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State Water Resources Control Board

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Arnold Schwarzenegger
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NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE LAHONTAN REGION (BASIN PLAN) TO ESTABLISH A TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL) FOR SEDIMENT IN SQUAW CREEK

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) will now accept comments on a proposed Basin Plan amendment that would establish a program to control sediment in Squaw Creek, Placer County. The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Lahontan Water Board) adopted the proposed amendment on April 13, 2006 under Resolution R6T-2006-0017. The State Water Board expects to consider the proposed amendment for approval at a future meeting in 2007. Notice of that meeting will be published separately. The meeting agenda item, including the State Water Board draft resolution and proposed amendment language, is available on the State Water Board's Web site at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/tmdl/tmdl.html>, or by request as specified below.

Squaw Creek is a tributary to the Truckee River and drains a small alpine watershed located about six miles northwest of Lake Tahoe between Tahoe City and Truckee. Squaw Creek was identified in 1992 under federal Clean Water Act § 303(d)(1) as not meeting narrative and numeric water quality standards due to excessive sedimentation/siltation. Excessive sedimentation has been identified as impacting the aquatic life and recreational beneficial uses of Squaw Creek. The beneficial uses found most sensitive to excessive sedimentation are those related to cold, freshwater aquatic life habitat.

Hillslope erosion from land disturbance related to development in naturally erosion-prone areas contributes to excess sediment delivery to Squaw Creek. Stream channel erosion, road sanding operations, and naturally occurring erosion also contribute to sediment loading to Squaw Creek. The sedimentation impairment is most apparent in the low gradient meadow reach of Squaw Creek, where the high gradient north and south forks deposit sediment transported from the upper watershed.

Placement on the Clean Water Act § 303(d) list requires that a plan (a TMDL) be developed to control the identified pollution and ensure that standards are met. Numeric targets were selected to interpret the water quality standards and track the effectiveness of the TMDL. These targets include physical habitat measures of stream substrate quality (median particle size and percent fines and sand), and biological parameters that represent desired stream habitat conditions for fish and aquatic invertebrates. The targets were established by comparison to regional reference streams with relatively less land disturbance.

The Squaw Creek Sediment TMDL focuses on controlling nonpoint sources of sediment from land use categories identified as major contributors to excessive in-stream sediment loading. Based on comparison with reference streams, it is estimated that a 50 percent reduction in the controllable sediment loading of 21,800 tons per year is needed to protect beneficial uses. The TMDL implementation program is based on continuation and improvement of existing erosion control and monitoring programs currently conducted by Squaw Valley Ski Corporation, the Resort at Squaw Creek, and the Village at Squaw Creek. Additionally, waste discharge requirements will be issued to Placer County to control nonpoint source erosion and sediment delivery to Squaw Creek. Other individual or general permits may be issued as warranted for construction-related or other land-disturbing activities to control sediment discharges to Squaw Creek.

Implementation monitoring will focus on tracking compliance with existing and proposed regulatory actions, including installation and maintenance of Best Management Practices to control sediment discharges, with a focus on control of fine sediment. Progress toward meeting the TMDL will be determined through monitoring of the in-stream physical and biological parameters. The estimated time frame for meeting the numeric targets and achieving the TMDL is 20 years. This estimate takes into consideration the time needed for dischargers to identify sediment sources, to devise a plan to address those sources, and to fully implement appropriate sediment controls; and for target indicators to respond to decreased sediment loading.

Letters commenting on this proposed amendment must be received by 1 p.m. on February 8, 2007. After this deadline, additional written comments will not be accepted unless it is specifically determined otherwise or unless changes are made to the proposed resolution prior to the State Water Board meeting where this proposed amendment will be considered. Please address your comments to: Song Her, Clerk to the Board, and send by email to commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov, by fax to (916) 341-5620, or by mail to State Water Resources Control Board, 1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. Please also indicate in the subject line "Comment Letter - Squaw Creek Sediment TMDL."

Please direct questions about this notice to Joanna Jensen, Division of Water Quality, at (916) 341-5557 or JJensen@waterboards.ca.gov or to Sheila Vassey, Senior Staff Counsel, at (916) 341-5173 or SVassey@waterboards.ca.gov.

January 16, 2007

Date



Song Her
Clerk to the Board