

# Staff Report 42

## APPLICANT:

Christopher D. White and Kristine F. White

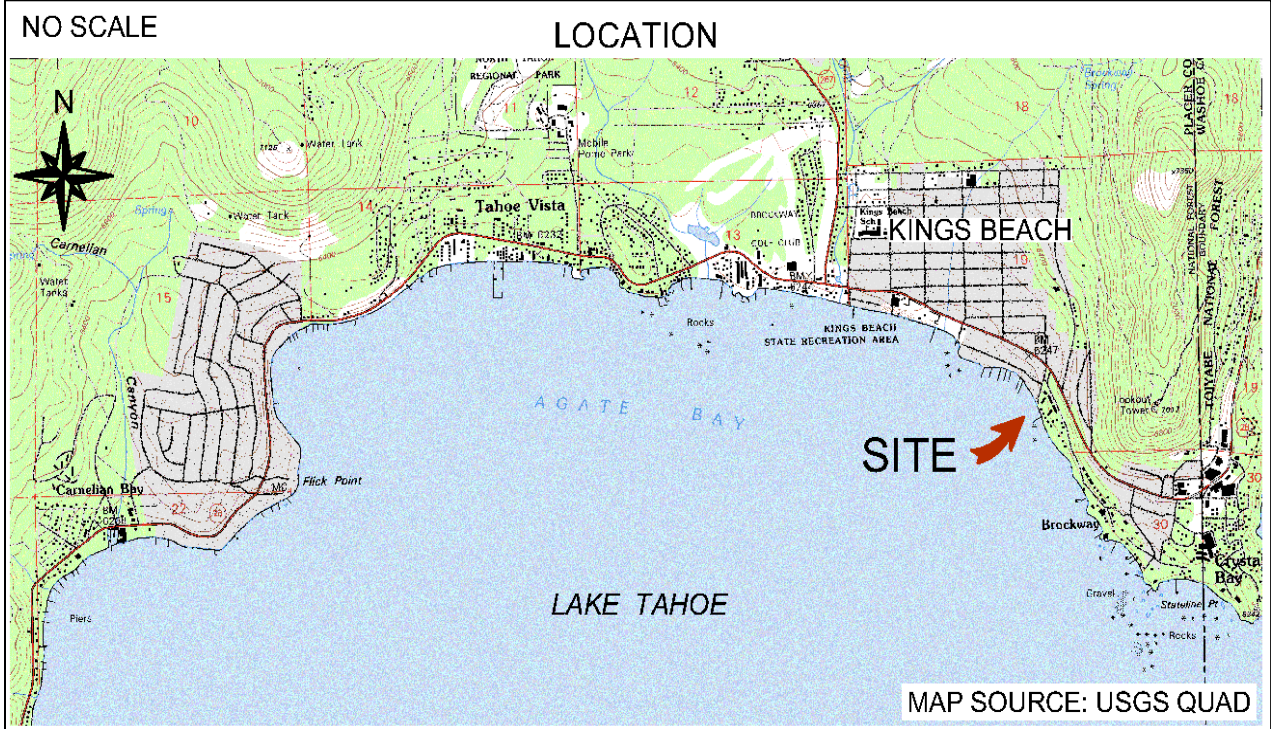
## PROPOSED ACTION:

Issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use.

## AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:

Sovereign land located in Lake Tahoe, adjacent to 99 Chipmunk Street, near Kings Beach, Placer County (as shown in Figure 1).

