

Fall Newsletter 2013

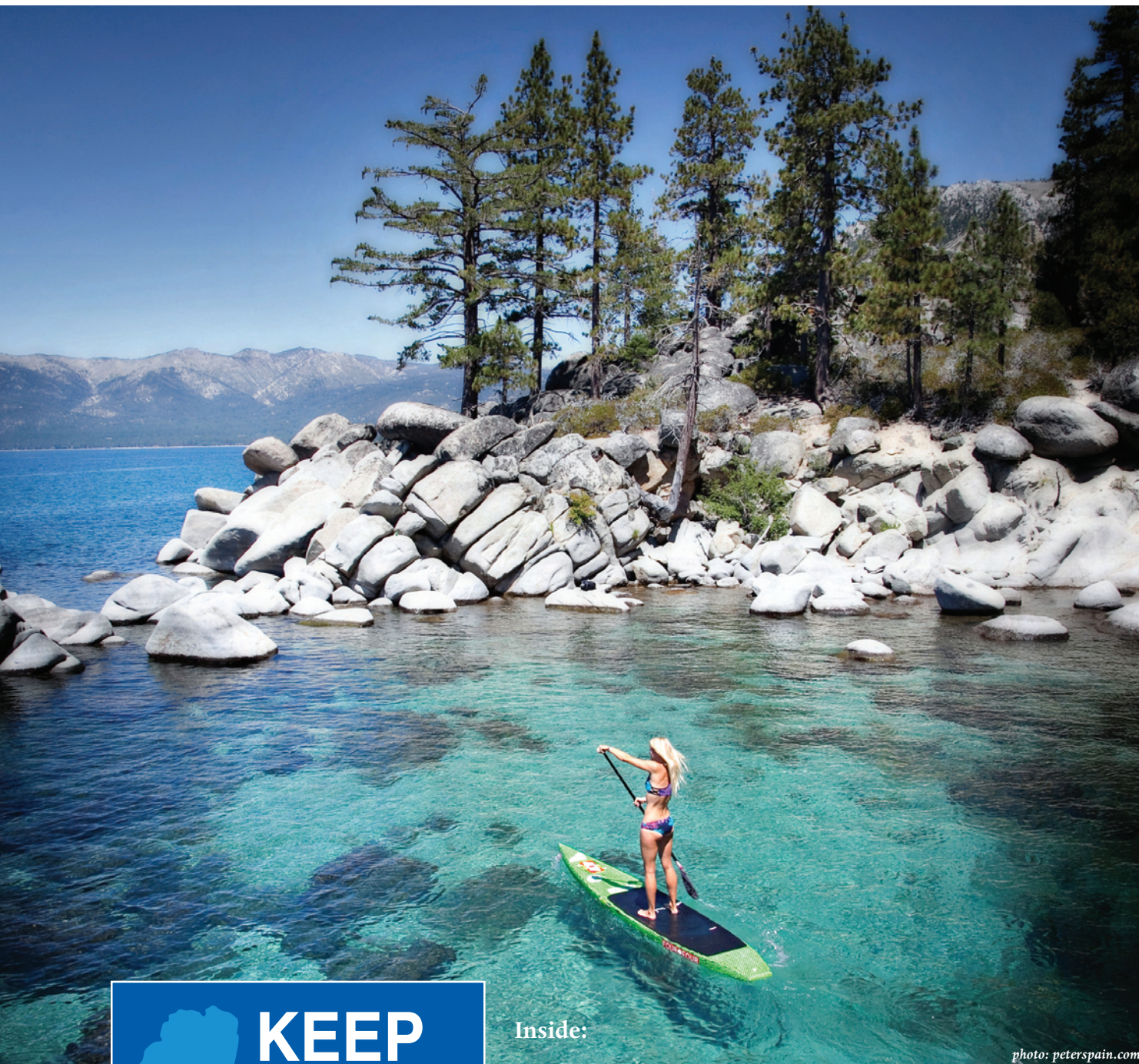


photo: peterspain.com



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keptahoeblue.org

How Your Support Helps Keep Tahoe Blue



As a member of the League, you support all the important advocacy, education, community engagement and volunteer efforts we undertake. Here's how your support is making a difference at Lake Tahoe.

photo: peterspain.com

Bi-State Compromise Ensures Strong Environmental Regulation Continues

The League's most important accomplishment for the year has been helping to bring about a compromise between the states of California and Nevada to preserve the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

The two states had been in a stalemate after Nevada threatened to withdraw in 2011. Nevada's reasonable expectation that Tahoe pass an updated regional plan was met, while it dropped its demand to change the voting structure of the TRPA board.

