

## Lake Tahoe program wins national award

With Lake Tahoe losing a foot of its famed clarity every year, various groups began educating the public about ways to protect the lake. “But many of these efforts to achieve environmental education goals, though considerable, were sporadic or disjointed,” observes UNCE’s John Cobourn. So UNCE partnered with University of California Cooperative Extension to sponsor the Lake Tahoe

Environmental Education Coalition (LTEEC), and hired Heather Segale as its full-time coordinator.

The results have been astounding, with 24 agencies participating in seven active subgroups. LTEEC is one of only two natural resource programs in the country to garner a 2002 National Flagship Award from the Cooperative Extension System.

Some of the accomplishments:

- Five Best Management Practices (BMP) workshops for residents drew more than 350 people. BMPs help homeowners prevent detrimental occurrences to their property, such as erosion and runoff, which pollute the lake with sediment. More than 2,700 site evaluations were conducted, with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency awarding 904 Certificates of Completion.
- The first Snapshot Day drew more than 100 volunteers to photograph, sample and evaluate water from 44 sites. In early 2002, more



Photo by Heather Segale  
*Left and right: Lake Tahoe residents participate in activities at Snapshot Day and learn how to conduct water quality assessments at workshops.*

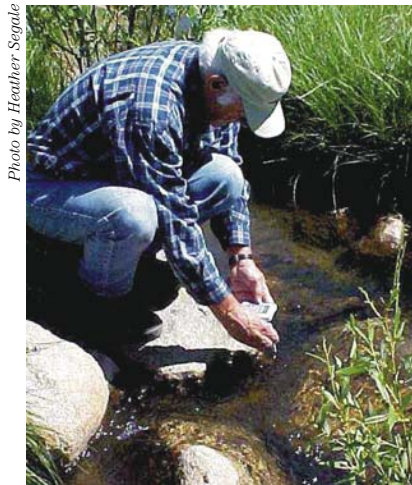


Photo by Heather Segale

than 300 volunteers collected data from 110 sites. By taking samples and photos at various locations, sources of pollutants are more easily identified and stifled.

- Children’s Environmental Science Day was enjoyed by 110 children and 40 volunteers and researchers.
- North Shore Earth Day 2002 drew 3,000 compared to 150 in 2001.
- Six BMP workshops reached 280 contractors and homeowners association representatives.

## Fire Safe Highlands: Taking the offense on wildfire

With wildfire ravishing nearly 3 million acres in Nevada during the past three years, motivating residents to make their homes more fire safe is a priority. UNCE’s Marlene Rebori took the lead in the wildfire-susceptible Virginia City Highlands. She formed the Fire Safe Highlands group of volunteers, homeowners associations, special interest groups and local and state governments to “apply a community approach to reducing wildfire threat through education and collaboration.”

### In less than one year, the group:

- Increased water storage capacity to 30,000 gallons for firefighting.
  - Enhanced knowledge and visibility of county evacuation routes by placing 415 color-coded reflective markers throughout the community.
  - Recruited 47 residents for community action projects, such as removing dead, flammable vegetation from community sites.
  - Requested removal of dead trees and erected a sign along Route 341 to alert tourists of the fire hazard.
  - Established a fuel demonstration site.
- In addition, 63 homeowners have implemented defensible space practices such as fuels reduction and brush removal; others have incorporated fire-safe landscaping, planned family evacuations and improved their driveways for emergency vehicle access.

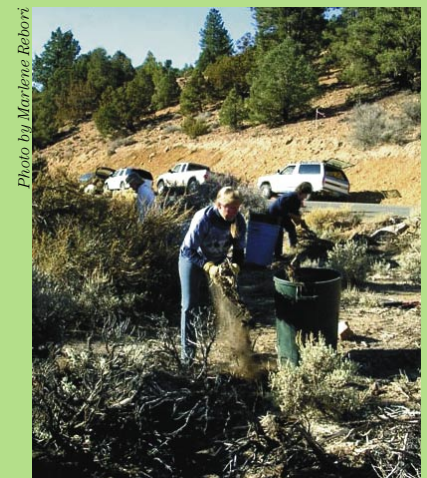


Photo by Marlene Rebori

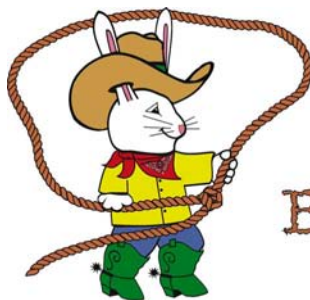
*Volunteers in the Fire Safe Highlands group build a fuels demonstration plot on Lousetown Road in the Virginia City Highlands area of Storey County.*

## Buckaroo Bunny steers children toward literacy

*A whopping 6,656 infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children will benefit as a result of these workshops.*

Children of working parents are typically in the care of others for the major part of each working day. "And research indicates the level of care received is directly related to the level of education and training of child care providers," says UNCE's Jackie Reilly. However, only 12 percent of Nevada caregivers have two or more years of early childhood education and training.

To help provide caregivers with tools to care for and educate our children, Reilly, Dan Weigel and other faculty and staff presented 20 workshops in Reno and Carson City to 344 child care providers, part of the Cooperative Extension Child Care Nevada program.



### Buckaroo Bunny: Steering Kids to Literacy

Among these 2001 workshops was the new Buckaroo Bunny: Steering Kids Toward Literacy curriculum, taught to 256 caregivers at 17 workshops.

The class was well received with 89 percent of participants rating it a 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 (not helpful) to 5 (very helpful), and 93 percent

rating instructors a 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 (very ineffective) to 5 (very effective). Participants' responses indicate a significant knowledge gain in literacy development. A whopping 6,656 infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children will benefit as a result of these workshops.

## School children get a healthy dose of nutrition education

As fast foods become a greater part of Americans' fast-paced lives and children's activities become increasingly dominated by television and computer games, nutrition education is of greater importance than ever.

In 2001, UNCE enlisted the help of 21 professional dietitians who each volunteered one hour to 15 hours a month at 13 high-risk elementary schools in Carson City, Storey and Washoe Counties.

"The purpose of our Nevada Team Nutrition Partners program is to promote the consumption of healthful foods and increase access to nutrition education in the schools," says UNCE's Mary Spoon.

With funding from the Nevada State Department of Welfare for materials, the partners worked with teachers and staff to provide interesting nutrition education activities. These activities involved 450 teachers and 7,000 students.

Here is just a small sampling of some of the schools' successes:

- Desert Heights Elementary School held a Food and Fitness Day that included appropriate skits, songs and plays at the school assembly, a Food and Fitness Field Day where classes set up booths for students, and a "best snack contest" with snacks judged on their economy and inclusion of the five food groups.
- Sierra Vista Elementary School hosted a Nutrition Week during which the entire school conducted daily nutrition-related activities and lessons. A Fitness Field Day and barbecue culminated the week's activities.
- Smithridge Elementary School teachers conducted various classroom activities, including Food Pyramid Bingo, lots of fruit and vegetable teaching games and even Pyramid Explorer, a CD-ROM computer activity.

*For the benefit of children's health, professional community dietitians team up with teachers to bring more nutrition education into the schools.*

