



Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit



Conservation Education
Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act
(SNPLMA)
Accomplishment Report 2015



Mission and Goals

Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) Conservation Education Program works with partners and volunteers to deliver programs to youth, local communities, formal and non-formal educators, and visitors to National Forest Lands. Programs connect people with nature, promote environmental literacy, provide ecological restoration opportunities and create future land stewards. Programs support understanding of four theme areas.



Theme Areas

Fuels Reduction and Forest Health

Healthy forests are fire tolerant, disease and insect resistant and contain a sustainable population of native plants and wildlife.

Watershed Restoration and Habitat Improvement

Healthy watersheds consist of a mosaic of habitat types and are vital to clean and abundant supplies of water.

Water Quality Improvement

Controlling erosion and reducing the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) around Lake Tahoe will improve water clarity.

Recreation and Human Responsibility

Everything we do leaves an impact on something else. Conserving Lake Tahoe takes all of us.

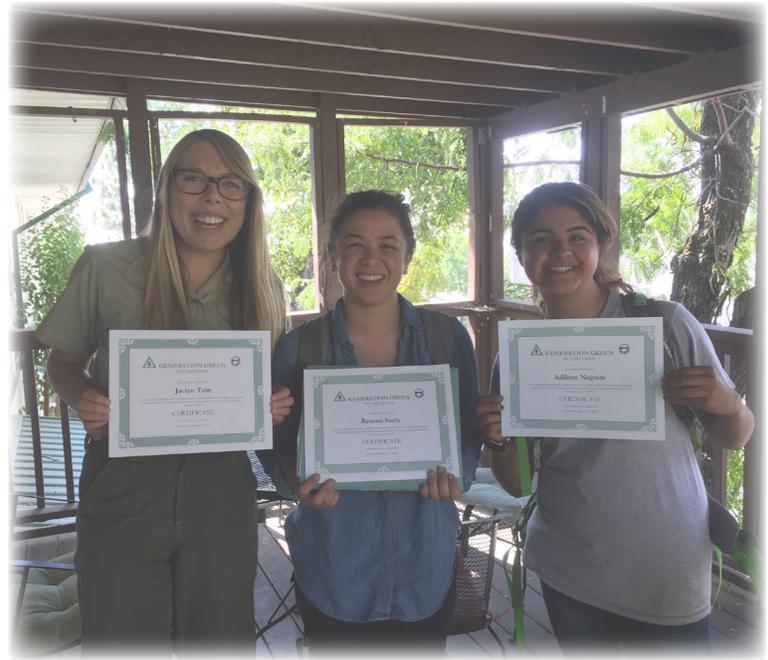


These programs are primarily funded by the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) in a Federal Interagency Partnership to implement the Environmental Improvement Program (EIP). The EIP is a cooperative effort to preserve, restore and enhance the unique natural and human environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Highlights in 2015

Conservation Education Program Expansion

FY2015 was a year of expansion for the Conservation Education program. As a result of conceptual idea sharing in 2014 with the Eldorado National Forest (ENF), Conservation Education staff were funded 50% of the year to expand this successful program to the neighboring forest. The Generation Green ENF program exceeded goals, hiring nine Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) enrollees, providing in-class school programs for 250 district students and establishing new partnerships with groups such as: El Dorado High School, the El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts, Shingle Springs Band of the Miwok Indians, and the Indian Youth Education Alliance. 2015 is the inaugural year for continued future Conservation Education achievement on the ENF.



National & Regional Recognition

The LTBMU's Conservation Education (CE) Program Manager, Joy Barney, received both the honorable U.S. Forest Service R5 Regional Gifford Pinchot *Interpreter of the Year Award* and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency *Lake Spirit Award* for being the stoic leader of the vigorous CE Program, engaging K-12 grade youth in natural resource conservation and by leading partner educators in the community to design, coordinate, and teach a variety of innovative programs that engage youth in natural resource conservation and ecological restoration concepts and projects.

Two Generation Green students from South Lake Tahoe were invited to attend the National Environmental Justice Conference located at the National Office in Washington D.C. Coordinated by the Outreach, Recruitment, and Workforce Diversity Program in the Regional Office, 15 students were showcased to represent "*Hood to the Woods*," focusing on exposing youth to not only the U.S. Forest Service, but outdoor recreation, future opportunities, and career pathways.

After eight years of working with partners to educate students in grades K-12 and beyond, we see measurable improvements in environmental literacy and interest in natural resource careers. These programs are in high demand, valued by the community, and continue to exceed expectations. Our strong consistent presence in the schools is embraced by the school districts, parents, teachers, partner organizations and agencies, as well as the Lake Tahoe community.



