

Damage being mitigated; work continues at Emerald Bay

By Kathryn Reed

The contractor doing work for Caltrans near Emerald Bay has been allowed to continue the project after regulators found employees potentially violating the permit by degrading the natural environment.

“A TRPA inspector visited the site (Friday) afternoon and found that adequate protection measures have been put in place as requested, and the project can proceed,” Tom Lotshaw with TRPA told *Lake Tahoe News*. “TRPA will continue to work with Caltrans and California State Parks to assess the disturbance and agree on a cleanup and restoration plan, and TRPA is continuing to pursue its investigation to determine if any civil penalties for code or permit violations will be pursued.”

If the bi-state regulatory agency decides to assess fines, it can be up to \$5,000 per infraton, per day – which means the damages could be substantial.

Stewart Engineering out of Redding is the firm that is being accused of not having its erosion control measures in place. Workers were caught **on video** laughing as a boulder took out a tree.

“The day we were informed about this incident taking place, our resident engineer on the project called the project manager for Stewart Engineering to discuss what happened and find out what he knew about the incident. No one from Caltrans staff was on scene during the filming of the boulder going over the hill,” Steve Nelson with Caltrans told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We immediately contacted a local arborist to visit the jobsite with us and inspect all the damage to trees below the

wall that could have occurred due to this project. The arborist has put together a report for us, detailing the damage and severity of the injuries to several trees below the wall due to any rocks rolling down the slope, along with a plan to mitigate that damage. The arborist will be employed to carry out that plan as soon as the work on the wall is complete.”

The goal is to have the project completed on or about June 20.

Nelson said Caltrans has an approved plan to stabilize the slope below the wall, and to plant a number of sapling sugar pines below the wall. TRPA is reviewing those plans.