

Obama visit coincides with crunch time for Tahoe funding



Invasive species, like the clams that were suffocated by mats at Emerald Bay, were not an issue 20 years ago.
Photo/LTN file

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

A visit by President Bill Clinton in 1997 is credited with pushing Lake Tahoe onto the national stage.

That visit, part of the first Tahoe Summit, rallied disparate interests from California and Nevada around the idea of Lake Tahoe as a singular political issue that crossed state lines and federal agencies.

When President Obama visits today he'll see progress on water clarity and political unity that can be traced back to the original summit.

And there's a chance that 20 years from today people will look

back at Obama's visit as another turning point in the lake's perception on the national political stage. That's because it coincides with crunch-time for reauthorization of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act. The reauthorization, which has been floating around Congress in some form since 2009, would authorize \$415 million in federal spending at Lake Tahoe.

It also calls for future presidents to aggregate federal spending on Lake Tahoe into a single line item in the executive budget. The change would mean that during future budget-making processes the President would see Lake Tahoe as a singular cause, similar to Florida's Everglades, the Great Lakes or Long Island Sound.

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