

League to Save Lake Tahoe

2011

ANNUAL REPORT

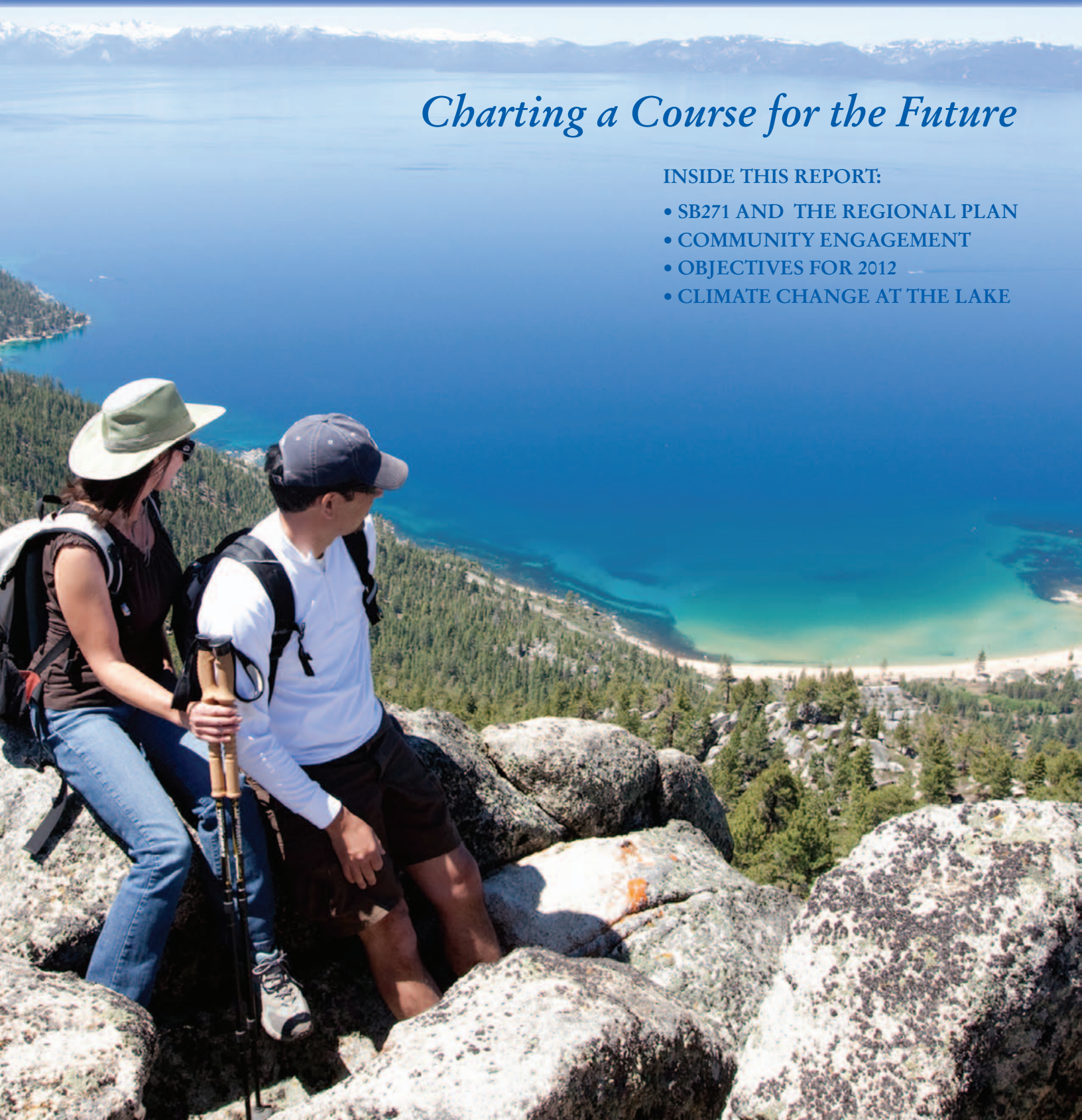


KEEP
TAHOE
BLUE®

Charting a Course for the Future

INSIDE THIS REPORT:

- SB271 AND THE REGIONAL PLAN
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- OBJECTIVES FOR 2012
- CLIMATE CHANGE AT THE LAKE





The League to Save Lake Tahoe is Tahoe's oldest and largest environmental advocacy organization. Since its founding in 1957, the League's prime function has been to monitor development and recreation plans, and to educate the public and local, state and federal lawmakers to take action to save Lake Tahoe. Our focus has been consistent for over 50 years: We urge policy makers to use the best available science to protect and restore the lake over the long term. We try to persuade them to prioritize the public interest — including the interest of future generations — in a pristine lake and healthy ecosystem.

