

Invasive clams a threat to Sand Harbor

By Anne Knowles

CARSON CITY – Nevada officials are worried about the arrival of Asian clams at Sand Harbor.

Charles Donohue, administrator and state land registrar for the Nevada Division of State Lands, said a small population of the invasive species has been detected at the popular Lake Tahoe beach. On Nov. 30 he was addressing the Nevada Legislature's interim committee that oversees the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and Marlette Lake water system.

He told *Lake Tahoe News* two age classes of the clam were recently discovered by a graduate student at UC Davis after an initial review cleared the area.

Donohue said there was some speculation that the clams ended up there via discharge from the ballast of a boat that had traveled somewhere where the clams are commonly found. They have been in Lake Tahoe since 2002.

They are about 2 to 3 centimeters, with some 1-2 millimeters – like a grain of sand. They produce calcium – which Lake Tahoe doesn't naturally have much of. Calcium is needed for quagga mussels to survive and thrive; that is one species that has yet to be detected in Lake Tahoe.

Donohue said an assessment will soon be made and, if necessary, a quick mitigation before the clams can do any near shore damage.

"Sand Harbor is a treasure," Donohue said.

Amy Berry, chief executive officer of the Tahoe Fund, after hearing Donohue's presentation, said the Asian clam mitigation

could become one of the group's projects for 2016.

She said two projects the nonprofit may do next year are acquisition of Johnson Meadows in the upper Truckee River and adding lookouts to Taylor Creek.

For 2017, the group is considering work on the Incline Flume Trail.

The Legislative Committee for the Review and Oversight of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Marlette Lake Water System meets six times during the interim. The remaining meetings will be at Lake Tahoe.

After its work, the committee can submit 10 bill draft requests to the 2017 Legislature.