

Explorer talks about what's in Lake Tahoe

When we are asked, "What do you see under there?" the most common response by divers with the Tahoe Divers Conservancy is "not much." Swimming among beautiful waves of granite boulders the size of houses, bright reflections of light from mica studded sandy lake bottom and a generally stark but surreal crystal environment. TDC often describes diving in Lake Tahoe as "Zen Diving".

But today the underwater world of Lake Tahoe is disturbingly full of strange, new life.

In just a few years, vast sandy areas that for centuries covered the bottom of Lake Tahoe have disappeared under a carpet of invasive plants. The change is not merely cosmetic. Invasive species will upend the ecology of Lake Tahoe, shifting distribution of species and starving familiar fish of their usual food supply. Eurasian watermilfoil, Curlyleaf pondweed and the Asian clam are all found in Lake Tahoe now. It is not just invasive plants. In summer 2009 scores of brown bullhead catfish were found in Emerald Bay. Once confined to the Tahoe Keys and Taylor Marsh, non-native fish are propagating all over Lake Tahoe.

Phil Caterino has spent the last 40 years working to protect Lake Tahoe. He was the founder of Alpengroup, the Sierra Avalanche Center, the Nevada Conservation League, the Tahoe Divers Conservancy, and the Thunderbird Lodge Preservation Society. He is a strong advocate for grass-roots activism to engage the public in meaningful projects committed to the preservation of Lake Tahoe.

Presentation by Phil Caterino, Tahoe Divers Conservancy

Date: May 13

Time: 6:30pm no-host bar/door opens; 7pm program

Cost: \$10. No-Host Bar.

Location: Assembly Rooms 139 & 141, Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village, Nevada (on the campus of Sierra Nevada College)

Program is presented by Squaw Valley Institute and UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center.