

Lake Almanor Watershed Group Meeting
Wednesday, December 14th, 2022, 1:00 - 2:30 pm

Bella Bledsoe
Bridie Johnston
Gina Johnston
Peggy Fulder
Tom Tisch

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda, and November Minutes

The agenda and minutes were approved.

Financials

There was no change in income in November. There was an increase in expenses (\$88.75) for SI travel miles. LAWG still has allocations of \$1000.00 for the Maidu plant project, \$4025.00 for the 2022 Water Quality Testing, and a remaining Sierra Institute Testing balance of \$2671.49. There is a working balance of \$12,076.57.

LAWG members also discussed holding the remaining Sierra Institute water quality testing balance of \$2671.49 for next year (2023) to be used by SI staff for future water quality testing. That way, LAWG will have funds in place for testing in April. There is consensus among the group to leave the funds allocated to Sierra Institute for the spring. If any group members are opposed who are not in the meeting, they can reach out to Bella to let her know.

Member Updates and Announcements

Water Quality Monitoring

- Che was not able to get out to do stream sampling because of the weather. There was no Lake sampling or stream sampling completed in November 2022.
- Gina has not started on the 2022 report yet. She is planning to have the first draft at the end of January 2023.

Friends of Plumas Wilderness (FoPW) Meeting Update

- FoPW is working on establishing a National Monument centered on the Upper Feather River watershed – the Feather River Canyons National Monument.
- Bella is attaching some information that she received about this effort below.
- *Middle Fork and North Fork Feather & surrounding canyon country, managed by USFS, are public, but lack permanent protection. Only 4% of public land in the watershed is permanently protected (Wilderness, W&S River).*
- **National Monument is the most flexible option for permanent protection**
 - *Current uses can continue (mining & grazing leases, access to pvt property, utilities)*
 - *Allows fire suppression & forest health activities (fuels reduction, thinning, Rx burning...)*
 - *Recreation uses, and access doesn't change.*
 - *Requires locally-led management plan within 3 years of NM designation*
 - *A National Monument designation will permanently protect healthy watersheds, cultural landscapes, and critical wildlife habitat connectivity.*

- **To protect these ‘Objects’ or values:** ([More detail here.](#))
 - Free-flowing rivers and rugged canyons at California’s Headwaters
 - Culturally critical waters and lands of Maidu Indians
 - Relics reflecting diverse perspectives from the past
 - Critical natural habitats connecting the Sierra & Cascades
 - Diverse natural ecosystems with a long history of scientific study
- **To avoid these threats:**
 - Dams and diversion of the last free-flowing streams in our region – without protection, our area will be a target as more protections happen all around California and drought increases in a warming climate.
 - No plan – The Plumas National Forest’s Community Protection plan focuses fuels reduction work around our communities, which we fully support. There is not a plan for the more remote parts of the watershed. A NM would address this lack of planning.
 - Drastically outdated plan – Plumas National Forest’s Land & Resource Management Plan (‘Forest Plan’) dates to 1988 and is unlikely to be updated for at least another decade. A NM would require planning to occur, so a large chunk of the forest isn’t being managed through a 50-year-old plan.
 - Alternative vision – SBTS’s Connected Communities plan to develop 600 new miles of mostly motorized single-track is gaining lots of momentum. A NM provides a conservation vision that does **not** overlap with SBTS’s development proposal, but focuses on wildlife connectivity and natural systems.
- **Options for partners – most to least commitment:**
 - Become a core coalition member - help design & direct NM campaign
 - This is for groups / individuals willing to meet regularly to be part of the movement that makes FRCNM a reality
 - Kick-off meeting in January 2023
 - Working groups focused on Communications, Objects Reports, etc. will form
 - Requires staff or volunteer time
 - Become a FRCNM sponsor
 - Hang a sign of support in your business / organization’s window
 - Post in social media
 - Let FoPW include your logo on our webpage of supporters
 - Provide financial or in-kind support
 - Sign a letter of support or resolution
 - Show your support with a custom-written letter with your own words
 - Use our template to provide a letter of support
 - Join with others in your profession or area of interest to create a resolution
- Peggy mentioned that Lorena recently attended a meeting about the project and felt it was quite ambitious. The group is looking forward to hearing Lorena’s thoughts at the next LAWG meeting.

Westwood Chamber of Commerce Meeting Update

- The Chamber of Commerce in Westwood received \$500,000 for the good of Westwood. The money is Dixie Fire related.
- The Chamber has not typically donated to causes in the past, and they have had to develop a process for dispersing money. There has been a bit of controversy in opening up that process. Some of the

Chamber feels that they are operating in a scarce economy, and there is some tension about dispersing the money.

- However, the money will be dispersed, and there is a chance to apply for some of this money from the Chamber for LAWG. The Chamber has developed a form so that organizations can apply for money; it is very simple. There is no deadline for applications yet.
- Given that Westwood did not burn, it is not totally clear what the Chamber wants to fund. Peggy thinks water quality monitoring would be appropriate.
- Gina thinks LAWG could expand water quality testing to include Mountain Meadows Reservoir, which feeds into Lake Almanor. Gina proposes we expand our reach to do both sites.
- The Mountain Meadows area burned some in the Dixie Fire, which could affect water quality if it contributes to sedimentation.
- The Land Trust has the area around Mountain Meadows Reservoir under easement. They are not focusing on water quality monitoring, and we could possibly complement some of their efforts. We could also expand the type of testing we do and look for metals as well. Metals have an impact on the health of fish and therefore have a direct impact on community wellbeing. Algae does as well. Algae make the scenic value of the area go down.
- Gina feels like since she is up here now, living on the Lake, she can expand her participation to help include Mountain Meadows.

Lake Almanor West Association

- No one was present.

Maidu Summit Consortium

- No one was present.

Others?

- Tom suggested that we should try to make our case to the LACC Board about increasing their funding for LAWG water quality monitoring. He feels speaking with the board is more appropriate than with LACC management or the manager of the association. The board is the entity that decides on the budget. Gina suggested that we write the Board a letter to tell them what we are doing. And then, if we can get on the Board agenda, perhaps Jonathan is the best to actually speak with them.
- If Lake quality goes down, LACC home values go down; they should care about that.
- LAWG members would like to discuss where to send the 2022 water quality monitoring report during the January meeting.

Adjourn

Next Meeting: January 11th