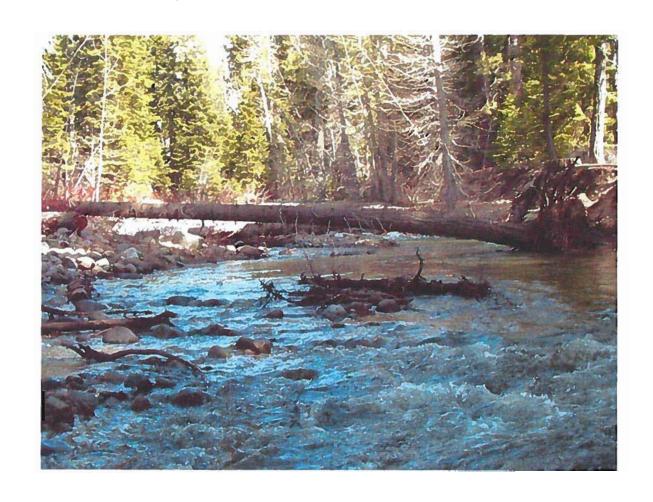
Snapshot Day, May 16, 2009

Lake Tahoe Basin and Truckee River Watershed



Introduction

What is Snapshot Day?

Snapshot Day is a one-day, volunteer-based event designed to collect watershed information during one point in time. Volunteer "team leaders" are trained, and these leaders accompany teams of volunteers to various pre-determined sites to collect information relative to the health of our watersheds.

The goals of this effort are two-fold: 1) to promote environmental education and stewardship, and 2) to collect valuable water quality information. While there is a great deal of high quality agency and university-sponsored monitoring taking place in the region, there is still insufficient information to adequately assess the status of all of the aquatic resources in the Truckee River Hydrologic Unit which includes all the Lake Tahoe Basin and Truckee River watersheds. With proper training and quality assurance, community volunteers can help fill this void by providing valuable information for watershed management and pollution prevention.

Some of the objectives of Snapshot Day are:

- Build awareness of water quality issues, aquatic resources and pollution prevention
- Screen for water quality problems, including the identification of sources of pollution and detection of illegal activities (i.e., chemical spills, filling of wetlands, diversions, illicit discharges, destruction of stream environment zones (SEZs), non-compliance with ordinances or regulations in place to protect natural resources, etc.)
- Provide water quality data that may be compared to water quality standards set by TRPA for the Tahoe Basin, and the States of California and Nevada;
- Provide water quality data that may be used in status and trend analyses;
- Provide baseline water quality data for non-monitored waters to determine how they compare to the water quality standards
- Provide some pre and post data for evaluating the effectiveness of restoration activities

It is important to note that citizen monitoring is designed to supplement existing agency monitoring efforts; all information is provided to the regulatory and resource management agencies, whose responsibility it is to protect water quality.

The Truckee River Annual Snapshot Day was held on May 16, 2009 and includes entire Truckee River, from Lake Tahoe to the terminus at Pyramid Lake. This event has been sustained and operated by the dedication of both paid and unpaid staff, the funding of a few grants and donations, but mostly by the dedication and commitment of peoples who value the public involvement to protect the watershed they live in.

The 2009 Snapshot Day summary of volunteers and sites for the Truckee River Hydrologic Unit each region is shown in Table 1. Over the almost 10 years of the Truckee River Snapshot Day the number of sites has fluctuated, and recent lower volunteer numbers is mostly related to the team leaders training and experience over the years and the ability to visit multiple sites with minimal effort. The Lower Truckee River Group has been very effective at engaging the local high school students, while the Middle Truckee River has a solid base through the Truckee River Aquatic Monitors (TRAM). Lake Tahoe has the largest struggle to maintain interested citizens, partially due to lack of full time residents.

Table 1: Snapshot Day 2009

	Volunteers	Locations
North Shore Lake Tahoe	30	19
South Shore Lake Tahoe	57	32
Lake Taboe*		3
Middle Truckee River	51	22
Lower Truckee River	45	15
Totals for 2009	183	91
*excludes duplicate samplers		

This collaborative effort was planned and coordinated by the Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC), Incline Village General Improvement District (IVGID), the Regional Chapter of CalTrout, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe (PLPT), and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). The complete list of organizations involved in putting on Snapshot Day 2009 includes:

- Citizens at Fallen Leaf Lake
- City of Reno
- Incline Village General Improvement District (IVGID)
- Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Lake Tahoe Community College (LTCC)
- Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP)
- Nevada Division of State Lands (NDSL)
- Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe (PLPT)
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA)
- Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC)
- University of California Berkeley, Sagehen Creek Field Station
- University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE)
- University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE)
- University of Nevada Reno (UNR) Electrical Engineering Department

The citizen-monitoring program of the California State and Regional Boards is the Clean Water Team, (website) and many of the existing groups have adopted this moniker (Incline Village Clean Water Team). The Nevada equivalent is under Project Wet (website) and these two agencies bring volunteers from Lake Tahoe, the many residents along the Truckee River and Reno, and the Washoe/Paiute Tribes to make the Ninth Annual Snapshot Day event a large region-wide success.

Methods of Data Collection

Citizen monitoring "team leaders" were provided training prior to Snapshot Day during April or May of each year. Team leader trainings covered protocols for visual observations, photo-documentation, water quality field measurements (temperature, pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen), and water sampling (grab samples sent into the laboratory for subsequent analysis of nutrients, coliform, and turbidity). Each monitoring team leader was required to attend at least one session prior to the field day. Training for the team leaders is usually taught by the coordinator for that region, with assistance as needed from the cooperating resource and regulatory agencies.

