
Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

April 10, 2020

Jan Cutts, District Ranger
Bridgeport Ranger District,
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
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Letter of Support for Proposition 68 Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Funding for Buckeye Hot Springs Recreation Enhancement Project, Bridgeport, Mono County

This letter is written to support Mammoth Lakes Recreation's (MLR's) and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest's (HTNF's) efforts to bring much needed recreation and resource management improvements to the Buckeye Hot Springs adjacent to Buckeye Creek (Project). The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Lahontan Water Board) has primary responsibility for the protection of water quality in the Lahontan Region, and Lahontan Water Board staff acknowledge the need for action at the Project site. We appreciate the HTNF's attention and immediate response to our concerns about the current conditions at Buckeye Hot Springs.

The Lahontan Region extends from the Oregon border to the northern Mojave Desert and includes all of California east of the Sierra Nevada crest. Buckeye Creek is part of the East Walker River Hydrologic Unit and is a pathogen-impaired water body on the Federal Clean Water Act section 303(d) list. Both developed (e.g., camping, skiing, day use) and undeveloped (e.g., hiking, fishing) recreation are important components of the Region's economy. Due to the increase in visitation, proliferation of social media (geo-tagging), absence of formal parking delineation, and lack of educational materials, the Buckeye Hot Springs informal recreation opportunity requires the programmatic steps included in the Project proposal to provide a quality recreation experience and protect human health and the environment.

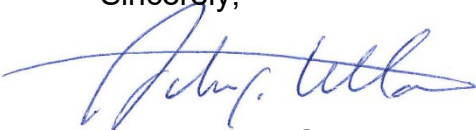
Lahontan Water Board staff supports the proposed actions of MLR and HTNF to mitigate existing water quality issues arising from informal and unsustainable recreation occurring at the Project site. The proposed Project improvements would mitigate human impacts including feces and urine, erosion, and damages to sagebrush steppe. The proposed project includes installation of a vault toilet which would help address a pathogen source to Buckeye Creek.

PETER C. PUMPHREY, CHAIR | PATTY Z. KOUYOUMDJIAN, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Lahontan Water Board staff requests that you support Mammoth Lakes Recreation's application for funding from the SNC - Vibrant Recreation and Tourism grant to implement the proposed actions for the protection of water quality, the benefits outlined above, and in support of sustainable recreation region-wide.

If you would like to discuss this letter, please feel free to contact Tom Gavigan, Engineering Geologist, at (530) 542-5422 (tom.gavigan@waterboards.ca.gov), or me at (530) 542-5436 (ben.letton@waterboards.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ben Letton", written over a horizontal line.

Ben Letton, PG
Supervising Engineering Geologist

cc (via email): Tom Gavigan, Lahontan Water Board