

PERFORMANCE-DRIVEN STORMWATER AND THE LAKE CLARITY CREDITING PROGRAM

Local governments and highway departments are demonstrating real progress toward reducing pollutants from entering Lake Tahoe. Combined, stormwater managers have exceeded the first milestone of reducing fine sediment in runoff by 10 percent. We know because the Lake Clarity Crediting Program tracks and reports water quality improvements defined by the Lake Tahoe Total Maximum Daily Load that are incorporated into municipal stormwater permits. This performance-driven approach provides a consistent framework to connect on-the-ground activities, like street sweeping and structural BMPs, to quantifiable pollutant reductions in the form of credits.

How it works

Achieve better results with current funding and staff resources

Focusing on desired outcomes, rather than prescribed activities, provides stormwater managers the flexibility to prioritize the most cost-effective stormwater practices.

Expand available resources with portfolio financing approaches

A crediting approach provides a mechanism to clearly and consistently track water quality improvements, opening the door to innovative financing approaches such as pay-for-performance contracts, green bonds, credit trading, and contributions from non-stormwater sources.

Engage the private sector to achieve goals and permit requirements

Permittees earn credits for best management practices installed on commercial and residential property, as mandated by regional ordinances. Public-private partnerships enable municipalities to scale implementation while reducing the risk of funding under-performing projects.



Urban stormwater contributes 3/4 of the fine sediment to Lake Tahoe, with 110 credits representing a 1% load reduction. Annual targets show progress leading to the Clarity Challenge, a 1/3 reduction of fine sediment from urban stormwater runoff by 2026.

“The Water Board is grateful for the strong partnerships in the Lake Tahoe basin. Working together, we’ve successfully reduced fine sediment reaching the lake by more than 10% and have gained unprecedented support of our new permit, with its 2021 target of a 21% load reduction.”

– Robert Larsen, Lahontan Water Board

Results from Lake Tahoe contribute to the growing body of evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of performance-driven approaches to stormwater management; that provide the feedback needed to maximize water quality benefits per dollar spent. Local governments can learn from and build upon the approaches used in Lake Tahoe—and across the country—to advance their stormwater management programs.

See the results at: bit.ly/LakeTahoeResults



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