

Declining lake clarity may harm property values

The results of the 2017 clarity report for Lake Tahoe showed that it declined to an all-time low of less than 60 feet.

This should be alarming to Tahoe Basin property owners. It continues a stair-step trend of decreasing lake clarity that started in the 1960s. While Crater Lake in Oregon remains pristine, the dramatic differences in development and road traffic, along with the number of visitors and full-time residents around these two beautiful alpine lakes are the main reasons one stays incredibly clear while the other continues to suffer degradation.

One of the primary attractions of Lake Tahoe for visitors from all over the world is the unusually clear water. Prior to extensive development around the lake, the clarity was so fantastic that you could see more than 100 feet below the surface. Imagine the feeling early settlers and visitors had seeing the native fish swimming offshore among the boulders seemingly close enough to touch.

Fine particles carried into Tahoe from the creeks



Don Kanare & Sabrina Belleci
Special to the Tribune

around the lake when the snow melts are really only one contributor to the decline in lake clarity.

Far bigger causes of the decline in water quality and clarity are the vast amounts of sand and grit distributed on the roads during snow removal season, removal of the vast majority of natural marshes and wetlands for development purposes, algae blooms from the use of fertilizer on golf courses and lawns and untreated runoff from the extensive amounts of paved areas around the lake.

Invasive species such as Asian clams may also contribute to the decline in lake clarity, not to mention clogging water intakes. The threat of zebra and quagga mussels is so great that mandatory boat inspections

Weekly real estate update

Statistics gathered from the Incline Village MLS on 10/28/18

| | Houses | Condos | PUDs |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| For Sale | 107 | 46 | 20 |
| Under \$1 million | 20 | 34 | 8 |
| Median Price For Sale | \$2,155,000 | \$624,900 | \$1,295,000 |
| YTD Sales 2018 | 155 | 163 | 53 |
| YTD Sales 2017 | 141 | 166 | 46 |
| New Listings | 7 | | |
| In Escrow | 8 | | |
| Closed Escrow | 9 | | |
| Range in Escrow | \$465,000 - \$11,500,000 | | |

These statistics are based on information from the Incline Village Board of Realtors or its Multiple Listing Service as of Oct. 28.

had to be initiated several years ago to try to prevent their spread into Lake Tahoe.

A lesson in history takes us back to the late 1970s and early 1980s to a beautiful lake in central New Hampshire called Lake Winnisquam. Known to the locals as "Little Winni" due to its smaller size and proximity to the grand and majestic Lake Winnepesaukee, Winnisquam suffered an algae bloom that killed off not just the fish, but also all forms of recreation for more than three years.

Property values plummeted, real estate sales virtually dried up, tourism almost completely vanished and local businesses suffered huge economic losses. While nearby Lake Winnepesaukee

was the beneficiary of all the visitors who would normally go to Lake Winnisquam, the year-round residents and business owners at Little Winni suffered through some very difficult times.

It took some drastic measures but eventually Lake Winnisquam was cleaned up, the fish restocked and property values skyrocketed after the lake was once again usable by swimmers and boaters.

While the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has been engaged in a mission to preserve and protect the Lake Tahoe for about 50 years, the clarity of our lake has declined significantly.

It is the responsibility of every property owner and visitor to help protect Lake Tahoe for future

generations.

You can start by taking a more natural approach and accept the fact that a suburban lawn is out of place in a mountain environment.

If you feel that you must have a lawn, forgo the fertilizer and that includes golf courses, too. Fertilizer has no place in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The various county and state highway departments responsible for snow removal will need to use a lot less sand and grit during the wintertime. Excess sand and grit should be removed from the streets when road conditions improve so it does not all wash down into the lake.

In the winter, drivers will have to slow down and drive more cautiously. Increasing

the amount and availability of clean powered public transit to and from the ski resorts, major hotels and other destinations will reduce particulates from vehicles and erosion of the pavement.

If we all work together on common sense solutions to increase lake clarity we can stabilize the current condition and hopefully improve the beauty of the water over time. Otherwise, it will be a steady downward spiral until one day Lake Tahoe suffers the same fate as once happened to Lake Winnisquam.

The only difference is that Lake Tahoe is too big to restore once the damage becomes pervasive and property owners of all types will suffer harsh economic consequences.

Sabrina Belleci and Don Kanare are the owners of RE/MAX North Lake. Read their blog and find weekly stats on their website at www.INSIDEINCLINE.COM.

Home design and real estate trends to consider

Metro Creative

Home design and real estate trends come and go, but once in awhile certain concepts exhibit considerable staying power.

Staying abreast of what's hot and what's not can be a bit overwhelming. This list breaks down some of

the trends that have made a splash and figure to be around for some time.

Open concept spaces: Watch the DIY Network or HGTV and you'll quickly understand that open floor plans remain highly coveted. Many modern, newly built homes have a large multi-purpose area that blurs

the borders of the kitchen, dining area and family room. These homes make it easy to entertain and keep an eye on youngsters.

Patterned fabrics and upholstery: Solids will always have their place in home decor, but patterned furnishings are making a name for themselves as well. Today's

homeowners are not afraid to experiment with geometric and floral patterns alongside neutral colors to showcase their personalities, advises the real estate industry resource The Lighter Side of Real Estate.

TRENDS, 34

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