Our Mission

The League to Save Lake Tahoe is dedicated to protecting, restoring, and advocating for the ecosystem health and scenic beauty of the Lake Tahoe basin. The organization focuses on water quality and its clarity for the preservation of a pristine Lake for future generations.

League to Save Lake Tahoe

2011

ANNUAL REPORT

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From the Executive Director:

Forging relations, opening dialogue and breaking gridlock



By Darcie Goodman-Collins, Ph.D.

Fifty-five years ago a newly formed League to Save Lake Tahoe led the effort to prevent a high-speed freeway from encircling the lake, halt the construction of a bridge spanning Emerald Bay and stop excessive development of subdivisions and casinos throughout our basin. Since the 1960s the League has mobilized thousands of residents, visitors and those passionate about Lake Tahoe. As we celebrate our 55th anniversary, I extend an exceptional thanks to our founders, staff past and present and the thousands of supporters who have worked tirelessly to Keep Tahoe Blue. We have helped create regional protection and environmental preservation to ensure long-term sustainability of our national treasure. We have curbed inappropriate growth in both states, pushed for the creation of environmental goals, played a pivotal role in the passage of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, and helped establish urban boundaries.

As we reflect on the extensive list of our achievements and successes, I am excited to lead the League into another era of environmental protection. We look forward to engaging the next generation of environmental stewards, working closely with the community to educate and encourage responsible use of our valuable resources and continuing to lead the charge as the basin's environmental watchdog. In this endeavor, we will expand our ability to network through social media, collaborate with regional and local partners and work closely with scientists to ensure the basin's policies are based on best available science.

As the new Executive Director of the League, I am confident that we will continue to win more battles toward improving lake clarity and a sustainable ecosystem. These tasks will not be easy. Tahoe's communities have been polarized by gridlock. A lack of transparent, open dialogue has created discord where there should be none. I am committed to helping forge new relationships, opening



I am confident that we will continue to win more battles toward improving lake clarity and a sustainable ecosystem.

new dialogue and breaking the gridlock so that each community can move forward with confidence in their ability to protect the lake. We will revitalize our Community Engagement Program to help communities rejuvenate their built environment and improve their economies. The only way to reach long-term solutions and sustainable environmental protection is through collaborative deliberation among all parties.

I am extremely proud of the widespread support and dedication of our members, community and donors in the challenge of keeping Tahoe blue. Our logo is known

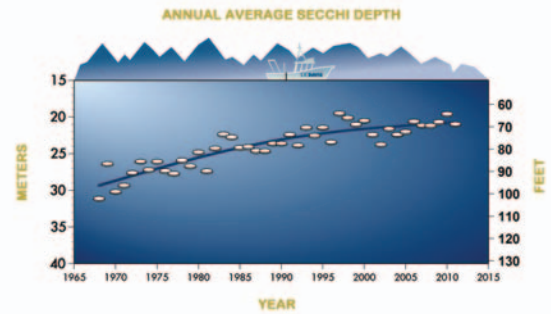
worldwide and the love for the lake is widespread. We embrace the vision our founders had of a pristine lake that can be enjoyed by all.

Born and raised in South Lake Tahoe, Dr. Goodman-Collins joined the League in February from Save the Bay, where she was the Habitat Restoration Director. She earned her Ph.D. at University of California at Santa Barbara's Donald Bren School of Environmental Science and Management, where her dissertation topic explored how environmental restoration and science can integrate with community engagement and public policy. She has two bachelor's degrees from UCSB, in biology and political science. Dr. Goodman-Collins became involved with the League as a summer intern in 1996. In 1997, she was the Tahoe community's youth representative at the first Tahoe Presidential Summit. She is the board president of the Tahoe-Baikal Institute, and a former board member of the League.

