

Lake Almanor Watershed Group Meeting **Wednesday, November 10th, 2021, 1:00 - 2:30 pm**

Attendees:

Bella Bledsoe
Bridie Johnston
Charlie Plopper
Jacqie Cordova
Lorena Gorbet
Mary Davidge

Moorea Stout
Peggy Fulder
Phil Datner
Susan Padilla
Tom Tisch
Virginia Pritchard

Approval of Agenda and October Minutes & General Announcements

There is a motion to approve the agenda and the October minutes. Bridie proposes to add a discussion on the Chester Boil Drinking Water Order to the agenda. Peggy proposes to add a short update on the South Lassen Watersheds Group Field Tour. The group accepts the agenda as amended, and the October minutes are approved.

Financials (Bridie)

There were no changes in income. Expenses increased by \$417.48 (\$350.64 in salaries/benefits, \$63.84 in travel miles, and \$3.00 in additional logger battery fix costs). The total balance is \$20,372.41. Allocated monies include \$1,000.00 for the Maidu Plant Project, \$4,040.00 for 2021 Water Quality Testing, and \$325.16 for Sierra Institute co-ordination. The working balance is \$15,007.25.

Member Updates and Announcements

Water Quality Monitoring

- During the November water quality sampling, there was a lot of algae at the LA3 site.
- Generally, November sampling showed consistent temperatures and a return of dissolved oxygen in the Lake.
- Virginia took some great photos while doing Lake monitoring that LAWG can use to create volunteer recruitment content, or raise money for the water quality monitoring program.
- Virginia is meeting Kyle, her PG&E contact, tomorrow (November 11th) so that she can do stream sampling below the PG&E dam, and at the other stream sampling sites.
- Gina mentioned that it is typical to have an algae bloom in the Fall at the LA3 site. There are several things that might bring more nutrients into the Lake during the Fall. Gina is going to pick up plankton samples tomorrow from Phil so she can test them and determine the algae type.
- Gina is not too alarmed by the algae because people are not swimming in the Lake during this time of year, plus no one uses the Lake for drinking water.
- The group turned to discussing whether they should consider monitoring in the Lake over the winter.
- Gina described that if LAWG just keeps collecting data on their current metrics (e.g., temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH), the data will not show much effect from the Dixie Fire. LAWG would have to collect chemical data and do chemical analysis. Temperature, oxygen, and pH are going to stay the same throughout the winter, so there is no value in monitoring over the winter unless LAWG expands what they are measuring.

- Tom asked if there is any value in testing the chemical constituency of the Lake water by buying and doing a drinking water analysis.
- Gina responded that basic drinking water testing can be quite expensive, plus we would have to decide where to sample that would be representative of the entire Lake. It might be hard to sample in a way that would provide information about the whole Lake.
- It is likely not worth doing chemical assessments unless LAWG can get support from Plumas County or the Department of Water Resources (DWR). Gina will follow up with DWR to ask if they will help LAWG expand its sampling.
- Peggy reported that she talked with Sherrie on the phone. Sherrie expressed that Plumas County is heavily focusing on the Greenville area right now.
- Gina reiterated that she will follow up with Scott about potential DWR support. Gina asked Virginia if she has any idea which specific tributary sampling sites would be most likely to show the impacts of the Dixie Fire.
- Virginia answered that she thought the areas below Mountain Meadows, near Westwood, or along the North Fork Feather River would likely show the biggest impacts. Pretty much any area that is downstream of a burn scar should show Dixie Fire impacts.
- Lorena added that above the causeway could be a good spot to monitor. It burned really hot above the causeway.
- Peggy also suggested that LAWG follow up with Sherrie about potential Cal OES support; Sherrie is responsive by phone.
- The group turned to discussing Virginia's staff time and LAWG's willingness to pay for her to continue helping with water quality monitoring out of their budget.
- Bella described that Sierra Institute has some private funding that they are willing to use to support Virginia's time to help with November monitoring and April/ May monitoring.
- Once this small pot of money runs out, is LAWG willing to pay for Virginia's time?
- The group has about \$15,000 in their budget and acknowledges that there is a real benefit of keeping SI and Virginia involved in water quality monitoring.
- The group is also worried about the budget. Lake Almanor Country Club was giving LAWG about \$5,000 a year. Now, the group feels like it is begging to get the \$2,000 it is receiving. Further, maintaining the monitoring equipment is a substantial expense. Probes, plankton nets, replacement batteries, calibration liquids, and other materials add up quickly. There needs to be at least some money set aside, so LAWG has funds on hand to make needed equipment replacements.
- Phil agrees that having some money put aside is a good idea. Equipment does cost money. He thinks there should always be about \$5k in reserve.
- Moorea added that LAWG raised a lot of money last year and can raise more. Moorea mentioned that the Almanor Foundation helps fundraise for the community, and also writes grants.
- Moorea stated that she is actually leaving Sierra Institute to be the Executive Director at the Almanor Foundation. The Sierra Institute and the Almanor Foundation are going to be close partners, and Moorea still plans to be a resource for the group. She hopes LAWG considers the Almanor Foundation as a resource as well. The Almanor Foundation has historically supported multiple on-the-ground efforts, including the Lost Sierra Food Project and MSC, and provides money to support housing investments for the region, immediate Dixie Fire relief, firewood, and more.
- The group discussed getting info about the water quality monitoring program out to the public; this might include an article for the local paper. Letting the community know what LAWG has been doing may help raise funds.

