

Plastic bags caused sewage backup; fecal numbers high

By Kathryn Reed

Plastic bags are what caused the backup at the Fresh Ketch restaurant and subsequent sewage spill into Lake Tahoe.

A plumber from Summit Plumbing in his work order said he found a 4-inch sewer line backed up and overflowing on May 3. He also removed plastic bags from the line.

On the Tahoe Keys Marina & Yacht Club Facebook page Chad Holdren, who works at the marina, claims two former tenants deliberately sabotaged the restaurant by flushing the bags down the toilet.

However, as of the afternoon of May 7, the marina had not contacted the police department to report a crime.

“There is no police activity at this time,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Andrew Lubrano, one of the people who the marina accused, told *Lake Tahoe News*, “I would never go out of my way to sabotage someone else. I have no reason to. I don’t believe anyone sabotaged them.”

He plans to meet with Lahontan officials next week as well as his attorney.

Lubrano is the one who on May 4 called the emergency number for Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board to let them know he saw the sewage on the back walkway of the South Lake Tahoe restaurant and that it was flowing into Lake Tahoe.

Lahontan tested for bacteria on Monday and found fecal coliform bacteria levels well above normal.

Tests taken May 6 show numbers are going down except at the location closest to the discharge. It is 288 colony forming units 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.

"It could be a goose that went by before the sample was collected or it could be something else of that nature or it could be from the spill. It's hard to say," Eric Taxer, water resource control engineer with Lahontan, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We will continue to collect samples through the week to see if it's an anomaly or goes back down."

The results have been forwarded to the El Dorado County Environmental Health Department.