The League was able to have a strong presence in both Carson City and Sacramento to urge the two states to work out their differences. With support from the Nevada Conservation League, Nevadans spoke out against special interests in favor of environmental protection for their lake. The pact means uniform environmental regulation will continue at the lake.

"Two states united in environmental protection are better than two states divided," said League Executive Director Darcie Goodman Collins in a recent radio interview on *AirTalk* with Larry Mantle.

In September, the California State Legislature unanimously approved its portion of the compromise. The bill was introduced by California's preeminent environmental lawmaker, Senator Fran Pavley, with support from Governor Brown and Senator Feinstein. *The Sacramento Bee* also supported our point of view that the pact is the best thing for Tahoe's environment in a recent editorial.

The pact also gives momentum to the newest version of Senator Feinstein's \$415 million Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, sending a clear message to Congress that the two states are committed to safeguarding investments in this national treasure. If passed, the act would fund more watershed restoration, stormwater management, wildfire prevention, Lahontan Cutthroat Trout introduction, and invasive species prevention at Tahoe.

Area Plans Under Review as Communities Implement Regional Plan

After Tahoe's new regional plan was approved in December 2012, communities throughout the lake from Tahoe City to South Lake Tahoe quickly went to work on their own area plans. The League has been advocating for strong environmental analysis and water quality improvements in each community, and ensuring land uses match the regional plan's intentions.

The first area plan to receive TRPA board review will be Douglas County's plan. The League accomplished a lot for the lake in this plan by working with Douglas County and TRPA staff. We were open and vocal about our concerns from the beginning, while Douglas County staff were receptive to discussions and willing to incorporate our suggestions. The League ensured that the policies included specific goals and requirements for improvement to water clarity, including stormwater runoff management. The plan also originally included a golf course use in an area that was previously conservation land without adequate environmental analysis. We convinced the county and TRPA to remove this land use.

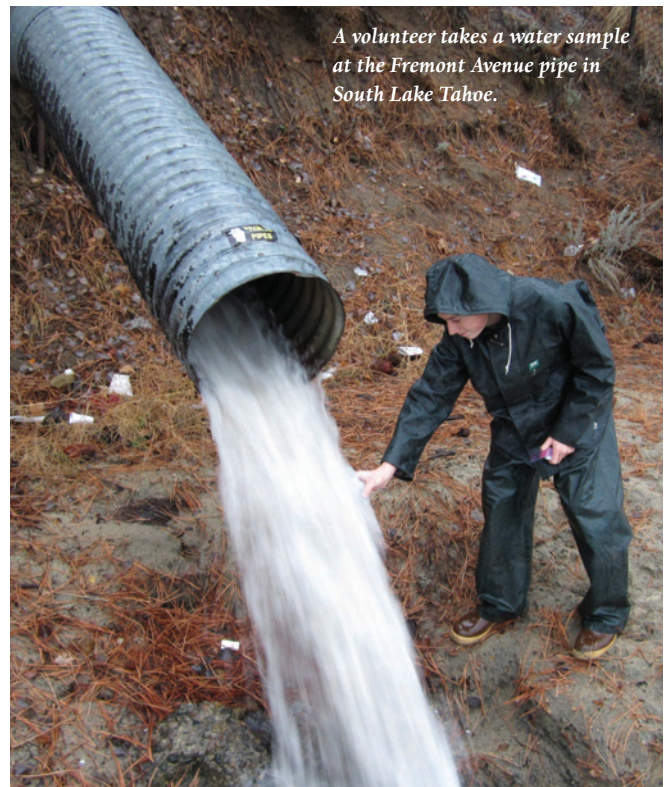
"The League is encouraged that effective advocacy through collaboration can protect the lake, and each community can thrive by determining its own character through these plans," said policy analyst Shannon Eckmeyer, Esq.

