



**Lake Almanor Watershed Group Meeting
Wednesday, August 4th, 2021, 1:00 - 2:30 pm**

Attendees

Bella Bledsoe
Gina Johnston
Jacqie Cordova
Peggy Fulder

Phil Datner
Susan Padilla
Thomas Tisch

Approval of Agenda and June Minutes & General Announcements

Each group member introduced themselves and said where they are currently located during the Dixie Fire.

Group members then discussed the possible effects of the Dixie Fire on the lake. Fire-retardant has nutrients in it. Gina predicted that we will see the impact of added nutrients in the lake maybe this fall (2021), but certainly next spring (2022). It will be interesting to see how algae responds to the fire retardant input. Ash may also be a nutrient that could contribute to algae growth.

Susan wants to explore working with PG&E. LAWG has the ability to reach the local community, and Susan suggested that maybe we can work together with PG&E in a positive manner.

Phil ran across an article recently that smoke is changing the temperature in streams. The study looked at the lower Klamath River. Phil proposed that we may see a drop in temperature in the local streams come September. Hopefully, our data loggers can catch any temperature variation.

There is a motion to approve the agenda and the June minutes; the agenda and minutes are approved.

Group Check-In: Dixie Fire

- Susan heard that there was a pretty big spot fire on the West Shore of Lake Almanor. Susan also heard compliments about all the fire clearing and Firewise work that West Shore residents have been doing; this work has made a difference. Susan suggested that LAWG support future thinning efforts in residential areas along the lake.
- Phil updated the group that fire has come down to the water's edge between Prattville and Almanor West. There are a couple of forward-looking infrared cameras on top of Dyer Mountain that are helpful in tracking the fire.
- Susan thinks it is important that we tell the story of the Dixie Fire through information and pictures. People must understand what is happening here, including local residents, and beyond.
- Phil agrees that information is key. He has been a firefighter and feels like Cal Fire does not provide enough information. Phil feels like we need to better share information amongst our community and more broadly.
- Tom thanked Phil for sharing fire resources with the group via email. Tom also supports Firewise work, especially since spotting had been a significant issue in the Lake Almanor area. If we clean up timber, we will have a much better shot at preventing spot fires in the future.
- Susan said that she would try to connect with the local Firewise representative. We have a good core of people to start talking to and networking with.

Financials

- Bella will circulate the financials for everyone to look at, given that Bridie is not at the meeting to present them.

Carl's Letter of Resignation

- Peggy feels that people can come and go as they wish from LAWG. She feels we need to accept Carl's resignation without much comment.
- Tom asked Peggy to comment on why Carl does not want to serve the group any longer.
- Peggy said that Carl is one of the oldest founding members of LAWG. Carl has been very involved with all of LAWG's work, and he has been an active member for a long time. Carl has taken exception with some of the letters LAWG has written recently, but he was also fairly unwilling to provide concrete details on how to improve them. Carl is also a bit frustrated with Sierra Institute. Carl cares a lot but is ready to move on.
- Susan believes in keeping a good relationship. She thinks we can accept Carl's resignation but can also maintain a good relationship with him.
- Gina got the sense Carl was frustrated with the Zoom format of LAWG meetings. Carl had technical issues with Zoom and became frustrated and irritated that LAWG continued with the Zoom format.
- The group voted to accept Carl's resignation. The group appreciates his long involvement with LAWG and his commitment to the program.

Member Updates and Announcements

Water Quality Monitoring Volunteer Updates

- Mike Kossow reached out to Bella to tell her that he has collected water quality data from Almanor and Butt Reservoirs from 2004 to 2010. As part of his email, he attached an Almanor water temperature and dissolved oxygen column profile spreadsheet.
- Mike will also be collecting daily water quality data from Lake Almanor this summer. He mentioned that PG&E is repairing the wing wall of the Low Level Outlet (LLO) this summer. They will pass the Minimum In-Stream Flow (MIF) over the spillway and dry the area between the LLO and spillway to facilitate working in a dry area. Turbidity monitoring, water temperature, and maybe pH levels will be part of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWQCB) requirements. It will be a pretty simple job; the SWQCB requires 3rd party monitoring. Construction is supposed to start July 12th and end by the middle of October.
- Mike also said that he has water quality and fisheries information on Almanor Reservoir from 1980-1986.
- Bella will connect Gina with Mike and send Mike's data along to Gina.
- Bella and Michael Willhoit met in mid-July, so Michael could relay what he knows about Lake Almanor, the larger watershed, hydro generation in the area, and current lake issues. Michael is a phenomenal resource, with a wide range of knowledge about the Lake. If LAWG ever has questions about current and historic lake conditions or issues, Michael is willing to be a point of contact who will help us find answers. He is well connected in the community and is interested in helping LAWG gain further visibility in the wider Lake Almanor community so that we can all continue protecting the lake.
- Once things settle down again, Michael will introduce Bella to some other key folks in the area, so Bella can continue to expand her network and conduct outreach on behalf of LAWG and Sierra Institute.
- Susan and Peggy added that Michael works closely with the chamber. LAWG suffers from a lack of exposure, and potentially Michael could help us improve our public engagement.

- Last, Kevin and Virginia took a gentleman named Neal out on the lake in July to train Neal in water quality monitoring. It sounds like Neal might be a future resource or possible volunteer for our water quality monitoring efforts.
- Kevin's AmeriCorps term has ended, and he is leaving Sierra Institute. Virginia is taking his place to work with LAWG and help facilitate water quality monitoring.

Lake Almanor West Association (Susan)

- Moorea is a great resource and did a phenomenal job speaking on behalf of LAWG at the WACC meeting on June 14.

FERC Relicensing Update

- Sherrie was not present to provide an update.

MSC Update

- Lorena was not present to provide an update.

Lake Almanor Watershed Management Plan

- Bella asked how she can support LAWG in using the Lake Almanor Watershed Management Plan.
- Tom said that the plan is broad. Tom feels like a lot of activity and effort is taking place in the Lake Almanor community, but Tom thinks the work is fragmented. Organizations (e.g., the South Lassen Watersheds Group, the chamber) are all doing separate and disparate projects in the area. He feels like there needs to be a resource where community members can go to track local-level projects. The community likely does not understand what is occurring in and around the lake.
- Susan suggests that the group ask Jonathan about the best way to tackle the Management Plan.
- Peggy described that many contacts receive the monthly agenda and minutes, however many of those people are not attending meetings. Peggy suggests that LAWG should not reach out to people who are not interested; Peggy thinks LAWG should evaluate its membership.
- Peggy also feels like LAWG needs to evaluate its mission and priorities. Water quality is fantastic, but that's all LAWG does right now. Peggy feels the group needs to outline a few more priorities.
- Peggy described that LAWG needs to try and communicate with Moorea more; she is such an important asset for the group. Peggy feels that the group needs to put more effort into maintaining the relationship with Moorea.
- The group is going to become familiar with the Management Plan. Each group member will pick 2-3 things from the report that they feel are particularly important and bring those to the next meeting so the group can brainstorm how it might do those things.
- Peggy wants the group to get up and running. A little bit of work goes a long way in the Lake Almanor area. LAWG's projects do not have to be grandiose to make a significant impact.

Action Items

- Susan will try to connect with the local Firewise representative.
- Bella will connect Gina with Mike and send Mike's data along to Gina.
- The group is going to become familiar with the Management Plan. Each group member will pick 2-3 things from the report that they feel are particularly important and bring those to the next meeting so the group can brainstorm how it might do those things.

Adjourn:

Next Meeting: September 8th