

Staff Report 03

LESSEE/APPLICANT:

Cedar Flat Improvement Association, Incorporated

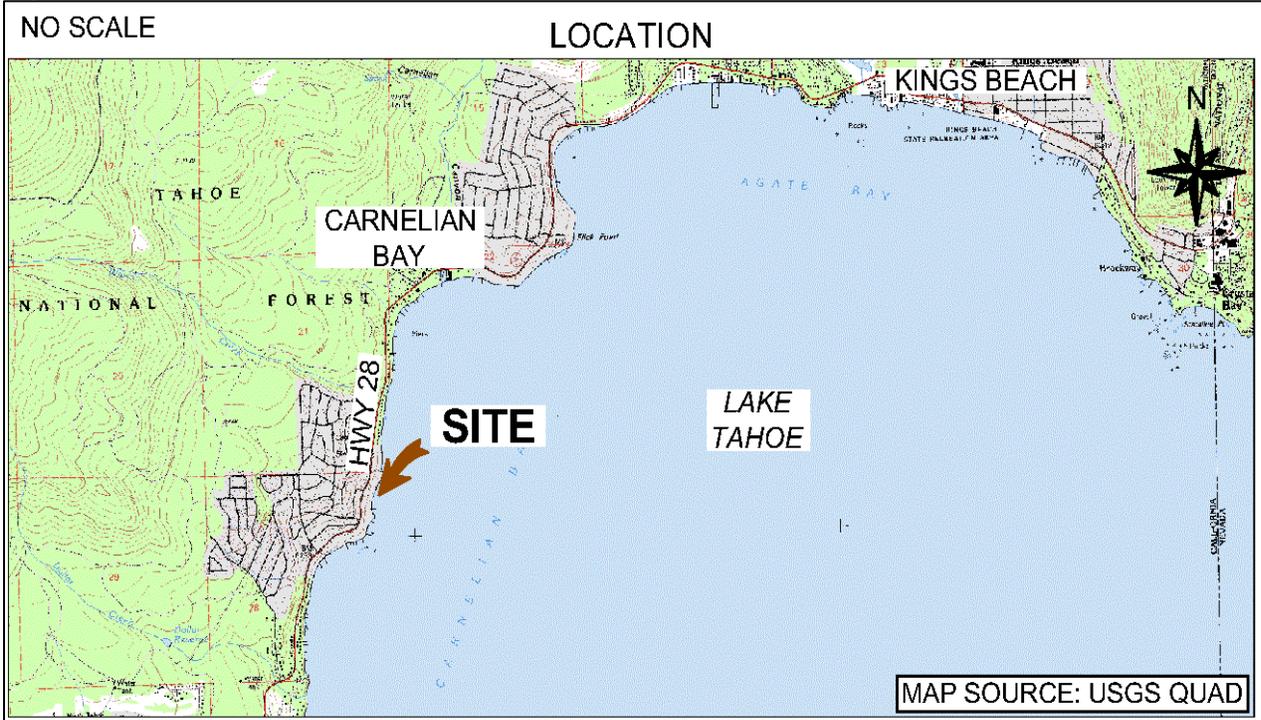
PROPOSED ACTION:

Acceptance of a Lease Quitclaim Deed; and Issuance of a General Lease –
Recreational Use.

AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:

Sovereign land located in Lake Tahoe, adjacent to 4370 North Lake Boulevard,
near Carnelian Bay, Placer County (as shown in Figure 1).

