

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

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LAHONTAN WATER BOARD RELEASES POLLUTION CONTROL STRATEGY FOR INDIAN CREEK RESERVOIR

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, CA- The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, the State agency responsible for regulating water quality in the eastern Sierra, is seeking public comments on proposed controls to reduce phosphorus loading in Indian Creek Reservoir in Alpine County.

Control strategies called Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) are required by federal law for all surface water bodies that do not meet state water quality standards and that are not expected to meet those standards even after the control of "point sources" - or pollution, such as industrial or municipal discharges. Federal regulations require that TMDLs include an assessment of the current situation and reasonable assurance that state standards will be attained.

The mandatory public comment period for the draft TMDL and corresponding environmental document lasts 45 days and will begin May 8. This TMDL document includes changes incorporated in response to public comments received regarding an earlier draft.

Until 1989, the reservoir was used to store treated sewage exported from the Lake Tahoe Basin. Despite the fresh water input since 1989, the reservoir is still impaired by the effects of past nutrient loading from wastewater. Symptoms of impairment include algae blooms, low dissolved oxygen, low transparency, and high levels of phosphorus.

The control of phosphorus is considered essential to improve these symptoms. The draft TMDL estimates phosphorus loading from internal sources, including reservoir sediment, and from external sources including tributary inflow, surface runoff and precipitation. The TMDL implementation plan establishes a process for selection and implementation of measures to reduce phosphorus loading from both external and internal sources.

The Regional Board will accept written comments on the draft documents, or verbal comments at its July 10-11, 2002 meeting in Truckee. The Regional Board will consider approving the TMDL at the conclusion of the July public meeting.

To receive copies of the proposed TMDL and environmental document, or to obtain more information, contact Judith Unsicker at (530) 542-5462. All documents will also be available on the Internet at www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb6.

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board is part of the California Environmental Protection Agency.