Visual observations and photo-documentation were performed according to the procedures developed by the SWRCB Clean Water Team. The standardized observation form, the *California Stream and Shore Walk Visual Assessment Form*, was slightly revised to better apply to the region. At least three photos were taken at each sampling site (bed conditions, view across stream and view upstream from the starting point), however volunteers are encouraged to photograph as much as possible, especially of team members in the field. All stream-walks were initiated from a downstream position, traveling upstream.

A variety of instruments and kits are used on Snapshot Day by the volunteers. The majority of the monitoring teams were assigned these typical field instruments; armored Envirosafe thermometers (alcohol filled, 0.5° C resolution); standard pH indicator strips (0.5 pH unit resolution) or handheld Hannah pH meters (0.02 unit resolution); hand-held Oakton TDS Tester Conductivity meters (10 µS/cm resolution or Oakton Conductivity Low+ meters (1 µS/cm resolution); and Chemet dissolved oxygen kits (colorimetric, indigo carmine dye reaction, 1 mg/L resolution below 6 mg/L and 2 mg/L resolution above 6 mg/L). A few more experienced volunteer teams were trained to use Winkler titration kits (0.2 mg/L resolution). Most of these instruments/kits have been purchased over time by funding from many sources including University of Nevada Reno (UNR) Electrical Engineering Department, a Proposition 13 grant from the California SWRCB, a Truckee Tahoe Community Foundation grant, a Proposition 40 Grant re-granted from the Sierra Nevada Alliance to TRWC, the Truckee River Fund, and the Cities of Reno and Sparks and Washoe County through the Storm Water Permit Coordinating Committee. The remainder of the equipment was borrowed from US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), LTCC, IVGID, and others. Turbidity meters, to be used at the staging locations, were supplied by TRWC and TRPA. All of the instruments and kits were calibrated and tested/standardized at a quality control session held one day prior to the event (see supplemental Snapshot Day QA/QP Plan?)

All observations, photos, field measurements and samples were taken between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon on May 16, 2009 Samples were kept chilled with ice or blue ice in coolers from the point of collection until arrival at the lab for analysis. Any samples submitted past 1:00 pm are evaluated at that time to determine what the value is of samples submitted. Bacteria samples were collected in sterile Whirl-paks and nutrient and turbidity samples were collected in clean (acid rinsed) Nalgene® plastic bottles.

Bacteria samples were transported from drop off points at Lake Tahoe and Truckee to either the Lahontan Water Quality lab in South Lake Tahoe or the U.S. Geologic Survey in Carnelian Bay. Bacteria samples collected from the Lower Truckee River were transported to the Nevada State Health Laboratory. The need for multiple labs for such a large area is to ensure sample analysis within the allotted 4 hour holding time. Quality assurance is comparable as each lab uses the same standard methods lab SM9222. re?

Nutrient samples collected from Lake Tahoe and the Middle Truckee River were delivered to High Sierra Water Lab in Truckee within the allotted hold time, which can be several days as long as they are kept chilled to 4° Celsius. LTR nutrient samples were taken to the Nevada State Health Lab for analysis. Nutrient samples were kept refrigerated until analyzed for the various constituents. One important distinction in regards to nutrients reporting units is the upper watersheds (SLT, NLT, and MTR) are in micrograms/liter or parts per billion and the lower Truckee is in milligrams/liter or parts per million. This limits the ability to compare levels upstream to downstream, and should be considered when looking at the full data set.

Turbidity samples were run from the grab samples taken on Snapshot Day, along with replicate testing of field measurements such as pH and conductivity.

Site Locations

Volunteers gathered data at 78 locations, including multiple reaches within some streams, in the Lake Tahoe and Truckee River watersheds (see maps in appendix) as follows:

Lake Tahoe (On Lake):

- North Shore Lake Tahoe, National Ave. Boat Ramp
- South Shore at Ski Run Marina
- South Shore of Reagan Beach

Lake Tahoe Tributaries, South Shore:

- Angora Creek near SEZ project (3 sites)
- Angora Creek at Lake Tahoe Golf Course
- Angora Creek at Washoe Meadows
- Bijou Park Drainage, at Werner Salas
- Bijou Park Drainage below Hansen's Resort
- Bijou Park Drainage at Verdon Rd.
- Burke Creek at mouth
- Burke Creek south of Hwy 50
- Cascade Creek
- Cold Creek above Trout Creek
- Eagle Creek south of bridge on Eagle Falls loop
- Echo Creek at Upper Truckee
- Fallen Leaf Lake
- Glen Alpine Creek at mouth
- Heavenly Creek above confluence with Trout Creek
- Heavenly Creek below Pioneer Trail
- Meeks Creek at mouth
- Meeks Creek above meadow
- Saxon Creek at confluence with Trout Creek
- South Zephyr Creek at Mouth
- Tahoe Keys, Marina and Lagoon, East Channel
- Tahoe Keys Lagoon, West Channel
- Tallac Creek at mouth
- Tallac Creek abv Hwy 89
- Taylor Creek at mouth
- Trout Creek near confluence with Upper Truckee
- Trout Creek at Bellevue
- Upper Truckee River at mouth
- Upper Truckee River near airport meadow
- Upper Truckee River at Hwy 50 near Carrows

Lake Tahoe Tributaries, North Shore:

- Bonpland Creek at mouth
- Burton Creek at Star Harbor
- First Creek at mouth
- Griff Creek at mouth
- Homewood Creek at mouth
- Hatchery Creek near Star Harbor

- Lake Forest Creek at mouth
- Madden Creek at mouth

McKinney Creek at mouth

- Quail Lake Creek at mouth
- Secret Harbor Creek
- Snow Creek downstream of Highway 28
- Rosewood Creek abv Third Creek
- Tahoe City Urban Ditch
- Tunnel Creek at mouth
- Wood Creek at mouth
- Wood Creek at Tanager

Truckee River Watershed - Middle Truckee River:

