

STAFF REPORT

Date: November 13, 2019

To: TRPA Forest Health & Wildfire Committee

From: TRPA Staff

Subject: Discussion and Possible Recommendation of proposed code language for TRPA Code of Ordinances Chapter 61, Section 61.1. Tree Removal and Section 61.2 Prescribed Fire

Summary and Staff Recommendation:

Chapter 61 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances addresses vegetation management and forest health. Staff will present a short overview of the Committee's approved revisions to Prescribed Fire section of the code from September, and a discussion regarding potential approach to changes to Section 61.1. Tree Removal. Staff will then present proposed code language for the Prescribed Fire and Tree Removal Sections for final recommendation by the Forest Health and Wildfire Committee.

Requested Motion:

A motion to approve the proposed code language for Prescribed Fire and Tree Removal Sections of Chapter 61: Vegetation Management and Forest Health.

Previously Approved Direction for Updates to Section 61.2. (Prescribed Fire):

During the Forest Health and Wildfire Committee's September 2019 meeting, the Committee approved proposed direction to update Section 61.2. concerning Prescribed Fire. These edits focused primarily on developing a user-friendly code. Approved recommendations included:

1. Relying on partner agency MOU's with the TRPA
2. Deleting line 61.2.5.B.7.
3. Deleting Section 61.2.3.B.1-5. Limitations

Proposed Revisions to Section 61.1. (Tree Removal):

Most forests within the Lake Tahoe Basin are overly dense from decades of fire suppression and historic patterns of timber harvest. Dense, even aged forests are at greater risk from insects and disease, drought, and potential catastrophic wildfire. Thinning and tree removal within dense forests can increase structural heterogeneity and complexity, increase habitat diversity, and make forests more resilient to disturbance. Additionally, tree removal allows for critical protection of homes, infrastructure, and fire fighter safety, while allowing for the potential reintroduction of fire post-treatment.

Many TRPA partner agencies have MOUs that exempt or qualify exempt various tree removal activities. With this in mind, the proposed tree removal code update will aim to streamline the code to facilitate user efficiency while ensuring TRPA requirements are met. The proposed revisions focus on:

1. Moving sections that reference protections to a more logical section of Chapter 61.
2. Refining code language to reflect recommendations from partner land management and regulatory agencies that focus on current practices and increased pace and scale of forest restoration.
3. Reorganizing Section 61.1. Tree Removal to a facilitate a logical flow.

Contact Information:

For questions regarding this agenda item, please contact Kathleen McIntyre, at (775) 589-5268 or kmcintyre@trpa.org.