Accomplishments



~ Teaching how to think, and not what to think.~

Community Events, Trainings, & Workshops

As the “face of the Forest Service,” Conservation Education participated in a variety of festivals and events to educate the public, students, and to work with volunteers and partners.

Wild Tahoe Weekend: bird conservation and celebrating native species (600 visitors)

Fall Fish Fest: long-running festival celebration of fall colors and wildlife viewing at Taylor Creek Visitor Center (12,000 visitors)

Lake Tahoe Stewardship Day: annual partner event focused on ecological restoration (100 individuals)

UC Davis TERC Science Expo: hands-on activities and science experiments for 1st - 5th grade students and community members (1,000 individuals)

South Shore Earth Day: forest health and fire ecology education to visitors, providing a Forest Service presence along with multiple local partners (300 visitors)

4th of July Celebration: celebrating the holiday weekend and providing general forest information (100 visitors)

Heavenly Epic Mix: promoting local environmental education nonprofit organizations, in partnership with Heavenly Mountain Ski Resort, supported recreation opportunities with expertise for summer season (90 visitors & 120 LTBMU employees)

AmGen Event: provided Forest Service Public Services presence at bike event booth, offered forest health and fire ecology education (60 visitors)

Project WET & WILD Participant & Facilitator Trainings: educating interested participants based on Project WET & WILD criteria with curriculum guides (53 individuals)

Aspen Workshop: educated biologists and ecologists how to engage communities on aspen restoration (50 individuals)

International Interest: international student groups traveled from Guam and New Zealand, focusing on replication of CE program. Assisted hosting groups in Lake Tahoe (36 individuals)

California Naturalist Fire Education training: attended training providing forest health, fuels, and fire ecology information (2 individuals)

Total reached: 14,511 individuals

Educational Programs

Wonders of Water Expanded Edition (WOWEE)

K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th grade
(1,835 students, 350 adults)

Outdoor Explore, K, 1st, 2nd grade

(555 students, 65 adults)

Children's Forest, 3rd, 4th grade

(554 students, 65 adults)

Farm Day, 3rd, 4th grade

(700 students, 65 adults)

Winter Trek, 5th grade

(321 students, 65 adults)

Trout in the Classroom, 2nd grade

(65 students, 15 adults)

Total reached: 8,373 individuals

Fire Ecology & Fuels Reduction,

Pre-K, 3rd, 5th grade
(108 students, 5 adults)

Fire Ecology & Fuels Reduction,

Developmentally challenged adults
(12 students, 6 adults)

Middle school career fair, 6th, 7th, 8th grade

(200 workability students, 20 adults)

Tahoe Basin Watershed Education Summit (TBWES), 9th - 12th grade

(21 students, 29 adults)

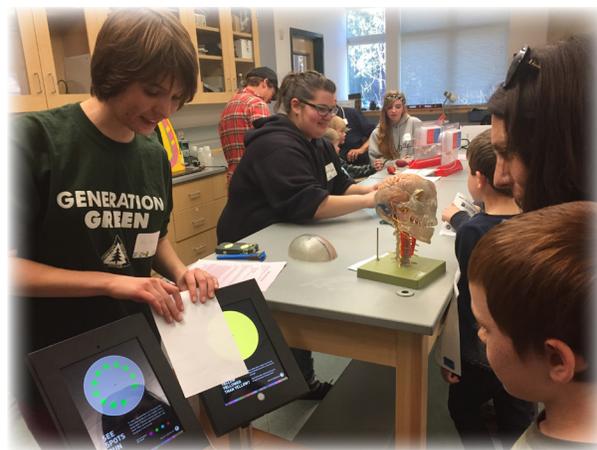
Taylor Creek Visitor Center Conservation Education Summer Programs, General public (3,245 attendees)

Valued Partnerships

As a lead member of the South Tahoe Environmental Education Coalition (STEEC), we work with Lake Tahoe agencies and organizations in a collaborative effort to engage visitors, community members, and children to connect with the land and to become active stewards of our forests. We could not accomplish all of our programs without our growing list of partners, which include:

- Great Basin Institute
- Lake Tahoe Community College
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
- League to Save Lake Tahoe
- Tahoe Resource Conservation District
- California Tahoe Conservancy
- Nevada Tahoe Conservation District
- South Tahoe Public Utilities District
- South Tahoe Refuse
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region
- South Tahoe High School
- Mt. Tallac Continuation School
- Lake Tahoe Unified School District
- Sierra Watershed Education Partnership
- Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe
- Tahoe Institute for Natural Science
- UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center
- City of South Lake Tahoe, Parks & Recreation (Explore Tahoe)
- Lake Tahoe Sustainability Collaborative
- Tahoe Fund
- El Dorado County Health & Human Services
- Tahoe Family Resource Center
- North Tahoe Environmental Education Coalition
- Sierra Avalanche Center
- Tahoe Rim Trail Association
- Sugar Pine Foundation
- Live Violence Free
- Heavenly Mountain Ski Resort
- Lake Tahoe Humane Society