- Alder Creek
- Bear Creek
- Little Truckee River below Boca Dam
- Little Truckee River at Boyington Mill
- Cold Creek
- Davies Creek
- Donner Creek at Hwy 89
- Donner at Donner Lake outlet
- East Martis Creek at bridge
- Union Valley Creek at Glenshire
- Martis Creek at mouth
- Martis Creek at ACOE upstream border
- Pole Creek
- Prosser Creek below dam
- Prosser Creek at Highway 89
- Sagehen Creek at Highway 89
- Squaw Creek
- Truckee River at three different locations:

Near Tahoe City

Near Goose Meadows

Regional Park

- · Trout Creek at mouth
- Trout Creek at Bennett Flat
- Upper Little Truckee River at Highway 89

<u>Truckee River Watershed – Lower Truckee River.</u>

- Alum Creek
- Chalk Creek
- Chalk Creek West
- Chalk Creek East
- Dry Creek
- Evans Creek
- Galena Creek
- Pyramid Lake
- Thomas Creek
- Steamboat Creek
- Truckee River above Nixon Bridge

- Truckee River at Idlewild Park
- Truckee River at Rock Park
- Truckee River near Wadsworth Bridge

Results and Discussion

It is important to remember that the measurements made on Snapshot Day were designed to represent a single point in time and do not necessarily represent average conditions. Since these measurements are designed to supplement existing monitoring, but could be used to gage the results against standards.

Water quality standards are the foundation of the water quality-based control program mandated by the Clean Water Act. Water Quality Standards define the goals for a water body by designating its uses, setting criteria to protect those uses, and establishing provisions to protect water quality from pollutants. A water quality standard consists of four basic elements:

- 1. Designated uses of the water body (e.g., recreation, water supply, aquatic life, agriculture)
- 2. Water quality criteria to protect designated uses (numeric pollutant concentration and narrative requirements)
- 3. An anti-degradation policy to maintain and protect existing uses and high quality waters, and
- 4. General policies addressing implementation issues (e.g., low flows, variances, mixing zones).

The US EPA has recommended criteria for nutrients and turbidity, and Nevada, California, and the TRPA have specific water quality standards and indicators generally more stringent in the Lake Tahoe Basin than elsewhere in the watershed. Table 2 lists some of these standards.

Table 2: Examples of Lake Tahoe Water Quality Standards

Parameter	Standard
Temperature	Shall not exceed 15° C, surface waters of Fallen Leaf Lake (CA)
рН	7.0 - 8.4 in Lake Tahoe (CA and NV)
TDS	Shall not exceed 60 mg/L average in Lake Tahoe (CA and NV)
Dissolved Oxygen	Mean no less than 6.5 and minimum of 4.0 mg/L for Lahontan waters designated as "cold freshwater habitat" (CA)
Turbidity	Shallow water shall not exceed 3 NTU near tributaries and 1 NTU not directly influenced by streams (TRPA)
Secchi Depth	December-March average of not less than 33.4 meters for Lake Tahoe (TRPA), and a mean of 18.5 meters for Fallen Leaf Lake (Lahontan Region, CA)
Algae	Lahontan RWQCB waters shall not contain biostimulatory substances (nutrients) that cause algae to become a nuisance or to affect the water's beneficial uses (CA)
Total Nitrogen	Mean of no more than 190 ppb (CA)
Inorganic Nitrogen	Mean of no more than 25 ppb for most tributaries to Lake Tahoe, Nevada side of Lake Tahoe (TRPA)
Total Phosphorous	Annual average of no more than 50 ppb for most tributaries, Nevada side of Lake Tahoe (NV) and no more than 30 ppb for most tributaries, California side of Lake Tahoe (CA)
Soluble Reactive Phosphorous	Mean of no more than 7 ppb for Lake Tahoe, Nevada side (TRPA)
Fecal Coliform	Log mean of 20 CFU (30 day period) and maximum of 40 CFU, (Lahontan Region, CA)

Lahontan Water Quality Control Board has Objectives for the whole Truckee shown in Table 3. Note the units for these tables are in parts per billion rather than the more common parts per million or mg/L for most water quality measurements. This reflects the much lower concentrations in the upper watershed, and in fact there can be no direct graphing of the Lake and Middle Truckee to the Lower Truckee because of this major difference.

Table 3. Examples of California State Water Quality Objectives for the Truckee River Hydrologic Unit

Surface Water	Site ID	Total P (ppb)	NO3-N (ppb)	Total N (ppb)	TKN (ppb)
Trout Creek at Mouth	MTR-TROU-00	40	50	150	100
Squaw Creek at Mouth	MTR-SQCR	20	50	180	130
Bear Creek at Mouth	MTR-BEAR	20	50	150	100
Truckee River at Lake Tahoe outlet	MTR-TR01	10	20	120	100

The selected standards shown in Table 4 are for the Lower Truckee River watershed.

Table 4. Examples of Nevada State Water Quality Standards for the Truckee River

Parameter	Truckee River at Idlewild (LTR-IDL)	Truckee River at Wadsworth (LTR-WADS)
Temp	≤13°	≤14°
Dissolved Oxygen	≥5 mg/l	≥6 mg/l
pH	6.5-9.0	6.5-9.0
Chlorides	≤250 mg/l	≤250 mg/l
Total Phosphates	Annual average ≤ 0.10 mg/l	Annual average ≤ 0.05 mg/l
Ortho-phosphate	≤0.05 mg/l	NA
Nitrate	≤2.0 mg/l	≤2.0 mg/l
Nitrite	≤0.04 mg/l	≤0.04 mg/l
Total Nitrogen	NA	≤1.2 mg/l
Turbidity	≤10 NTU	≤10 NTU
Fecal coliform	≤200/400 ⁸ No./100ml	≤200/400° No./100ml
E. coli	≤410 No./100ml	≤410 No./100ml

^a Based on the minimum of not less than 5 samples taken over a 30-day period, the fecal coliform bacterial level may not exceed a geometric mean of 200 per 100 ml nor may more than 10 percent of the total samples taken during any 30-day period exceed 400 per 100 ml.