Average Clarity Bounces Back But Summer Numbers Worrisome

Despite a huge amount of snowfall over the 2010-2011 winter season, and a large amount of sediment runoff in spring and summer, Lake Tahoe's average annual clarity bounced back to 68.9 feet in 2011. The number was released in February by the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center. However, scientists also found that summertime clarity continues to be much worse than wintertime clarity, a phenomenon that is likely related to nutrient runoff and the lake's warming temperatures.

The latest data indicate clarity loss has leveled since 2000, which could be a result of lake-wide measures to reduce urban stormwater runoff, also known as best management practices. For over two decades, the League has championed the task of urging policy makers to create and enforce strong urban runoff requirements across all properties.



Tahoe's Shore Gaining Attention

Agencies and land managers continued measures to control invasive species such as milfoil and Asian clams along Tahoe's shore and shallow areas. Milfoil clogs views of the lake's white sand bottom, while



Asian clams compete with native species and cause unsightly algae blooms. While complete elimination is impossible, one agency – California State Parks – reported that milfoil is “under control” in Emerald Bay, where resources and volunteers have been adequate to wage a full defense against the invaders.

In addition, the Tahoe Resource Conservation District and the Nevada Tahoe Conservation District launched a new program to help lakefront property owners identify and protect the endangered Tahoe Yellow Cress, a native plant endemic to Tahoe. The agencies will work with property owners who wish to participate to identify potential habitat, install nursery plants, aid in weed removal and monitor the plant's progress.

Meanwhile, a company is working to clear permits to harvest non-native crawfish from Lake Tahoe. The crawfish may be linked to declines in the lake's native invertebrates, while its only predators are the non-native largemouth bass and bluegill.



State of the Lake

Two States Sign Agreement to Boost Clarity

Governors in California and Nevada gave their stamps of approval to the long-awaited Total Maximum Daily Load program in the summer of 2011. The landmark water quality law places restrictions on each jurisdiction's urban runoff into Lake Tahoe and creates a goal of restoring clarity to 100 feet within 65 years. The League worked tirelessly with the water quality board and EPA over the last several years to prevent efforts to weaken this program.



Boat Inspections Improve

To increase convenience and provide better locations for decontamination, new off-ramp stations were opened for all boat inspections during summer 2011. The inspections are currently the lake's only hope for preventing introduction of new invasive species, like the destructive quagga and zebra mussels, and other devastating species. In addition, a new program called Tahoe Keepers launched in 2011 to teach paddlers how to inspect their crafts.

Protecting the Upper Truckee River

California Trout and Trout Unlimited are working to designate the uppermost section of Lake Tahoe's largest tributary as "wild and scenic." The designation could bring restoration grant opportunities and would help protect the Upper Truckee River from dams and other large-scale construction, while residential development would be unaffected. The stretch of river is one of the only places where Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, on the brink of extinction, have been successfully re-introduced.

Olympics in 2022?

California Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom and Nevada Lieutenant Governor Brian Krolicki have formed the Lake Tahoe Winter Games Exploratory Committee. The group will work to develop a bid for Reno/Tahoe to host the 2022 Winter Olympic Games. Environmental groups are keeping a close eye on any proposals for traffic and environmental impacts.

Reducing Wildfire Risk

A 10,000-acre fuel reduction project was recently approved for the California side of the Tahoe Basin. The 10-year project will include tree removal and brush thinning from Cascade Lake to the Nevada Stateline and will primarily take place on public land managed by the Forest Service. Mechanical equipment and pile burning will be allowed in stream areas to lower the project's cost. The Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act will help pay for the first few years of the project.





Our Work: 2011 Highlights

Shorezone Case Nears Completion

In another victory for Lake Tahoe's environment, the US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with the League in February, 2012, that TRPA must analyze boat pollution from illegal buoys before approving new development. In anticipation of the case's completion, the League worked throughout 2011 to identify viable mitigation programs for shorezone development, and held productive conversations with groups like the Tahoe Lakefront Owners Association.



The shorezone case is not just about new piers, but about the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's obligation to achieve and maintain Tahoe's unique environmental goals when approving any new development. TRPA did not appeal the vast majority of the original landmark decision, which provided strong protections for Lake Tahoe. Under the new ruling, TRPA will retain discretion on a minor procedure in environmental review.

Overall, the League is confident that the case will produce significant changes in how regulators analyze new development and its impacts, and how they face their obligations to meet Tahoe's high environmental standards. Read the decision and more about the case on our website KeepTahoeBlue.org.

