Letter: Cause and effect of dog waste in Tahoe

To the community,

Eutrophication – diminishing clarity due to excessive nutrient loading.

According to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, the year-round or permanent resident population of the Lake Tahoe Basin is approximately 50,000.

There are approximately 50,000 year-round Lake Tahoe residents of which, in my opinion, 20 percent own and care for our canine guest, which suggest the number of canines to be in the range of 10,000 dogs living in the Tahoe basin.

It is expected that a 30-pound dog will eat approximately one-half pound of food per day, or 15 pounds of dog food per month. Assuming that 70 percent of the nutrients consumed is converted directly into energy the remaining 30 percent is left as waste.

Some math: 10,000 dogs x 15 pounds/month x 12 months x 0.30 = 540,000 pounds of waste deposited per year.

In addition to the 540,000 pounds of waste from our local dogs we can add to that number the number of pounds of waste per year from our visiting dogs, which is an unknown quantity. Then we can add to that number the number of pounds of waste from our local and visiting cats, an unknown quantity. All of which push up the number of pounds of waste deposited per year.

My theory as to the cause of the algae blooms and aggressive growth of the Eurasian milfoil weed found in the basin is directly correlated to the waste produced from our pets. This

theory could be verified by studying the bloom locations and comparing them to the locations of our drainage outlets where the nutrient concentration would be greatest.

There are solutions to this problem and I encourage all of the residents of Lake Tahoe who own pets and also acknowledge this as a problem suggest a solution of their own.

Comments welcome.

Sincerely,

Mark Allione, dog owner