

Fall rains will dictate if Lake Tahoe falls below rim

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Officials said they are hopeful that a wet fall will keep Lake Tahoe above its natural rim to provide a continuing flow of water into the Truckee River, but to the south, drought conditions have lowered Lake Mead to its lowest point in nearly 75 years.

Slightly buoyed by October rains, Tahoe's water levels Tuesday were about a half foot above the lake's natural rim. When full, the top 6 feet of Tahoe's waters above the rim are stored by the dam at Tahoe City for use by Reno-Sparks and other downstream users.



Sand bars at the South Shore's Cove East in September.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

If conditions are dry this fall, Tahoe should drop below its rim and the dam's gates by the end of the year, said Chad Blanchard, chief deputy water master. Continued rains could prevent that from occurring.

“It hopefully won’t happen at all,” Blanchard said.

The situation is far different at Lake Mead, which serves the Las Vegas area.

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