

Opinion: Working together to protect shoreline

By Joanne Marchetta

Lake Tahoe's shoreline is a place of majestic beauty with sandy beaches and secluded, boulder-strewn coves. It's where residents and visitors alike go to enjoy Tahoe's famously cold, clear water, whether they are dipping their toes in for the first time or launching their boat, kayak, or paddleboard for a daily outing.

TRPA and nearly a dozen partner agencies and groups have been working together for two years to update Lake Tahoe's shoreline regulations for the first time in decades. We continue to move forward with this initiative and aim to have a broadly-supported shoreline plan up for consideration by the end of 2018.



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These 72-miles of shoreline have been one of Tahoe's most difficult planning areas. TRPA has proposed updates to its shoreline regulations many times, but each attempt faltered as various groups rejected plans put forward.

This time, TRPA took a more collaborative and inclusive approach. The agency invited stakeholders like the Lake Tahoe Marina Association, League to Save Lake Tahoe, and Tahoe

Lakefront Owners' Association, as well as other public agencies, to work together to identify key issues and craft a plan that protects Tahoe's environment and scenic beauty and improves recreation access to the lake.

The collaborative approach is working. This spring will mark a major milestone in the initiative, with the release of a draft environmental review for a proposed shoreline plan.

That draft review is slated to be released for public comment in early May. It examines a proposed shoreline plan that was endorsed by the Shoreline Steering Committee members and TRPA's Regional Plan Implementation Committee, as well as several other alternatives to regulate shoreline structures such as piers, buoys, boat slips, and marinas.

With a functioning plan in place, we can see beneficial redevelopment as shoreline structures are upgraded or relocated from sensitive areas like stream mouths, as well as scenic improvements and better recreation access to the lake.

The proposed plan would authorize two new public boat ramps, 10 new public piers, and up to 128 new private piers. Private piers would be authorized gradually, and the program would prioritize piers that serve multiple properties or retire pier development potential on other properties. The plan would also authorize up to 1,486 new buoys for lakefront properties and homeowners associations and create a reserve pool of 630 buoys for use by marinas and public agencies.

No new marinas would be allowed under the proposed shoreline plan. But marinas could expand or reconfigure if they become certified as a "clean marina" and incorporate environmental improvements into their projects, including work to control aquatic invasive species, reduce stormwater pollution, or provide cleaner, more efficient boat rental fleets.

The proposed shoreline plan includes new environmental protection provisions for rentals and concessionaires and

storage racks for non-motorized watercraft and would maintain Tahoe's 600-foot no-wake-zone to prevent shoreline erosion and reduce conflicts between motorized and non-motorized watercraft. It would expand this no-wake-zone to include all Emerald Bay, the most heavily-visited site on the lake. TRPA is also working with marinas, law enforcement, and state parks on ways to improve education and enforcement of the no-wake-zone to help protect people who enjoy non-motorized watercraft.

The proposed shoreline plan includes various low-lake adaptation strategies. The last drought left many piers, buoys, and boat ramps unusable as water levels fell below Tahoe's natural rim. These strategies aim to keep such structures functional down to an elevation of 6,220 feet, allowing property owners to install an additional buoy block to be able to move buoys into deeper water as lake levels fall, allow public boat ramps to be temporarily extended further into the lake, and allow marinas to install an additional row of lakeward buoy anchors and temporary floating pier extensions for use during low lake levels.

TRPA looks forward to the release of this draft environmental review in May, and to receiving and incorporating public comment on the shoreline plan proposals. There will be community workshops, public hearings, and many other opportunities to share your thoughts and ideas as this plan continues to progress in coming months. Please go **online** to learn more about this draft plan and the process guiding it, or to request a presentation on the shoreline plan from TRPA staff.

We have made great progress working together on this difficult issue. By continuing to work together, find common ground, and build consensus, we can develop a shoreline plan that protects Lake Tahoe's environment and scenic beauty, while also helping more people enjoy one of the greatest recreation experiences in the world.

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