Area plans are also intended to alleviate the burdensome permitting process for residents and business owners in Lake Tahoe. Smaller projects do not have to conduct an expensive and complicated permitting process with both the county and TRPA. Now the process is streamlined, but maintains the same environmental standards.

Pipe Keepers Heads into Second Season After Successful Year

When the snow melts or it rains in Tahoe, runoff pours out of roughly 100 pipes or culverts into the lake or its tributaries. Pipe Keepers volunteers brave these storms, donning waders to take water samples at these pipe outlets, which are brought back to the League's office where we measure the turbidity (or cloudiness) of the water.

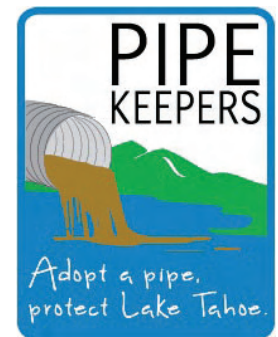
Pipe Keepers marks the end of its first year in October. The results have not been pretty. The water flowing out of the pipes is often so turbid that it causes the lake's water to violate standards, says the program's manager, Nicole Gergans. The good news is that the League accomplished its



A volunteer takes a water sample at the Fremont Avenue pipe in South Lake Tahoe.

objective for the year to launch a discussion about the pipes, find out how many there are, how problematic they are, and what is being done about them. (We want to thank the TRPA staff for taking the time to count and map the pipes). More good news is that there are plans underway to divert or upgrade a few of these pipes as part of wider restoration projects. We discovered that water running through many of the pipes has been treated. Those pipes that discharge untreated water are a priority for local and state governments under the Lake Tahoe TMDL requirements. Volunteers have consistently monitored 12 pipes, and we're aiming to add more in the coming season.

The program sparked a lot of curiosity and some skepticism from other agencies when it launched, Gergans said, but once our objectives were understood, that quickly turned into an interest in partnering and collaborating. It also sparked a wider discussion among agencies, colleges and various other groups about the need for more citizen monitoring at the lake. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for this program, please visit our website to learn more.



Eyes on the Lake Targets Water Weeds

The League launched a new volunteer program this summer called Eyes on the Lake, which helps prevent the spread of aquatic invasive plants in Tahoe's waters. The program engages water lovers at Tahoe to help protect the lake while they play in the lake. This includes swimmers, paddlers, boaters, SCUBA divers, snorkelers, fishermen, rafters and beachgoers.

The program's main targets are Eurasian watermilfoil and curlyleaf pondweed. The goal is to identify small populations before they grow larger and more difficult and expensive to manage. Over 30 volunteers are now surveying the lake's shoreline and reporting their findings. The League's goal come spring is to recruit recreational associations like SCUBA clubs or fishing groups to receive free trainings on plant identification. Please contact us at protect@keeptahoeblue.org to arrange a session for your group.

"Eyes on the Lake has generated a lot of excitement," said Deputy Director Jesse Patterson. "We're looking forward to enhancing this program with up-to-the-minute technologies like a phone application for reporting sightings."



The League raised \$30,000 for the program at our annual benefit in just a few minutes. Eyes on the Lake was also recently featured on Capital Public Radio. Visit our website to listen to the story and watch a feature video.

Summer Beach Cleanups A Success Coming Up: Tahoe Forest Stewardship and Great Sierra River Cleanup

As this newsletter went to print, we were busy preparing to host our annual Tahoe Forest Stewardship Day and the Great Sierra River Cleanup. The League hosted several successful beach cleanups throughout the summer.

Our new Keep Tahoe Red, White & Blue Beach Cleanups on July 5 followed the Fourth of July festivities. Over 40 volunteers scoured three beaches throughout Tahoe, hefting out more than 370 pounds of trash and more than 60 pounds of recyclables.

