

2023

ACCOMPLISHMENTS PROTECTING LAKE TAHOE

New Partners, New Places



Restoring Tahoe's native ecosystem, such as its meadows and creeks, is like mending a broken leg – it makes the whole body feel and work better.

In 2023, we welcomed new sites and partners to our long-running Tahoe Forest Stewardship Days events, including the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, Nevada Tahoe Conservation District, and Incline Village General Improvement District. Together with hundreds of volunteers, we removed conifers that were siphoning the water out of Meeks Meadow, improved beaver dam habitat for a South Shore creek, and pulled invasive plants from a stream in Incline Village. The result is a healthier, more connected Lake Tahoe.



Taking a Bite Out of Tahoe's Litter Problem



At the 10th anniversary of our "Keep Tahoe Red, White & Blue" July 5th Beach Cleanup, we hosted the most partners and sites in the history of the Lake's largest litter-fighting event. Since the first cleanup, we've been thrilled to use the data we collect to track a decade-long trend toward cleaner beaches. In 2023, one extreme outlier distracted from that progress. At Zephyr Shoals, our volunteers, partners, and staff removed 6,300 pounds of litter, but found very little trash at our five other sites.

Our robotic beach-cleaning program also grew in 2023. Together with ECO-CLEAN Solutions, we added a second BEBOT to the fleet and began cleaning full beaches to remove more trash hidden beneath the sand that would otherwise find a permanent home in Lake Tahoe's waters.



New Tech for Containment and Control



Aquatic invasive species (AIS) throw a wrench in Lake Tahoe's native ecology and threaten to turn its beautiful water from blue to green. In 2023, we combined forces with the Tahoe Keys Marina and ECO-CLEAN Solutions to introduce the PixieDrone, a motorized, aquatic skimmer that captures plant fragments and prevents the infestation from continuing to spread.

The League also funded a mobile, solar-powered cleaning station for non-motorized watercraft like kayaks and paddleboards. The CD3 – short for "clean, drain, dry, dispose" – gives paddlers and anglers a free tool to make sure their gear is AIS-free. This resource will help slow the spread of AIS that are already in the Lake and prevent new introductions, like the New Zealand mudsnail that was discovered in Tahoe in 2023.



2024

OBJECTIVES PROTECTING LAKE TAHOE



Preserving Tahoe's Federal Funding Lifeline

We're dedicated to building the Basin's ecological resilience so it can withstand climate change. To achieve that goal it takes resources and collaboration. With support from our generous donors, our team of policy experts meets regularly with legislators in Sacramento, Carson City and Washington DC to recruit them as vocal champions for Lake Tahoe. In the federal arena, this year we have a singular focus – to pass the Lake Tahoe Restoration Reauthorization Act. When it becomes law, this legislation will ensure that more than \$300 million of previously authorized funds can still flow to Tahoe, so critical environmental improvement projects can be completed.



Raising the Bar for Beach Management

Over the past decade, we've been thrilled to see a trend toward cleaner Tahoe beaches. Yet, more work is needed to create the litter-free Tahoe we all want. Building on two years of coordination and planning, the League, USDA Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (USFS), and USFS's concessionaire businesses are partnering in a new "Tahoe Blue Beaches" program in 2024. The program focuses on improved education (outreach and signage), engineering (trash facilities, bathrooms, and parking), and enforcement (making sure rules are followed). USFS has updated their concessionaire permits to prevent the litter problems of the past, and the League looks forward to publicly recognizing beaches and businesses that take these extra steps to Keep Tahoe Blue for the future.



Protecting Tahoe's Waters for the Long Term

In 2024, a decade of coordinated work will culminate with the completion of the Tahoe Keys Control Methods Test (CMT). This innovative program was designed to evaluate a wide range of methods for tackling aquatic weeds in the Tahoe Keys, which is ground zero for the Lake's aquatic invasive species infestation. The lessons and data provided by the CMT will guide aquatic weed management for the entire Lake for the long term.

The CMT's insights will also be combined with public outreach and the use of novel technologies like the PixieDrone, bubble curtains, and CD3 machine to ratchet up containment and control of aquatic invasive species right away. The goal is simple: to protect the clear water we all enjoy by stopping the invasion at the source.