Keeping Rules Intact

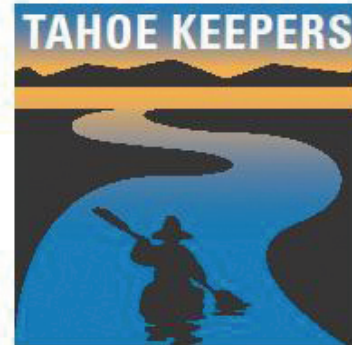
Two-stroke jet skis almost became legal in Tahoe again. In summer 2011, the League was invited to review a new, "streamlined" version of TRPA's 600 pages of ordinances. TRPA had hired an outside consultant to clean up the code, remove redundancy, and fix non-substantive errors like punctuation. However, through painstaking review, the League found substantive changes and some entirely new material. In one case, League staff discovered the consultant had inadvertently deleted one of Lake Tahoe's most effective water quality ordinances. The League and TRPA staff worked collaboratively to correct errors and negotiate significant issues. The new streamlined code was approved in late 2011. The League looks forward to cooperating on similar projects in the future.

Community Engagement and Outreach

The League engaged hundreds of community members in 2011 with volunteer and outreach events including Earth Day festivals, Walk & Talk Tours, Tahoe Forest Stewardship Day and Coastal Cleanup Day. Stewardship Day was held in collaboration with the Incline Village General Improvement District and brought over 100 volunteers together to help restore the urban forest environment. In addition, the League continued to harness the power of social media to engage and educate tens of thousands of Keep Tahoe Blue supporters online.

Tahoe Keepers Engages Paddlers

The League helped to create the Tahoe Keepers stewardship program in 2011. Funds came from the Lake Tahoe Quagga Mussel Prevention Fund, which the League formed in conjunction with the Tahoe Lakefront Owners Association. Tahoe Keepers provides video training to paddlers on how to properly clean, drain and dry watercraft and gear after each use, and dispose of any plants or debris away from lakes and streams. The goal is for every paddler at the lake to be a registered self inspector. This is not only to protect the lake, but to ensure that paddlers continue to enjoy the freedom to launch at dispersed sites. With Tahoe Keepers, the non-motorized community is now engaged in the effort to combat invasive species.



Homewood Mountain Resort

The TRPA Governing Board approved this large West Shore development in December 2011. After extensive project review and dialogue with both the developer and TRPA throughout 2011, the League was able to secure some additional mitigation measures. The project did include some benefits to water quality and community revitalization that the League has long supported. In the end, the League still had strong concerns about the project's scenic and air quality impacts, but decided that continuing cooperative talks would likely secure more environmental improvements in a quicker timeframe than a lengthy court challenge.

Regional Transportation Planning

The League provided feedback on TRPA's proposed Regional Transportation Plan in 2011. The League highlighted several areas that require more attention, including Tahoe's worrisome ozone violations, higher pollution output from proposed water-borne transit such as ferries, possible impacts if the region were to host the 2022 Olympics, and strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

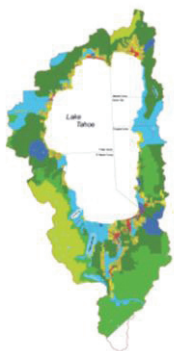


Protecting Tahoe from Subdivision Development

To prevent a disturbing precedent, the League has appealed an adverse court ruling in its case regarding the Sierra Colina subdivision on Nevada's South Shore. The TRPA's 2009 approval of this project represented the first time in nearly 40 years that the agency permitted a new residential subdivision without counting its private road against the overall coverage limitations for the project. If the development is allowed to proceed as proposed, large lots throughout Tahoe will become easier to subdivide and develop, while pavement and coverage that endanger Tahoe's clarity will increase.

Our Work: 2012 Objectives

Bi-state Cooperation and the Regional Plan



The League's number one priority in 2012 is to ensure that Nevada and California continue to work together, while pushing for a new regional plan that protects and enhances Tahoe's unique environment. A new Nevada law, SB271, not only threatens to withdraw the state from the Compact, but also made clear that lawmakers want to see progress on the passage of a new regional plan.