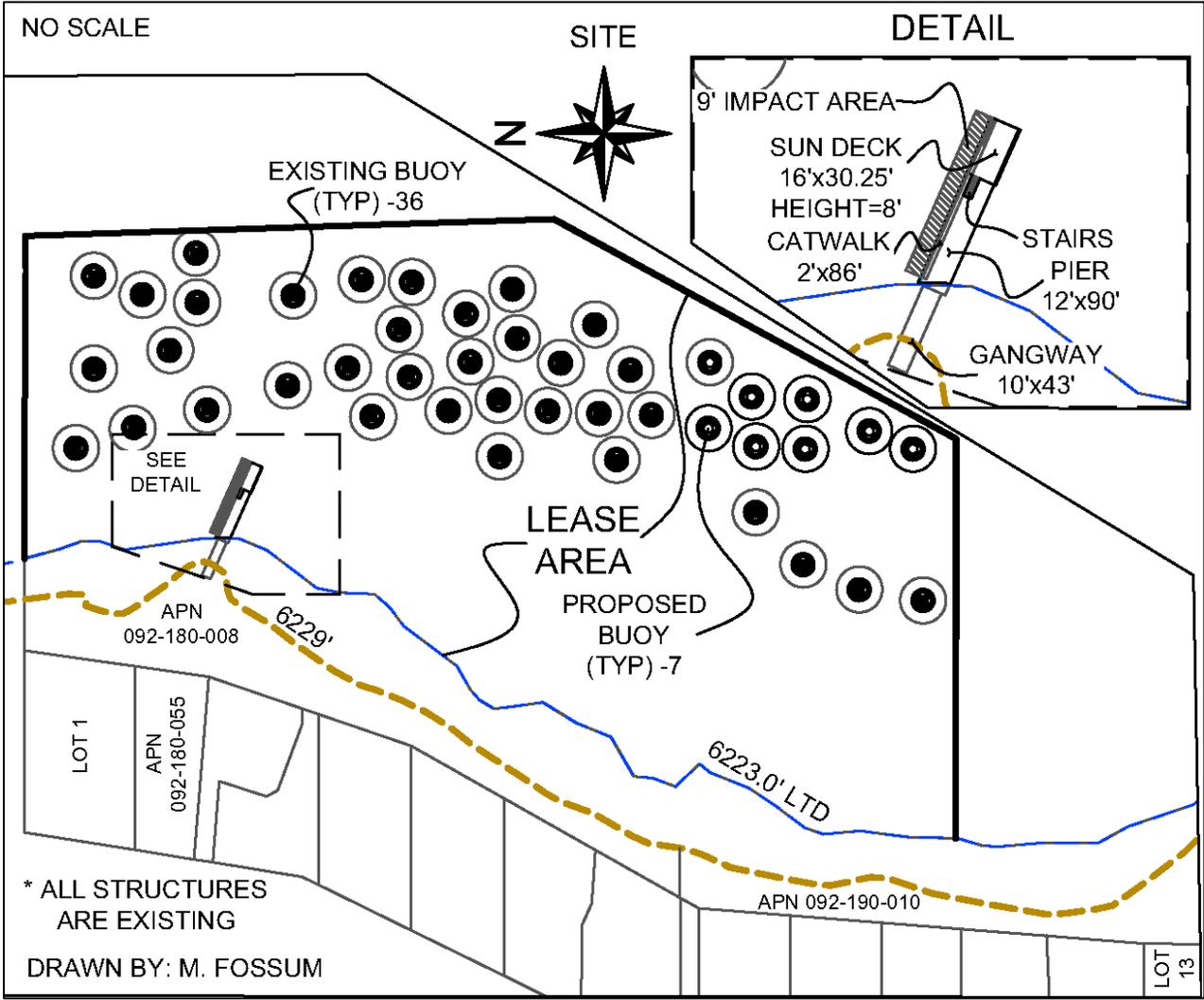
Figure 1. Location



AUTHORIZED USE:

Use and maintenance of an existing pier with sundeck and stairs and 36 existing mooring buoys, and installation and use of seven additional mooring buoys.

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 February 9, 2026.

CONSIDERATION:

\$14,529 per year, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment.

SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:

- Lessee acknowledges that a Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) permit or registration 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 the lease.
- Lessee shall not store any personal items or construct any improvements in the Public Trust Easement that may impair the public's right of access for navigation, fishing, and public trust consistent recreational uses.
- 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).
- The lease contains provisions stating that the existing sundeck with stairs, as shown on the attached Exhibit B, cannot be expanded, and if repairs to any portion of the existing sundeck cost more than 50 percent of the base value of the sundeck, the sundeck with stairs must be removed from the lease premise
- Within 60 days of completing the installation of the seven additional mooring buoys, Lessee will provide Lessor with photographs and a set of "as-built" plans that will show where the improvements have been placed. Lessor shall then replace Exhibit A, Land Description, and Exhibit B, Site and Location Map, to the lease as necessary to accurately reflect the final location of the authorized improvements. Once approved by the Lessor's Executive Officer or designee, the revised Exhibits shall replace the Exhibits incorporated in the lease at the time of lease execution. The replaced Exhibits shall be incorporated in the lease as though fully set forth therein.

