

MINUTE ITEM

This Calendar Item No. C27
was approved as Minute item
No. C27 by the State Lands
Commission by a vote of 3
to 0 at its 6/11/90
meeting.

CALENDAR ITEM

C 2 7.

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06/11/90

PRC 7109

Garibay

MINOR AMENDMENT OF GENERAL PERMIT - PUBLIC AGENCY USE

APPLICANT: California Tahoe Conservancy
Attn: Tamara McCandless
Project Coordinator
P. O. Box 7758
South Lake Tahoe, California 95731

AREA, TYPE LAND AND LOCATION:
Two parcels of submerged land in Lake Tahoe,
one north of Taylor Creek and one near Camp
Richardson, El Dorado County.

LAND USE: Construction and maintenance of two artificial,
experimental reefs for fish feeding, spawning,
and cover habitat.

TERMS OF EXISTING PERMIT:

Initial period: 49 years beginning July 17,
1987.

Surety bond: None.

Public liability insurance: None.

Consideration: The public benefit; with the
State reserving the right at
any time to set a monetary
rental if the Commission
finds such action to be in
the State's best interest.

(ADDED pgs. 148-148.6)

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PROJECT BACKGROUND:

In 1987, the Conservancy authorized and implemented the Offshore Fish Habitat Enhancement Project, creating two artificial reef areas on the south shore of Lake Tahoe in order to compensate for the lack of prime fish habitat in the nearshore areas of the lake. These reefs consist of boulder clusters located in different habitat areas. One site is located near Eagle Point in a cobbled area, and the second site is located in a sandy area off Kiva Beach. These areas provide feeding, spawning, and cover habitat. Based on monitoring results, staff is now exploring a second phase of the project.

The project was undertaken in response to identified fisheries planning needs. In 1971, a cooperative field survey was conducted by the Nevada and California Departments of Fish and Game and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to identify fish and aquatic habitats of special significance. These areas are critical for fish habitat and are important components of their food chains. These areas commonly have nearshore bottoms consisting of rocks, boulders and rubble. They provide cover, forage and nursery grounds for a wide variety of organisms. Most of the Nevada shoreline falls into this category, prime habitat is much less extensive along the California shoreline.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) has adopted a threshold for fish habitat in the lake for the provision of 5,948 acres of excellent nearshore habitat. At present, there are 2,776 acres of what is considered excellent habitat, leaving over 3,000 acres of habitat which need to be improved to meet this threshold.

Through an agreement between the Conservancy and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the USFS began a monitoring program at the artificial reef sites to determine success of the project in improving fish habitat. This involved identifying and recording abundance of crayfish and fish, as well as sampling periphyton (attached algae, forming the base of the food chain). Monitoring results from the USFS have shown significant use of the reefs by fish and crayfish. Fish species identified include Lahontan reddsides, sculpin, and Tahoe sucker. Up to 200 Lahontan reddsides have been observed at each boulder/cobble cluster. The monitoring results thus far indicate that the preliminary organisms which are a part of the fish food web appear to be establishing themselves on the reefs.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

The proposed project involves the expansion of the artificial reef area at the sandy site off Kiva Beach. The expansion will incorporate different designs to determine which type (or types) of structure is the most cost-effective and most attractive to different species or life stages of fish.

The first type of structure design would be the connection of two of the existing boulder clusters using a boulder and a cobble mix to create a larger habitat area. Significantly, enlarging a cluster pair would make it possible to find out if a larger sheltered mass would attract proportionately more fish.

The second type of design would be to experiment with the boulder/cobble mix. The existing clusters are composed of boulders surrounding cobble for greater surface area and interstitial spaces. One of the new clusters would be composed entirely of boulders (20.2 inches and greater in diameter) and the other structure would be composed of cobble (2.5 to 10.1 inches in diameter). Approximately 200 cubic yards will be used for the project. This would allow the applicant to determine if simpler structures are more or less attractive than the more complex habitat structures, or if they attract different species or life stages of fish. This information could then be incorporated in future project designs throughout the lake.