All standards listed in Table 4 are for a single value unless stated otherwise. These are the standards established to maintain beneficial uses.

For full and more detailed information on water quality objectives in California refer to the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan at the following website: http://www.waterboards.ca.qov/lahontan/BPlan/BPlan Index.htm. For water quality standards in Nevada see the following website: http://ndep.nv.qov/bwqp/standards.htm. For a .pdf version, visit: http://www.ndep.nv.qov/nac/445a-118.pdf. For the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) water quality standards, see the following website: http://www.trpa.org/Documents.htm and select "Environmental Threshold Carrying Capacities."

The following section gives a summary of this year's data, Appendix A gives all the results.

Water temperature for Lake Tahoe and the Truckee River watershed ranged from 4.9° Celsius (C) at Pole Creek to 17°C at the somewhat enclosed marina at National Av. There were only 4 measurements in the Lower Truckee River watershed and all were over 20 °C, much higher than the upper watershed.

Generally, cooler water temperatures are considered better habitat for aquatic life in mountain streams and lakes since colder water contains more dissolved oxygen, an essential ingredient for fish and invertebrates. Higher temperatures promote nutrient solubility and can occur as a result of low flow (shallow) conditions, and/or a lack of canopy (tree) cover along stream banks, which acts to shade and thus prevent solar heating of the water.

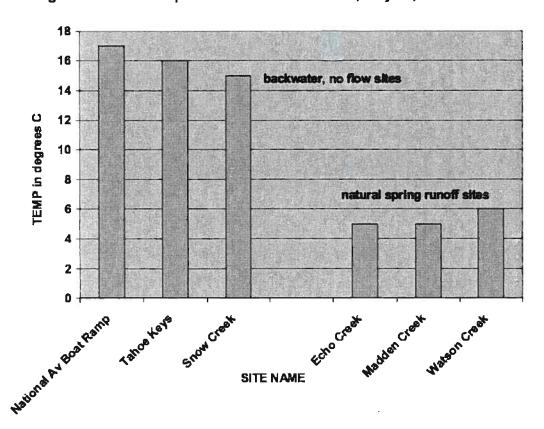


Figure 1. Water temperature for selected sites, May 16, 2009.

In many Sierra streams, propagation of cold-water fish (i.e. trout or salmon) is a designated beneficial use of the water. In such streams, numerical and narrative water quality standards generally are set at levels that will "support the beneficial use" of a cold water fishery. Such streams generally require cooler temperatures (ranges adequate for Rainbow trout survival shown below) and higher dissolved oxygen content than water in streams and lakes that do not have cold-water fishery as a designated beneficial use. Cold-water fish also require habitat characteristics that promote spawning (clear gravel beds, riffles), rearing habitat (glides and pools) and adequate food sources such as macroinvertebrates (mayfly, nymphs, stonefly nymphs, and caddisfly larvae). Such characteristics can be monitored, but they do not usually have numeric standards.

(Note that dissolved oxygen, temperature, total suspended solids (TSS) and turbidity are parameters directly related to habitat for which most waters generally have standards. Because macroinvertebrates are believed to be a primary indicator of stream health as related to fisheries, both LRWQCB and NDEP have developed or are in the process of developing an Index of Biologic Integrity (IBI). These are basically standards for benthic macroinvertebrates.)

Table 5: Beneficial Uses of the State's Waters

Species	Growth	Maxima	Spawning*	Embryo Survival**
Rainbow Trout	19°C (66 °F)	24°C (75 °F)	9°C (48 °F)	13°C (55 °F)

^{*} The optimum or mean of the range of spawning temperatures reported for the species.

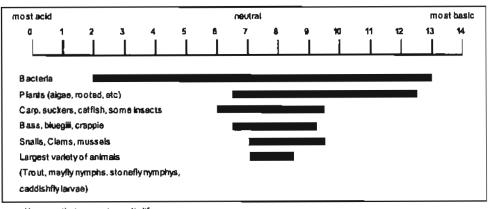
^{**} The upper temperature for successful incubation and hatching reported for the species. Adapted from EPA's Draft Volunteer Stream Monitoring: A Methods Menual.

All measured **pH values** fell between 4.5 and 9.2, which is typical of fresh water streams or lakes in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. In fresh water, pH in the range of 6.5 to 8.5 should protect most organisms. The high value of 9.2 was from Pyramid Lake, exactly the same as last year. The highest reported value from a stream was 8.7 (First Creek at North Lake Tahoe).

Many sites had pH values lower than 6.5, with several sites showing valid responses of 5.5-4.5. It has not been unusual to see low values in Tahoe during spring runoff.

The range of pH tolerated by organisms is shown in Table 6 below. This table comes from the SWRCB Clean Water Team pH Fact Sheet. An analysis of aquatic life (bio-assessment) might provide better information for determining if the pH is acceptable within these streams.

Table 6: pH Ranges that Support Aquatic Life



pH ranges that support aquatic life.

Dissolved oxygen measurements ranged between 4.8 and 13.6 mg/L, all within reasonable levels for streams. Cold, clean water usually has levels of dissolved oxygen averaging above 6.0 mg/L, and single-measurement levels below 5 mg/L are considered dangerous for cold water aquatic life. While water quality objectives for dissolved oxygen will vary from region to region, waters that support coldwater fishes usually require that the average dissolved oxygen concentration shall not fall below 6 to 8 mg/L.

