

Staff Report 22

APPLICANT:

Geoffrey David Ralston and Andrea Gayle Ralston, Trustees of the Ralston Family Trust U/D/T dated January 16, 1998

PROPOSED ACTION:

Issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use

AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:

Sovereign land located in Lake Tahoe, adjacent to 1560 North Lake Boulevard, near Tahoe City, Placer County.

AUTHORIZED USE:

Use and maintenance of two existing mooring buoys not previously authorized by the Commission.

TERM:

10 years, beginning October 25, 2022.

CONSIDERATION:

\$546 per year, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and \$807 for unauthorized occupation of State land for the period beginning July 3, 2021 through October 24, 2022.

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 this 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.

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 July 3, 2021, ownership interest in the upland property adjacent to the lease premises transferred to Geoffrey David Ralston and Andrea Gayle Ralston, Trustees of the Ralston Family Trust U/D/T, dated January 16, 1998.

The Applicant is now applying for a General Lease – Recreational Use, for the use and maintenance of two existing mooring buoys not previously authorized by the Commission. No prior lease or application for the buoys exists, however the previous upland owners registered the buoys with TRPA on September 30, 2009 (Registration No. 1104).

The Applicant will pay \$807 in compensation for the unauthorized occupation of State lands by the two mooring buoys for the period of July 3, 2021 through October 24, 2022, the day before the beginning date of the proposed lease. Additionally, the proposed lease will require the Applicant to indemnify the State for the entire period of unauthorized occupation, ensuring the State is protected.

The subject mooring buoys are privately owned and maintained, used for the docking and mooring of boats, 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 subject mooring buoys are located directly lakeward of the upland property and occupy a relatively small area of the lake. 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 lease, the lessee may be required to remove all

improvements from State land and restore the lease premises to their original condition.

The improvements to the upland property include an existing pier that does not extend waterward of elevation 6,223 feet, Lake Tahoe Datum, and therefore is not located on sovereign land, but is within the Public Trust easement. The immediate upland topography of this pier is rocky, wooded, and moderately challenging to traverse; however, public access for pedestrians and lake-related activities is available at varying water levels underneath the pier and by passing through the upland parcel within the Public Trust easement.

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 are 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 storm events and winds. 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.

Improvements 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 Applicant may be required to remove the two mooring buoys and restore the premises to their original condition. The lessee 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 Areas 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, 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 the proposed lease will not substantially impair the public rights to navigation and fishing or substantially interfere with Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time, and for the foreseeable term of the lease; is consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine; and is in the best interests of the State.

AUTHORIZATION:

1. Authorize acceptance of compensation from the applicant in the amount of \$807 for unauthorized occupation of State land for the period of July 3, 2021 through October 24, 2022
2. Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use to the Applicant beginning October 25, 2022, for a term of 10 years, for the use and maintenance of two existing mooring buoys not previously authorized by the Commission, 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 \$546, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

EXHIBIT A

A 3502

LAND DESCRIPTION

Two parcels of submerged lands situated in the bed of Lake Tahoe, lying adjacent to Lot 5 of fractional Section 5, Township 15 North, Range 17 East, M.D.B.&M., as shown on Official Government Township Plat approved November 9, 1866, County of Placer, State of California, more particularly described as follows:

Two circular parcels of land, each being 50 feet in diameter, underlying two existing buoys lying adjacent to that parcel described in Grant Deed recorded June 3, 2021, as Document Number 2021-0073453-00 in Official Records of said County.

Accompanying plat is hereby made part of this description.

END OF DESCRIPTION

Prepared 04/14/2022 by the California State Lands Commission Boundary Unit.



