

\$94.6M invested in Tahoe's environment in 2016

By Kathryn Reed

In the last five years, 137 environmental projects have been initiated in the Lake Tahoe Basin, with 207 in the planning stage. They will cost \$1.5 billion to implement, but only \$670 million has been secured.

This was some of the information delivered at last week's Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board meeting.

Kim Caringer, TRPA's division manager of the environmental improvement program, gave an overview of accomplishments to the board.

Project categories include: water quality, watersheds, habitat; forest health; transportation and air quality; sustainable recreation; science; and program support.

In the last year, 20 projects have been completed. These include work in the forest, aquatic invasive species, stream restoration, erosion control and air quality projects.

In 2016, \$94.6 million was spent on environmental projects in the basin. California contributed the most with \$53.1 million, \$13.2 million from the feds, \$12.6 million in private sector funding, \$8 million in local government dollars, and \$7.6 million from Nevada.

Of note is that while the federal Lake Tahoe Restoration Act was signed last year by President Barack Obama, it has not been funded. It is supposed to bring \$415 million to the basin in a 10-year period. The original LTRA was approved by Congress after President Bill Clinton launched the Lake Tahoe Environmental Summit in 1997. (This year's summit is Aug. 22,

10am at Valhalla, hosted by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif.)

The LTRA is expected to be one of the theme's at this year's summit. With Harry Reid no longer in the Senate, it means more work for the current California and Nevada delegations. The senators have often been in lockstep on Tahoe issues, while members of the House have not always been in agreement.

Other summit agenda items will include climate change, the impacts of last winter and sustainable recreation.