- Virginia also described that LAWG might need to purchase a laptop to house and process water quality monitoring data, that has the software Hoboware. An inexpensive laptop should be fine for this and have the capacity to run Hoboware.
- Bella will look into some laptop options for LAWG.

FERC Relicensing Update

- Sherrie is not present to provide an update.
- The group agreed to send Sherrie a copy of the most recent letter to FERC and ask for an update on the FERC relicensing process.

Chester Boil Drinking Water Order

- One well in Chester was contaminated with E. coli, prompting the boil drinking water order. However, recent E. coli tests have come back negative, and there is no more need to boil water.

Lake Almanor West Association (Susan)

- Susan is confident that donations from Lake Almanor West Association will continue. She suggests that the group continue to make contact with LACC, and see if they are able to contribute more to LAWG.
- As a new resident of LACC, Gina will see if she can influence LACC and ask LACC residents to give \$5 a year.

MSC Update

- Lorena does not have much to update. Neighboring Maidu Tribes are coming together to support the Summit in recovery efforts. MSC is planning to open the campground by late spring. MSC is also looking at campground improvements, including new restrooms, hazard tree removal, and a new kitchen area. In June, MSC will celebrate getting all the deeds to their required land.

SLWG Field Tour Update

- Peggy provided a brief update on the SLWG Field Tour.
- The SLWG group met with Collins. Collins land was extensively burned by the Dixie Fire, and they just planted around 80,000 new trees. Collins is cutting all the dead and burned material they can to pay for the planting that needs to happen. They are trying to cut the best timber right now.
- The Forest Service told the group that they plan to clean up hazard trees and replant areas that burned on the West Shore. However, they are struggling to find mill space for dead and damaged timber.
- The SLWG stopped at the Robbers Project briefly, but there was snow on the ground, so the group did not stay long.

Other Group Updates

- Mary added that she is happy to share information about the Lake Almanor water quality monitoring program with her community. Mary is particularly interested in finding ways to use the burned timber that is around, as well as supporting Greenville to build back in a more resilient way.
- A LAWG member asked if Mary thinks people plan to rebuild in Warner Valley.
- Mary said she does not know yet. She is not sure if Plumas County will let them rebuild. Her family has been in Warner Valley for many generations, and she has an emotional attachment to the area and a desire to rebuild.
- The group turned to discussing raising money for the water quality monitoring program. LAWG members want to draft language describing the history of LAWG and its monitoring efforts.
- Bella will make a shared folder for LAWG members to gather information about the group, past marketing materials, and photos.
- Bella will also coordinate a fundraising meeting for LAWG before the next planned LAWG meeting.

Lake Almanor Watershed Management Plan

- Pick up your hard copies of the LAWG Management Plans @ MSC after November 8th

Action Items:

- Gina will follow up with Scott about potential DWR support.
- Bella will look into some laptop options for LAWG.
- The group agreed to send Sherrie a copy of the most recent letter to FERC and ask for an update on the FERC relicensing process.
- Bella will make a shared folder for LAWG members to gather information about the group, past marketing materials, and photos.
- Bella will also coordinate a fundraising meeting for LAWG before the next planned LAWG meeting.

Adjourn

- Aquatic invasive species prevention workshop: November 17th
- **Next Meeting:** December 8th