Conductivity measurements ranged from 0.9 to 7,775 µS/cm (micro Siemens per centimeter, the units used for conductivity measurements in fresh water), the highest at Pyramid Lake, a natural alkaline system. Conductivity is used as an indicator of dissolved solids (e.g., minerals or salts), with higher levels associated with degraded water quality. Conductivity will vary with water source inputs from natural sources such as groundwater seepage, springs and/or geothermal activity can affect the readings. Anthropogenic sources that may affect conductivity include drainage from agricultural fields, wastewater discharge, or inputs stemming from deicing materials on the roadways.

Conductance tends to be lower as water volume increases due to dilution, and generally increases with higher turbidity (Figure 2). Although Snapshot Day occurred close to peak spring run off, the total volume of water was fairly low this year compared to previous years (see streamflow section below). Therefore, conductivity levels were expected to be higher than in years when Snapshot Day occurred on the tip of spring runoff during heavy snow years (2003, 4 and 5).

Bijou Park Drainage, as a very urban area, has typically been very high in conductivity and 2009 was no exception. All 3 of the samples sites were close or above 500 μ S/cm, as compared to the undeveloped sites such as Eagle and Madden Creeks. The highest on Middle Truckee River was Union Valley Creek, similar to other years.

Lower Truckee River sites had higher overall conductivity than sites higher in the watershed, which is what is usually found on Snapshot Day. Because Pyramid Lake is a desert terminal lake it usually has much higher conductivity than other sites measured on Snapshot Day. The other site in the Lower Truckee River that had high conductivity were the Chalk Creek sites at 1990 µS/cm.

Figure 2: Specific Conductivity and Turbidity at Selected Sites

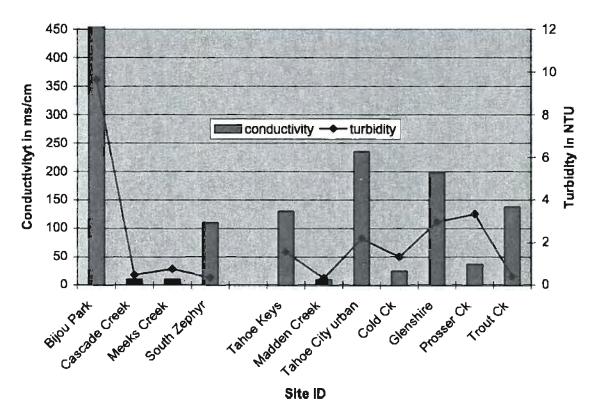


Figure 2: Specific Conductivity and Turbidity at Selected Sites

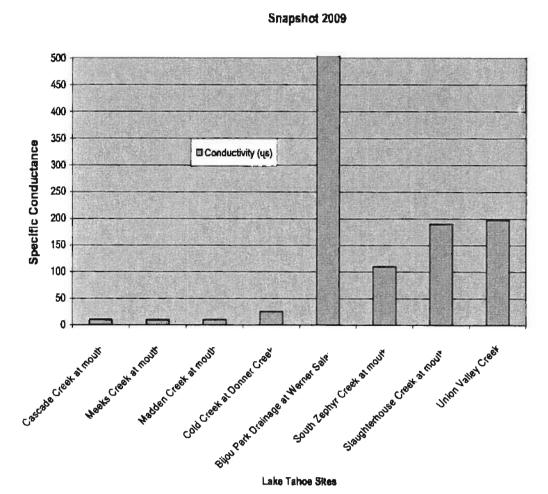


Table 4: Acceptable Ranges for Water Conductivity

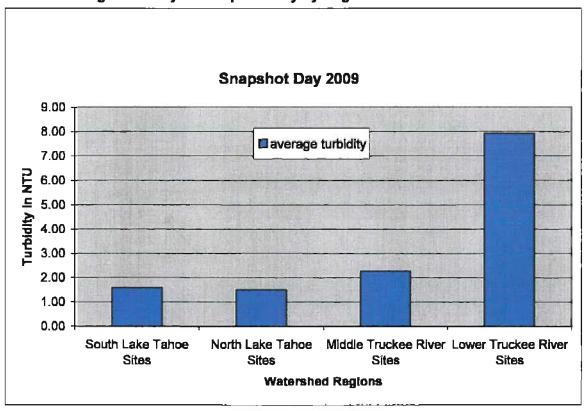
Water Type	Conductivity µS/cm (micro Siemens per centimeter)
Distilled Water	0.5 - 3.0
Melted snow	2 - 42
Potable water in U.S.	30 - 1500
Irrigation Supply Water	< 750

Turbidity is a measure of the amount of suspended particles in the water. Algae, suspended sediment, organic matter, and some pollutants can cloud the water making it more turbid. Suspended particles diffuse sunlight and absorb heat, which can increase temperature and reduce light available for algal photosynthesis. If the turbidity is caused by suspended sediment, it can be an indicator of erosion, either natural or man-made. High sediment loads can clog the gills of fish, foul gravel beds and smother fish eggs and benthic insects. The sediment can also carry pathogens, pollutants and nutrients.

The US EPA's recommended criteria for turbidity in streams in Eco-Region II (forested mountains in the western U.S.), is at or below 1.3 NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Units) or less (US EPA Ambient Water Quality Criteria Recommendations). Higher NTU levels indicate poorer water clarity. TRPA has a near shore turbidity standard of 1-3 NTUs, which is rarely exceeded in the lake. The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (LRWQCB) has established a standard of 3 NTUs for the Middle Truckee River, as measured by mean of monthly means. The standard for the Truckee River in the State of Nevada is generally 10 NTU (single value measurement).

