

Lake Almanor Watershed Group Meeting

Wednesday, November 14th, 2018 2:00-4:00pm; Maidu Summit Consortium Office,
Chester, CA

Members Present: Aaron Seandel, Bridie Johnston, Carl Felts, Susan Riney, Peggy Fulder

Sierra Institute staff present: Kaily Bourq, Moorea Stout, Leana Weissberg

Review of agenda and approval of minutes: Meeting minutes were approved with minor modifications. The November agenda was approved with the addition of discussing the future of LAWG.

Introductions/Announcements: All provided introductions

South Lassen Watershed Group (SLWG) Presentation/Discussion

Leana Weissberg presented an overview of the South Lassen Watershed Group (SLWG), including the group's origins and current projects, and acknowledged LAWG's role with SLWG. SLWG emerged from strategic planning conversations launched by LAWG. The SLWG boundary currently exists at 600,000 acres and incorporates the Mill, Deer, and North Fork of the Feather River. Carl recognized that LAWG's boundary was similar when it split from the county. SLWG engages 25-30 stakeholders, including local, state, and federal government, Plumas Board of Supervisors, timber companies, etc. Representatives from PG&E do not attend SLWG meetings; however, the coordinator position is funded through a \$100,000 grant from PG&E. SLWG continues to try to engage PG&E and will be treating some of their land.

SLWG advances objectives to reduce catastrophic wildfire risk and improve ecological resilience, watershed condition and function, and socioeconomic outcomes. Improved forest health is linked to bolstered community health and economic values. SLWG is currently engaged a strategic planning effort to identify ways to collectively develop project plans and implement them. Leana presented SLWG's current projects, including those that have that have received funding from the California Climate Investments (CCI) program. In the West Shore project, the whole federal footprint is 6,000 acres—3,000 acres of which will be treated. Landowners will do complementary fuels reduction (e.g., mechanical and hand thinning), which will equate to a total of 3500-4000 acres total treated. The forest service is currently developing a prescription for thinning as there are some spotted owl pacts in the vicinity. A big goal of forest thinning in this region is to preemptively mitigate what we know will be the effects of climate change. The region needs to reduce forest density in a way that reduces tree resource competition and external pressures, such as pests and pathogens.

The CCI grant expires in March 2022. Projects with implementation piece where biomass will be removed is on mostly on Collin's Pine land, and therefore, a lot of the material will likely be processed by their mills. The project on Childs Meadows is a thinning and meadow restoration project. The Rock Creek "Robbers" project restores a 200 acre continuous aspen stand, and is currently the only aspen stand improvement project in the SLWG footprint.

How might LAWG participate in SLWG?

SLWG is on track with projects and concurrently doing strategic planning. An MOU was recently finalized within the group, and member organizations are in the process of signing on. One way LAWG might be involved is to assist SLWG with strategic planning efforts, looking to take into consideration values that address wildlife habitat and water quality issues. LAWG could be a technical group. The purpose of the MOU is to be able to document membership in some capacity, which is important for applying for grants, grounding members, and outlining the collective mission, goals, and approaches of the group. **Action Item:** Kaily to send out the MOU to LAWG members when available. **Future Meeting Item:** LAWG to vote on signing the MOU at the next meeting.

Maidu Summit Consortium Update

Action Item: Kaily will follow up with Lorena for an update about the Prattville Dredge Project.

Mountain Meadows Conservancy Update

MMC received a reimbursement from Stewardship Council with Sierra Pacific Industry's fuels reduction work in the dam. Additionally, bass were stocked twice in Mountain Meadows reservoir. A MMC newsletter will be sent soon. The next regional trails meeting is scheduled December 12th.

Almanor West and Lake Almanor Country Club Update

Aaron presented that the Lake Almanor Country Club agreed to continue donating for the 2019 year at \$3 per lot. The donation would be received in the middle of April and middle of May. There is some skepticism of the continuation of the donation being a line budget item for LACC. We have to communicate that the purpose for the money is to provide a donation for the LAWG for the benefit of the lake. Almanor West voted to continue the donation in 2019 without question. The group discussed possible alternatives for funding sources, adding that more outreach is needed. **Action Item:** LAWG to send a thank you card to everyone on the board of the two donating entities. Another idea is to include a thank-you ad in the paper summarizing the goals of the group. The group brainstormed a few names of folks we might try to engage more: Connie and Dave Slusher, John Crotty with the Almanor Fishing Association, Eric Rudgers.

Tahoe Garden Projects

Carl mentioned that his wife may be available to join a subcommittee to advance the gardens project in the Springtime. Aaron confirms that issues dealing with shoreline erosion are part of the 2105 relicensing. Susan continues to research ideas for a garden project looking at Lake Tahoe as a model, for example: working with universities and community colleges. Charlie has previously mentioned having contacts with UC Davis. Some local resources and experts include: Butterfly Valley gardens, California Native Plant Organization, Bidwell House. The group discussed anticipated obstacles with landownership and private property around the lake. Because shoreline erosion in the lake is a part of 2105, PGE&E may be interested in being part of the conversation. Involving schools and students may be another way to attract PG&E's support.

Water Quality Meter Inventory and Youth Education Opportunity

Due to the Camp Fire, Scott was unable to attend the LAWG meeting. **Action:** Kaily will request an update for the next meeting.

Grant Opportunities Updates

Kaily discussed current grants available or soon to be available for coordinator funding. Sierra Institute intends to apply for the Department of Conservation Watershed Coordinator grant for SLWG and LAWG. Due to the high match required (50%) and other factors, Sierra Institute will not apply for the Bureau of Reclamation Cooperative Watershed Management Program.

Fundraising Strategy and Outreach

Moorea suggested that a marketing and fundraising committee be developed. The group discussed ideas to expand group membership. Many people are lost through aging and moving away. Aaron suggested LAWG should begin looking at ways to cooperate with the different groups, such as Almanor Recreation, Almanor Fishing Association, and people who are active in the trails movement. More collaboration could benefit projects that other groups and LAWG have in common. **Action Item:** All to identify the different groups in the Lake Almanor region that can be a part of the conversation. **Future Meeting Topic:** Scheduling a joint meeting in the spring with groups working in the Lake Almanor region. Moorea suggested that LAWG also connect with the businesses as business also depends on the health of the lake. Moorea introduced the concept of a membership program, noting that profits made would go into the LAWG fund and the board would decide how to spend the money. Hosting joint events with other organizations such as Plumas Audubon and Feather River Land Trust may benefit participation and impact. **Future Meeting Topic:** LAWG to jointly host an open house or watershed awareness event. Ideas regarding an open house include: food and drink, raffle prizes, forums, focus on an issue sensitive to the public or the future of the lake, bring in Gary Freeman, the Rotary or Chamber of Commerce can help host, hold it after hours at Plumas Bank. Aaron noted that the Almanor Recreation District is developing a town visitor center and will house information related to the lake's water quality.

Closing Remarks, Next Steps

At the January meeting, members will vote on group leadership. Each member try to bring a guest/potential new LAWG member to the next meeting. Due to scheduling conflict on the Wednesday, January 9th, the LAWG meeting will be held on the Thursday, January 10th.