The most common items were cigarette butts, which are very harmful to wildlife, and beer bottles. Among the trash were also a pair of pants, a pocket knife, a wallet, and an empty keg. Commons Beach, Tahoe City/Timber Cove Beach, Regan Beach, Lakeview Commons Beach in South Lake Tahoe were the lucky beneficiaries of this summer's cleanup efforts.

The Red, White & Blue Cleanups will be an annual event. Next year, we'll be bringing in more partners and hosting more locations around the lake.

OUR STAFF

Darcie Goodman Collins, PhD *Executive Director*

Jesse Patterson *Deputy Director*

Karen Hodges *Director of Finance and Development*

Cozette Alojzya Savage *Director of Operations*

Nicole Gergans *Natural Resources Manager*

Shannon Eckmeyer, Esq. *Policy Analyst*

Flavia Sordelet *Education Center Coordinator*

Jennifer Marshall *Executive & Administrative Assistant*

Jessica Enciso *Membership Manager*

Emily Mathews *Community Engagement Coordinator*

Amanda Royal *Newsletter Editor*

Chris Patrick Morgan *Newsletter Designer*

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photo: Drew Altizer

A Sold-Out Audience Welcomes Oscar de la Renta

On August 3rd, 600 smartly dressed guests soaked up the Sierra sun on the sandy shores of Incline Village, as they delightfully greeted the return of Oscar de la Renta to Lake Tahoe, after a year's hiatus.

De la Renta spoke eloquently about his love for the lake and the significance of the national treasure, which has inspired this annual League to Save Lake Tahoe – Saks Fifth Avenue fundraising soiree, as he addressed the sold-out crowd before presenting his 2014 Resort Collection. During his remarks, he modestly proclaimed, “I realize it will be very difficult to look at my clothes when you are surrounded by such beauty. So if you can, please forgive the clothes.”

The 65-foot runway was framed by a brilliant Tahoe blue sky; a dramatic complement to the chic shade structure, which offered relief from the warm temperatures as guests enjoyed the runway show, lunch hosted by GRAFF and live auction.

The day was dedicated to the late Diana Dollar Knowles, a founding member of the first Fashion Show Committee back in 1969, who, with several other influential supporters

brought high fashion to Lake Tahoe in an effort to raise funds needed to Keep Tahoe Blue. Her love for Tahoe inspired her to serve as a member of the committee until

2004, after which she generously continued to underwrite the lunch until her death earlier this year. Her dedication helped generate over \$15 million over the years to support the League’s unwavering effort to protect and restore Lake Tahoe.

Christie’s auctioneer extraordinaire, Lydia Fenet, created an electric energy as she roused the crowd during the live auction featuring exceptional

experiences from Bulgari, Oscar de la Renta, NASCAR, Squaw Valley and more. The live auction finale generated \$30,000 as guests “raised the paddle” to support Eyes on the Lake, a new volunteer invasive species monitoring program launched by the League this summer.

Fashion Show Committee members Barbara Brown, Jessica Hickingbotham, Genta Luddy, Hillary Marble and Edith Tobin worked tirelessly behind the scenes to bring all the pieces together for a successful event. Their effort generated a gross of over \$506,000 to Keep Tahoe Blue.



Diana Dollar Knowles



Trans Tahoe Relay



Information booth at summer kickoff party

Swimming, Pulling, Spreading the Word Summer in Review



Eyes on the Lake field training



Pulling for the Lake

The summer was as busy as any for the League staff, who in addition to launching new volunteer programs and clearing advocacy hurdles, found time to participate in important outreach events. We hosted booths at four Earth Day events: South Lake Tahoe, Reno, Truckee and the Washoe Tribe's event in Carson City. Then the summer kicked off with a party at the League office in South Lake, which was sponsored by local businesses. The League hosted two beach cleanups and two weed pulls (aptly named "Pulling for Lake Tahoe"). We hosted a booth at Cycle the Sierra in South Lake Tahoe, and provided a speaker for their kickoff to help motivate the riders. We tabled at the Live at Lakeview concert series each Thursday, hosted an info booth at the Adventure Sports Festival in Tahoe City in June and attended the Native Species Festival at the Forest Service's Taylor Creek Visitor Center. We also hosted an educational recycling activity at the Children's Environmental Science Day in August at TERC in Incline Village. Last but not least, two League staff swam for a team of six in the Trans Tahoe Relay in August, which raised \$3,500 for our organization. Now that's a full summer!



