

TIMELINE: History of the UC Davis Tahoe City Field Station (Tahoe City Fish Hatchery)

- 1850s-1900 The discovery of silver at the Comstock Lode (near Virginia City, NV) brings many more people to the area. Fish populations decline from overfishing and logging causes environmental damage.
- 1859-1917 Abundant cutthroat and whitefish populations support a commercial fishing industry on the lake.
- 1870 The California State Legislature passes an act “provided for the restoration and preservation of fish in the waters of the state,” leading to the creation of a program to build hatcheries throughout the state.
- 1889 First state-run fish hatchery opens at Lake Tahoe. It later closes due to inadequate water supply.
- 1917 California bans commercial fishing in Lake Tahoe to protect endangered trout populations.
- 1920 Tahoe City Fish Hatchery opens at this location.
- 1921 Hatchery receives first shipment of eggs. The hatchery has a capacity of 64 rearing troughs and 3 million eggs or 2.5 million fingerling trout. Fingerlings are put into streams and lakes to establish new fish populations.
- 1921 – 1956 California Department of Fish and Game staff raise native Lahontan cutthroat trout, eastern brook trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, Kokanee salmon, and other fish desired for planting in the Tahoe Basin.
- 1925-1928 John Steinbeck works as a caretaker at the hatchery, living in a two-story cottage behind this building. He completes his first novel, *Cup of Gold*, about the pirate Henry Morgan, while working here.
- 1956 Tahoe City Fish Hatchery closes. The facility needs costly renovations and can’t keep up with the demand for bigger trout because the fish grow too slowly in the cold water. The California Department of Fish and Game can raise trout more economically and efficiently at other hatcheries with warmer water supplies.
- 1956 – 1975 California Department of Fish and Game keeps offices here, as well as employee lodging for wardens, seasonal aides, and fisheries biologists.
- 1960 – 1966 First comprehensive study of Tahoe fishes describes sport fishing and establishes management programs to improve fisheries in the lake.
- 1975 The UC Davis Tahoe Research Group moves its laboratories to historic fish hatchery to study and monitor the ecology of the lake.
- 1996 The State Resources Agency transfers the hatchery to UC Davis, which assumes maintenance and other responsibilities for the site.
- 2007 – 2008 Hatchery is renovated, including earthquake retrofitting; new roof, siding, and windows; new field preparation lab and workroom, offices, SCUBA locker. Restoration begins on surrounding three-acre wetland and stream environments. BMP and hydrologic test plots are built.
- 2008 Hatchery opens as the UC Davis Tahoe City Field Station.
- 2010 Eriksson Education Center opens at the Tahoe City Field Station.

TIMELINE: Aquatic Food Web (Species Introductions, etc.)

- 1889 – 1940 First series of intentional fish introductions in the lake. Of these, only the rainbow trout, brown trout, lake trout, brook trout, and Kokanee salmon persist today.
- 1911 William Pomin catches record cutthroat trout (31 lbs. 8 oz.).
- 1912 Lake trout (Mackinaw) established. This fish outcompetes the native Lahontan cutthroat trout to become the new top predator.
- 1934 Crayfish established.
- 1939 Lahontan cutthroat trout extinct in Lake Tahoe
- 1944 Kokanee salmon escape into Lake Tahoe when hatchery fish-rearing trough overflows.
- 1948 Kokanee salmon established. The Kokanee salmon represent the most successful introduction as they did not compete with native fish and were able to establish a healthy population in the lake.
- 1963 Mysis shrimp established. Introduced to provide food to increase fish size and numbers, but ended up having opposite effect. Their daily migration to deep, dark waters allows them to escape fish predators.
- 1967 Native fish populations decline (Lahontan redbreast shiner, Lahontan speckled dace)
- 1973 Dick Bournique catches record Kokanee salmon (4 lbs. 13 oz.)
- 1974 Robert G. Aronsen catches record lake trout (37 lb. 3 oz.).
- 1977 *Daphnia* (zooplankton) population declines due to consumption by the introduced Mysis shrimp – a negative, unintended consequence of this introduction.
- 1991 Warm-water fish (largemouth bass and bluegill) established in shallow bays and marinas. These warm-water fish compete with Tahoe's native fish populations and may cause other water quality problems.
- 1995 Eurasian watermilfoil was confirmed in the lake. This plant has spread quickly around the lake, clogs boat propellers, and creates habitat for warm-water fishes, allowing them to spread.
- 2001 Asian clam first found in very low numbers in a localized area of the lake. The Asian clam population continues to expand, and there are many high-density infestations found along a majority of the southeastern shore.
- 2003 Curlyleaf pondweed, a more aggressive plant, was discovered and is spreading along the southern end of the lake.
- 2009 Watercraft inspections begin over concerns about possible Quagga mussel, Zebra mussel, and New Zealand mudsnail invasion. These inspections protect the lake from introduction of new species since boating is the primary source of the introduction of new species to the lake.
- 2009 Crayfish populations have more than doubled since the first estimates were made in the 1960's and may be reducing native species diversity like the blind amphipod and Tahoe stonefly.