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, section 2000 and 2003.

PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:

On February 4, 2019, the Commission authorized issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use to Cedar Flat Improvement Association, Incorporated, for the use and maintenance of a pier with sundeck and stairs, and 21 existing mooring buoys ([Item 3, February 4, 2019](#)). That lease will expire on September 28, 2028.

On February 26, 2024, the Commission authorized an Amendment of Lease 4173, a General Lease – Recreational Use, to the Lessee for the installation and use of 15 additional mooring buoys, effective September 29, 2024 ([Item 8, February 26, 2024](#)). The 15 mooring buoys were installed on November 19, 2025.

The Lessee has applied to quitclaim Lease 4173, a General Lease – Recreational Use, and is requesting a General Lease – Recreational Use for the existing pier with sundeck and stairs, and 36 mooring buoys; and to install and use an additional seven mooring buoys. The seven proposed mooring buoys were authorized by Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) Permit MOOR2024-1508, effective February 26, 2025. All 43 mooring buoys were registered with TRPA on August 28, 2025 (Mooring Registration No. 10475).

Accounting records for Lease 4173 show rent has been paid through September 28, 2026. Staff recommends that a prorated amount be credited to the Applicant and applied to their next annual rental payment, to account for rent which has already been paid. Staff also recommends that the new proposed lease have an effective date of February 9, 2026.

The pier at this location is situated over a rip-rap style raised slope, composed of large, rough-cut boulders and stone blocks. On either side of the raised slope, the shoreline is composed of a flat and pebbly beach. Public access for pedestrians is available across the shoreline by utilizing the pebbly beach beneath the pier. Lessee shall post signs identifying the designated public passageway. The signs shall be in place at all times.

Construction and placement of the buoy equipment will be performed by an experienced buoy placement company or marine contractor from a boat. The blocks will be placed on the lakebed using a crane lowering them over the side of the boat and placing them on the lake bottom. As stipulated by the TRPA permit, a spill prevention plan will be on board at all times. However, no hazardous materials will be utilized in the placement of the buoy equipment.

The Applicant owns the upland adjoining the lease premises. The pier and mooring buoys 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 seven proposed mooring buoys will be located on the southerly end of the existing buoy field and will 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.

Although the sundeck with stairs is a private use of public property, and not a Public Trust consistent use, the sundeck structure does not expand the footprint of the subject facilities. While new sundecks are not generally authorized, sundecks that have been in place for many years have been permitted, so long as they do not significantly interfere with Public Trust needs or activities. Additionally, the proposed lease contains terms such that the sundeck may not be expanded or rebuilt if it is substantially damaged.

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 involve.

CLIMATE CHANGE:

INTRODUCTION:

Climate change significantly affects inland non-tidal lakes such as Lake Tahoe, and its effects are increasing throughout the Sierra Nevada mountains. According to [California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment](#) (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.

These impacts create hazardous conditions like flooding, landslides, wildfire, drought, extreme heat, and severe storms. Structures along the shores of inland lakes are particularly vulnerable to the more frequent and extreme weather events, year-to-year changes in total precipitation, and shifts in seasonal characteristics.

DATA & PROJECTIONS:

Temperatures in the Sierra Nevada are expected to increase six to ten degrees Fahrenheit on average by the end of the century, causing the snowline to shift upslope 1,500 to 3,000 feet in elevation ([California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, 2018](#)). The long-term warming trend will lead to warmer and shorter winters and longer and drier summers. The warmer winters will reduce winter snowpacks by up to 60 percent across most of the Sierra Nevada and will result in increased winter streamflows and floods and decreased spring and summer runoff. Loss of snowpack is expected to dry soils 15 to 40 percent below their historical norms. Hotter, drier summer seasons and low water years will increase stress to vegetation, elevating wildfire risk and fire severity in the Tahoe Basin.