Valid turbidity data from the grab samples was determined for 81 sites. Values for Lake Tahoe area ranged from a low of 0.01 and 0.40 on the relatively undisturbed Tunnel and Eagle Creeks respectively, to a high of 36 on Steamboat Creek in the Lower Truckee. Middle Truckee River sites were all very high with only 2 of the 22 sites below 1.0 NTU. Five of the Middle Truckee River sites had values greater than 3 NTU (Squaw Creek, Prosser Creek at Hwy 89, Prosser Creek below the dam, Martis Creek at Martis Lake, and Alder Creek. All of the Lower Truckee River sites were below the Nevada State standard (10 NTU) for the Truckee River with the exception of the high measurement of Steamboat Creek.

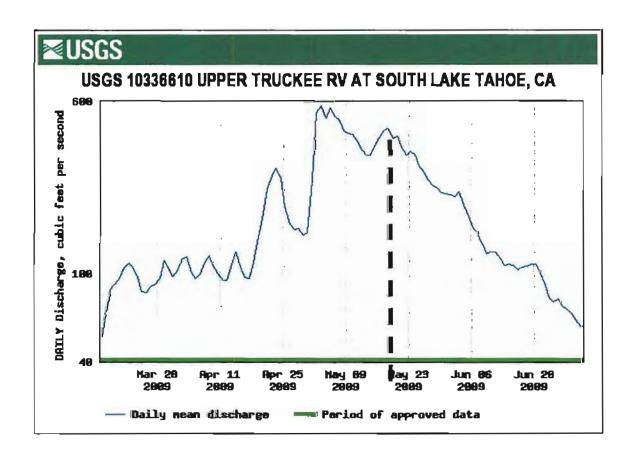
Table 5: Average Turbidity for Snapshot Day by Region

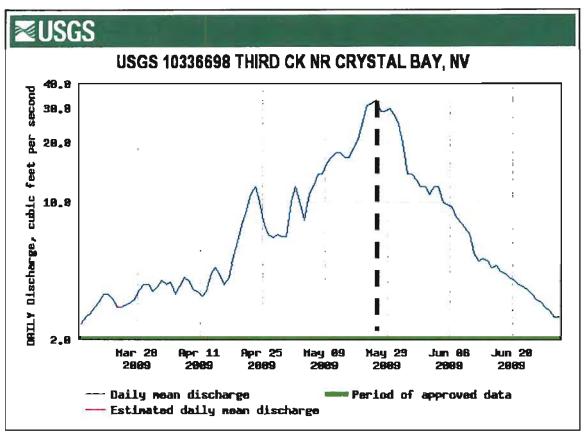


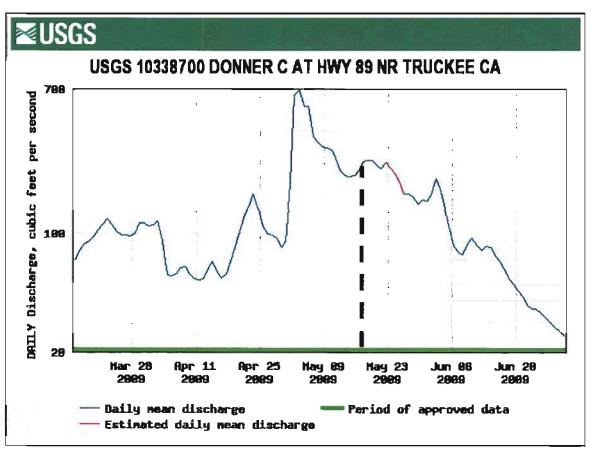
Streamflow is the measurement of how much water is following, which varies with precipitation. One of the major goals of Snapshot Day, besides the public involvement and education, is to gain information on the vast numbers of streams and creeks that are not routinely measured for water quality or streamflow (volume of water). The Tahoe Basin has about 13 streams that are regularly measured out of 64. The Middle and Lower Truckee have even less under regular monitoring. Stream flow data for those sites that are measured was obtained for May 16, 2009 was obtained from USGS gaging stations and is entered into the summary table in Appendix A. Hydrographs of the flow for selected streams are shown below. As can be seen, the 2009 flow data, the peak of runoff was earlier in May than the day of sampling. The North Lake Tahoe sampling was the closest to the peak followed by South Lake Tahoe. Middle and Lower Truckee River were about 2 weeks past the peak of runoff. This could be reflected by higher conductivity and temperature (less dilution) in the water quality data.

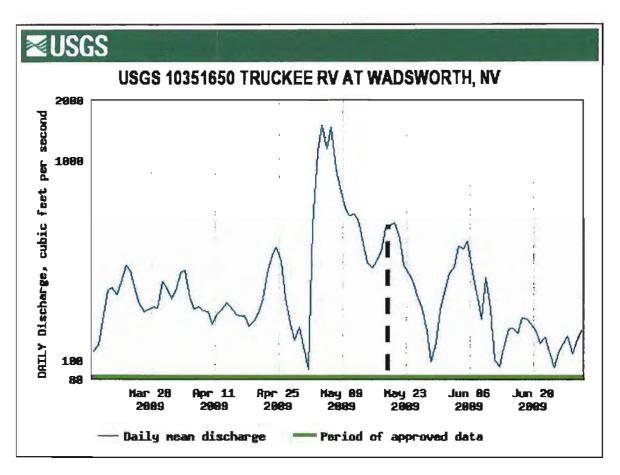
Average snow pack as of the June 2009 NRCS Water Supply Outlook Report for the Lake Tahoe Basin was 38.3 percent, with the Truckee River at 65.6 percent. Reported precipitation for June 2009 was 90 percent of average in the Lake Tahoe Basin and 89 percent of average for the Truckee River. Reported stream flow forecasts were expected to be well below average for the Lake Tahoe and Truckee River watershed as of May 1, 2009.

Figure 4: Stream Flow of Selected Streams on Snapshot Day









Visual observations at most of the study locations were indicative of generally good water quality conditions. Algae were reported at 30 of the 91 sites, not too bad considering the low flow year. Litter was only reported at 10 sites overall with 7 of the 10 sites in the Lower Truckee locations. Water with a rotten egg smell was reported from Bijou Park at Verdon Rd. South Zephyr Creek at the large Zephyr Cove Marina has observations of algae, oily sheen, form/suds and litter.

