

## PRESS RELEASE

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## Passive “Floating Robots” Will Go Wherever Lake Currents Take Them



**PHOTO CAPTION:** UC Davis research engineer Alexander Forrest programs the 64 drifters that will be used in the experiment to track Lake Tahoe surface currents

Researchers at the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center (TERC), in collaboration with UC Berkeley, will undertake the first of a series of “drifter” experiments to better understand the surface currents of Lake Tahoe during the week of November 12 - 15, 2012.

A fleet of 64 floating drifters, each about the size of a 2-liter bottle soda, will track the water motion at 1-minute intervals by recording and transmitting their changing GPS location. They are submerged at the water level (to the approximate level of the orange tape visible in the photo) so that their motion is driven by lake currents.

Understanding surface currents of Lake Tahoe is important because currents are responsible for the transport of contaminants, invasive species, urban storm water and floating debris.

The first experiment will take place from November 12–15, 2012. On the first day, 32 drifters will be deployed in Lake Tahoe on a north-south and on an east-west line. The drifters will be tracked and replaced for two days and then the drifters will be replaced by another 32 fresh drifters. The positions of the drifters will be mapped over the entire four-day period.

If the units are not retrieved by the end of day on November 15, they will lose battery power and will no longer be able to be tracked.

If anyone finds a drifter either washed up or floating in the lake after November 16, 2012, it would be greatly appreciated if they could be collected and returned to Geoff Schladow at the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center (phone: 530-902-2272; email: [gschladow@ucdavis.edu](mailto:gschladow@ucdavis.edu)) or Brant Allen (phone: 530-604-6551; email: [bcallen@ucdavis.edu](mailto:bcallen@ucdavis.edu)). Information about how to send the drifter home is available on each drifter.

Stay tuned for more information once the experiment has been conducted and results are available. Or visit <http://terc.ucdavis.edu> for details.

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