



U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Briefing Paper

Date: July 29, 2011

Topic: Aquatic invasive species (AIS) collaborative prevention program at Fallen Leaf Lake.

Since 2008, the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) has worked with Lake Tahoe AIS Coordination Committee (federal, state and local agencies and NGOs) to prevent AIS from entering Lake Tahoe and associated water bodies, such as Fallen Leaf Lake. The LTBMU AIS prevention program focuses on 3 key areas: boat ramp facilities, developed and dispersed recreation areas, and other aspects of management that have potential to be vectors of transport. The LTBMU manages developed recreation sites at Fallen Leaf Lake campground and Moraine Trail Day Use site, and provides public access to Fallen Leaf Lake via a number of hiking trails.

Starting in 2008, the LTBMU initiated an AIS screening form at Fallen Leaf Lake campground. The screening process is performed by campground attendants at the entry kiosk. The kiosk attendants ask individuals carrying watercraft on their vehicles (canoes, kayaks, rafts, etc.) a series of brief questions, which are intended to gauge the level of risk they pose as AIS. If it is determined that risk is high, the attendant advises the visitor to get their watercraft inspected and provides inspection locations. The attendant also contacts the Lake Tahoe AIS hotline phone number (coordinated by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and Tahoe Resource Conservation District) and provides pertinent vehicle and watercraft information. AIS screening form data is then entered into an LTBMU database and used to inform managers of the overall risk hand carried watercraft pose to AIS transference. The AIS screening forms and process are updated annually by LTBMU Aquatic and Recreation Specialists, in coordination with the Lake Tahoe AIS Non-Motorized Subcommittee.

In addition to the screening process, the kiosk attendants at Fallen Leaf Lake campground are required to engage the public in an education discussion that focuses on undesired effects of AIS. They also emphasize the need to clean, drain and dry watercraft and other equipment that comes in contact with water bodies.

In 2009, working in collaboration with the AIS Non-motorized Subcommittee and members from Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District, the LTBMU coordinated installation of public information signage at 10 dispersed access locations. The signs state the need to clean, drain and dry watercraft prior to launching and cite the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency ordinances regarding boat inspection.

Two boat launch facilities exist on National Forest System land in Lake Tahoe: Meeks Bay and Echo Lake. Both facilities fall into the larger multi-agency Lake Tahoe AIS boat inspection plan for motorized watercraft. The launch facility at Fallen Leaf Lake is privately owned and operates under a system of boat decontamination first, then inspection. The Fallen Leaf Lake boat launch facility AIS prevention program is operated under a MOU between Fallen Leaf Lake Homeowner Association and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

In 2010, the Tahoe Resource Conservation District and Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District, in coordination with the LTBMU, co-funded a full-time roving boat inspector. The roving inspector covered numerous access points around Fallen Leaf Lake, which included areas on National Forest System land. The roving inspector also walked through Fallen Leaf Lake campground, inspecting hand carried watercraft and discussing AIS issues with the public. A roving inspector will again be covering Fallen Leaf Lake in 2011.

Since 2007, the LTBMU has maintained an AIS webpage (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/lbmu/LakeTahoeAIS>), where the public can find out more about the importance of prevention. The webpage is updated periodically and includes critical information (i.e., boat inspection and decontamination sites, AIS boater information cards, etc.) for the public concerning boating in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The AIS prevention program is evaluated annually, both internally and in collaboration with the Lake Tahoe AIS Coordination Committee and various subcommittees. LTBMU Aquatic Specialists coordinate with members of the Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Tahoe Resource Conservation District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game and other partners to identify ways to improve AIS prevention. For instance, these agencies, which comprise the AIS Non-Motorized Subcommittee, have designed a new Stream Keeper website, where the public can participate in a simple self-training and AIS certification program. Hand-carried watercraft users can then show roving inspectors and kiosk attendants proof of their training and certification. The subcommittee expects to launch the Stream Keeper website by August 15, 2011.