The existing monitoring agreement with the USFS would continue at this site to determine the results of the different design types.

The construction of the proposed artificial reefs will be done entirely from a barge which will be loaded at the Conservancy's property in the Tahoe Keys area. It is anticipated that construction activities would begin by mid-August 1990 and completed by November 1990.

CONSISTENCY WITH PROGRAM CRITERIA:

This project would enhance a critical habitat area as indicated by the TRPA thresholds. Artificial reef creation has been used in the oceans, Great Lakes, and many smaller lakes as an effective tool for increasing and enhancing fish habitat. The additional information gathered from this project would be useful as a model for future nearshore habitat enhancement projects in Lake Tahoe. The project is supported by TRPA, the USFS and the California Department of Fish and Game.

CALENDAR ITEM NO. C 27 (CONT'D)

BASIS FOR CONSIDERATION:

Pursuant to 2 Cal. Code Regs. 2003.

STATUTORY AND OTHER REFERENCES:

A. P.R.C.: Div. 6, Parts 1 and 2; Div. 13.

B. Cal. Code Regs.: Title 2, Div. 3;
Title 14, Div. 6.

AB 884: N/A.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. The proposed project includes a requirement that, should any structure authorized be found in nonconformance with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's snorezone ordinance if any alterations, repairs, or removal required, pursuant to said ordinance, are not accomplished within the designated time period, then the permit will, effective upon notice by the State, be automatically terminated, and the site shall be cleared pursuant to the terms thereof.
2. Pursuant to the Commission's delegation of authority and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 Cal. Code Regs. 15061), the staff has determined that this activity is exempt from the requirements of the CEQA as a categorically exempt project. The project is exempt under Class 4, Minor Alteration to Land and Class 6, Information Collection, 14 Cal. Code Regs. 15304 and 15306.
3. This activity involves lands identified as possessing significant environmental values pursuant to P.R.C. 6370, et seq. Based upon the staff's consultation with the persons nominating such lands and through the CEQA review process, it is the staff's opinion that the project, as proposed, is consistent with its use classification.

4. Applicant has requested that the processing fees be waived for this project. Staff recommends the Commission waive the processing fees because the project will provide significant environmental information concerning the future construction of fish habitats in the bed of Lake Tahoe.

APPROVALS TO BE OBTAINED:

Lanhamton Regional Water Quality Control Board,
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, United States
Army Corps of Engineers and Department of Fish
and Game.

EXHIBITS:

- A. Sketch of Proposed Modification.
- B. Location Map.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COMMISSION:

1. FIND THAT THE ACTIVITY IS EXEMPT FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CEQA PURSUANT TO 14 CAL. CODE REGS. 15061 AS A CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT PROJECT, CLASS 4, MINOR ALTERATION TO LAND AND CLASS 6, INFORMATION COLLECTION, 14 CAL. CODE REGS. 15304 AND 15306.
2. WAIVE THE PROCESSING FEES FOR THIS PROJECT.
4. AUTHORIZE ISSUANCE TO CALIFORNIA TAHOE CONSERVANCY OF A MINOR AMENDMENT TO PERMIT PRC 7109 PROVIDING FOR EXPANSION OF EXISTING ARTIFICIAL REEF FOR FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT; IN CONSIDERATION OF THE PUBLIC BENEFIT/HEALTH, WITH THE STATE RESERVING THE RIGHT AT ANY TIME TO SET A MONETARY RENTAL IF THE COMMISSION FINDS SUCH ACTION TO BE IN THE STATE'S BEST INTEREST; ON THE LANDS DESCRIBED ON EXHIBIT "A" ATTACHED AND BY REFERENCE MADE A PART HEREOF.

