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NEWSLETTER 2015

Protecting Lake Tahoe since 1957 | keep Tahoe Blue.org



COMBATTING POLLUTION

① Keep Tahoe Blue Schools

Recognizing that youth represent the next generation of Lake Tahoe stewards, the League's Keep Tahoe Blue Schools program helps provide environmental science and stewardship education for Lake Tahoe area students. With school back in session, we're helping Tahoe's teachers take advantage of the Lake as the ultimate classroom. Aaron Hussmann (above), the League's community engagement associate, has engaged 1,300 youth so far this fall.

② Pipe Keepers

Created in 2012, Pipe Keepers is a citizen science program that examines stormwater entering Lake Tahoe. To date, Pipe Keeper volunteers have collected over 1,400 water samples from 22 pipes around the Lake. In 2015, the League partnered

with the Desert Research Institute to further analyze Pipe Keeper data and determine the size and amount of fine sediment particles clouding the Tahoe's waters. Here, core volunteer Casey Metkovich braves a cold morning to monitor the impact of a neighborhood pipe on Lake Tahoe.

③ Road Sand

The road sands that Tahoe agencies use to provide safe winter traction for drivers are the largest source of fine sediment that harms Lake clarity. With the League's support, Heavenly Resort and Caltrans' south shore operations will join other Tahoe agencies this winter in switching to Washoe sand, a more Lake-friendly road abrasive. League staff will continue collaborating with decision-makers for Tahoe's roadways to find more solutions to Keep Tahoe Blue.



Photo: Bob Harms

1



1



Photo: Julie Regan

2



Artwork: Tahoe Outdoor Living

3

PROMOTING RESTORATION

Decades of unchecked development have destroyed much of Tahoe’s meadows, marshes and streams, which acted as natural filtration systems for the Lake. Restoration, the best method of bringing back these natural processes, will be even more critical to shore up Tahoe’s resiliency as the climate changes.

The League advocates for better regional planning to drive restoration. So far in 2015 our staff has attended 46 policy meetings in support of better planning, reviewed 11 development projects or plans, and submitted 14 comment letters with detailed suggestions on environmental improvements.

- 1 **18th Annual Tahoe Forest Stewardship Day**
League staff and volunteers collaborated with the city of

South Lake Tahoe and the California Tahoe Conservancy to restore 16,000 square feet of stream corridor. We planted 700 willow stakes and 300 wood rose plants to stabilize the stream banks and prevent erosion into the river.

- 2 **Lake Tahoe Restoration Act**
League Executive Director Darcie Goodman Collins continues to collaborate with Tahoe stakeholders in advocating for congressional reauthorization of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act.
- 3 **League’s Tahoe-Friendly Landscaping**
We replaced 4,000 square feet of lawn with water-wise and native plants at our office grounds in participation in South Tahoe Public Utility District’s turf buy-back program.



1

Photo: Brian Walker, brianwalkerphoto.com



2



3

Photo: Brian Switzer

TACKLING INVASIVE SPECIES

Eyes on the Lake: Protect While You Play

Eyes on the Lake is the League’s citizen science program to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive plants in Tahoe’s waters. Volunteers identify and report on plants found while out enjoying the Lake. The drought has created hospitable conditions for invasive species by warming Tahoe’s shallow shorewaters, making these efforts more important than ever.

So far, in 2015:

- We trained staff from four marinas: Obexer’s, North Tahoe, Sierra Boat Company and Tahoe City.
- The League incorporated Eyes on the Lake training into a new Lake Tahoe Community College course on field monitoring, providing job skills to 18 students.
- We collaborated with Lake Tahoe Aquatic Invasive Species Coordination Committee partners to produce an informative summary on the AIS challenge facing the Lake.

1 Trainings Grow the Program

We expanded Eyes on the Lake to 244 trained volunteers, who have submitted 345 surveys to date. Here, volunteers use their new tools to survey on the South Shore.

2 Eyes on the Lake Survey Day

The League hosted the first ever lakewide Eyes on the Lake Survey Day. Volunteers scoured the Lake’s shoreline for infestations and conducted an intensive survey of Taylor Creek, a South Shore tributary.

3 Aquatic Invasive Weed Pull

We hosted an AIS removal event using volunteer power in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.



