

ALMANOR BASIN WATERSHED ADVISORY COMMITTEE

*Carl Felts, Chair
Eastshore*

To: Plumas County Board of Supervisors
Re: Recommendation for Lake Almanor water quality monitoring
Date: January 2009

*Ryan Burnett, Vice Chair
Chester*

*Aaron Seandel
Peninsula*

*Peggy Fulder
Lassen County*

*Lorena Gorbet
Maidu Community*

*Mike Mitzel
Member At-Large*

*Rich Rydell
Plumas County Planning
Commission*

*Dick Daniel
Member At-Large*

*Dick Fording
Westshore*

*Vince Gannon
Member At-Large*

*Dave Durkin
Member At-Large*

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1. Recommendation

The Almanor Basin Watershed Advisory Committee (ABWAC) recommends that the Board of Supervisors authorize the Plumas County Flood Control District to prepare, release, and manage a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a 2009 water quality monitoring program for Lake Almanor.

The recommended sampling program for 2009 is attached. The water quality monitoring will be funded with money that has already been donated to support the program. Members of the ABWAC unanimously supported this recommendation in the committee's November 12 meeting.

2. Background Information

As described in the Water Quality Report (CH2M Hill 2006), water quality monitoring has been conducted at Lake Almanor for the past several decades by a variety of agencies. The data suggest that water quality is good.

The Watershed Assessment (CH2M Hill 2007), however, concluded that planned and potential future changes in land use and recreational activities in the watershed could significantly impact water quality, and that proactive management is needed to ensure that the values and benefits of Lake Almanor are protected into the future. To provide baseline data and track water quality over time, monitoring should be an annual event.

For many years, the Department of Water Resources conducted most of the water quality monitoring in Lake Almanor. In 2008, the Department halted its Almanor monitoring program due to budget constraints. There were just two monitoring activities for Lake Almanor in 2008: one by the Regional Water Quality Control Board in June, and the second by the Plumas County Department of Environmental Health, analyzing *E. coli* and fecal coliform counts at heavily-visited beaches, in July.

In order to meet financial constraints but still provide continuity of monitoring with past efforts, the proposed plan is a minimal one, designed to measure

critical constituents that track the health of the lake. The plan is structured to evaluate trends and is not intended to permanently replace a more comprehensive program. When the FERC 2105 license is eventually issued, up to \$40,000 (2004 dollars) will be available each year for ongoing monitoring, and ABWAC will be in a position to propose an enhanced sampling program.

A comprehensive water quality database is available at www.SierraInstitute.us/Factsheets.html

3. Individuals or Agencies Affected by the Recommendation

- Plumas County Flood Control District: develop and release the RFP and administer the contract(s). The Flood Control District has agreed to take on these responsibilities pending the Board's authorization.
- Lake Almanor Watershed Coordinator: assist in coordinating monitoring as needed, and update the comprehensive water quality database for Lake Almanor.
- Residents and businesses in the Lake Almanor Basin (indirectly): will have confidence that water quality is good and that steps are being taken to ensure the long-term health of the lake.

4. Code or Policy Implications

None

5. Estimated Cost of Recommendation

None to the county — all costs for carrying out the recommended plan will be covered by donations to the Lake Almanor water quality program.

6. Recommended Schedule of Implementation

The RFP should be released by the end of February, with a return date of mid-March. The sampling program should begin by the middle of April 2009, no later than April 30.

7. "No Action" Alternative

If not supported, there will be no evaluation of the general health of Lake Almanor for the second consecutive year. Given the potential for growth and the potential impacts on water quality, as well as the future monitoring that will be conducted under the 2105 license, it is important for Lake Almanor that an interim monitoring program continue.

A proposed monitoring program for Lake Almanor, 2009

Monitoring stations:

LA-1 (DWR) – near the dam

LA-2 (DWR) – east lobe

LA-3 (DWR) – west lobe

LA-4 (DWR) – North Fork Feather

Parameter	Specific parameters	Locations	Frequency
Physical	Temperature Dissolved oxygen Turbidity Secchi depth	LA-1 LA-2 LA-3 LA-4 (no secchi)	4 per year: spring turnover (1) summer stratification (2) fall turnover (1)
Organics (petroleum products)	TPH BTEX	East Shore, East Lobe of Lake	1-2 per year: July 4 and Labor Day
Plankton	Zooplankton Phytoplankton	LA-2 LA-3	4 per year: spring turnover (1) summer stratification (2) fall turnover (1)
Nutrients	Total phosphorus Total nitrogen	LA-2 LA-3	1 per year: spring turnover
Bacteria* (to be conducted by Plumas County Environmental Health)	E-coli, Fecal coliform	High use swimming areas	1-2 per year: July 4 and Labor Day

* Will not be part of the RFP for 2009.