NO SCALE



EXHIBIT A

PAGE 2 OF 2

DT 04/14/2022

LAND DESCRIPTION PLAT
 A 3502, RALSTON TRUST
 PLACER COUNTY

CALIFORNIA STATE
 LANDS COMMISSION



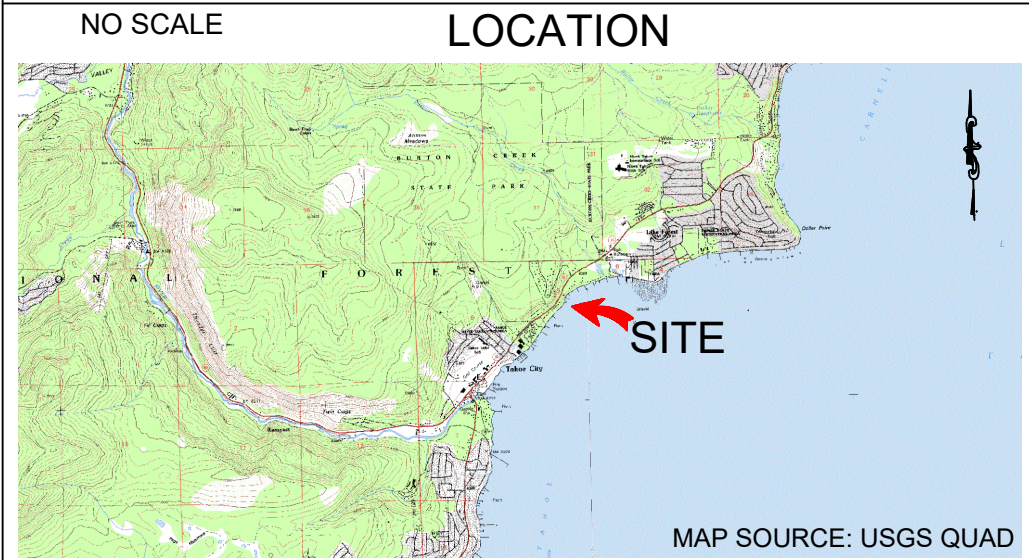
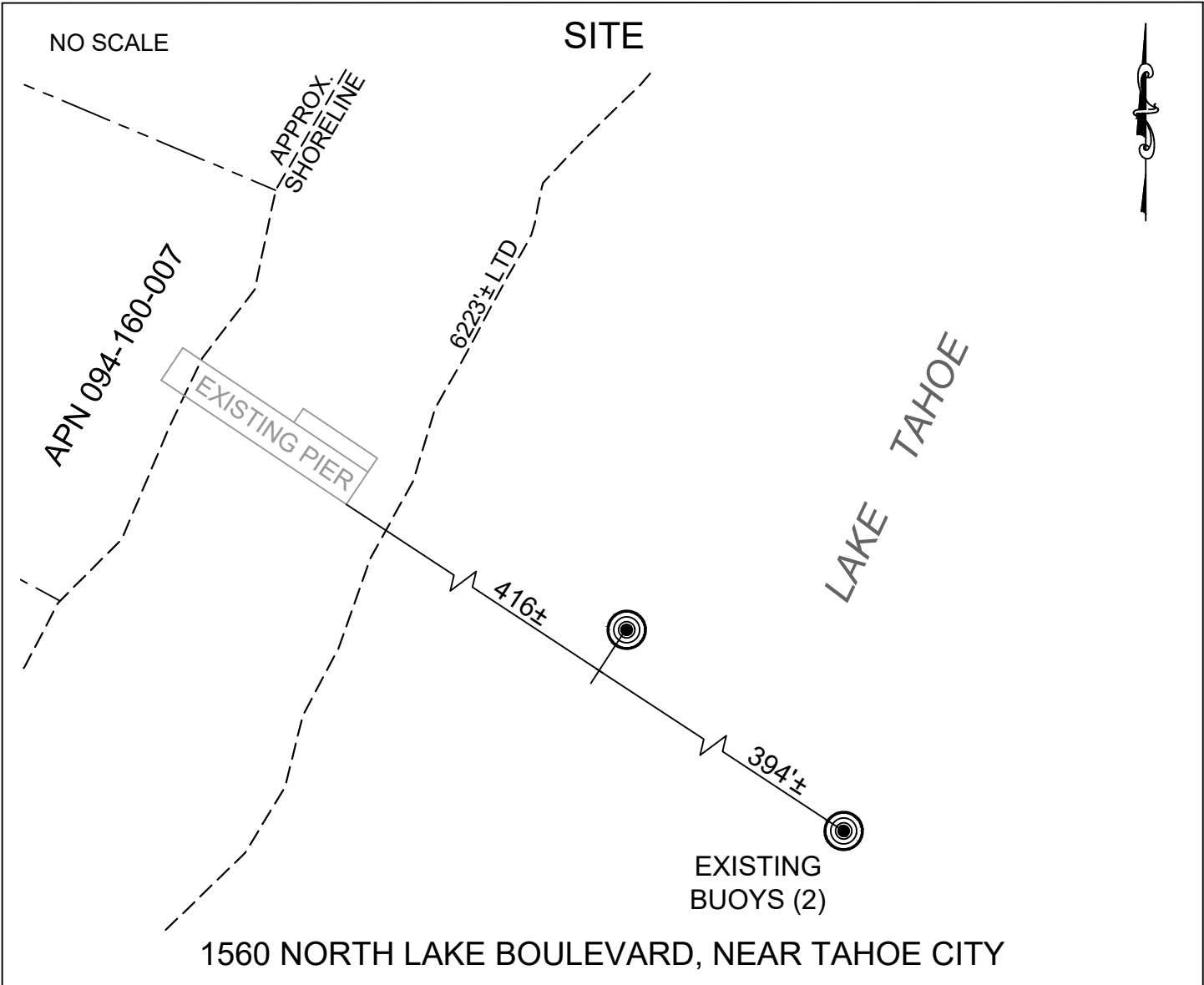
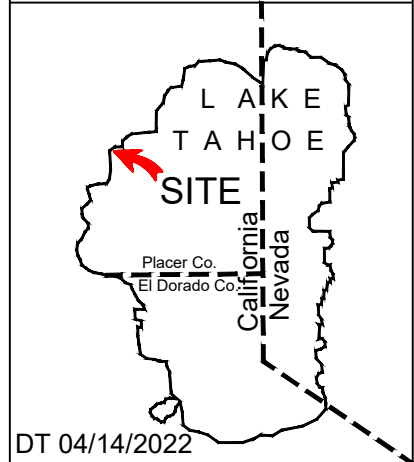


EXHIBIT B

A 3502
 RALSTON TRUST
 APN 094-160-007
 GENERAL LEASE -
 RECREATIONAL USE
 PLACER COUNTY



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.