

Lake Almanor Watershed Group Meeting

Wednesday, September 12th, 2018 2:00-4:00pm; Maidu Summit Consortium Office,
Chester, CA

Members Present: Aaron Seandel, Bridie Johnston, Charlie Plopper, Sherrie Thrall, Gina Johnston, Carl Felts, Susan Riney

Call-in: Scott McReynolds

Sierra Institute staff present: Kaily Bourg and Moorea Stout

Review of agenda and approval of minutes: Meeting minutes were approved with modifications to correct spelling of Gina's last name, adjust a statement in the LACC and Almanor West Updates, and change the fish count on MMC update from 10,000 to 1,000. The September agenda was approved with additions to discuss the Great Sierra River Cleanup, follow up on the Letter of Support to Trust for Public Land, and add management plan update to project ideas and strategies.

Introductions/Announcements: Moorea Stout, Sierra Institute's new Director of Development introduced herself and described her job responsibilities, which included aspects of public relations and building a funding base that isn't necessarily grants. LAWG members present briefly provided introductions for Moorea.

Water Quality Monitoring Update: Scott provided a water quality monitoring update via conference line. He reported that the next sampling would occur the following week, and the last round for 2018 would occur in November. Lake Almanor residents commonly question why the state does not pay for the program, but DWR does contribute a substantial amount. Aaron requested if Scott and/or Gina could provide him with DWR's estimated expenditures for the sampling program to share with the LACC Board of Directors at their upcoming meeting. Gina and Scott will follow-up with Aaron and the group on the exact number via email. The DWR funds do not cover analysis of the data, chemical costs, or reporting. There is concern that PG&E should be paying also; however, it is unlikely they will contribute until they get the 2105 FERC license. PG&E operates in a reactive mode; LAWG wants to get ahead of the efforts to combat nutrient and phosphorus loading in the lake. That's why this group has to keep going. The statistics show that more people will be coming to the lake this summer, which strengthens the argument to support the lake's water quality. Property value can also be used as a supporting argument—if lake quality goes down, so do property zones. Carl brought to the attention that new buoys have been placed along the lake shore. The group discussed the importance of having community support of projects and linking community contributions with project outcomes in order to maintain community engagement and be more appealing to funders. Scott will take photographs during the monitoring to include with any outreach materials.

Financials: Bridie reviewed the financials sheet, and asked about a minor miscalculation on the budget sheet. Kaily will follow up with Bridie and Amy about the number. The watershed coordinator expense of \$1,136.25 has not yet been attributed to a specific account. Kaily's time for LAWG is currently limited to 5%, which will only allow for basic tasks at this time.

Maidu Summit Consortium: Lorena was not present to provide an update; however, Sherrie provided a summary from the dredge meeting with PG&E. Community member representation was primarily Tribal representatives. Representation from PG&E were folks new to the area and issues. Some didn't know about the 2105 project. PG&E discussed that the dredge had nothing to do with the 2105 or the thermal curtain issue. The dredge is being considered part of routine maintenance to remove the sediment being sucked into the intake of the tower. Sherrie expressed concern of the indirect impact this project will have, including increased truck traffic (400 or so truck trips to move the sediment) and the lack of control of the dredge material once it is removed and dumped somewhere—it will go back into the watershed. The Maidu is concerned with the remains of ancestors and honoring their heritage; we might ask Lorena to provide an update at the next meeting. PG&E talked about giving MSC a conservation easement of the site so that it would be closed to the public. PG&E had

The Lake Almanor Watershed Group is a project of the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment.

the general attitude that they were going to proceed with the dredge despite Maidu sentiment. Sherrie raised the issue that this is a key piece of the 2105 and the fact that it would go on without the county knowing is incomprehensible. PG&E did not report a timeline, but they do plan to stage equipment at the PG&E work site. Someone asked that if the project functions as a turbidity stream, would the county be in the position to ask for an injunction against it? The county isn't there yet, and PG&E claims that clearance from the water board does not require permits. PG&E also says they are exempt from CEQA, which also means a required public reaction period. PG&E claims to have done some outreach to the surrounding property owners and businesses and coordinated with CalTrans. As for Tribal consultation, the law demands that PG&E coordinate but if agreement is not reached, PG&E has the autonomy to go ahead anyway. A LAWG member suggested that Earth Justice or Pacific Legal Foundation be contacted.

Mountain Meadows Conservancy: PG&E has \$130,000 to develop area around the dam at Walker Lake. As for the fish, the bass were bigger than they were supposed to be and all viable afterwards. The next step is to look at the gateway site. PCREW did a tremendous job cleaning up the site, and opened a space for a parking area. MMC has \$18,000 more than needed to buy the gateway project. As for the Water Trails maps, there is still discussion about what needs to be done to the map for the next version (e.g., putting every business on the map, more trails, etc.) Aaron asked about what the role of the recreation district might be in terms of including more trails. It is unclear, but including more trails is a long-term goal. Lake Almanor Country Club roads are not on the map because they are not publicly accessible. Info about private trails are open for discussion, but there are legal aspects and including them would be a challenge. Someone mentioned that perhaps the map might include contact information for learning more about private trails.

Tahoe Gardens Project: The group is looking at ways to control the flow of nutrients and phosphorus around the lake. Tahoe has a garden project that might be of interest to LAWG. Susan suggested that to learn more, she would like to have conversations with some folks involved in gardens projects in Tahoe, and then follow up with a day trip. Susan attests there is general concern among Lake Almanor residents of what is going into the lake, but the degrees of interest vary among individuals. There are a number of groups and entities in the watershed and adjacent watershed that can contribute expertise or resources a garden project, such as the Quincy co-op garden, the Chester nursery, schools and classrooms, others who own landscaping companies, and California native plant society. Part of the hold up for 2105 is the lake's shoreline erosion issue. This project represents a way to effectively mitigate shoreline erosion issue through implementing a variety of native plants that function as nutrient filters. The group proposed a subcommittee for developing this project, including Susan and Moorea and other community members. There are also possible connections at UC Davis.

Action Items/ Homework/Topics for Next Meeting: Scott and Gina will follow up with Aaron regarding DWR contributions to water quality monitoring. Moorea will follow up with Aaron regarding fundraising. Kaily will connect Bridie and Amy to discuss financials calculation. Susan and Moorea will work together to develop the Tahoe Gardens project concept. Charlie will work to develop the tributaries monitoring project concept. Kaily will follow up with a few folks regarding details on the Trust for Public Lands Letter of Support. The next meeting is scheduled for November 14th.