

Scope of Work (SOW)

Tahoe Science Advisory Council (TSAC)

Third-Party Review of the Tahoe Keys Final Summary Report

Background:

The Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association (TKPOA) implemented the Control Methods Test project (CMT project) to assess the options for large-scale invasive aquatic plant control in the Tahoe Keys. The key target species were invasive Eurasian watermilfoil, curlyleaf pondweed, and coontail. The project sought to determine what technologies could achieve a 75% knockback of the current weed infestation and evaluate if that knockback could be maintained over a 3-year time frame using non-chemical methods.

The tested control technologies included two different aquatic herbicides, an aeration system, and ultraviolet light. In the first year (2022), chemical treatments were tested both independently and in combination with other methods. Follow-up non-chemical treatments began in Year 2 (2023) and continued with some modifications in Year 3 (2024).

After the project was complete, TKPOA developed the Tahoe Keys Final Summary Report that summarizes findings and offers conclusions and recommendations for next steps.

Objective:

The objective of this review is to assess the methods, findings, and conclusions presented in the Tahoe Keys Final Summary Report.

The review will focus on (1) evaluating the scientific soundness of the methods, (2) examining whether the methods and findings support the conclusions, and (3) considering whether alternative conclusions could be drawn from the data.

Key Areas of Focus:

1. **Scientific Soundness of the Methods** - Are the scientific methodologies, data collection techniques, and analyses robust and consistent with current best practices in environmental science and ecology?
 - Review the sampling design, data quality, and statistical approaches in the report.
 - Identify any methodological gaps, weaknesses, or inconsistencies that could affect the validity of the findings.
2. **Support of Conclusions by Methods and Findings** – Are the conclusions drawn in the Tahoe Keys Final Summary Report well-supported by the data and associated findings?
 - Examine the correlation between the methods used and the conclusions made, ensuring that the findings are logically derived from the research presented.
 - Determine whether the report sufficiently addresses any uncertainties, limitations, or assumptions made during the study.

3. **Consideration of Alternative Conclusions** – Are there alternative conclusions that could be reasonably drawn from the available data?
 - Assess whether the report overlooked any other plausible explanations or interpretations of the findings.
 - Evaluate if there are additional conclusions that could enhance the understanding of the Tahoe Keys ecosystem, considering the scope of the report's findings.

Deliverables:

1. **Initial Feedback Memo**

Answers to questions 1-3, including a general summary of potential concerns regarding methods or conclusions.

2. **Third-Party Review Report**

A succinct review report addressing:

- An evaluation of the scientific soundness of the methods.
- An analysis of the project linkage between methods, findings, and conclusions.
- An outline of other conclusions that could be reasonably be drawn.

Timeline:

- Final Summary Report Released- May 9, 2025
- Tahoe Science Advisory Council Review- May 11, 2025 to June 27, 2025
- Review Report Submitted to Project Lead- June 27, 2025