Dry winters will be punctuated with exceedingly wet years and higher temperatures will result in more rain-on-snow events ([Integrated Vulnerability Assessment of Climate Change in the Lake Tahoe Basin, 2020](#)). Atmospheric river systems will become more common. These events produce both flash floods and higher than normal seasonal flooding which may shift earlier in the year. Higher soil moisture will increase erosion and elevate landslide risk, particularly following intense wildfire seasons.

ANALYSIS:

The greatest vulnerability to recreational facilities is from flooding, landslides, and wildfire hazards ([Integrated Vulnerability Assessment of Climate Change in the Lake Tahoe Basin, 2020](#)). The Sierra Nevada is expected to experience year-to-year variability in precipitation and may shift between extreme wet and dry periods. High precipitation years or successive years will result in higher lake levels, causing beaches to narrow and reducing public access. Surface runoff may carry more sediment into the lake, adversely impacting water quality, clarity, and increasing risk of algal blooms ([UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center, 2024](#)). Conversely, low lake levels will become normal during periods of extended drought. Low lake level conditions can create more expansive beaches and increased shoreline access in dry months. However, these conditions could make some shoreline areas too shallow for effective recreational use of piers, boat docks,

and mooring buoys. During drought, structures will also be exposed to heat and wind that may accelerate deterioration or reduce the structural integrity of certain structures.

Additionally, atmospheric rivers and extreme weather events are expected to increase in the high Sierra. Storms may deviate from prevailing wind patterns for the region. Wind-driven waves can accelerate shoreline erosion in some areas or cause erosion in areas not typically subject to erosion. Winds can also increase wave damage on structures and boats along the lake.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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. Replacing older structural components with materials designed to better withstand extreme heat, wind events, and storms can reduce the likelihood of degradation and damage to structures. Any future construction or activities on State land would require a separate authorization from the Commission.

Regular maintenance, as required by the lease, may reduce the risks from extreme temperatures and rain. Pursuant to the proposed lease, the Applicant acknowledges that the lease premises and adjacent upland are located in an area that may be subject to the effects of climate change.

CONCLUSION:

For all the reasons above, staff believes that 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; and is in the best interest of the State.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. Approval or denial of the application is 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 lessee would not be allowed to install the seven additional buoys and may be required to remove the existing improvements and restore

the property to its 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. Acceptance of the quitclaim deed is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is an administrative action that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Authority: Public Resources Code section 21065 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, sections 15060, subdivision (c)(3), and 15378, subdivision (b)(5).

4. Existing pier and mooring buoys: Staff recommends that the Commission find that issuance of the lease 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 15061.

5. New mooring buoys: Staff recommends that the Commission find that issuance of the lease is exempt from the requirements of CEQA as a categorically exempt project. The project is exempt under Class 3, New Construction of Small Structures; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905, subdivision (c)(3).

Authority: Public Resources Code section 21084 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061 and California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission:

CEQA FINDING:

Find that issuance of the lease 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 1530, and Class 3, New

Construction of Small Structures; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905, subdivision (c)(3).

PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:

1. Find that the pier and 43 mooring buoys 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 term of the proposed lease, and are consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine.
2. Find that the existing and continuing use of the sundeck with stairs is not generally a Public Trust consistent use, but the current use does not substantially interfere with Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time.
3. Find that issuing the proposed lease is in the best interests of the State.

AUTHORIZATION:

1. Accept a Lease Quitclaim Deed for Lease 4173, effective February 8, 2026.
2. Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use to the Applicant effective February 9, 2026, for a term of ten years, for the use of an existing pier with a sundeck and stairs, and 36 mooring buoys, and to install and use seven additional mooring buoys; annual rent in the amount of \$14,529; and liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
3. Authorize the Executive Officer or designee to replace Exhibits to the lease upon submission, review, and approval of as-built plans detailing the final location of the new improvement following installation.