

# ZCES kids learn about water issues at the lake



Zephyr Cove Elementary School fourth-graders learn from their environment.  
Photo/Stella Roper

**By Malin Kennedy**

The fourth-grade class at Zephyr Cove Elementary School attended a three-hour outdoor lesson that focused on teaching the impact of water quality on Lake Tahoe.

The lesson, directed by the Great Basin Outdoor School, is part of a program at ZCES this year that combines place-based education with Common Core curriculum.

Even with low lake levels, the research vessel Prophet was able to take the class out to test water clarity, oxygen saturation, and water temperature. Each group tested the clarity of the lake with a Secchi disc and discussed the properties of the scientific process and how the process is used in real work happening on the lake.

After the on-board experiments, the class went ashore to test and demonstrate the effects of pollution, construction and life on the clarity of Lake Tahoe. The children quickly linked

the connection between water clarity and a healthy ecosystem.

“It was a great experience. We learned about keeping Lake Tahoe clean on the research vessel the Prophet, and at the beach at Zephyr Cove. Our favorite part was being on the beach and playing Bear, Salmon, Mosquito,” said fourth-graders Jena White and Lilly Dingman.

This lesson on Lake Tahoe created a hands-on experience that combined science, mathematics, geology and sociology.

One lesson on the beach visually demonstrated that very little of the earth’s water is usable to humans and the importance of water conservation.