

Raw sewage spills into Tahoe at Keys Marina



Sewage from the Fresh Ketch restaurant spills onto a walkway before winding up in Lake Tahoe. Photo/Andrew Lubrano

By Kathryn Reed

Sewage from an overflow tank at the Fresh Ketch restaurant flowed into Lake Tahoe for at least 24 hours this weekend.

People at the restaurant first saw the spill Friday night, but Summit Plumbing of South Lake Tahoe said they didn't receive a call for service until 6:08pm May 3.

Employees with the El Dorado County Environmental Health Department went to the restaurant Saturday afternoon. Dry bleach was used on the surface areas where people frequent.

"There is not much you can do once it is in the water because

algae starts taking up the nutrients. Bacteria has only a certain amount of time it can stay viable," Lauri Kemper with Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The cold temperature of the lake and sunlight would dissipate the bacteria quickly.

However, her agency will be out at the Tahoe Keys Marina on Monday to take samples for bacteria.

It is near impossible to know how much sewage made its way into Lake Tahoe, but several gallons, according to witnesses.

No one from the marina or restaurant was available for comment.

The expanded outdoor seating area behind the restaurant has tables and chairs that sit over the overflow tank for the restaurant. This is where the problem was.

"We walked up and there was a very large puddle and interesting odor. When we got up to it we saw toilet paper, etcetera coming from the old pump-out station," Andrew Lubrano told *Lake Tahoe News*.

This was on May 2. He went back out the next morning and saw the problem had not been fixed. He called the 800 number for Lahontan to report the spill.

Kemper said her agency would work with the county to see what it has found, as well as with South Tahoe Public Utility District.

"With all the facilities connected, they may need a larger tank or to maintain the lines better. They could be dumping grease. STPUD has ordinances against dumping grease into their lines," Kemper said.

This will be the second investigation Lahontan will have

involving the Tahoe Keys Marina. The other is the fueling dock. Kemper said she was not at liberty to discuss that case further at this time.