

Fecal matter detected in water near Fresh Ketch



Sewage last weekend went from the Fresh Ketch into Lake Tahoe. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

Elevated levels of fecal coliform bacteria were found in the water where sewage flowed from the Fresh Ketch restaurant into Lake Tahoe for at least a 24-hour period that ended Saturday night.

Lahontan Regional Water Control Board today released results from water samples taken May 5. The highest measurement was 54 colony forming units (cfu) per 100 milliliters.

Lahontan's standards are 20 cfu per 100 ml and not more than 10 percent of all samples collected in a 30-day period to exceed 40 cfu/100 ml.

Sampling done in July at the marina showed fecal coliform bacteria levels below 20 cfu/100 ml.

Here are the May 5 results from testing at Tahoe Keys Marina

Site	Colonies/100 ml
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6 feet lake-ward of discharge point	29
6 feet lake-ward of discharge point – duplicate	19
6 feet lake-ward of discharge point – average	24
10 feet north of discharge point	22
40 feet north of discharge point	13
100 feet north of discharge point	12
350 feet north of discharge point	54
<i>Lahontan Laboratory Technician: Lisa M. Petrusa</i>	

More testing will be done this afternoon.

The risk of someone becoming ill is slightly elevated, according to Lauri Kemper with Lahontan.

She told *Lake Tahoe News* if people fishing or kayaking in the area get water on themselves that soap and fresh water is enough to wash away any contaminants.

The spill started May 2 when an overflow box behind the South Lake Tahoe restaurant failed. Sewage covered a back walkway near where the outdoor dining has expanded and then made its way into Lake Tahoe.

An employee at Tahoe Keys Marina said General Manager Robert Spinnato would never speak to *Lake Tahoe News*.

However, just moments after that a marina employee posted this comment on the two previous *LTN* stories regarding the spill, “The spillage was factual [stet] sabotage from a former Key [stet] Marina tenant who has just recently been evicted.

Because of his eviction he purposefully stuffed plastic bags down the drain, forcing the pipes to malfunction.”

The truth of that statement is likely to come out later as the agencies continue their investigation. No matter what, the marina and restaurant, which are owned by the same people, allowed the sewage to spill into Lake Tahoe for at least 24 hours.

“We are trying to ascertain all the facts and are working with environmental health on corrective action,” Kemper told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Besides Lahontan and El Dorado County Environmental Health Department, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has also been involved.

“TRPA would want to see that some precautions are taken to avoid an incident like this in the future. In the case of the Tahoe Keys Marina, there is discussion of possibly a lock being added to the pipe,” Jeff Cowen, spokesman for the bi-state regulatory agency, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

TRPA violation processes and fines are generally only used when it is the lead agency on a discharge or other matter.