The League has been invited to participate in a bi-state working group that includes interest group representatives, elected officials, and state and agency staff who are tasked with tackling the important issues raised by SB271. The aim is to formulate reasonable solutions for a regional plan that both states can embrace, including appropriate growth and environmental safeguards. Unity is more important than ever, as threats to Lake Tahoe like new invasive species, urbanization and climate change are also greater than ever before.

Engaging Communities

The League is renewing its commitment to community engagement and participation. In early 2012, we developed a full-time position for a Community Engagement Manager, who will build on our past successes with Stewardship Day and Coastal Cleanup to develop a robust outreach and education program. The manager will cultivate new partnerships, increase League participation in local events, and continue to build an effective community of lake supporters, volunteers and educators. In particular, the manager will focus on opportunities to build shoreline stewardship, and engage volunteers on projects to control waste and invasive species.

Reducing Winter Road Sand Use

Snow plows deposit much of the fine sediment that is so harmful to lake clarity right onto our roads, near drainage pipes that lead directly to the lake. The League will continue to advocate for jurisdictions to use low-nutrient sand, less sand, better street sweepers and implement more frequent sweeping.



Battling Aquatic Invasive Species

New invasive species are knocking on Lake Tahoe's doorstep. All stakeholders agree that we must prevent new harmful species such as the golden, zebra, and quagga mussels, killer shrimp and Eurasian ruffe from entering the lake. Invasive species can cause drastic changes in an ecosystem, altering nutrient cycles and adding to algal growth and clarity loss. They can decrease recreational activities, degrade boats and clog propellers. In 2012, the League will head a project to deploy bottom barriers to combat milfoil in the Tahoe Keys. The League will also boost its education and stewardship programs, support boat washing programs and partner with research institutes to ensure continued development of control methods.

Protecting and Improving Shoreline Beauty

Degradation along Tahoe's shoreline is on the rise. Visitors and residents alike can see that the shoreline ecosystem is experiencing dramatic changes and needs immediate attention. In addition to advocating for strong standards and regulations to protect the shore, the League will work in 2012 to develop hands-on programs to engage the public in safeguarding this scenic resource. We will explore new strategies for protecting native species, reducing trash, capturing stormwater, controlling invasive species and managing pet waste. We will also work to identify funding opportunities available to aid jurisdictions for waste and pollution control.



Restoring Sensitive Lands

In 2012, the League will participate in a working group tasked with helping the Upper Truckee River Restoration Project move forward. Also, the League will continue its advisory role in the Environmental Improvement Program, where the League plays an important part in directing public funds for restoration projects. The EIP was established in 1997 as a coordinated national, state and local effort to protect and restore Lake Tahoe's natural resources. The program includes erosion control, land acquisition, and watershed and forest restoration projects.

Guest Column:

Tahoe and Planet Earth Are Heating Up, So What Can We Do About It Now?



Dr. Charles R. Goldman
Distinguished Professor of Limnology Emeritus, UC Davis

Little doubt remains among the world's scientific community that the Earth has been gaining heat, even during the 2005-2010 period of slightly decreased solar radiation. Evidence from ice cores proves that this recent rapid rate of warming had not previously occurred during the past 800,000 years. Our own lake data, carefully analyzed by Dr. Robert Coats, show that over the last 30 years the entire volume of the lake (39.75 trillion gallons) has increased in temperature by a whole degree Celsius or 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit. This warming is nice for swimming but tends to speed eutrophication by promoting less desirable algae as well as the invasion of warm-water aquatic invasive species.

It was cooler when I arrived at Tahoe in 1958 to begin a half-century of research on the lake, and the major threat was gradual greening of the lake as sediment-associated nutrients transported from the highly disturbed watershed combined with atmospheric loading of nitrogen to accelerate the first stages of eutrophication of the lake. Thanks in large part to the League's effort to publicize the Tahoe Research Group's science and take action to prevent the most damaging land development projects, a great deal has been accomplished to slow the lake's loss of transparency.

