



Board Member Spotlight: Aaron Seandel

Aaron is retiring from LAWG after more than 22 years of dedicated service.

By Peggy Fulder
LAWG Co-chair



The history of the Lake Almanor Watershed Group (LAWG) and its predecessor, Almanor Basin Watershed Advisory Committee (ABWAC), is inextricably linked to the long-term and unwavering dedication of Aaron Seandel. His involvement with both organizations and many efforts to support water quality, lake health, and community well-being have benefited the lives of so many within the Lake Almanor Basin. Beginning almost three decades ago, Aaron has collaborated with others to address numerous issues that require extensive research, communication, community organizing, and leadership. Aaron has recently relocated away from the area, but this summer I had the opportunity to sit down with Aaron and listen as he recounted how he got involved with ABWAC, which eventually became LAWG.

In the early 1990's Don Woodhall, the Plumas County Supervisor formed a Water Quality Subcommittee with the purpose to "maintain oversight on the water side of things." Aaron, who was on the Lake Almanor Country Club Board of Directors, served on this committee along with George Protsman, Bob Mitchell, Marvin Alexander, Steve Jackson, Jeane Lawson, Donna Scott, Bob Merrifield, Sandy Frelich and others. Aaron and his collaborators focused on the question: "What can be done to make the basin grow?" ABWAC was part of the answer.

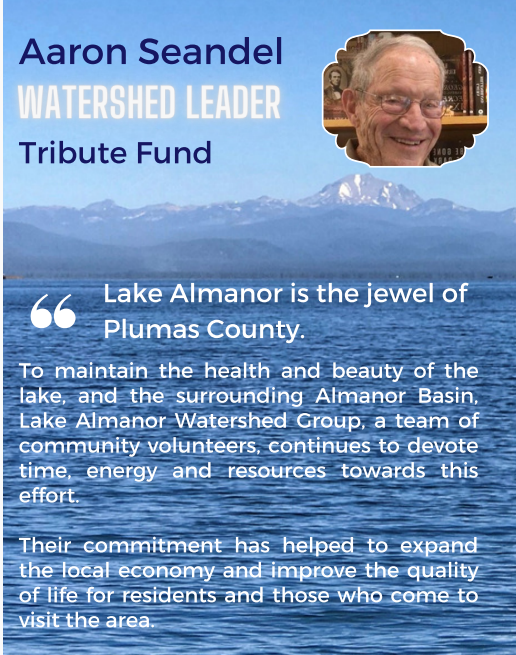
Board Member Spotlight: Aaron Seandel *Continued*

In the year 2000, Jonathan Kusel, founder of the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment, arranged a meeting with Aaron, Bill Dennison (then the District 1 Plumas County Supervisor) and Carl Felts to promote economic and recreational growth and community involvement in the Lake Almanor Basin. In 2003 Jonathan and Aaron's group conducted surveys with individuals in Chester and Lake Almanor asking how they would go about making the community a more desirable place to live. They wanted to set up an advisory committee that had representatives from the business community, the Mountain Maidu and other Tribal members, industries such as Sierra Pacific Industries and Collins Pine Company) and representatives from different geographic areas around the lake. Thus was formed ABWAC, to address water quality, land use, and critical habitat issues in the Lake Almanor Basin and make policy recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

Under Sierra Institute's direction a small group of people began to meet regularly to develop a plan for the basin. In 2009 The Lake Almanor Watershed Group formally adopted the Lake Almanor Watershed Management Plan, which was intended to guide all efforts by the ABWAC to protect water quality, critical habitat and quality of life.

Towards the end of our conversation, I asked Aaron about whether or not he felt that ABWAC and LAWG reached the goals of its members and if they had enough community involvement with the basin's issues. Aaron responded "Yes we did. **The demographics may be changing; there are more younger people coming to recreate, but we need to continually assure all who are here that the opportunities to fish, swim and play will not change. We need to keep up with the times.**" To that end, LAWG members have collaborated with Sierra Institute in 2020 to revise the Lake Almanor Management Plan to better reflect the environmental issues and needs of local communities within the basin. As Aaron stated, the demographics of the communities and partners involved in this critical group may change, but **the important work that Aaron initiated will continue onward.**

Please join us in celebrating Aaron by making a contribution in his honor:
www.sierrainstitute.us/aaron



Aaron Seandel
WATERSHED LEADER
Tribute Fund

“ Lake Almanor is the jewel of Plumas County.

To maintain the health and beauty of the lake, and the surrounding Almanor Basin, Lake Almanor Watershed Group, a team of community volunteers, continues to devote time, energy and resources towards this effort.

Their commitment has helped to expand the local economy and improve the quality of life for residents and those who come to visit the area.

LEADERS WANTED!

LAWG is looking for people to join the steering committee

YOU ARE:

- Interested in water quality
- Passionate about the Lake Almanor basin
- A part- or full-time resident of Lassen or Plumas Counties
- Able to commit 20 or more volunteer hours per year



While we welcome participants from anywhere, there is immediate need for someone to replace Aaron

The Lake Almanor Country Club is a crucial constituency within the LAWG group but with Aaron's departure, they no longer have a representative on the committee.

