

Letter: Fallen Leaf Lake boat wash not adequate

Publisher's note: *This letter was originally sent to members of the Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District board and others in that South Shore community. It is reprinted with permission. Since it was sent, the board has agreed to place the topic on the May 25 board agenda. The board meets at 9am at the FLL Fire Department.*

To the community,

On May 15 an announcement was made that the New Zealand mud snail had been found in the Truckee River. Per this article it was most likely introduced by a kayak or canoe being launched into the river. They have confirmed approximately one mile between samples found in the river, this is very scary.

New Zealand mud snail can be from about the size of a grain of sand all the way up to one-eighth inch in diameter.



Fallen Leaf Lake's boat wash at the marina. Photo/LTN file

For the most part they "cannot be seen by the human eye". They can populate a square yard with up to 900,000 snails. They can

also have a severe impact on the ecosystem within lakes and streams as well as causing problems on lake front areas and beach with dead snail shells. There is a large potential for financial impact as they will get into pumps, water pipes, and water tanks leaving them unusable. Very serious.

When I started our boat wash program many years ago, the intention was to decontaminate each vessel before being launched into Fallen Leaf Lake. This would help to ensure the pristine waters of Fallen Leaf Lake would be maintained for future generations to enjoy. It has recently come to my attention that someone has changed the requirements of the program. Apparently if a boat comes in with a tag from Tahoe (only an inspection required), the attendants at the launch ramp will perform a visual inspection and if it looks good, they will let the boat be launched.

Please don't forget many of these AIS [aquatic invasive species] cannot be seen by the human eye. The people at the launch ramp indicated that the existing boat wash system is now not considered strong enough per TRPA.

Has anyone looked into an upgrade? Has anyone tried to raise funds to purchase the upgraded pressure washer? Leaving the responsibility of keeping our lake healthy for our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren in the hands of people who have already allowed Tahoe to be infected with Eurasian water milfoil, curly leaf pondweed, Asian clams, and now the New Zealand mud snail is irresponsible on our part.

We can make a difference. The fact that Fallen Leaf Lake is still presumed to be clean proves it.

The Fallen Leaf Lake Protection Association and the CSD needs to get it together. Why has this program been allowed to change from the strict requirements previously set? There are now four potential AIS in our back yard, the program standards need to be up held as originally written. Although we have

been unable to get the USFS to participate in the protection of our lake, there is no reason as a community we can not get together and hold our standards higher to protect the lake as much as we possibly can.

I would like to request a response from both the FLLPA and the CSD on this matter. This has the potential of impacting our entire community and the reduced protection that has been allowed for our lake is unacceptable, especially with the increased threat.

Mike Kraft, Fallen Leaf Lake U.S. Forest Service land leasee and creator of the now nearly 9-year-old FLL boat wash program