

Small group owns 40% of Incline's lakefront property

By Yun Long, Reno Gazette-Journal

Of the 105 Incline Village lots that border Lake Tahoe, 40, or nearly 40 percent of available property, are controlled by just 15 owners.

Billionaires and millionaires have flocked to Lake Tahoe to build estates for decades. But the recession has presented additional opportunities for those who long to build a private, mega-compound at the lake.

"If you find the location that you love and that you are really drawn to, you might or might not have the opportunity to expand on that land," said Kerry Donovan, a Chase International broker. "Many want to expand their privacy, and more people want more acreage – not less."

Most Lake Tahoe parcels already have buildings on them. Some luxury homebuyers tear down existing structures and build an estate that suits their taste.

"It's a lot easier to start from scratch sometimes," Donovan said.

Those with the means have long been acquiring Lake Tahoe property to build compounds and dream homes. In 1987, businessman Warren Trepp bought seven homes and then proceeded to raze them to build a 8,000-square foot residence. Junk-bond king Michael Milken, casino mogul Steven Wynn and many from Silicon Valley such as PeopleSoft Inc. chief David Duffield and Oracle CEO Larry Ellison followed.

Even with the housing market going bust in Nevada, Incline-Crystal Bay's 89451 zip code still made Forbes' 2010 list of

the most expensive ZIP codes in the U.S. At No. 389, it was the only Nevada entry on the list.

Donovan said the high-net worth individuals are drawn to Nevada for its tax advantages, the potential to move or headquarter a company here and because they want to own an enjoyable asset.

“This is where they want to be,” she said.

Incline Village’s lakefront properties now are listed from \$2.9 million to \$49.9 million and a half-acre can be valued from \$7.5 million to \$9 million, depending on market conditions, according to Chase. Having private piers and buoys adds to the value.

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