

Lake Tahoe clarity sinks to all-time low in 2017

June 14 2018



In this March 5, 2018 file photo snow covers the mountain tops as a boat crosses Lake Tahoe, in South Lake Tahoe, Calif. Scientists at Lake Tahoe say the clarity of the alpine lake that straddles the California-Nevada line sank to an all-time low last year. Experts say the 9.5-foot (2.8-meter) decline was most likely due to a convergence of drought, record precipitation and warm temperatures. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli,File)

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The dinner-sized disc used to measure clarity was only visible as deep as 59.7 feet (18 meters). The worst level recorded previously was 64.1 feet (20 meters) in 1997.

Officials at the Tahoe Environmental Research Center say the combination of extreme drought and heavy rainfall washed 12,000 tons of sediment into Tahoe's waters in 2017.

UC Davis engineering professor Geoffrey Schladow says measurements taken so far this year already are showing improvement and are more in line with the long-term trend. The five-year average is approximately 70 feet (21 meters).

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