Cycle the Sierra

Carl Young, longtime League program director

Devoted Advocate Passes Too Soon

Carl Young, former program director for five years with the League, passed away in May while conducting research on tornadoes in Oklahoma. Carl was particularly concerned about climate change at the lake, and worked tirelessly to advocate for including climate change as a factor in determining policy here. Carl worked to add greater environmental improvements in the TMDL water quality program, the shorezone policy, the regional plan and several large development projects. Carl also travelled once to Siberia as a League representative with the Tahoe Baikal Institute.

Carl had been conducting tornado research since 2003 and had appeared on the Discovery Channel's show *Stormchasers* for several seasons as a teammate with famed researcher Tim Samaras. Tim and his son Paul also died in the tornado that took Carl's life. A meteorologist, the goal of Carl's research was to improve the warning time on tornadoes in order to



Carl Young with Sen. Diane Feinstein at the 2008 Lake Tahoe Summit.

save the lives of people in their path. He had spent many summers at Lake Tahoe as a child. His love for the lake was apparent in every advocacy project he undertook and his approach was always levelheaded and intelligent. Carl will be missed among Tahoe's environmental community.

Climate Ride Seeks Cyclists to Support Keep Tahoe Blue

Climate Ride California and the League are looking for cyclists who want to help Keep Tahoe Blue to join its four-day tour from May 17 to 20, 2014. The route will include riding from San Francisco, the Marin Headlands, wine country and the capitol in Sacramento.

The League was a beneficiary of this September's Climate Ride from New York to Washington, D.C., which raised over \$500,000 for 60 charitable organizations. We encourage interested members to sign up for the California ride at www.climateride.org and choose the League as your beneficiary.

Climate Ride California is more than a bike trip. It's an inspiring journey with like-minded people who are united by their passion for sustainability, renewable energy, and



bicycles – the ultimate carbon-free form of transportation. Climate Riders bike through some of America's most beautiful landscapes while making a contribution to a cause they care about. If you love the idea of cycling to benefit Lake Tahoe, we hope you'll sign up soon as spots are going quick.

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Lake clarity hits 75 feet, best in 10 years

Lake Tahoe's deepwater clarity improved 6.4 feet to 75.3 feet in 2012, the second yearly increase, and the best clarity number in 10 years. However, scientists are worried that the lake is showing more signs of climate change, including less precipitation and higher lake temperatures.

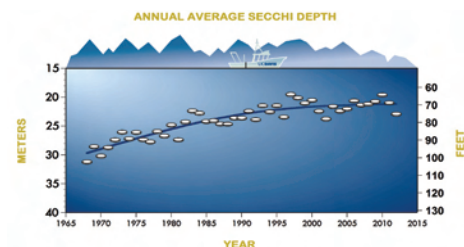


TERC director Geoffrey Schladow gave credit to restoration projects completed over the last 15 years as part of the Environmental Improvement Program, but noted climate change could easily undo those gains.

"In this last year we saw how nature, combined with the results of the many projects that have been completed in the basin, produced an amazing increase in clarity," Schladow said in a press release. "The real challenge is to be able to sustain the improvements when nature is working against us."

When the long-term measurement program began in 1968, clarity was 102.4 feet.

Scientists are also using exciting new technologies and instruments to study the lake, including hyperspectral



radiometric measurements of its blueness, an underwater glider that traversed the lake 17 times taking measurements of temperature and chemistry, and a permanent, real-time submersed water quality monitoring station on the West Shore.

Clarity improved in both summer and winter for several reasons. 2012 was a dry year for Lake Tahoe, with precipitation 71 percent of the long-term average. Reduced precipitation resulted in fewer pollutants flowing into the lake via stormwater. The lake did not mix, which means nutrients from the bottom did not rise and become food for algae.

Source: Tahoe Environmental Research Center's 2013 State of the Lake Report