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Proposed Project

(Not to Scale)

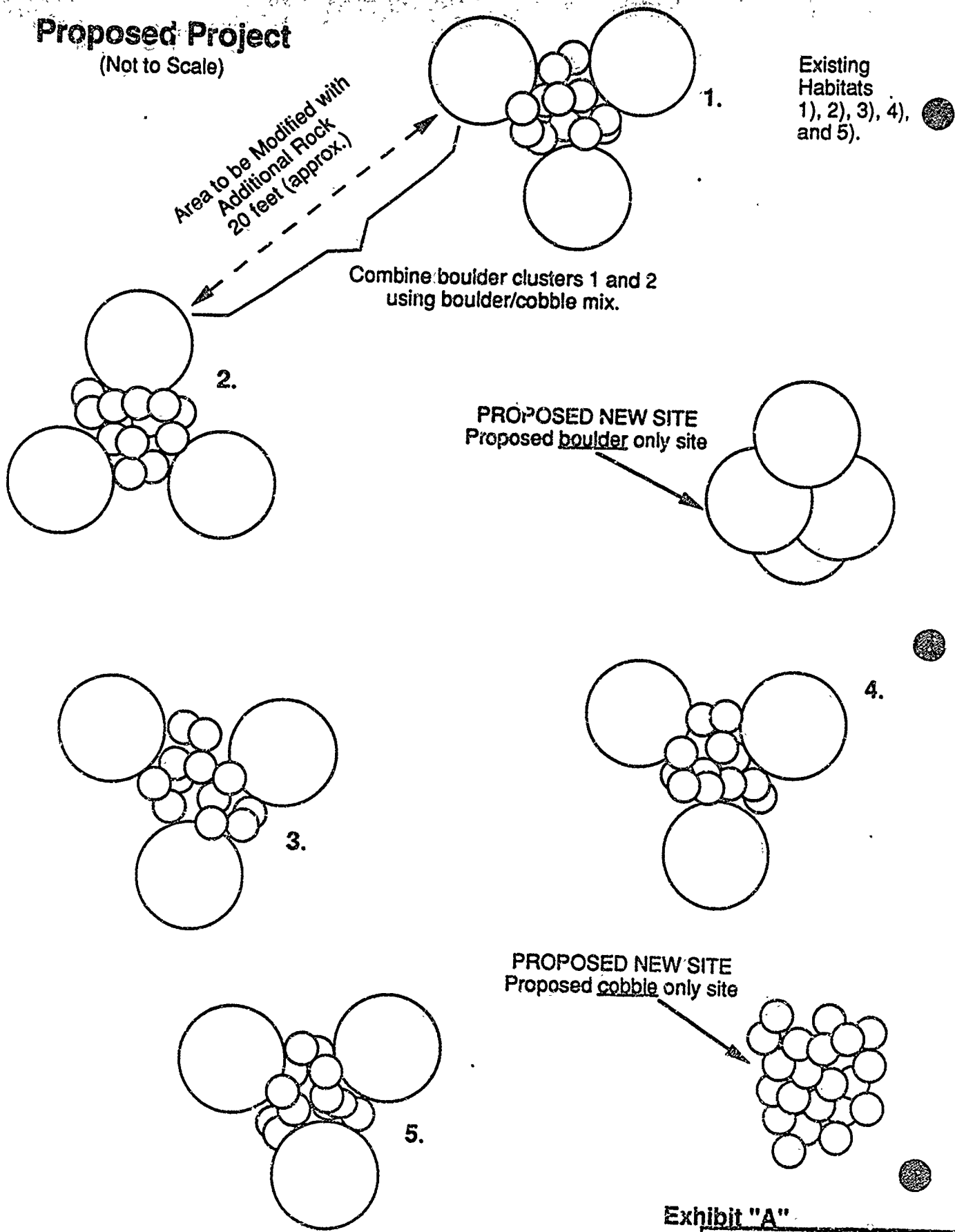


Exhibit "A"
