

Lake Almanor Watershed Group Meeting
Wednesday, April 12th, 2023, 1:00 - 2:30 pm

Attendees

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|-----------------|------------------|
| Amy Bailey | Jason Kindopp |
| Bella Bledsoe | Lorena Gorbet |
| Bridie Johnston | Mike Roberts |
| Chelsea Palisoc | Peggy Fulder |
| Gina Johnston | Scott McReynolds |
| Jacquie Cordova | Susan Padilla |
| James Long | Tom Tisch |

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda, and March Minutes

The March minutes were approved, and the April agenda was approved.

Financials (Bridie)

There were no changes in income. There was a \$45.85 increase in expenses for travel miles for Sierra Institute staff. LAWG still has allocations of \$1000.00 for the Maidu plant project and a remaining Sierra Institute Testing balance of \$2625.64. There is a working balance of \$14,076.59 and a stated balance of \$17,702.23.

Member Updates and Announcements

Water Quality Monitoring

- Gina's commented that her 2023 WQ Proposal is pretty much the same as the past proposals. She is projecting the first sampling will be in early May. Once she hears the boat launches are open, then she will go out.
- Jacqui shared with the group that LAWG did not receive funding from the Westwood Chamber of Commerce for water quality monitoring in Mountain Meadows Reservoir. The majority of the board felt that the funding was not in line with the mission statement of the funding.
- The group voted to approve Gina's 2023 Water Quality Monitoring Proposal for \$4,125.00.

DWR Habitat Evaluation Study

- Jason from DWR presented to LAWG their proposed study to evaluate habitat for spring run salmon in the Lake Almanor basin. This feasibility study would focus on habitat above Lake Almanor, including Warner Creek.
- The study would go on for a couple of years. Right now, DWR has funding until June 2025. Chinook Salmon are not doing well in the Valley, and there is interest in exploring historic watersheds and habitats.
- Tom asked Jason: Would the salmon be locked above Lake Almanor? Or would DWR transport them?
- Jason answered that the salmon would not be landlocked. DWR would collect the juveniles when they try to come into Lake Almanor and transport them to the lower watershed. Jason commented that DWR is particularly interested in studying how effective they might be at capturing them. When there are large flow events where every single salmon cannot be captured, some may end up in Lake Almanor.
- Once again, this is just a feasibility study, to understand how salmon may behave in the area. We will take salmon eggs, place them in a few specific locations--Warner Creek--and study them as they emerge

and migrate downstream. We want to understand how they will behave in the actual environment, so we can see how we would trap them and when.

- Bridie asked how this would affect fishing in the North Fork of the Feather River and in Warner Creek.
- Jason commented that this would not affect fishing. Fish in streams like Deer Creek were native, so they were well protected. However, because this is an experimental population, there would not be changes in regulations around fishing. There would also not be any fishing regulations in Lake Almanor. The goal is to trap most of them before reaching the Lake. If they end up in the Lake, they can be harvested.
- We are early in the process; we are looking to evaluate habitat, conduct outreach to community members, design and test juvenile capture facilities, study transport survival, study juvenile behavior, model reintroduction scenarios, and report findings.
- Also, when the salmon are captured, we will release all the brown trout, rainbow trout, and fish we are not studying.
- Tom asked how many eggs is DWR going to put in the environment. Jason answered around 100,000-150,000 eggs. We do not know how effective they will be at hatching and surviving. The long-term program may also involve bringing adults up. Perhaps 500-2,000 adults. At the end of this effort, we will have a better idea of numbers.
- Also, we are very sensitive to the angling community. We will be looking at pathogens to ensure not to harm any of the hatchery systems. We will be studying pathogens closely.
- Every piece of information will be helpful in understanding the big picture. It will help us think about how successful a program might be. We hope to have a report in Summer 2025; this will include recommendations on the next steps.
- Right now, our timeline is spring 2023 for outreach to the community, summer 2023 for beginning fieldwork, and June 2025 for the end of fieldwork. We also plan to have a public outreach meeting in May or June. We will keep you updated.
- Susan commented that maybe PG&E could support this work. They have suffered from poor press. This is an opportunity for them to have great press.
- Jason added there has been a lot of work on the Lower Feather River, including a robust hatchery program. This is essentially a larger watershed approach, so we can hopefully have fish that spawn naturally in both the Lower and Upper Feather River. This would help with protecting spring run salmon by giving them access to this very pristine environment.
- Gina asked if DWR is expecting the Dixie Fire to have impacted the streams. Jason answered that fire is part of this ecosystem. It is going to come sooner or later. He does not think it'll affect study elements, but we will look at it. Jason does not think the Dixie will affect water temps much because many of these rivers are fed by groundwater and snow.
- Bridie asked, is there enough food for all the fish? Scott answered yes; we are putting fish where the conditions are supportive. Jason added that the only way we can get this type of habitat is to bring fish to it. This is a really good habitat, way better than the lower watershed. We do not have this type of quality habitat in the lower system.
- Susan would like to hear about this effort quarterly, if possible.

Friends of Plumas Wilderness: Chester Meeting

- This meeting was scheduled for the end of March and then rescheduled because of the weather. LAWG members felt the meeting was poorly publicized. Bridie and Lorena committed that they both had not heard about it. Lorena learned about it the day afterward on Plumas News.

LAWG Handout

- Bridie asked if Sierra Institute could make the one-pager into a brochure. Bella said she would try to convert it.

3rd Congressional District Area

- Bridie contacted Kevin Kiley about the proposed Monument and has not heard back.

Lake Almanor West Association (Susan)

- No news.

Maidu Summit Consortium (Lorena)

- The Maidu Cultural Development Group is having its second logging jamboree at Chester Park on June 3rd.
- MSC is also holding a celebration on August 19th to celebrate getting land deeds back.
- There will be a panel discussion on April 24th with Friends of Plumas Wilderness in Quincy.

Others?

- Peggy updated the group that they sold the winery. She spent a lot of time going through the space, given that the Mountain Meadows Conservancy was using it; the organization has no main office now.

Adjourn

Next Meeting: May 10th