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the planet

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# Sierra Club Lake Group

## November-December 2021 Newsletter

### Next Community Forum: Mt Konocti Park!

Lake Group's next community meeting will be held at 6PM on Wednesday November 17, when Community Services Director Lars Ewing will join us to discuss plans to expand and improve recreational opportunities at Mt Konocti County Park. At the present time the park is open for day-use hiking only, and the county is looking for ways to expand access in a way that meets the needs of the community and is consistent with the area's biological sensitivity and ancient sacred heritage. Please join us to find out what is being proposed and to join the conversation.

Although the meeting is free and open to the public as always, registration is required: everyone who signs up will receive confirmation and Zoom connection details, and a followup email a day or so before the event. To RSVP, go to the Lake Group website, [sierraclub.org/redwood/lake](http://sierraclub.org/redwood/lake) and click the link in the embedded calendar. We'll also stream on our Facebook page.

### ***Calendars!***

Despite continuing Covid constraints, Lake Group has 2022 Sierra Club calendars for sale in both wall and appointment versions at the discounted price of \$14. Since neither in-person meetings nor our usual holiday party are possible yet, we have again placed a comparatively small order, so prompt action may be necessary to obtain the kind and quantity you want. Calendars can be purchased at Watershed Books, 305 N. Main in Lakeport, or in Lower Lake by making advance arrangements with Victoria, [vbrandon95457@gmail.com](mailto:vbrandon95457@gmail.com) or 707 994 1931.

Watershed Books  
Lakeport, California

305 North Main Street  
707.263.5787

## Drawing the Lines: redistricting deadlines coming up

California's Redistricting Commission is getting closer to finalizing the maps that will determine state legislative and Congressional districts throughout the state. As a preliminary, in October they released "visualizations" which map possible groupings for new districts, groupings that would align the county quite differently than its current configurations, and that prompted the Board of Supervisors to send a letter to the Commission requesting different alignments.

As currently drafted, the county would be grouped with the North Coast for congressional and assembly representation, and with Napa, Solano and portions of Contra Costa County in the state senate. Current representation at all three levels is likely to change completely under this scenario.

Links to all the maps and to a great deal of additional information are available at the Redistricting Commission website, [wedrawthelinesca.org](http://wedrawthelinesca.org)—please take a look.

Final maps must be presented to the Secretary of State by December 27.

### Lake Group Executive Committee

Denise Rushing (Chair, Climate Chair): 560-1166,  
Ed Robey (Vice Chair) 994 8304,  
JoAnn Saccato, (Secretary) 350-1719  
Deb Sally, (Outings Chair) 995-2125,  
[enviracat1@gmail.com](mailto:enviracat1@gmail.com)  
Victoria Brandon (Treasurer, Conservation Chair,  
Political Chair, newsletter editor, webmaster):  
994-193  
Tricia Evans (Membership Chair),  
Cheri Kessner, 263 5787

*ExCom meetings are held at 5:30PM on the third  
Wednesday of the month, on the Zoom platform.  
All members are cordially invited to attend, but  
requested to contact the Chair first to confirm time  
and connection details*



*Highland Springs  
Equestrian Center  
707-279-1903*

*Horse Boarding in a Sublime Setting in the Wine Country  
8900 Wight Way, Kelseyville, CA 95451  
Paul Marchand and Juliana Vidich  
[www.highlandsspringsequestrian.weebly.com](http://www.highlandsspringsequestrian.weebly.com)*

## KONOCTI POST

*[www.konoctipost.blogspot.com](http://www.konoctipost.blogspot.com)*

**a lake county naturalist's blog**

**TAKE A RAMBLE. IT'S FREE.**

### Let's Go Digital

Lake Group members are invited to help fight deforestation by receiving this bimonthly newsletter electronically rather than on paper. To get it as an email attachment in pdf format instead, send a request to join the "Lake Group Paper Free" list to [vbrandon95457@gmail.com](mailto:vbrandon95457@gmail.com)—not only does this save some trees, it also benefits the Group financially.

## Group and Chapter Elections: Don't Forget to VOTE!

Voting for both Group and Chapter executive committee members began with publication of the fall edition of the Redwood Needles early in October, and will continue until December 31. It's easy to let this annual exercise in participatory democracy slide until too late, but the opportunity to determine our own leadership is one of the most important privileges of membership—please take a minute *today* to cast your ballot! Candidate statements and a link to the on-line voting site are available at [sierraclub.org/redwood/redwood-chapter-and-group-elections](http://sierraclub.org/redwood/redwood-chapter-and-group-elections)

# Potter Valley Project Update

As previously discussed, in the belief that this action would be the quickest way to restore healthy populations of imperiled anadromous fish to the Eel River, Redwood Chapter has supported the recommissioning of PG&E's antiquated "Potter Valley Project" hydroelectric facility as proposed by the five-member Two-Basin Partnership. Among other things, this proposal would include the removal of Scott Dam, improved fish passage at Cape Horn dam, and maintenance of water exports to the Russian River watershed. Since this action would take place under the continuing oversight of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), generation of electricity would also continue.

Over the summer the viability of this plan seemed increasingly doubtful, in part because it would require an immediate investment of tens of millions of dollars in environmental studies, and in September FERC denied the Partnership's request for an extension on its application deadline. Without adequate funding to conduct the studies needed to complete the relicensing application, decommissioning of the Potter Valley Project is now nearly inevitable.

Then early in October an additional impediment arose, when it was announced that recent transformer bank failure had created such unsafe conditions that power generation had to cease altogether. Replacement is estimated to cost \$5-10 million and to take 18 to 24 months. Considering PG&E's previous determination to walk away from a hydro project that generates \$9 million in annual operating losses, it seems extremely unlikely that they—or anyone else—will make the investment needed to restore power generation.

In the meantime, there will be no discretionary flows going past the power plant using the Bypass Channel and no legal requirement to divert and release water to Lake Mendocino or other Russian River users.

According to Congressman Jared Huffman, whose advocacy has been the driving force behind the Two Basin Solution, this situation is a "blessing in disguise" because "PG&E is going to have to pay for all of this decommissioning so it won't be up to the partners to scramble for public funding and figure out a way to fund these \$18 million in studies between now and next year." Removal of the need to maintain such a money-losing facility indefinitely "in some ways makes it an easier lift."

In the meantime the clock is ticking for the salmon and steelhead.

## Outings

**Help Wanted:** Outing Leaders. No experience needed, just a love for brisk exercise in the out-of-doors. There are many good reasons to become an Outing leader, including an opportunity for autocracy: as leader *you* get to choose where to go, and when. Interested? Get in touch with Outings Chair Deb Sally at 235-9011 or [enviracat1@gmail.com](mailto:enviracat1@gmail.com)



Sierra Club Lake Group  
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