Photo: Brian Walker, brianwalkerphoto.com



PROTECTING TAHOE'S SHORELINE

Tahoe's shoreline is under assault. Rocks are covered in algae, invasive species are gaining a foothold, once pristine beaches are often marred by trash and the nearshore waters are getting cloudier. Fortunately, record numbers of beach cleanup volunteers inspire hope. In 2015, low-water drought conditions left an usually large amount of beach exposed to litter, making cleanups especially important.

① “Cleanups like these are only possible because of our volunteers and strong collaborations with local businesses and the land managers for Tahoe beaches,” said Marilee Movius, the League’s community engagement manager.

② Because beach cleanups provide opportunities to educate residents and visitors about protecting the shoreline, we track data for each of our cleanup events. The League’s post-July 4 beach cleanups set new records: over 300 volunteers pitched in to clean up more than 4.5 miles of Tahoe’s shoreline at nine beaches, finding, for example, 4,289 cigarette butts.

③ Tahoe beaches are some of the most beautiful in the world. League volunteers scoured the expanded shoreline this year to ensure everyone can enjoy the Tahoe experience we have come to know and love.

So far, in 2015:

- Total number of beach cleanup volunteers: 645
- Total number of beach cleanups: 23
- Number of beaches cleaned: 10
- Total pounds of trash collected: 3,924
- Total number of cigarette butts collected: 10,263



Survey the history of Tahoe's clarity with secchi disk readings dating back to the 1960s.

Learn more about how you can help address the two biggest threats to Lake Tahoe: fine sediment from stormwater runoff and aquatic invasive species.

Young visitors can explore the colors of the Lake and the colors of the pollution that threatens it.



Photos: Brian Walker, brianwalkerphoto.com

ED CENTER

Fritzi & David Huntington Environmental Education Center

The next time you are in South Lake Tahoe, we invite you to visit the newly renovated Fritzi & David Huntington Environmental Education Center at our South Lake Tahoe offices. Featuring fun and interactive exhibits, our Education Center's overhaul improves the League's ability to educate the

public about the threats facing Lake Tahoe and how to protect it. The League's new educational displays were designed by well-known exhibit developers Tisha Carper Long and Mary Jo Sutton. "We are grateful for the generosity of the Huntington family for enabling us to better educate our visitors about how to Keep Tahoe Blue," said Darcie Goodman Collins, PhD, the League's executive director.



CORE VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT

LORETTA FRIEDEL

What is special about Lake Tahoe for you?

I would say it's the most beautiful place on earth. I consider myself a very lucky person when I can get up every day and I can go out there and look at that gorgeous lake and the mountains and the sky and the surrounding forest and I think, "where else could you be and have so much beauty and delight every single day?"

Why did you decide to become an Eyes on the Lake volunteer?

Because I wanted to give back to the Lake — because it gives me so much joy. Eyes on the Lake helps me to do that — to contribute to the Lake and the community.

What's your favorite part of being involved?

I like going out every day, seeing nature and seeing it evolve. What's really struck me in the last year from being out there is that you're seeing how the shoreline of the Lake is evolving and how some of the rivers and streams are changing.

Where do you most often survey for aquatic invasive plants?

I mostly go to Cove East, adjacent to the Tahoe Keys Marina and the Upper Truckee River as it enters Lake Tahoe. Sometimes I step off on the kayak trail and go upstream along

the Truckee River and I'll check out algae blooms in that area and see if there is any curlyleaf pondweed. When you visit a location every day you get a feel for what is supposed to be there and what isn't supposed to be there and then you can do a better job of taking care of it.

Loretta Friedel lives in South Lake Tahoe and is a Core Volunteer in the League's Eyes on the Lake program, which trained her to identify aquatic invasive plants such as Eurasian watermilfoil and curlyleaf pondweed. Hear Loretta and other volunteers share their stories about protecting Lake Tahoe at our new listening station in the Fritzzi & David Huntington Environmental Education Center in our South Lake Tahoe offices.



About the Core Volunteer Program

In 2014, the League rolled out our Core Volunteer Program to recognize our most dedicated volunteers — those individuals who, like Loretta, have given 15 hours or more. Core volunteers receive an exclusive "We Are the League" T-shirt. We are proud to highlight our core volunteers and share their outstanding work.

