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Tahoe is becoming popular on the Web

By Tanya Canino
The Associated Press

TAHOE CITY, Calif. — With the addition of remarkable images from the recent mapping of Lake Tahoe's bottom, visits on the Lake Tahoe Data Clearinghouse web site have jumped dramatically.

Since it went on-line Jan. 16, Lake Tahoe's "virtual library" had about 3,000 visits in its first seven months on the Internet. But after the bathymetry of Lake Tahoe was put on the web site in mid-August, the number of visits has risen to 12,000.

"I watch the hits and it's really climbed dramatically. The bathymetry has really attracted a lot of attention," says Alexander Evans, the site's webmaster and a scientist with the U.S. Geological Survey's National Mapping Division in Menlo Park.

Between Aug. 6 and Aug. 13, the USGS' coastal and marine geology group mapped the floor of Lake Tahoe using acoustic sonar aboard the research vessel Inland Surveyor.

The mapping revealed lake floor sediment patterns, sunken artifacts and photograph-like maps of the bottom of Lake Tahoe.

"This is a key road map for future research and restoration," Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said in an online press release. "We need a comprehensive understanding of all factors — particularly sedimentation patterns and rates and the exact contours and water volume — so that we can accurately predict what work will be most effective in restoring clarity to the lake."

High resolution, three-dimensional digital photographs are in-

cluded on the Lake Tahoe Data Clearinghouse site, showing the lake's depths in multi-colors and pulling out different views of Lake Tahoe from under the water.

The Lake Tahoe Data Clearinghouse provides data from the USGS and has links to other Tahoe-related agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service, the National Resource Conservation Service, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, among others.

It was started following the Presidential Forum in July 1997.

Many Tahoe agencies use Geographical Information Systems software to create maps and data banks for their use. The Lake Tahoe Data Clearinghouse is trying to post that information on the web site or link it to other web sites so it can be used by all basin agencies, scientists and interested people.

The Lake Tahoe Data Clearinghouse is an easy-to-follow site which provides questions and help about downloading files, as well as information on various Tahoe agencies, the Presidential Forum and its status report on "deliverables" that the forum has or will produce.

There are aerial photos of Lake Tahoe, watershed maps, TRPA plan area statement maps, land capability maps, topographical maps, water data, scientific reports on various Tahoe subjects and even the day-to-day log of the Inland Surveyor while it mapped the bottom of Lake Tahoe.

The web site is located at <http://blt.wr.usgs.gov/>



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