Most important from a science view was to reduce the loss of clarity being caused by a combination of increasing algal growth, fueled then in large part by atmospheric loading of nitrogen, and an increase in the very fine suspended sediment particles from erosion and dust. Some of the dust, according to the recent work of Drs. Tom Cahill and Jason Snyder, has been tracked to the lake all the way from China! The move toward best management practices on

the Tahoe watershed, in combination with a change since about 1980 in the nutrient requirements of the resident algal community, has pinpointed control of phosphorus and fine sediment inputs as the best strategy to prevent further transparency loss and associated eutrophication of the lake. Recent work at UC Davis - TERC by Drs. John Reuter and Geoff Schladow shows that lake clarity can be improved over time if the load of fine sediment and nutrients is sufficiently reduced. For the first time, the science has been done to model lake clarity response to various pollutant control scenarios. The timeline for success is proportional to the amount of load reduction. This work is critical to the Lake Tahoe TMDL and now gives agencies and project implementers a science-based roadmap that can help guide the Environmental Improvement Program.

While recently editing a book (Wiley Blackwell 2012) on the effects of climatic change on the world's inland waters, I was struck by the fact that eutrophication control emerged as the most promising way on a local scale to reduce the negative impacts of warming, since higher temperatures and increased nutrients both promote the most undesirable species of algae. In the long run, the availability of clean drinking water is more important to us than the availability of oil, and future wars over water supplies remain a disturbing possibility. The time has come for a new world ethic which recognizes that Earth's increasing population may well be facing a climatic tipping point beyond which it may not be able, with existing technology, to return.

Lake Tahoe's incredible value as a clean drinking water source and recreational wonder is definitely worth our continued and united efforts to preserve its quality for this and future generations.

M eet Patricia Ronald, a valued friend and ambassador to the League for several decades. A philanthropist and co-chair of the Capital Campaign funding the League's new permanent home, Trish's true passion is conservation, a value instilled by her father, Clark Fobes, a conservationist himself.

Trish's interest in the League began after hearing about the proposed plan to build a bridge across Emerald Bay. Her interest peaked further when she attended a national conference of the League of Women Voters, which passed a resolution to protect Lake Tahoe's clarity that was presented by Lois Shellhammer.

California's League of Women Voters soon appointed Trish to observe hearings on the upcoming environmental thresholds for Lake Tahoe, then subsequently to the bi-state TRPA meetings. During these frequent meetings, Trish became acquainted with League pioneers Fritz Huntington, Dwight Steele and Janet Gray Hayes. They became treasured mentors and nominated Trish for a seat on the League's board of directors in 1988, where she remained for 21 years.

Trish thinks her greatest contribution as a board member, while there are many, was partnering with Steele, whom she admired greatly, to bring various stakeholders within the Basin together to tackle transportation issues at a time when tensions were

extraordinarily high and issues divisive. This group eventually formed the Tahoe Transportation and Water Quality Coalition, which is best known for bringing President Clinton to Tahoe in 1997 and elevating the lake's conservation as a national issue. The effort resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars for restoration projects here.

When asked about her motivation to remain on the League board for over two decades, she answers, "I was so impressed with the caliber and knowledge of the board members. Working with these individuals toward a common goal was incredibly rewarding. The League is the only voice that is speaking up for the environment."

Trish, like her father, is instilling the importance of conservation in future generations. "Camp Ronald," an annual, five-day retreat held at the Ronalds' Tahoe home, has been attended by all the grandchildren in the family. Trish teaches a love for the natural environment through hiking, swimming, camping, lessons on native plants and invasive species and — most importantly — what the next generation can do to Keep Tahoe Blue.

Trish hopes we can all be better stewards of Lake Tahoe. She is certain we can accomplish this if we attend educational events sponsored by the League, become better informed about the issues, pay attention to BMPs and understand how to prevent runoff. And, when enjoying the outdoors, "Take only pictures, leave only footprints."



Donor Profile

Trish Ronald: A loyal participant committed to conservation



The League partnered with the Incline Village General Improvement District to host the 14th annual Tahoe Forest Stewardship Day. The event brought over 100 volunteers from as far as Reno and Sacramento together to help restore Tahoe's forest and watershed. Volunteer projects included installing environmental signage in stream zones, rerouting trails to reduce erosion and removing noxious weeds.

Tahoe Forest Stewardship Day 2011



Stay engaged, join us in South Lake Tahoe



The League's new location on Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe is quickly becoming a bustling center of activity. Our Tahoe staff is growing, and our conference room frequently hosts other environmental groups who lack space of their own. As part of reigniting community engagement, we are welcoming diverse groups to our center and hope to build a community hub for all who are excited about keeping Tahoe blue. Most of all, we want to invite our members to stop by anytime and meet our staff, discuss the latest issues or just enjoy our beautiful native garden. Peruse our bookshop and explore our Keep Tahoe Blue merchandise (did you know we even have Keep Tahoe Blue socks and disc golf frisbees?). Or find out about upcoming issues, events and ways to stay involved. We would love to see you.