ADVOCATING FOR GOOD LAND USE PLANNING

Brockway Resort Proposal: Not Right for Tahoe

As of late September, a proposal by developers would locate a 550-site resort camping complex, with nearly 100 RV pads and nearly 100 structures, in a remote location on the north rim of Tahoe's basin. We were happy to see more than 200 people turn out in opposition when the proposal was discussed at a September 23 meeting of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency after we published an August op-ed and shared our extensive comments via email and social media.

"This proposal would be the largest Tahoe has seen since the Stateline casino expansion projects in the 1980s. The recent update to Lake Tahoe's regional plan calls for cutting traffic and curbing pollution from cars by concentrating Tahoe redevelopment in our town centers," said Darcie Goodman Collins, the League's executive director. "Building the Brockway development as proposed would not support the regional plan's goals, as it would concentrate thousands of visitors at a destination far from any of Tahoe's town centers."

The League to Save Lake Tahoe encourages the public to oppose the current Brockway proposal:

- Speak up at public meetings.
- Send letters to decision-makers at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and Placer County.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

Learn how to effectively advocate your concerns using resources at keptahoeblue.org/brockway or email us at info@keptahoeblue.org.

A Model Area Plan in South Lake Tahoe

In the coming years, the west end of South Lake Tahoe will see a wide range of community improvements, including a cutting-edge greenbelt concept to treat stormwater pollution, better neighborhood connectivity, and new amenities to make it more safe and convenient to walk or ride a bike.

In the summer of 2015, TRPA approved the city of South Lake Tahoe's proposed area plan for Tahoe Valley, the area around the South Tahoe "Y" at the intersection of Highway 50 and Highway 89. The new plan sets targets for environmental improvements, includes a system for tracking whether those targets are met, and provides incentives to drive Lake-friendly redevelopment and restoration.

"The Tahoe Valley Area Plan truly represents the community's vision and the city is looking forward to working with property owners and developers in implementing the many improvements that will benefit the community economically, socially and environmentally," said John Hitchcock, planning manager for South Lake Tahoe. "We're especially excited about the greenbelt and how it can transform the 'Y' into a destination while improving our water quality and reducing fine sediments to Lake Tahoe."

"What makes the Tahoe Valley Area Plan stand out is the quality of the community process that resulted in such widespread and well-deserved community support," said Shannon Eckmeyer, the League's policy analyst. "We applaud the city for producing an area plan that can serve as a model for future plans in Tahoe."



One exciting component of South Lake Tahoe's Tahoe Valley Area Plan is the proposed greenbelt (above), which would make stormwater management the centerpiece of linked open spaces and new bicycle and pedestrian amenities.

Forested land (left) near the north rim of the Lake Tahoe Basin on the site of the Brockway proposal. The controversial 104-acre project would concentrate thousands of visitors in a hard-to-reach corner of Tahoe.



Photo: Justin Majeczky, varient3.com



Photo by Liza Heider

A FIGHTER FOR STRONGER PROTECTIONS FOR TAHOE

E. Clement Shute, Jr. Honored as a Tahoe Environmental Leader

In 1984, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency began work on the first regional plan for Lake Tahoe under the 1980 amended California-Nevada Compact. Wanting to ensure a positive outcome for the Lake, the League to Save Lake Tahoe retained the best environmental attorney to follow the process: E. Clement Shute, Jr.

Decades of unchecked development had destroyed much of Tahoe's meadows and marshes, which acted as natural filters to prevent sediments and other pollution from getting to the Lake. Restoration, driven by better regional planning, would be key to bringing back these natural processes that Keep Tahoe Blue.

When the resulting plan violated the California and Nevada bi-state compact — it proposed few environmental benefits and called for far too much development — the League, with Shute as our attorney, and California's attorney general filed separate suits against TRPA on the same day. The result was a judge's ruling that blocked all development until a plan with better environmental protections was developed.

TRPA kicked off a consensus process to bring the plan in line with the bi-state compact and end the moratorium on new construction. "For two years, I met repeatedly with all the stakeholders. Collectively, we wrote a new plan," said Shute. "The attorney general and I argued every line, point by point, with the rest of the participants." At risk was a continuation of the halt on construction on one hand, and threats by Nevada of pulling out of the compact on the other, effectively removing all Lake-wide protections for Tahoe. All parties had reason to compromise. Thankfully, the discussions produced the 1987 Regional Plan for Tahoe, which included strong environmental protections for the Lake that Shute had negotiated for the League. Nevada stayed in the compact, more environmentally-friendly construction began again, and the 1987 plan remained in effect for the next 25 years.