Coliform bacteria are a group of bacteria that are mostly found in the feces of warm-blooded animals, including humans, pets, livestock, beavers, and birds. Coliform is measured in colony forming units counted per 100 mL of water (CFU/100mL). CFU are roughly equivalent to the number of bacteria cells. The Lahontan Regional Board standard for coliform is 20 counts per 100 ml for a single occurrence. There are also standards for longer sampling periods.

There were few hits of bacteria in the upper watersheds, with only 2 counts above the CA standard at South Zephyr and Burke Creek. South Zephyr has a riding stable within close proximity to the stream that has had numerous violations in the past. Burke Creek is a popular dog walking area, and has benefited from a recent Eagle Scout Project that installed a dog waste station near the parking lot. This was not installed until after Snapshot Day so it will be interesting to see if subsequent years show decrease in values.

Lower Truckee River bacteria samples all measured some bacteria. The lowest levels (at 4 sites) were 10 CFU/100 mL, with the highest at 450 at Truckee River near Wadsworth Bridge. This area is surrounded by agricultural and grazing land uses. The Nevada State standard for E. Coli for is 410 CFU/100 mL (single value measurement) for most of the Truckee River. There were 2 sites on the Truckee River that exceeded this standard for E.

Coli, at Upper Chalk Creek at the head of the samplings sites and again at Wadsworth Bridge at the lowest sampling site. See Appendix A for more data and Table 7 for a further explanation of Nevada State coliform standards.

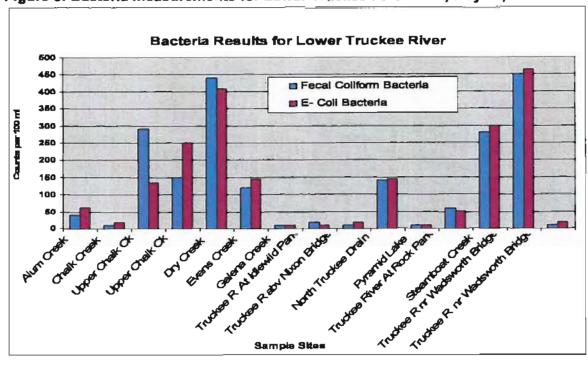


Figure 5: Bacteria measurements for Lower Truckee River sites, May 16, 2009

Nutrients

Sixty-five samples were analyzed for nitrogen and phosphorus that are of most concern for algae growth, which is the reason why Snapshot Day volunteers monitor for these specific nutrients. Along with excess algae growth, nutrient concentrations that are too high can lead to odors, discolored waters, loss of clarity, and nighttime oxygen depletion, which can cause fish kills in extreme cases. In looking at the data be aware of the difference in reporting units as they are not the same for the upper vs lower watersheds. The higher quality waters of Lake Tahoe and the Middle Truckee report concentrations in parts per billion (ppb) while the Lower Truckee is in the more common parts per million (ppm), please note when looking at the data. The discussion is separated accordingly.

Nitrogen is required by all organisms for the basic processes of life to make proteins, to grow, and to reproduce. Nitrogen is very common and found in many forms in the environment. Inorganic forms include nitrate, nitrite, ammonia, and nitrogen gas. Organic nitrogen is found in the cells of all living things and is a component of proteins, peptides, and amino acids. Nitrogen is a nutrient that stimulates the growth of algae in streams and lakes. Algae include benthic forms, attached to the rocks and sediment of the streambeds (as observed by the monitors), as well as phytoplankton.

The TRPA standard for inorganic nitrogen is 25 ppb, and only 4 sites in the Lake Tahoe and middle Truckee exceed this limit, and by orders of magnitude. The CA standards for Total Nitrogen ranges from 150-190 ppb, and though quite a few sites exceed this limit, note this is an annual average

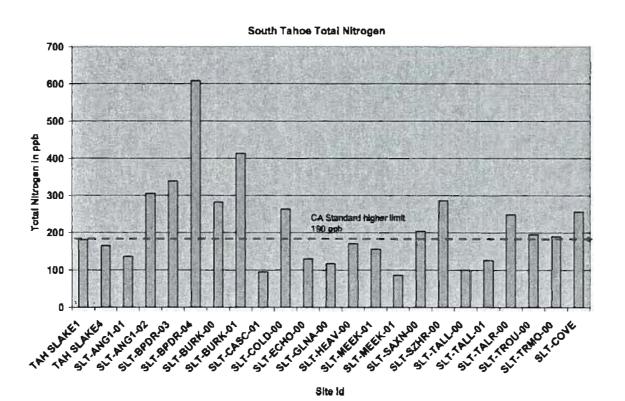
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Figure 6: Total Nitrogen



Conclusion

AS seen the overall water quality for 2009 was quite good, with very few major issues. Turbidity was somewhat elevated, typical for spring runoff, and the same 'hot spot' sites in each region continue to bear closer scrutiny.

The most amazing result in the now 9 years of Snapshot Day is not only how possible it is to successfully engage the public in active watershed stewardship, but to also provide valuable data to the responsible agencies. This event not been funded except though efforts by Various grants and donations, but large support has come the Nevada State Lands Commission through the selling of license plates for conservation. The staff is also mostly volunteer and yet the collaboration and continued dedication of citizen volunteers makes the event happen. Many residents have committed to the sampling near their homes to insure high quality data is collected for the protection of the waters in our region. The successes of this type of event show how average homeowners and residents can provide invaluable data collection and have fun at the same time!

