

Staff Report 24

LESSEE/APPLICANT:

John E. Warnock and Marva M. Warnock, as Trustees of the Warnock Family Trust dated August 27, 2012

PROPOSED ACTION:

Issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use

AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:

Sovereign land in Lake Tahoe, adjacent to 5470 North Lake Boulevard, near Carnelian Bay, Placer County.

AUTHORIZED USE:

Use and maintenance of an existing pier and one mooring buoy.

TERM:

10 years, beginning September 13, 2022.

CONSIDERATION:

\$1,209 per year, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment.

SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:

- Liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
- Lessee expressly acknowledges that a permit from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) is required for the Authorized Improvements and failure to obtain a permit from TRPA and maintain compliance with that permit may result in TRPA imposing civil penalties and will constitute a breach of the lease.
- Lessee shall not store any personal items or construct any improvements in the Public Trust easement which may impair the public uses of access, navigation, fishing, and lake-related recreation.

- The lease provides that signs shall be posted on each side of the pier to indicate passage and to provide continuous shoreline access to the Public Trust Easement below elevation 6228.75 feet, Lake Tahoe Datum (LTD).

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:

AUTHORITY:

Public Resources Code sections 6005, 6216, 6301, 6501.1, 6503, 6503.5, and 6505.5; California Code of Regulations, title 2, sections 2000 and 2003.

PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:

On February 22, 2013, the Commission authorized a 10-year General Lease – Recreational Use to John E. Warnock and Marva M. Warnock, as Trustees of the Warnock Family Trust dated August 27, 2012, for an existing pier and one mooring buoy ([Item C06, February 22, 2013](#)). On October 19, 2017 the Commission authorized an amendment to replace Exhibit A, Land Description, and Exhibit B, Site and Location Map, to reflect a revised lease impact area and revise the annual rent from \$1,722 per year to \$1,076 per year, effective September 13, 2017 ([Item C29, October 19, 2017](#)). The lease will expire on September 12, 2022. The Applicant is applying for a General Lease – Recreational Use for the use and maintenance of the pier and one mooring buoy. The TRPA registered the mooring buoy on December 8, 2019, under registration number 11361.

The existing pier is a rock crib pier, and due to the nature of its construction, the public may traverse over the landward end of the pier but not under it. The landward end of the pier lies directly on the shore and can be crossed by walking over it. Signs identifying the designated public passageway are required to be posted on each side of the pier at all times. The immediate area of the pier is a relatively flat beach with small stones and boulders. The buoy is located directly lakeward of the upland property and occupies a relatively small area of the lake.

The pier and mooring buoy are privately owned and maintained and facilitate recreational boating. Recreational boating is a water-dependent use that is generally consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine. The California Legislature has identified private recreational boating facilities as an authorized use of Public Trust land. (Pub. Resources Code, § 6503.5.)

The proposed lease does not alienate the State's fee simple interest or permanently impair public rights. The lease is limited to a 10-year term, does not grant the lessee exclusive rights to the lease premises, and reserves an easement to the public for Public Trust-consistent uses. Upon termination of the proposed lease, the lessee may

be required to remove all improvements from State land and restore the lease premises to their original condition.

The proposed lease requires the lessee to insure the lease premises and indemnify the State for any liability incurred as a result of the lessee's activities thereon. The lease also requires the payment of annual rent to compensate the people of the State for the occupation of the public land involved.

CLIMATE CHANGE:

Climate change significantly affects inland non-tidal lakes such as Lake Tahoe. The frequency and severity of natural disasters like flooding, wildfire, drought, extreme heat, and storms is increasing throughout the state of California, including the Sierra Nevada mountains, and will continue to accelerate through the end of the century. Structures along the shores of inland lakes are particularly vulnerable to the more frequent and extreme weather events and shifts in seasonal characteristics.

According to California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, released in 2018, the most significant impacts of climate change in the Sierra Nevada Region are more intense heat, precipitation extremes, declining snowpacks, and changes in streamflow timing. The long-term warming trend will lead to warmer and shorter winters, and longer and dryer summers. Successive dry and warm winters are resulting in minimal snowpack, increased winter stream flows and floods, and decreased spring and summer runoff. Prolonged low lake levels will become normal. Low lake level conditions can create more expansive beaches and increased shoreline access in dry months. However, these conditions interfere with boat launching and mooring facilities. This impact is most noticeable where the facilities are sited on shallow, low gradient lake bottom locations.

Dry winters will be punctuated with exceedingly wet years where prolonged and excessive precipitation can produce flash floods. High precipitation in these years will result in higher lake levels, causing beaches to narrow and reducing public access. Extra saturation of the soil can increase erosion, especially following intense wildfire seasons. Surface runoff water may carry more sediment into the lake, adversely impacting water quality and clarity.

