

## Lake Almanor Watershed Group Meeting

Wednesday, January 10 2018 2:00-4:00pm, *Maidu Summit Consortium Office, Chester, CA*

**Members present:** Peggy Fulder, Bridie Johnston, Aaron Seandel, Charlie Plopper, Sherrie Thrall, Gina Johnston, Scott McReynolds, Nils Lunder (arrived at ~3:30p)

**Sierra Institute staff present:** Courtney Gomola, Kira Miller

**Other:** Kenneth Holbrook (Executive Director of the Maidu Summit Consortium) called in.

**Review of agenda and approval of minutes:** It was requested that there be a discussion on 2015 talks added to the agenda, which was then approved. Minor modifications were made to minutes prior to being approved.

**Introductions/Updates:** Courtney introduced Kira, the Natural Resource Education and Recreation intern at Sierra Institute, who may help Courtney with some of the Water Quality outreach work (see Rose Foundation below). The group introduced themselves to Kira as well as their roles in the group. Sherri announced that Dick Daniels had passed away earlier this winter while out hunting.

**Officer elections:** The group elected to maintain the current officer appointments in lieu of an election.

**Rose Foundation:** Courtney submitted an application to the Rose Foundation for Communities and Environment (Rose) to support the development of a water quality outreach campaign to promote watershed stewardship in the Almanor Basin. The original request was for \$5,000, and LAWG received \$2,500 in support from Rose. The group agreed the best use of work might be to engage local students with the current water quality data, including participating in sampling in new sites and learning how to analyze and/or compare data. Sherri suggested LAWG partner with Feather River Land Trust on the Olsen Barn property- which both serves as a learning landscape close to the school, as well as a potential site for students to monitor water quality. Courtney will join CAT (trails) group meeting with PUSD Outdoor Educator Rob Wade on January 22.

**Lake Almanor Maidu Cemetery planning unit:** The Stewardship Council opened public comment on their upcoming decision to give specific parcels of PG&E land to the Maidu Summit Consortium (the Summit), specific to this conversation- the Maidu Cemetery planning unit. Ken Holbrook called in to the meeting and provided an overview on the intended use of the site by the Summit should they receive the land, which constitutes 145-acres adjacent to a traditional Maidu cemetery site. The site is currently rutted in a lot of areas as a result of motorized recreation. Should the Summit receive the property, they intend to promote more low-impact recreation on the site, while also reducing the impacts of the railroad and also the use of the site as a dumping ground, which has happened in the past. They intend to do this by having a steady presence of the Summit at the site. They hope to access the site through a right-of-way deed from a property to the south of the unit, which they will gate to control access and better monitor wildlife. If the site is granted to the Summit, they hope to work with the public and local groups and stakeholders to ensure their mission and vision for the property is in align with these interests as much as possible. To that end, the Summit hopes to engage LAWG in that process. Aaron proposed that the group write a letter of support to the Stewardship Council (via the Public Comment Request) voicing their support that the Council deed the land to the Summit. The group approved the letter. Courtney will write it and send to Peggy and/or Bridie for approval by Monday Jan 15.

**Financials:** Courtney provided a brief overview of the financials. Aaron deducted from the spreadsheets that the current funding will pay for Gina's contract this year. Scott confirmed that there were no financial obligations to him/DWR. Courtney reported on a \$1,500 anonymous donation that was contributed in January (and therefore not reflected in the current account balance), with the intention of the donation to support "watershed coordination." The group agreed that money should be allocated to support Courtney's time. There is \$1,165 remaining in the watershed coordination account the LAWG allocated for Courtney's time in January

2017. The group agreed they will discuss how they intend to support Courtney and her efforts at the next meeting. Courtney had been asked to see if any of the recent PG&E funding that was awarded to the South Lassen Watersheds Group was slated to support LAWG. Courtney reported Jonathan had said there was no funding set aside at this time. The group requested that Courtney follow up with Jonathan again in light of the funding that was spent from the LAWG budget on creating the group.

**Water Quality Monitoring updates:** Scott reported that last year's high flows rolled boulders on top of the original logger in the center of Hamilton Branch (HB). The new logger that was installed is in shallower waters, which may show water temperatures as a result, as can variability in the time of day in which the loggers were read. Bailey Creek was flowing when Scott checked on it earlier today (the logger had been out all summer due to lack of flow). Scott reported he has funding through June 30 to continue sampling (noting it costs about \$26,000 a year for sampling, and up to \$100,000 for lab analysis, although the latter are part of departmental overhead). If FERC relicensing happens on Oroville Dam, resources may be reallocated to support that work so he wouldn't be able to sample up here. Scott also noted quality analysis (QA) has improved in the trouble DO logger. Purchasing certified clean lab water has helped improved blank readings which have subsequently helped improve data collection.

