

July 23, 1959

W. T. Shannon, Deputy Director

Robert D. Montgomery, Regional Manager

Proposed Dredging in Lake Tahoe

The dredging of the Upper Truckee marshes to create a subdivision there is well under way. Apparently, there is nothing we can do about this except to prevent damage in the lake itself by muddy water that comes down the Upper Truckee River. It appears that this important nursery area will be destroyed.

Now the U. S. Corps of Engineers has received two applications for dredging in the lake itself. Application 3168 is by the State Lands Commission for dredging an unknown amount of sand from the lake off the mouth of Taylor Creek. Application 3169 is by J. H. Pomeroy and Company for dredging two million cubic yards of material off the mouth of the Upper Truckee. The latter application is connected with the Tahoe Keys operation that is destroying the Truckee marshes. The State Lands Commission has applied to the Corps of Engineers because they, being the owners of the land, have received an application from a private party who wishes to mine the sand from the lake.

Regional personnel have discussed the proposed dredging operations with District Ranger Al Mullen and Engineer John West of the El Dorado National Forest. They told us that the Forest Service is opposing the dredging unless some arrangement can be worked out to protect the swimming beaches at the south end of the lake. Mullen also informed us that the Tahoe Area Council has expressed opposition to the dredging and that last week the South Tahoe Rod and Gun Club passed a resolution opposing it.

It appears to us that these two operations would open the door for extensive sand and gravel removal and washing in Lake Tahoe. Certainly, this is something that could be very detrimental to the fishery. Since the protection of this fishery is our responsibility, we believe that the Department should oppose these and other similar projects.

The Army Corps of Engineers grants a permit which only expresses the assent of the Federal Government in so far as concerns the public right of navigation. While we should oppose the granting of these permits by the Corps, they probably will grant the permits over our objections because the work will not obstruct navigation. However, we believe that these operations and others of this kind can be stopped by the State Lands Commission since the bed of Lake Tahoe is owned by the State.

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We called Bob Nadey at the Sacramento office of the State Lands Commission and asked him how we might best proceed. He suggested that the Department write a letter explaining our stand to the Commission, and he believes that if the opposition to this type of work in Lake Tahoe is great enough, the Commission will not allow it.

We have prepared a draft of such a letter for the Director's signature as well as a letter to the Corps of Engineers.

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Region II

GHW/rs

cc: Water Projects Coordinator