

LOCAL

Tahoe Keys water quality plan under review

Invasive weed management plan to be submitted in May

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SOUTH LAKE TAHOE — How the Tahoe Keys can help limit the amount of clarity-reducing pollutants entering Lake Tahoe is the subject of a plan being reviewed by Lake Tahoe water quality regulators. An associated plan outlining steps to manage aquatic invasive species problems at the South Shore development is expected to be submitted to regulators in May.

The Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association submitted its Nonpoint Source Water Quality Management Plan to the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board Feb. 1. The primary goal of the plan is to reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus entering the lake via runoff to the 740-acre development's waterways. Nitrogen and phosphorus feed algae blooms that reduce water quality in the lake and may also be contributing to problematic aquatic invasive weeds in the Keys, which includes more than 1,500 residences at the South Shore.

The plan is part of July 2014 order



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The Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association submitted its Nonpoint Source Water Quality Management Plan to the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board Feb. 1.

by Lahontan requiring the Keys to increase its institutional control, education and outreach to homeowners regarding pollutants.

“Our goal is to greatly reduce the quantity of nutrients and other pollutants going into the Tahoe Keys lagoons and Lake Tahoe that affect

water clarity, quality and may contribute to aquatic weed growth,” said John Larson, president of the Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association Board, in a press release regarding the plan.

Phosphorous-containing fertilizers were banned by the association in 2015 and conservation measures have

reduced water usage by 69 million gallons compared to 2013, according to the release. Additional rules to encourage implementation of erosion control measures known as Best Management Practices have also been adopted for the neighborhood.

Doug Smith, supervising

engineering geologist with Lahontan, said the plan is a small part of improving water quality at Lake Tahoe. He said the agency would welcome comments on the plan, which can be viewed at www.keyweedsmanagement.org.

“If everyone does their part, then we’re making positive steps forward,” Smith said.

A plan to manage aquatic invasive species in the Keys, the Tahoe Keys Draft Integrated Weed Management Plan, was released in August 2015. The property owners association recently requested an extension to submitting the plan to regulators until May 2016 to address numerous comments from stakeholders.

“The end goal is to dramatically reduce the volume of aquatic invasive weeds within the Tahoe Keys, which will make them more manageable, greatly reduce the likelihood of further spread to Lake Tahoe, reduce habitat for non-native species, and improve the Keys lagoons’ water quality and recreational opportunities,” according to the release.

The association plans to employ new aquatic weed harvesting practices in 2016, as well as larger-scale use of bottom barriers to control the spread of weeds. Field trails of scuba-assisted weed pulling, UV light and other techniques are also possible this year.