

Tahoe's declining clarity along shoreline being studied

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By Erin Breen, KTVN-TV

It is a beautiful day at Lake Tahoe and Angela Stevens and Brian Fitzgerald are just offshore. They are cruising the shoreline at eight miles an hour. And they are hard at work. They are working on a new project that the Desert Research Institute has launched to study clarity ... at the urban interface.

"This is important because this is where a lot of the processes occur," says Stevens. "There's storm water runoff and there's erosion into Lake Tahoe and that reduces the clarity that you can see in the middle of the lake."



Asian milfoil is one of the items making the near shore of Lake Tahoe murky.

Photo/LTN file

Most of the studies on Lake Tahoe's clarity have been done in the middle of the lake.

Now, there is concern about collecting thresholds on what can enter the lake at the shoreline, whether it be storm rain,

dust from construction or roadway runoff. So these scientists are studying turbidity, and chlorophyll. And they are doing it by continuously sampling the near shore water and running it through technical sensors and collecting the data.

Water quality is a passion for Angela Stevens. She is a grad student from UNR working at the DRI and she is the first to be awarded the Caesars Foundation Fellowship that will fund the project for the next two years. You see, Caesars has an interest in keeping the lake as beautiful and clean as possible too. They depend on the tourists it draws to Tahoe. And that makes for a great public, private partnership to promote stewardship of the lake for all.