

Tahoe yellow cress is one of a kind

Tahoe yellow cress, or TYC, is a small perennial plant that grows on the shoreline of Lake Tahoe and nowhere else in the world. It lives only on the sandy beaches and dunes at the ever-changing margin of the lake. The plant has tiny yellow flowers with four petals and grows very low to the ground in small clusters that may spread across the sand.

As recently as 1996, this unique member of the mustard family teetered on the brink of extinction when it disappeared from previously occupied beaches in Nevada and was found growing in less than 10 sites on the California side of the lake.



TYC: Our natural history mystery

Tahoe yellow cress is the only species in the Sierra Nevada that is restricted to a single lake and no one really knows why. We do know that this remarkable plant has uniquely adapted to the fluctuating levels of Lake Tahoe over the millennia by adopting a strategy where some populations appear to persist under a wide range of environmental conditions while others come and go through time. Despite intense research efforts, the mechanisms behind this strategy remain a mystery. Lake Tahoe may have been over 500 feet lower in the distant past and it is truly a marvel that this little plant has co-evolved with the clear blue waters of the lake!



Help us protect TYC

If you see fences along the beach with educational signs like this one to the left, please stay away and let Tahoe yellow cress thrive. By protecting TYC now we can prevent it from becoming federally endangered and save Lake Tahoe from more restrictions. Other ways to help include:

- ☐ Avoid vegetated areas, especially near creek mouths
- ☐ Maintain control of your pets
- ☐ Launch and beach boats away from TYC
- ☐ Do not enter fenced areas



For more information on TYC make sure to visit www.tahoeyellowcress.org

All photos by Steve Matson or Alison Stanton



a
unique
piece
of
tahoe



Conservation Strategy

Tahoe yellow cress is uniquely adapted to the changing shoreline of Lake Tahoe, but the threat from intensive recreation and lake level management continues to grow every year. In response to near extinction in the late 1990's, a stakeholder group of agency representatives, researchers, environmental groups, and lakefront property owners formed the TYC Adaptive Management Working Group (AMWG). This task force developed a Conservation Strategy for TYC and made a formal agreement to ensure the long-term protection of the species. Since 2002, the AMWG has been guiding a research program on methods of effective restoration and incorporating the results into daily management. The plant is being successfully propagated in a Nevada state-run nursery and several existing populations have been enhanced with experimental plantings.



Help Tahoe yellow cress

Tahoe yellow cress grows in the same beautiful places that you might like to walk along the shore, beach your kayak, and soak up the sun or play with the dog. You can do your part to protect this special piece of Lake Tahoe's heritage:

- Respect areas that are fenced off to protect the plants
- Avoid beach activities in vegetated areas, especially near creek mouths
- Keep your dog on a leash
- Limit beach raking and follow the raking guidelines available at tahoeyellowcress.org

For more information on TYC, Adaptive Management Working Group and the Conservation Strategy please visit:

www.tahoeyellowcress.org



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