If you live in LACC and are interested in sharing your leadership skills and commitment to a healthy lake and vibrant community, please email us:

dweinman@sierrainstitute.us

WANT TO HELP BUT COMMITTEES JUST AREN'T YOUR THING?

THAT'S GREAT - WE HAVE PLENTY OF WAYS FOR YOU TO CONTRIBUTE:

- Citizen science
- Outreach and education
- Water trails map
- Youth programs

CONNECT WITH US TODAY:

WWW.SIERRAINSTITUTE.US/LAKEALMANOR

Thank you to our supporters!



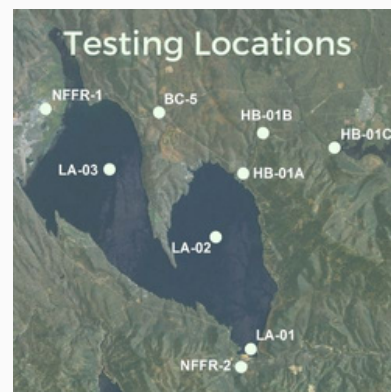
If you would like to support water quality monitoring and other important efforts to improve quality of life in the basin, please consider becoming an almanor advocate.

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

WHAT IS TURBIDITY?

Hint: It's not what your grandson calls his little brother

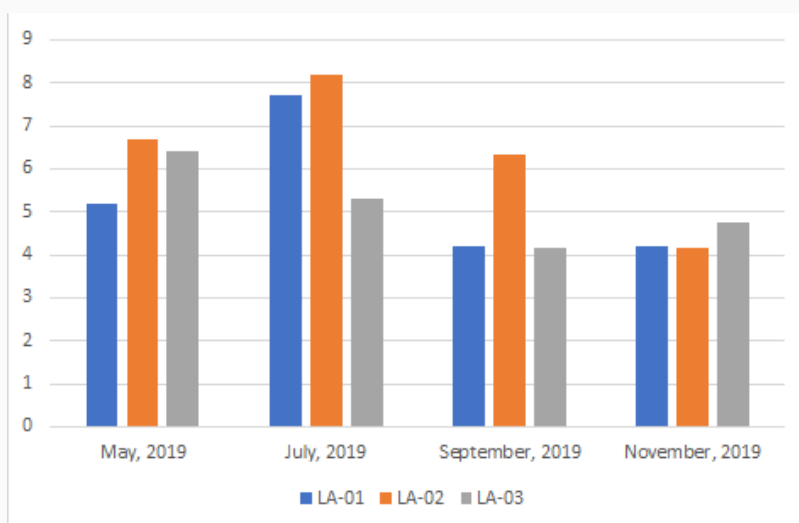
Turbidity. Cloudiness in water caused by particulate matter suspended in the water that decreases water clarity and can affect beneficial uses. Turbidity is produced by either inorganic material, such as clay particles, or organic material, such as algal cells



WHY IT MATTERS:

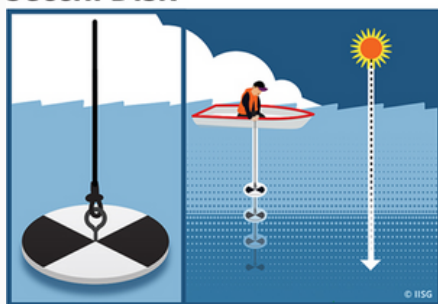
The high amounts of particles that produce high turbidity affect the health of the lake by reducing light penetration, which decreases ecological productivity, habitat quality and recreational value. Among other problems, the particles are attachment sites for other pollutants such as toxic metals and bacteria. Monitoring turbidity helps assess the health of the lake and identify potential problems before they get worse.

Turbidity Levels in 2019



[For more information our water quality monitoring program, please visit
www.sierrainstitute.us/LakeAlmanorWatershedGroup](http://www.sierrainstitute.us/LakeAlmanorWatershedGroup)

Secchi Disk



Secchi Depth. Secchi depth is a measurement of water clarity using a Secchi disc. The Secchi disc was invented by Pietro Angelo Secchi (science advisor to the Pope in the late 1800s). It is usually an 8-inch (20 cm) flat round plate, with alternating black and white quadrants, and a rope at the center to lower it into the water, usually from the shady side of a boat. The Secchi depth is the water depth at which the disc is no longer visible.



Our "day of learning" went virtual for 2020

Rather than gather in person at the lovely Olsen Barn, this year's State of the Lake became a series of online panel discussions featuring individuals and organizations who are working hard to improve the Almanor Basin. Each session focused on a different aspect of regional ecology and how it intersects with quality of life in our communities.

LAWG would like to thank Feather River Land Trust and Sierra Institute for Community and Environment for the hard work they put into making these events happen. We are very grateful for the time, energy and expertise they invested.

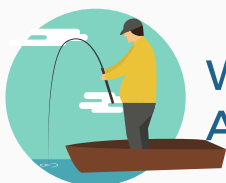
THEMES AND TOPICS



**FOREST AND
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT**



**LANDSCAPE
CONSERVATION AND
RESTORATION**



**WATER QUALITY
AND FISHERIES**



**COMMUNITY
VITALITY**

If you missed any of these great presentations,
they are all available at:

www.sierrainstitute.us/stateofthelake