Climate change may also lead to more intense and unpredictable winds and storm events. These storms may deviate from prevailing wind patterns for the region. These winds can accelerate shoreline erosion in some areas or cause erosion in areas not typically subject to erosion. Additionally, these winds can increase wave damage on structures and boats along the lake.

Shoreline structures and moorings authorized under this lease may require more frequent inspection and maintenance to ensure they are not displaced during storm events. Watercraft moored to buoys, piers, or docks are also vulnerable to damage from high wind events and excessive waves.

CONCLUSION:

For all the reasons above, staff believes the issuance of this lease will not substantially interfere with Public Trust needs at this location, at this time, and for the foreseeable term of the proposed lease; is consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine; and is in the best interests of the State.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. Approval or denial of the application is a discretionary action by the Commission. Each time the Commission approves or rejects a use of sovereign land, it exercises legislatively delegated authority and responsibility as trustee of the State's Public Trust lands as authorized by law. If the Commission denies the application, the current lessee/Applicant may be required to remove the pier and mooring buoy and restore the premises to their original condition. Upon expiration or prior termination of a lease, the lessee also has no right to a new lease or to renewal of any previous lease.
2. This action is consistent with the "Leading Climate Activism" and "Meeting Evolving Public Trust Needs" Strategic Focus Area of the Commission's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.
3. Staff recommends that the Commission find that this activity is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a categorically exempt project. The project is exempt under Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905, subdivision (a)(2).

Authority: Public Resources Code section 21084 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15300 and California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905.

EXHIBITS:

- A. Land Description
- B. Site and Location Map

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission:

CEQA FINDING:

Find that the activity is exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061 as a categorically exempt project, Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905, subdivision (a)(2).

PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:

Find that issuance of the proposed lease will not substantially impair the public rights to navigation and fishing or substantially interfere with the Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time, and for the foreseeable term of the lease; is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine; and is in the best interests of the State.

AUTHORIZATION:

Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use to the Applicant beginning September 13, 2022, for a term of 10 years, for the use and maintenance of an existing pier and one mooring buoy, as described in Exhibit A and shown on Exhibit B (for reference purposes only) attached and by this reference made a part hereof; annual rent in the amount of \$1,209, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

EXHIBIT A

LEASE 4186

LAND DESCRIPTION

Two parcels of submerged lands situated in the bed of Lake Tahoe, lying adjacent to Lot 1 of fractional Section 22, Township 16 North, Range 17 East, M.D.B.&M., as shown on Official Government Township Plat approved November 10, 1865, County of Placer, State of California, more particularly described as follows:

PARCEL 1 – PIER

All those lands underlying an existing rock-crib pier with two catwalks lying adjacent to that parcel described in Grant Deed recorded September 13, 2012, as Document Number 2012-0084844-00 in Official Records of said County.

TOGETHER WITH any applicable Impact Area(s).

EXCEPTING THEREFROM any portion lying landward of elevation 6223 feet LTD on the shoreline of said Lake Tahoe.

PARCEL 2 – BUOY

A circular parcel of land, being 50 feet in diameter, underlying an existing buoy lying adjacent to that parcel described in Grant Deed recorded September 13, 2012, as Document Number 2012-0084844-00 in Official Records of said County.

Accompanying plat is hereby made part of this description.

END OF DESCRIPTION

Prepared 05/03/2022 by the California State Lands Commission Boundary Unit.



