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NEWS RELEASE

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TRPA Announces Winners of Lake Spirit Awards

Stateline, NV – The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency announced the winners of the Lake Spirit Awards honoring “real people making real progress protecting Lake Tahoe” at their first-ever Community Appreciation Day event held on September 29 at TRPA’s office.

Two winners (one from the North Shore and one from the South) were honored for going above and beyond the call of duty to protect the beauty and clarity of Lake Tahoe and the Basin environment. “They represent the many unsung heroes tirelessly working to protect this special place,” explained TRPA Executive Director, Joanne Marchetta, in announcing the awards.

Ruth Dworsky was the Lake Spirit Award winner from the North Shore. She was nominated for her work creating defensible space on the 88-acre Carnelian Woods Townhouse Association (CWTA) where she has been instrumental in organizing her neighbors around community fire protection. Together they accomplished the removal of 222 dead and dying trees, created 30-foot areas of defensible space around 118 homes, organized community “rake-offs” to clear out brush and debris, inspired 30 people to contribute 250 hours towards creating defensible space, and was affectionately dubbed, “Queen of the forest” by her neighbors.

According to the townhouse association Board President, Lee Shuff, Ruth personally commits approximately 200 hours each year to raking up debris in her community, which she says “is great exercise.” In accepting the Lake Spirit Award and gift certificate from McBride’s Nursery, Ruth thanked her neighbors and vowed to use the gift certificate to purchase flowers to plant around CWTA’s community pool.

TRPA also awarded a Lake Spirit Award to Mahmood Azad from the South Shore. Azad previously worked as a Douglas County Engineer and currently works for the Nevada Tahoe Conservation District. As a County Engineer, he led Douglas County to a heightened level of engagement on Tahoe water quality and clarity. His committed leadership has benefited

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Lake Tahoe by encouraging the Douglas County Board of Commissioners and County staff to support the Lake Tahoe Restoration with both action and funding. He was instrumental in Douglas County's "Warrior Way" water quality improvement project developed to ensure the use of public funds in the most effective manner possible to maximize water quality benefit for Lake Tahoe.

Honorable Mention was awarded to Timothy Rowe, a US Geological Survey hydrologist who has worked in the Tahoe Basin as both a professional and volunteer for over 20 years. His undying passion and commitment have earned him the unofficial title of "The Face of USGS at Lake Tahoe," for providing the best science to help make improvements in the Basin, and by communicating this information in a manner that informs and inspires others.

In addition to Lake Spirit Awards, the winners were honored with Certificates of Appreciation from Senator Harry Reid's representative, Matthew Tuma, "in appreciation of their commitment to preserving Lake Tahoe."

The Lake Spirit Award Ceremony was held during TRPA's first-ever Community Appreciation Day event which included bluegrass music by local band, Bison, a free BBQ dinner, activities for the kids, an ice cream social hosted by members of TRPA's Governing Board and Advisory Planning Commission, and demonstration booths explaining TRPA's mission, as well as partner participation by the Sierra Watershed Education Partnerships, and Tahoe Resource Conservation District.

In welcoming the community, Marchetta said the purpose of the event was, "to honor all those in the Tahoe Basin working to protect our environment. Because, when it comes to creating environmental gain on the ground, everyone has a role to play," she said. "We would like to thank you all for your efforts, large and small, at protecting the beauty and clarity of Lake Tahoe." TRPA plans to hold a similar event each year.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency cooperatively leads the effort to preserve, restore, and enhance the unique natural and human environment of the Lake Tahoe Region now and in the future. For additional information, call Kristi Boosman at (775) 589-5230 or send an email to kboosman@trpa.org.

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