Total lead agency partners: 29
Total partner hours: 2,000



Generation Green of Lake Tahoe



Summer Employment Program

Generation Green of Lake Tahoe provides opportunities for employment, job experience, and higher education. The program has year-round involvement and outreaches to students who are not traditionally connected with the forest, including low-income and diverse students. The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) hiring authority funds are received from the Regional Office where in 2015, two youth crews, ages ranging from 15-18 years old, applied and received a student entry position with the U.S. Forest Service. This eight week, meaningful work program includes projects such as: trail restoration and construction, campsite restoration in Desolation Wilderness, maintenance and restoration of recreation sites, forest health and fuels reduction projects, urban lots management, removal of noxious weeds, aquatic surveys, and providing education and interpretation at public events. Students who experience the work program are rewarded with not only job experience at a young age, but are pleasantly surprised that their backyard is the forest, while many endure a significant and inspiring identity transformation. This year, four successful graduates were invited to attend the annual Fresno Generation Green Graduation.



Generation Green Club of South Tahoe High School

Engaged graduates from the summer work program lead the club during the school year with a strong officer board and dedicated club members. The club is the most popular club at the high school. Throughout the past eight years, over 240 students have participated in the club, where the LTBMU coordinates and works closely with members for student volunteer and outdoor educational opportunities at events such as: National Winter Trails Day, TERC's Science Expo event, South Shore Earth Day, Lake Tahoe Humane Society Hike Day, Native Species Day, Fall Fish Fest, Kokanee Streamside Interpretation, Lake Tahoe Stewardship Day and more. Club membership permits continued relationships and retention, therefore furthering student interest and involvement. Students learn that successful club outcomes lead to community service, and employment. This year, five club members were invited to attend the Sacramento Youth Summit to promote and speak about the Generation Green Program.



Generation Green Successes

YCC enrollees: 13
Total club members: 40
Total Pathways students: 11
Total GBI employees: 2
Hutton Fisheries Scholar: 1
Total Forest Service Permanent employees: 3
Total reached: 70



~ Generation Green of Lake Tahoe is a prime example of a Forest Service unit working with mentoring youth to create a sustainable connection to nature based on the foundation of community, education, and service. ~

Winter Programs

Winter Trek

This three-hour program continues to be a showcase success. Taking place at Heavenly Mountain Ski Resort, fifth grade students learn about winter adaptations while gaining snowshoeing skills. FS educators and volunteers meet CA & NV state core curriculum standards through Forest Health, Watershed Sustainability and Climate Change activities. The eight-week program provided 13 tours to elementary schools within the region. Dedicated community volunteers continue to return season after season, which attributes to the program's success. This year, Winter Trek was one of 45 nationally dedicated *SnowSchool sites*, a nonprofit network working to get students outside during the winter!

Total reached:

321 students

45 adults

8 volunteers, contributing 131 volunteer hours

Ski with a Ranger

In partnership with Heavenly Mountain Ski Resort, this program is designed to support and enhance public awareness of EIP and SNPLMA. *Spanish Ski with a Ranger* was offered for the third year on six tour dates to accommodate multicultural guests, both local and international, striving to reach diverse populations. Both programs continue to grow by increasing direct contacts through tours and roving rangers with an on-mountain presence. Returning dedicated community volunteers attribute to the program's success.

Total reached:

625 individuals

11 volunteers, contributing 345 volunteer hours



Partner Contributions

- Vail Ski Resorts donated 416 gondola tickets for U.S. Forest Service Winter Trek and Ski with a Ranger program staff, volunteers, teachers, chaperones, and students.
- Combined Winter Trek and Ski with a Ranger program volunteers donated 476 hours of service, allowing both programs to be consistently offered throughout the season.
- Explore Tahoe Visitor Center provided a meeting room for Winter Trek and Ski with a Ranger program preparation, debriefing, and storage area for supplies.
- Non-profit organization, Tahoe Heritage Foundation (THF), helped support Winter Trek by providing supplies and materials.