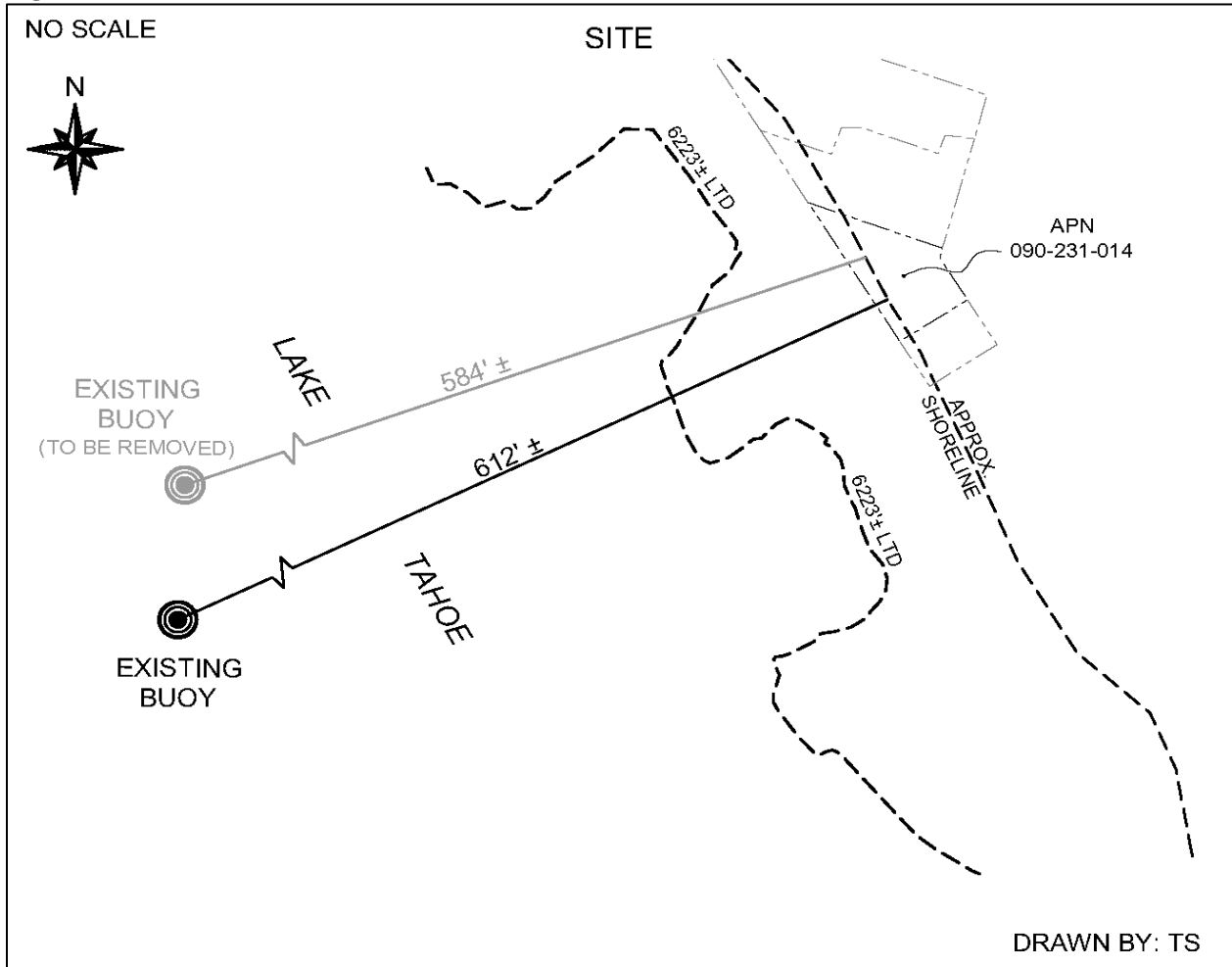
Figure 1. Location



**AUTHORIZED USE:**

Use of one existing mooring buoy (as shown in Figure 2) and removal of one mooring buoy.

**Figure 2. Site Map**



NOTE: This depiction of the lease premises is based on unverified information provided by the Applicant or other parties and is not a waiver or limitation of any State interest in the subject or any other property

**TERM:**

10 years, beginning December 2, 2023.

**CONSIDERATION:**

\$273 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 or registration from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) may be required for the Authorized Improvements and failure to obtain a permit or registration from TRPA and maintain compliance with that permit or registration 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's right of access for navigation, fishing, and Public Trust-consistent recreational uses.
- Lessee agrees and acknowledges that the hazards associated with climate change may require additional maintenance or protection strategies regarding the improvements on the lease premises.
- Within 60 days of completing the removal of one mooring buoy, Lessee will provide Lessor with a copy of a receipt by a licensed contractor confirming the removal of the buoy and buoy block.

**STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:**

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**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 December 2, 2013, the Commission authorized a General Lease – Recreational Use, Lease 9099, to Christopher D. White and Kristine F. White, for the use and maintenance of two existing mooring buoys adjacent to 99 Chipmunk Street, near Kings Beach, Placer County ([Item 48, December 2, 2013](#)). This lease expired December 1, 2023. (TRPA Registration No.11249).

The Applicant is applying for a General Lease – Recreational Use for the use of one existing mooring buoy and removal of one mooring buoy. Concurrently, the Applicant is a party in a separate application for a joint-use pier (A4133) which is on the February 26, 2024 Commission meeting agenda. If authorized, the pier will include construction of four boat lifts. Pursuant to the TRPA conditional permit,

construction of two of the four boat lifts remains contingent on the pier applicants satisfying a two mooring buoy removal requirement. Under this proposed lease, the Applicant is agreeing to, and will be responsible for, removing one buoy. The second buoy removal for A4133 will be addressed through Lease 9659, where that Lessee is seeking Commission authorization to amend their lease to reduce their mooring buoy count by one. The Applicant anticipates removal of the buoy within the second quarter of 2024.

The mooring buoy is privately owned and maintained and facilitates 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 buoy is located directly lakeward of the upland property and occupies 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 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.

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**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 drier summers. Successive dry and warm winters are resulting in minimal snowpack, increased winter streamflows 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 high wind events and damaging 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 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:

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1. The associated applications A4133 for the proposed construction of a joint-use pier and installation of four boat lifts and A4338/Lease 9659 for the removal of one mooring buoy are also scheduled for consideration by the Commission under separate actions at the February 26, 2024 meeting.
2. 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 mooring buoys and return the premises to their original condition. The lessee has no right to a new lease or to renewal of any previous lease.
3. 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.
4. **Buoy Removal:** 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 4, Minor Alterations to Land; California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15304.

**Existing Buoy:** Staff recommends that the Commission find that this activity is exempt from the requirements of CEQA as a categorically exempt project. The project is exempt under Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15301.

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

## RECOMMENDED ACTION:

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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 through the combination of the following exemptions: Class 1, Existing

Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15301; and Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land; California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15304.

**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 term of the lease; is consistent with the common law 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 December 2, 2023, for a term of 10 years, for use of one existing mooring buoy and removal of one mooring buoy; annual rent in the amount of \$273, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.