more cooperatively with various agencies and landowners.