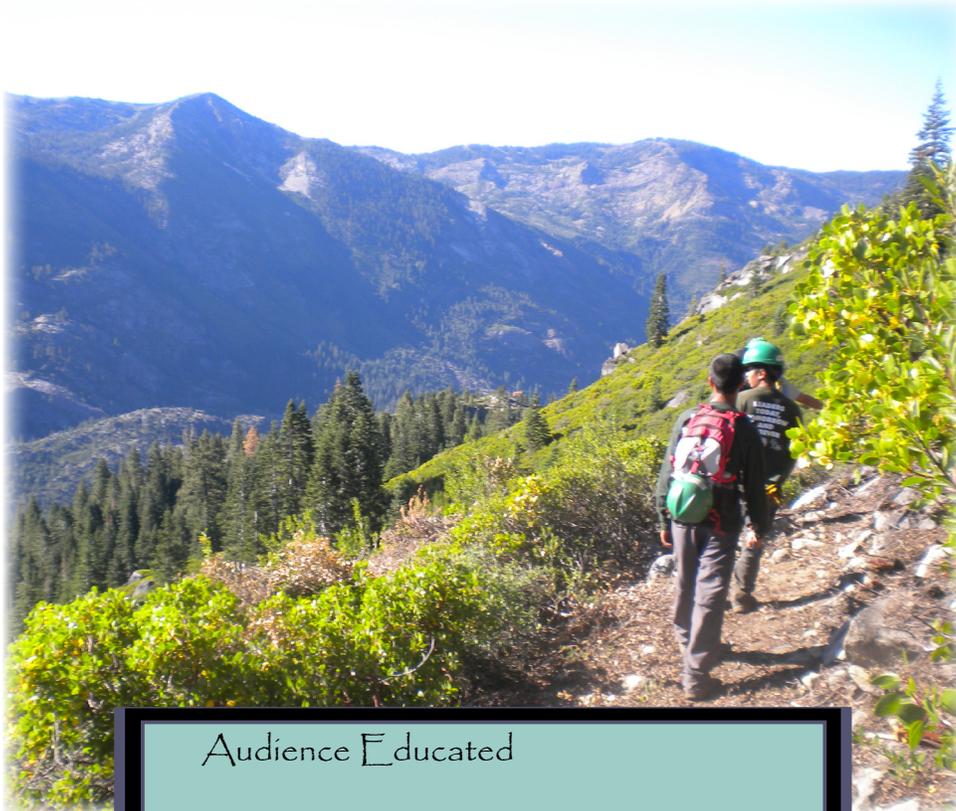
Funding Authorities

Generation Green

Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) and the California Consortium (CC) continue partnership and support with numerous organizations for Generation Green. Partners include: Great Basin Institute (GBI), El Dorado County Workforce Investment Act (WIA), South Tahoe High School, Mt. Tallac Continuation High School, Lake Tahoe Community College, Boys and Girls Club of Lake Tahoe, and the Tahoe Heritage Foundation (THF).

Education Programs

The continued invaluable partnership with South Tahoe Environmental Education Coalition (STEEC) give the opportunity to work with multiple partners in providing various environmental education programs to the Lake Tahoe Unified School District (LTUSD). Winter Trek and Ski with a Ranger programs are additional U.S. Forest Service programs in partnership with Heavenly Mountain Ski Resort and Tahoe Heritage Foundation (THF). SNPLMA, other non-SNPLMA funds, and grants help support these programs.



Audience Educated

Educational Programs : 8,373
Community Events &
Trainings: 14,216
Ski with a Ranger: 625 individuals
Generation Green: 70 individuals

Total: 23,284 individuals

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Funding FY2015



Watershed Restoration and Habitat Improvement Theme: Includes Ecosystem Management programs such as watershed and wildlife habitat restoration. Deliverables include: Generation Green; Taylor Creek Visitor Center programs on wildlife, aquatic species and botany, invasive species, biodiversity and aspen ecology; Ski with a Ranger program; Winter Trek program; Wonders of Water (WOWEE) programs; Project WET & WILD educator training; Water Education programs.

Water Quality Improvement Theme: Includes Engineering projects such as roads and trails, BMPs and erosion control. Deliverables include: Generation Green, TBWES watershed assessment program, Taylor Creek Visitor Center programs on water quality, BMP's and geology, Wonders of Water (WOWEE) programs, Ski with a Ranger program, Water Quality Monitoring programs, formal and non-formal educator training (Project WET).

Funding was spread across SNPLMA projects according to the following three theme areas. Additional funding from grants, partners, and the Forest Service supplemented the program to meet the Recreation Human Responsibility theme area. The programs cover the full spectrum from the environmental planning process, to implementation, to monitoring.

Fuels Reduction and Forest Health

Theme: Includes Vegetation, Urban Lots, Fire and Fuels Management. Deliverables include: Generation Green; Ski with a Ranger program; Project Learning Tree educator workshops; Trees are Terrific programs; Fire and Fuels Education; Taylor Creek Visitor Center programs on forest health, fire prevention, sustainable forestry, fire in the ecosystem; Winter Trek program.



Caring for the land and serving people