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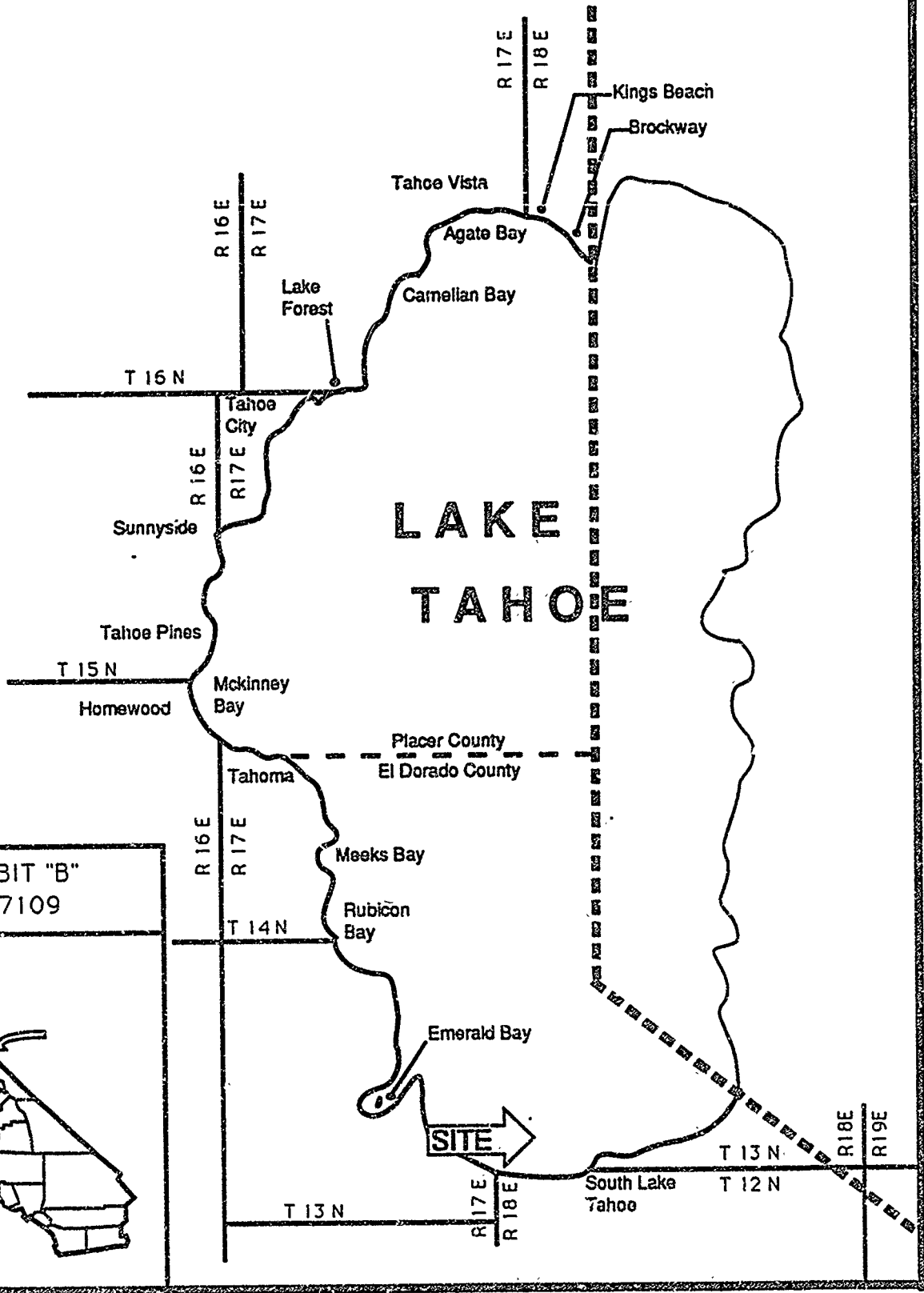


EXHIBIT "B"
PRC 7109



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