



Lake Almanor Watershed Group Meeting
Wednesday, March 13th, 2024, 1:00 - 2:00 pm

Attendees:

Peggy Fulder
Lorena Gorbet
Susan Padilla
Gina Johnston
Bridie Johnston
Bella Bledsoe
Jacquie Cordova
Tom Tisch
Vincent Vitale
Laurel Paulson Pierce

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda, and January Minutes

Peggy asked for a few additions to be made to the agenda. Laurel Paulson Pierce is joining to speak about the Copper Mine; Peggy, Bridie, and Jacquie also have additions they want to add. The agenda and meeting minutes were approved; Bridie suggested that the minutes should indicate that Charlie was the one to share the Trails updates at the last meeting.

Financials

LAWG income remained unchanged. The group's expenses were up \$4,125.00 for 2023 water quality testing. The stated balance is \$16,268.09. \$1,000 is still allocated for the Maidu Plant Project and \$1,292.89 for the SI testing balance. The working balance is \$13,975.20.

Member Updates and Announcements

Water Quality Monitoring

- The water quality monitoring report is all done. Gina will make a 2024 proposal. She predicts we won't sample until May. Gina will send a proposal in advance of the April meeting. Last year, we had about a thousand dollars in instrument repairs. Gina does not anticipate that this time around. Many of the instruments had that issue because they were not well taken care of. It might take a few hundred dollars to get the instruments working again.
- The group commented that Tom's video about Cape Cod was very interesting. LAWG should watch for nutrients emerging in Lake Almanor.
- Gina commented that we have tested for nitrogen in the past but have not recently. The soils in the Cape Cod area are sandy, and as a result, the leach fields readily flow into the Cape. Rapid development is also an issue. We do not have those issues at Lake Almanor. The soils are very high in clay and do not release nitrogen as readily as the sandy soils.

- Adding nitrogen to our panels would cost money, but perhaps not enough return. At the rate we monitor, we would not necessarily be able to see a substantial trend.

Maidu Summit Consortium

- MSC is in the process of conducting CEQA on our wetlands and trail parcels. We will use students from Chico State to conduct the CEQA surveys. MSC also has a basket weaving class. We are also working with Colins again on the logging show, which will be on June 1st.
- Roundhouse Council is having a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the end of June. It will be in the afternoon until dark. The building should be done in May; hopefully, it will be more fire-safe in the future. It is made of mass timber. There is a large round meeting room and then a wing going out for the kitchen and tutoring rooms. The building itself was designed by architects out of Seattle—SI helped locate the architects and contractors.
- We are still planning on the campground being open on May 22nd.

Jacquie - Westwood Firewise Committee

- Jacquie told the group that she took a training in Westwood on fire prevention led by the Lassen Fire Safe Council. She learned a lot and was excited to contribute to Westwood being a fire safe community. She connected with Dan Douglas who is part of the Susanville Firewise Committee.
- They went around and assessed the town together. The Westwood Firewise Committee now meets eight months out of the year. Jacquie went around collecting signatures from residents to see who was interested in having the Lassen Fire Safe Council assess their homes and property. More than 10% of Westwood signed. We have a highly active community. Signatures also showed folks who were working to make their homes more fire-safe. Through signatures, we showed that Westwood had generated \$120k of energy to make our community safe.
- Jacquie has been giving out information regarding fire safety at the farmers market and the clam chowder cook-off.

Laurel - Copper Mine

- There is a proposed Open Pit Mine in Plumas County, in the Feather River Watershed led by U.S. Copper (which is NOT a United States company, but based in Canada).
- They submitted a request to develop an open pit mine in April of 2023 with a plan to extract copper, silver, and gold from lands in Plumas County near Lights Creek.
- The main concern of citizens in the area is that they are requesting “Vested Rights” to the minerals in this area. The Term involves special rules that may allow the mining operation to avoid certain steps usually required in such plans, such as inspections, environmental quality reports, permits, and similar procedures.
- Plumas County's decision to grant these rights to this foreign corporation may be finalized as early as May 8. Plumas County officials will hold a public meeting in Quincy on April 10. The previous public meeting with the county was held at the Plumas County Fairgrounds.
- Please send any letters to Traceyferguson@countyofplumas.com Planning Department Director and ask that your letter be included in the public record. There is a hearing to

be held with the Plumas County officials in Quincy On April 10th, so it is very important to send your comments in to the County prior to April 8th. Letters should ask for the company not to have Vested Rights.

- The two parcels that the proposal is focused on have historically been in production as mines. This type of mining process uses caustic and toxic chemicals to extract the minerals out of the material they dig up. These compounds are known to persist in the environment for many years, and many mine sites have been declared as “superfund” clean-up sites where no plants or animals can grow for years after the operation uses the caustic chemicals in their “Tailings Management Facilities” as they call them. Many of these tailings dams have been known to fail in the event of heavy rains or seismic activity, releasing poisonous toxins into the environment.
- The grassroots organization working to learn about this project and inform the public of the plan is the Feather River Watershed Alliance. They can be reached at Post Office Box 271, Taylorsville, CA, 95983. They hold regular meetings, and their next scheduled public informational meeting is Thursday, March 28, at the historic Taylorsville Hall at 6:30 p.m. There will be a link available for Folks who cannot attend in person to join on Zoom.
- You can find much more information on the Feather River Watershed Alliance at Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556303414705> (there is also a video of their Last public meeting there.) There is a lot of information about the proposed mine and other topics of interest at: <https://www.lostsierralightworks.org/engels-mine.html>

West Lassen Headwaters Project- Bridie

- Bridie commented that she reviewed some of the WLHP Proposed Action Purpose and Need documents, and wanted to bring some items to the group’s attention.
- She wondered if there were too many trees going to be removed and if the landscape would look like a clear-cut. She also worried about sedimentation and the impact logging would have on the soils. Bridie also added that she wished community protection was a bigger component of the document.
- Bella encouraged the group to read the PAPN document and make comments.

Adjourn

Next Meeting: April 10th