

Tahoe-Baikal Institute celebrating 20th year

Born as the Cold War ended, the Tahoe-Baikal Institute celebrates its 20th year of bringing together young people dedicated to preserving two of the world's greatest lakes, Tahoe and Baikal.

For the past two decades, this nonprofit organization has been promoting peace, international and cultural understanding, and scientific exchange between the Lake Tahoe region and the Lake Baikal region in Siberia, Russia.

The idea for a joint Russian-American organization focused on scientific exchange about ecological issues at these two unique lakes was first discussed at an international youth conference in Helsinki, Finland, in 1989. During the conference, Presidents Regan and Gorbachev encouraged youth leaders from around the world to find ways to work together on common issues.

Upon returning from the conference, youth delegates from California and Irkutsk took the idea to their regional governments.

The first Summer Environmental Exchange program was in 1990, and has run annually ever since. The participants, most who come from the United States and Russia, learn about the science, policy-making and management challenges at the two lakes.

Since the first exchange, more than 300 young leaders, scientists, policy-makers and other professional delegates have participated in the SEE and other educational or cultural exchange programs organized by the Tahoe-Baikal Institute. Each year, the Tahoe-Baikal Institute's exchange participants make significant contributions to the environmental conditions

at Lake Tahoe and at Lake Baikal.

“The experience that participants gain through the Tahoe-Baikal Institute’s interdisciplinary approach to conservation is exactly what it will take to solve the problems that these lakes, and the global environment, face,” board member and TBI founder Charles Goldman said in a statement.

The 12 participants of the 20th Annual Summer Environmental Exchange arrived in Tahoe this month and are enjoying a rigorous curriculum of meetings with local agency representatives, scientists, and environmental advocates.

The Tahoe-Baikal Institute is inviting all community members to attend the 20th Anniversary Gala at Heavenly’s Lakeview Lodge on July 2. The evening will include a buffet dinner, live music and dancing, a silent auction fundraiser to support our future programs, and an opportunity to meet our exchange participants from Russian, Mongolia, and the U.S.

To learn more this opportunity or about the Institute, www.tahoebaikal.org or contact Jennifer Smith-Lee at jsmith@tahoebaikal.org or (530) 542.5599.