As summer gets underway, the League also hopes to involve you in one of our many stewardship

and volunteer activities, which we will be growing over the next year. These will include invasive species management, native species protection and cultivation, trash reduction, storm drain labeling and more. You may also learn more about Tahoe's unique ecology on a Walk & Talk Tour with our staff. Please call us at (530) 541-5388 and let us know you are a member to learn about upcoming opportunities. If you can't stop by in person, keep in touch with us online at KeepTahoeBlue.org, or find us on Facebook by searching "Keep Tahoe Blue." To receive important League announcements, action alerts, and news summaries, sign up for our email list at info@keeptahoeblue.org. We also welcome your comments, questions and feedback.

League extends heartfelt thanks to Rochelle Nason

The League said goodbye to long-time Executive Director Rochelle Nason in 2011. Nason stepped down in October after nearly 20 years of working to Keep Tahoe Blue.



Nason grew the League from a tiny organization with a single full-time employee into the substantial and influential group that it is today. The 'Keep Tahoe Blue' movement flourished under her leadership and with it public investment and conservation in the region.

Nason led the League's successful efforts to:

- Establish and maintain urban boundaries for Lake Tahoe's communities to prevent commercial, residential, and tourism uses from spreading into conservation and recreation areas.

- Initiate the drive for public funding of the Environmental Improvement Program, which has resulted in the investment of hundreds of millions of dollars in conservation.
- Provide a voice for conservation advocates on the steering committee of the 1997 Lake Tahoe Presidential Forum and subsequent federal decision making.
- Persuade the TRPA to adopt a ban on two-stroke engines from Lake Tahoe. This ban received national attention and accelerated the marine engine industry's movement towards cleaner technology.
- Establish the legal principle that the TRPA is obligated to achieve and maintain environmental standards for the Lake Tahoe Basin.
- Build widespread consciousness and support for the "Keep Tahoe Blue" campaign through an enormously successful bumper sticker program, Facebook following and membership growth.

League Financial Statement

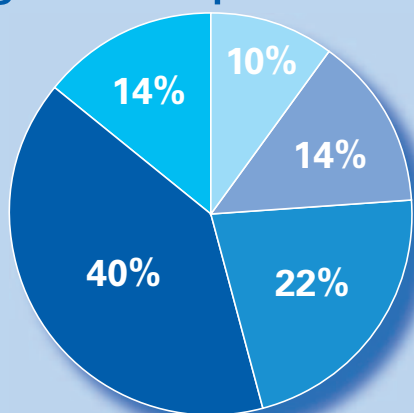
Statement of Financial Position

Year Ending Dec. 31, 2011

Assets	\$2,272,033
Cash	372,529
Investments	774,243
Restricted Investments	282,371
Merchandise Inventory	40,316
Property and Equipment	789,572
Prepaid & Deposits	13,002
Liabilities & Net Assets	\$2,272,033
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	21,962
Accrued Expenses	25,629
Net Assets	2,224,442
Unrestricted	1,937,559
Temporarily Restricted	4,512
Permanently Restricted	282,371
{Clarence E. Heller Endowment, Lane Family Endowment, League Endowment}	

Program Expenses

FY2011



Advocacy and EIP Support	\$559,427
Membership Education	\$313,997
Public Outreach & Education	\$201,660
Fundraising	\$195,514
Management	\$146,311

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

Jan. 1, 2011 – Dec. 31, 2011

Revenue

Membership	\$407,879
Benefit	471,809
Contributions	138,102
Foundations	40,000
Sales (net)	19,527
Earned Income	15,849
In-Kind	294,353

Total Revenue **\$1,387,519**

Expenses

Personnel	\$762,337
Operating	151,625
Communications	29,328
Special Projects	24,069
Member Education	84,105
Consultants	7,166
Travel	32,116
Professional Fees	70,381
Fundraising	226,534
Depreciation	29,248
In-Kind	294,353

Total Expenses **\$1,711,262**

Temporarily Restricted Assets	(18,050)
Additions to Endowment	3,348

Change in net assets **\$(323,743)**

**Audited financial statements are available upon request.*