**DO-** in August was 0.1 in the East Arm and at the dam; the Lake flipped in November resulting in high O<sub>2</sub> at the bottom. It was fairly anoxic at the mouth of HB in August, but it was restored in November.

**Metals-** There were high metal readings in the north fork in Chester. There were also high manganese measurements out of Mountain Meadows (MMR), but these were diluted by the time they reached HB. Metals are often bound to sediment, so the high runoff from the 2016-17 winter may explain these high readings.

**N's-** The north fork station in Chester had high nitrate and -ite levels in one sample, but otherwise the highest N was coming out of MMR, with the highest phosphorus coming out of Chester too. The high N could be a result of lawn fertilization, not fully treated effluent resulting from high storm events, or, as samples represent data collected just once a month, could simply represent an anomaly. Consequently, gaps in the data could be filled in by citizen science monitoring in these locations (potential link to Rose Foundation- students could use data to look at trends, best time to do sampling to fill in gaps, etc.).

Scott also noted the last three years represent the driest on record, followed by a normal precipitation year, and then the wettest year on record, which provides opportunities for interesting comparisons. Gina reported she anticipates finished the rough draft of the 2017 report by the end of the month, with review available for the March meeting.

**2105 updates:** Sherri reported she and Leah Wills had a recent meeting with Dave Steindorf (American Whitewater Association) as well as Chris Shoots (California Sport Fishing Protection Alliance) to discuss water temperature below Lake Almanor as they relate to sport fish populations and recreation. Recent discussions suggest the Environmental Impact Report will be released sometime in January. The relicensing conversations regarding Lake Oroville seem to support movements by the FERC committee, with Scott saying they expect a license in the next couple month, with delays a result of a lack of a quorum on the FERC committee.

Regarding the EIR, it seems like a thermal curtain won't be a viable option, but the committee may pursue releasing water from the bottom of the dam- with Scott pointing out our data shows there is no cold-water availability in drought years, underscoring that the data used to make the original recommendations about cold water delivery are no longer applicable. Sherri reminded the group she has an account set aside to support litigations should a decision be made about the cold-water delivery that is not supported by data. Reconnecting with Wendy regarding Save Lake Almanor may be a good idea, but LAWG should make sure conversations are moving forward first. Bridie suggest Rose money could also be used for public outreach if things progress.

**Waste/storm-water Assistance opportunities:** Courtney gave an overview of the phone meeting she, Charlie, and Aaron had with representatives at the Office of Sustainable Water Solutions (OSWS) and Region 5 of the State Water Resources Control Board. The group submitted a request for technical assistance to identify sources of storm and water-water introduction into waterways in the Almanor Basin, and opportunities for resulting mitigation measures. The OSWS call was to clarify the request, and OSWS is currently determining which communities in the Basin would be eligible for assistance, and proper next steps. Courtney raised that Patagonia Environmental Grassroots grants may be an option for sustaining monitoring funding. The group discussed there is no body that currently measures coliform (major concern on east and west shores because of old septic tanks), other than the presumed responsibility of the Water Quality Control Board to check septic tanks once a year.

**Mountain Meadows Conservancy updates (MMC):** Nils just arrived from a Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) workshop for Lassen, Modoc and Shasta Counties. SNC only has one round of Prop 1 money, which was dedicated largely to fuels reductions. They think future efforts may focus more on parks, recreation, and water (with a potential parks and recreation bond slated for June), and are consequently updating their strategic plan. Nils supported these ideas at the SNC meeting, as well as noting the need for funding of coordination of collaborative efforts. LAWG members can follow up with Kristy Hoffman if they have additional comments. This year MMC submitted a \$600,000 request to the Stewardship Council for increased facilities at MMR, including the CEQA assessments and infrastructure building. They are also looking to purchase an assess property that borders PG&E land at MMR. The next Almanor Basin planning meeting with NPS will be on February 1; people can fill out potential project forms and submit to NPS prior to meeting (see email). Nils reported the Summit is also interested in collaborating with other recreation efforts on delineating historic trails around Lake Almanor and the Basin, and developing interpretive signs.

**Water Trails update:** As of the meeting date, 760 maps have been sold!

**Topics for next meeting:** Review of financial support of Courtney; updates on Rose activities; updates on discussions with OSWS.

**Next meeting date:** Wednesday March 14 at the Maidu Summit Consortium office.