For more information about how to get involved with water quality monitoring activities contact the following agencies:

- South Lake Tahoe Contact Jenny Hatch, Executive Director of CalTrout, at (530) 542-2571.
- Fallen Leaf Lake Grant Adams, Fallen Leaf Lake Research, (530) 541-8535
- North Lake Tahoe Incline Village Contact Incline Village GID Waste Not/Incline Village Clean Water Team, (775) 832-1284.
- Middle Truckee River (Tahoe City to Nevada State Line) Contact Beth Christman, Truckee River Watershed Council, (530) 550-8760
- Lower Truckee River (Nevada Stateline to Pyramid Lake) Contact Mary Kay Wagner, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, (775) 687-9454

- Middle Truckee River (Tahoe City to Nevada State Line) Contact Beth Christman, Truckee River Watershed Council, (530) 550-8760
- Lower Truckee River (Nevada Stateline to Pyramid Lake) Contact Mary Kay Wagner, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, (775) 687-9454

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Acknowledgements

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Farr West Engineering

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

Lake Tahoe Community College

Marine Research & Education, Inc.

Nevada Division of Environmental Protection

Nevada Division of State Lands

Nevada State Health Laboratory

Nevada Tahoe Conservation District

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Sierra Nevada College

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Summit Engineering

Tahoe Environmental Research Center

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

Tahoe Resource Conservation District

Tahoe Water Suppliers Association

Truckee River Watershed Council

Truckee River Foundation

Truckee River Fund
Truckee Tahoe Community Foundation
University of California Cooperative Extension
University of Nevada Cooperative Extension
University of Nevada Reno Electrical Engineering Department
USDA Forest Service
United States Geologic Survey
Washoe County
Waste Not, Incline Village General Improvement District

Citizen Monitoring Working Group Snapshot Day Planning Committee:

Beth Christman (Truckee River Watershed Council)
Rebecca Sawyer (Incline Village General Improvement District)
Jenny Francis (Director, CalTrout)
Jason Kuchnicki (Nevada Division of Environmental Protection)
Mary Kay Riedl (Nevada Division of Environmental Protection)
Susie Kocher (University of California Cooperative Extension)
Rita Whitney (Tahoe Regional Planning Agency)

Equipment:

Carson Valley Subconservancy District
Environmental Protection Agency
Fallen Leaf Lake Citizen Group
Incline Village General Improvement District
Lake Tahoe Community College
Nevada Division of Environmental Protection
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
Truckee River Watershed Council
United States Geological Survey
University of California, Davis
University of Nevada, Reno

Laboratory Analysis (Nutrients and Bacteria):

High Sierra Water Lab Nevada State Health Laboratory Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control United States Geologic Survey

Special Thanks To

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Shasta Ferranto, for creation of maps

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Tahoe Water Suppliers Association, for report printing and binding

Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility for nutrient analysis, Lower Truckee River

Volunteer coordination by Jaymee Willison, Susie Kocher, Domi Fellers, Beth Christman, and Mary Kay Riedl

And all the volunteers that made it happen!

Appendices

Appendices:

- A. 2007 Summary of Field and Lab Data
- B. Map of Sampling Locations

Note: Data collected as part of the Snapshot activities is available electronically. Contact Marie Bledsoe, TRPA, at (775) 588-4547

APPENDIX A

Snapshot Day May 16, 2009 Summary Field and Lab Data

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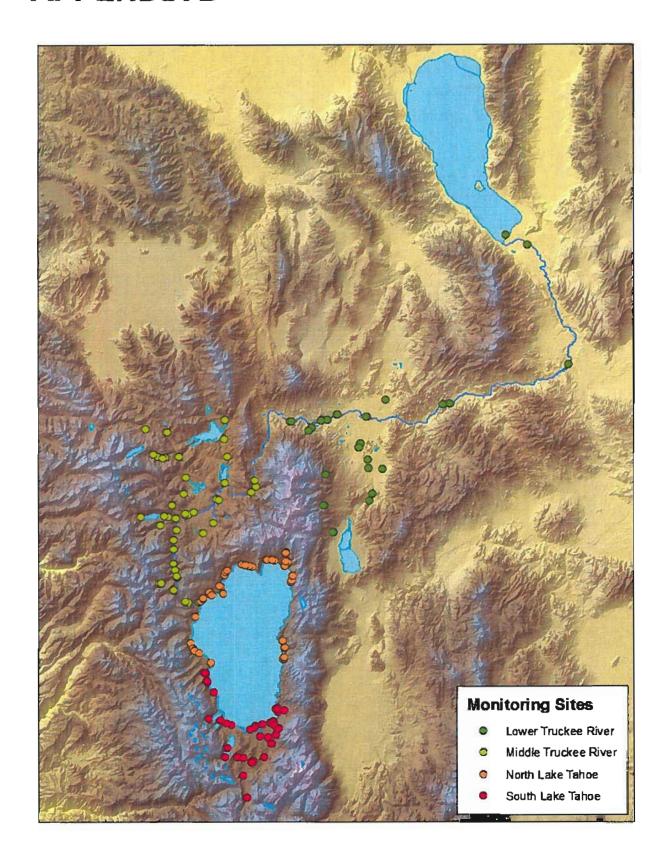
Note 1: Turbidity (NTU) lab analysis conducted at the four collection sites (Sierra Nevada College, Lake Tahoe Community College, Truckee and Washoe-Storey Conservation District).

Note 2: Lake Tahoe and Middle Truckee River Watershed nutrient analysis conducted by High Sierra Water Lab. Concentrations in Parts Per Billion (PPB).

Note 3: Lower Truckee River Watershed nutrient analysis conducted by Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility. Concentrations in Parts Per Billion (PPB).

Note 4: Fecal Coliform analysis conducted at Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Soard. Value represents number of colonies per 100 mL. Coliform value of zero is equal to "Non-Detect" less than one. Fecal

APPENDIX B



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