

TAHOE:
**STATE
OF THE
LAKE**
REPORT
2021

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Education and outreach

In 2020

Achieving healthy aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem conditions requires education and outreach to provide science-based information to people of all ages and backgrounds and to foster responsible action and stewardship.

In 2020, TERC interacted with 3,224 visitors through tours, field trips, and lectures, both in-person and virtually. This represented a 75% decrease over the previous year as the Tahoe Science Center was closed to nearly all in-person

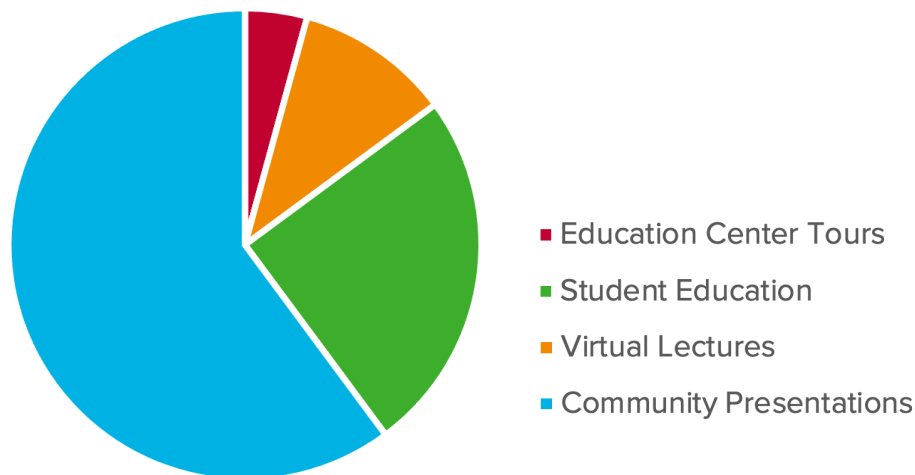
programming due to the COVID-19 pandemic in early March 2020, and transitioned to virtual programming.

Virtual student field trips over Zoom accounted for 25% of the total 2020 interactions and kept science in front of students, both locally and further afield, during a tumultuous school year. The TERC education team was still able to reach 1,058 students and conduct 69 virtual field trip sessions, including a new program on forest health based on the

latest TERC Forest Ecology Lab research to increase understanding of the impacts of climate change on the trees in our forest.

TERC also continued educating the public through online lectures, presentations to community organizations, and in-person outdoor programming.

Total Visitor Contacts = 3,224



Educational exhibits

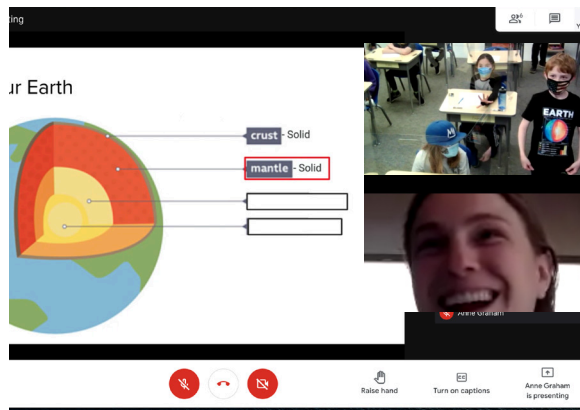
Plans for 2021

In 2021, the Tahoe Science Center will reopen by reservation only and utilize a new reservation system in partnership with Incline Village-Crystal Bay Visitor Center.

As part of the reopening, many new activities and products are planned. The Education team will create a hybrid virtual and in-person docent training program. Volunteer docents are a vital part of offering in person tours again. A new version of *Citizen Science Tahoe* as a web application will allow users to more easily access observation templates. A new *Tahoe's Plastic Problem* microplastics exhibit will focus on the problems and

impacts of plastic pollution on freshwater ecosystems. A virtual *All About Lake Tahoe Science Expo* will provide students access to the Tahoe Science Center content through engaging and visually stimulating experiments.

All programs and outreach efforts aim to increase engagement with locals and visitors and expand their awareness, knowledge, and understanding of environmental issues at Lake Tahoe and the importance of science and research to provide solutions to these problems.



AmeriCorps member Anne Graham teaches a lesson on the layers of the Earth and is excited to see a student wearing a matching Earth T-shirt to school the day of the virtual field trip.



New exhibit on microplastics and plastic pollution includes hands-on activities and interpretive panels (funded by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection).

Photo: H. Segale



AmeriCorps member Elise Matera reads the picture book *Mae Among the Stars* about the first African American woman to go to outer space. This book served as a segue to discuss earth and space science topics relevant to the students' grade levels.

Photo: B. Goodwin