NO SCALE

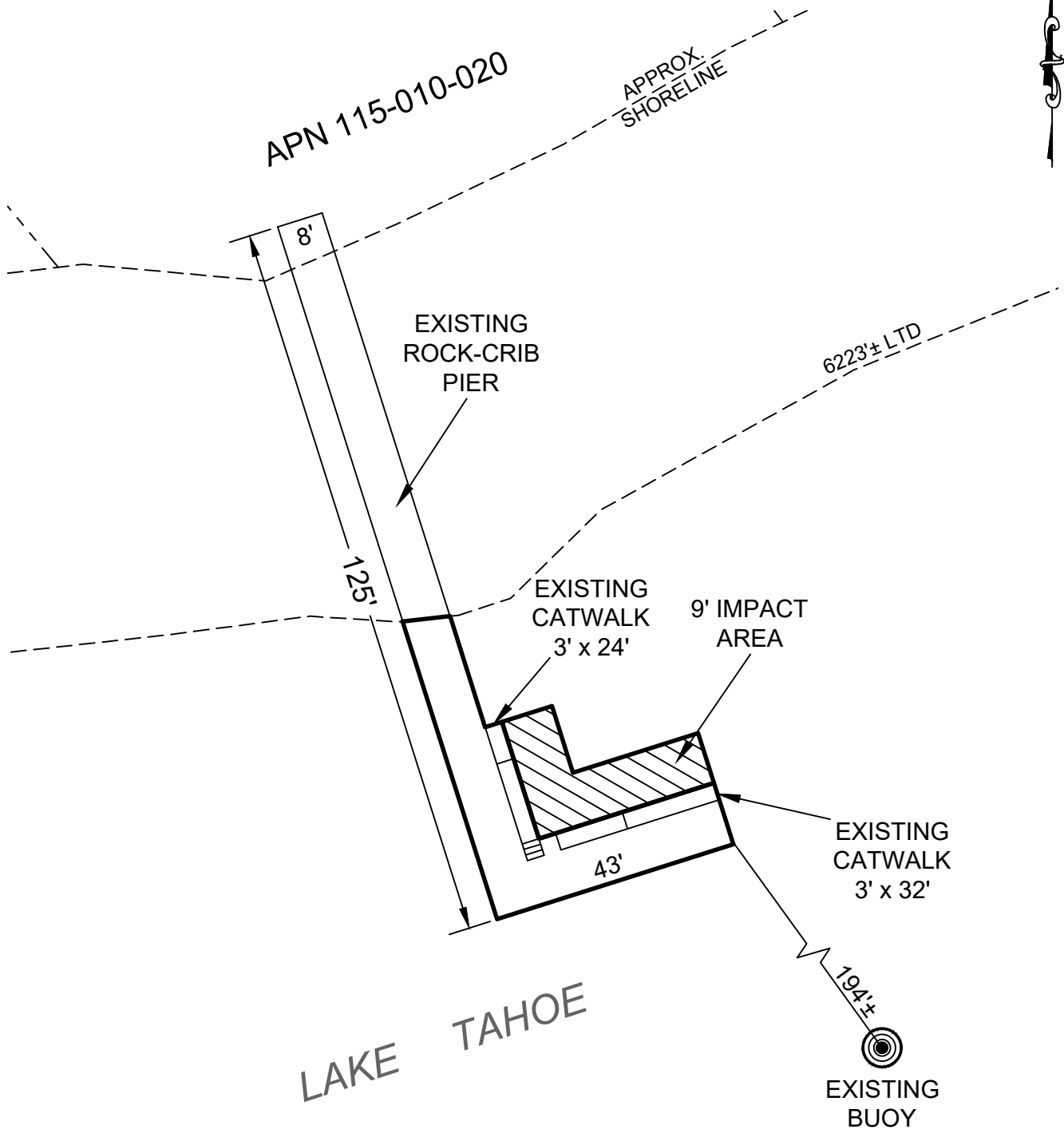


EXHIBIT A

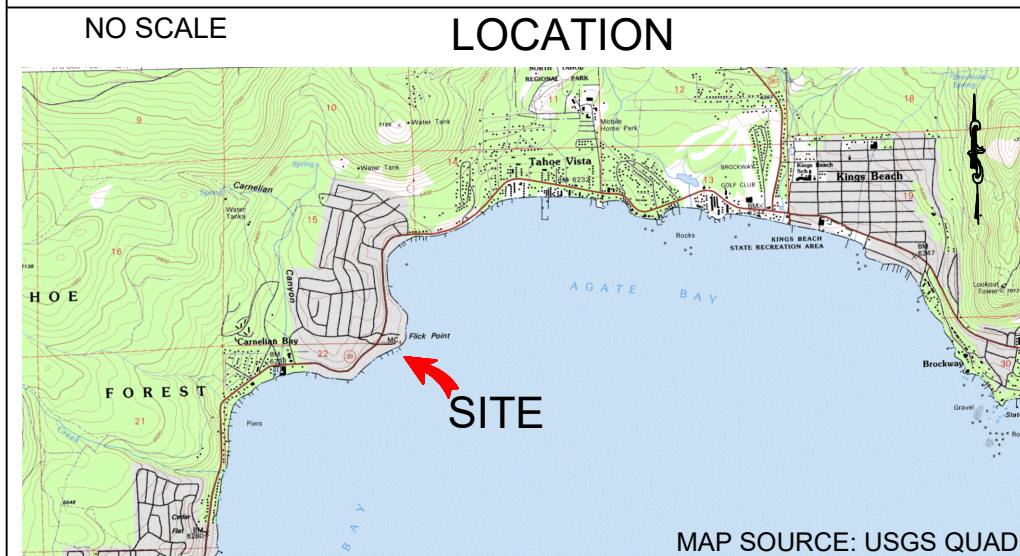
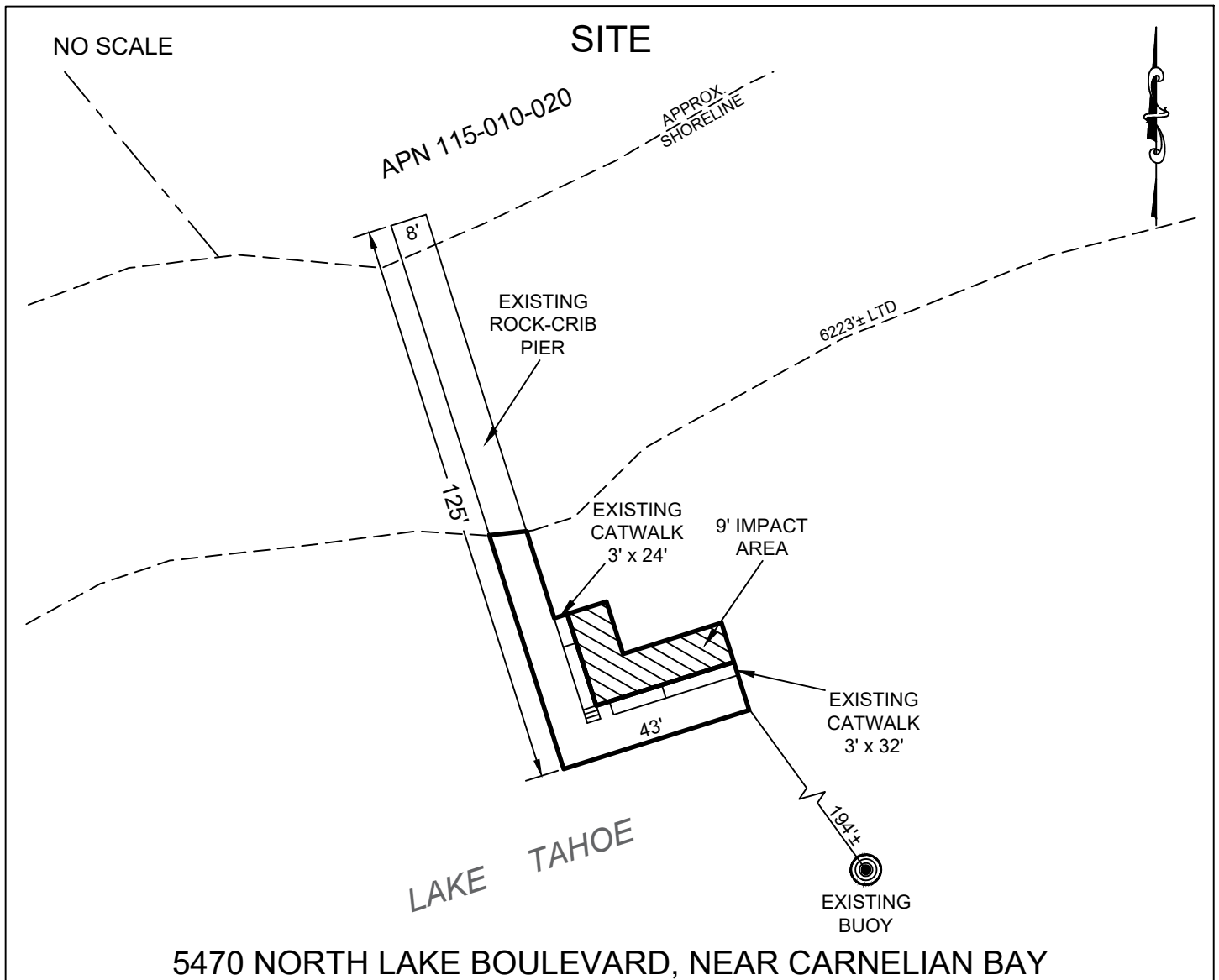
PAGE 2 OF 2

DT 05/03/2022

LAND DESCRIPTION PLAT
LEASE 4186, WARNOCK TRUST
PLACER COUNTY

CALIFORNIA STATE
LANDS COMMISSION





THIS EXHIBIT IS SOLELY FOR PURPOSES OF GENERALLY DEFINING THE LEASE PREMISES, IS BASED ON UNVERIFIED INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE LESSEE OR OTHER PARTIES AND IS NOT INTENDED TO BE, NOR SHALL IT BE CONSTRUED AS, A WAIVER OR LIMITATION OF ANY STATE INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT OR ANY OTHER PROPERTY.

EXHIBIT B

LEASE 4186
WARNOCK TRUST
APN 115-010-020
GENERAL LEASE -
RECREATIONAL USE
PLACER COUNTY

