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STORMWATER UTILITY PROJECT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How is stormwater regulated in the Basin? *Currently the TRPA ordinance states that all private and commercial properties must install BMPs to capture and treat precipitation from a 20 year 1 hour storm event. Public projects are designed by engineers and installed by qualified contractors to meet this requirement for streets and rights of way. Private homeowners have the option to install the BMPs themselves or hire a contractor to do it for them. The TMDL and the Lake Tahoe Clarity Model will inform policy decisions for the eventual implementation of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting, which is a Federal water quality regulation implemented by the State.*

2. *What is a Tahoe stormwater management system? Simply it is a system consisting of capture, conveyance and treatment of stormwater to help restore the lake's clarity. Over the recent years it has been resolved that lake clarity is linked to runoff, nutrient and sediment loading and atmospheric deposition into the lake. As open space is/was developed man altered the natural process of slowing and retaining stormwater runoff into the lake. The Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) was developed after the commitments made at the US Presidential Summit in 1997 to address improving lake clarity. The water quality improvement component of the EIP resulted in numerous projects focusing on stormwater management and federal sharing of costs to construct these systems.*

3. Why didn't the EIP pay for the O & M of these projects? *The EIP was initiated to construct the infrastructure to capture and convey stormwater and prevent it from directly or indirectly entering Lake Tahoe. The federal and State dollars conveyed as grants required a local/private match which is the O & M component. As a community we are fortunate to have the option of grants, many communities are left to fund the entire process at the local level. As this project evolves and is completed, we will determine if we are to pool our resources to address the maintenance of these systems to protect our investments and ensure their functionality over the long-term.*

4. What is a TMDL? *Total Maximum Daily Load refers to the amount of sediment, nutrients and/or contaminates a certain water-body can "handle". The load calculations for each sub-watershed will inform policy makers as to how best implement the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System or NPDES permits which regulate stormwater.*

5. What is NPDES? *The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System is an EPA program which addresses managing contamination in surface waters. Part of that program focuses on stormwater management. CA and NV both have begun to move toward a combined watershed management approach that focuses on reducing the load that causes reduction of lake clarity. It is still a few years before each sub-watershed will have a calculated TMDL which will guide policy decisions for water quality managers. A stormwater utility can be a buffer and collective protection management system to the rate payers as well as a point of contact for the regulators.*

6. What is a Stormwater Utility? *A stormwater utility can be seen as an umbrella under which individual jurisdictions address their own specific needs in a manner consistent with regional problems, priorities and practices. With the expected needs for increased stormwater management suggested by existing O&M programs and potential NPDES compliance through the TMDL, the stability, flexibility, and adequacy of a utility provides a great advantage over other financing methods. SW Utilities are seen as funding mechanisms, offering a mix of methods to fund, to operate and maintain the investments in stormwater management facilities. They are also a program concept which offers an effective balance of: capital, operational, regulatory,*

engineering, planning and administrative activities. And finally, SW Utilities are the legal authority to regulate stormwater management, to operate stormwater management systems, and to assess fees and charges.

7. What is this project and how is the work being completed? *The project has three phases; first is to establish an ad hoc advisory committee and technical implementation team. These will be charged with compiling and analyzing data generated throughout the work plan to determine if pooling resources in the form of a stormwater utility makes sense for Nevada Lake Tahoe jurisdictions. The second and third phases are dependent upon the final recommendations made by this committee and entail the development and implementation of a stormwater utility structure. The majority of the work is being completed by the technical implementation team, with the advisory committee and stakeholders providing oversight, advice, and input.*

8. Who is on the Implementation Team? *NTCD established a Technical Implementation Team comprised of US Army Corps of Engineers, our staff, TRPA staff and other agency technical staff.*

9. What is the Ad-Hoc Stormwater Advisory Committee (SWAC) and who is represented? *The SWAC is made up of leadership from GIDs, HOAs, TRPA, Nevada Division of State Lands, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Nevada Department of Transportation, and experts in the field of stormwater master planning. Participation from California is encouraged so that we can apply what we learn Basin-wide. Each meeting will have a public comment period for anyone wishing to provide input. This is an ad hoc committee, which means it is only advisory; they have no authority or regulatory role.*

10. What is the Stormwater Advisory Committee's role? *The committee's role is primarily advisory; they are non-regulatory and have no authority to make policy changes. They will review data and information generated from the Technical Implementation Team and provide input, guidance and recommendations as to whether a district should be formed. Furthermore, they will be instrumental in working with NTCD and TRPA to outreach to their respective constituents and help build public support.*