The Environmental Law Section of the State Bar of California will honor Shute this fall with a rare and prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award for his outstanding leadership on environmental law and advocacy in California. "Anyone who has had a hand in protecting the Lake would agree this is a well-deserved honor for a true champion for

(continued on page 10)

(continued from page 9)

Tahoe,” said Darcie Goodman Collins, the League’s executive director.

There have been many steps forward in the history of securing effective regional planning for Tahoe. Shute has had a hand in nearly every step. While on the California attorney general’s staff, he won a 1970 victory in the California Supreme Court that required local jurisdictions to provide funding for the newly formed TRPA. When Shute took up private practice, the League was among his first clients. We hired him to help us strengthen the 1980 replacement for the original 1969 bi-state compact for Lake Tahoe. In 2002, Shute won a landmark victory for TRPA in the U.S. Supreme Court that preserved TRPA’s authority to protect sensitive stream zones from harmful development, setting a national precedent. Shute now serves on the TRPA governing board, having been appointed by

California Governor Jerry Brown in 2011.

Shute notes that the very concept of regional planning to protect Tahoe is difficult because it requires collaboration by two states with completely different political philosophies, with the added complexity that each local jurisdiction has its own interests. “This leaves the TRPA fragile,” says Shute. “It’s hard to keep TRPA moving ahead toward achievement of environmental thresholds.”

“The League to Save Lake Tahoe has been a constructive force in helping to keep the TRPA moving ahead,” says Shute. The League feels the same about Clem Shute, and congratulates him on his well-deserved award.

For more details on Clem Shute’s history of advocacy for Lake Tahoe, read the full version of this article at keptahoeblue.org/news.



18th Annual Tahoe Forest Stewardship Day at the Upper Truckee River, South Lake Tahoe

OUR MISSION

The League to Save Lake Tahoe is dedicated to protecting and restoring the environmental health, sustainability, and scenic beauty of the Lake Tahoe Basin. We focus on water quality and its clarity for the preservation of a pristine Lake for future generations.

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A group of annual benefit attendees join League Deputy Director Jesse Patterson for a kayak tour of North Lake Tahoe to learn more about invasive species and remove trash from the shoreline (left). Your team can join League staff for an educational tour of Tahoe's shoreline by electric bicycle (top right) or standup paddleboard (lower right).



Photo: peterspain.com

EXPERIENCE LAKE TAHOE WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES!

Build teamwork while achieving a lasting positive impact on the health of the Lake. Show that your business or community group supports a clean and pristine Lake Tahoe by bringing the office out on a private Corporate Stewardship Experience. Some of the customized educational opportunities available include:

- Beach cleanups.
- Kayak or standup paddleboard tours.
- Electric bicycle tours.
- Streambank or trail restoration.

Let us schedule a private stewardship experience for your business or community group. Contact League Advancement Manager Seth Chanin at 530.539.4854 or seth@keoptahoebblue.org.

“The League staff organized an extraordinary volunteer outing for CSAA Insurance Group, mixing team building, a history and education on the Lake, and the volunteer project itself.

We can't wait to come back next year!”

-Roger Hancock, Community Affairs Manager, CSAA Insurance Group



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HERE'S HOW MEMBERS LIKE YOU ARE SUPPORTING THE LEAGUE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

A group of annual benefit attendees joined League Deputy Director Jesse Patterson for a kayak tour of North Lake Tahoe to learn more about invasive species and remove trash from a secluded beach. *(left)*

Climate Riders Bob Harris, Grant Lacey, Dan Moroni and Heather Lussier *(not pictured)* joined League staff member Seth Chanin on a 320-mile bike ride down the California coast to raise money for the League. *(bottom left)*



Photo: Kip Pierson Photography

Open this Newsletter to read how support from members like you helps Keep Tahoe Blue.

To join one of our future events, check out [keoptahoeblue.org/events!](https://keoptahoeblue.org/events)