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the planet

Sierra Club Lake Group

May-June 2019 Newsletter

Next Meeting: CLERC brings a hi-tech approach to the Clear Lake Hitch

The next Lake Group general meeting will take place at **6:30 PM on Thursday May 23**, at the Lower Lake Methodist Church Hall, 16255 Second St. Clear Lake Environmental Research Center (CLERC) president Will Evans will give a presentation about CLERC'S vision and activities, with particular focus on an interactive report form and map the organization created to assist Chi Council volunteer observers report hitch sightings during the spawning migration. A Chi Council representative will also be on hand to talk about this year's spawning run and other hitch-related subjects. As always the meeting is free and the public invited. For more info contact Victoria at 994 1931 or vbrandon@lakelive.info

Walker Ridge wind project—back from the ashes?

Nearly ten years ago the Sierra Club participated in the early stages of environmental review regarding a large-scale wind energy project on BLM land on the eastern border of Lake County.

Although the Club strongly supports renewable energy production in general, it also recognizes that “such projects may have significant impacts on land and related wildlife, air and water quality, and other resources.” In this case possible impacts to biological resources including birds, bats, and butterflies seemed likely to be severe, rare endemic plants could be at risk, and the probability of contamination of two watersheds from the heavy grading needed to widen the access road seemed high. Other concerns were identified as well, including the

comparatively small amount of energy that could be expected at this location, which is almost completely surrounded by the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument.

Lake Group expected to participate in the review of the Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement, but after several years of waiting we learned that the application had been withdrawn. It turned out that the intertie station site (where the project connects with the transmission lines) was on a parcel that the BLM had acquired with Land and Water Conservation Fund money under terms that restricted any kind of construction. Even if an appropriate alternative site could be found, the portion of the EIS that related to the (con't)

(Walker Ridge, con't) intertie construction would have to be done over again.

At this point—2013—the project seemed to be dead, but it has recently shown signs of revitalization: the BLM Ukiah Field Office has hired a project manager, and developers are monitoring wind speed and trying to negotiate contracts with electricity providers, with—so far—negligible public participation. Lake Group intends to follow this issue very closely, and to make sure that the complex issues surrounding this proposal are appropriately addressed.

KONOCTI POST

www.konoctipost.blogspot.com

a lake county naturalist's blog

TAKE A RAMBLE. IT'S FREE.

“Wilder than Wild”

Lake Group is proud to be co-sponsoring the Seigler Springs Community Development Association screening of the acclaimed documentary “Wilder than Wild” at the Soper Reese Community Theater, 275 S. Main St in Lakeport on June 14, from 6-8PM.

Filmmaker Kevin White takes us on a journey from the Rim Fire of 2013 to the wine country wildfires of 2017. Along the way, we learn how the proactive use of prescribed fire can reduce reliance on reactive fire suppression; we see a California tribe renew their tradition of cultural fire; and we meet stakeholder groups working with scientists and resource managers to build consensus on how to restore and manage the land we love and depend on.

More than 60 percent of Lake County's land acreage has burned since 2015, and with the exception of a portion of the city of Clearlake, every community has been evacuated at least once. Please join us for the film and panel discussion.

Ticket info on the Lake Group website, www.sierraclub.org/redwood/lake.

Lake Group Executive Committee

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Other contacts:

Steve Devoto (Outings): 279-8308, sdevoto@mchsi.com

ExCom meetings are held at 6:30PM on the fourth Wednesday of the month, at locations that vary. All members are cordially invited to attend, but requested to contact the Chair first to confirm time and location

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 vbrandon@lakelive.info—not only does this save some trees, it also benefits the Group financially.

Watershed Books
Lakeport, California

305 North Main Street

707.263.5787



California Native Plant Sale

May 18th 10 AM – 2 PM

Lake County Agriculture Center

11 AM: U.C. Master Gardener Talks:
Native Plant Gardening

883 Lakeport Blvd., Lakeport



Perennials, shrubs, and trees ideal for Lake County. Growing information on all plants & U.C. Master Gardeners available for advice.

A different approach to the box store dilemma

As mentioned repeatedly over the past several years, Dollar General has constructed outlets in Nice, Clearlake Oaks, and Lakeport, and has had applications denied in Kelseyville and the Riviera. A site in Middletown was also rejected, though the developers have begun the preliminary stages of applying for a somewhat smaller store there; an Upper Lake store has also been proposed and several others rumored.

The negative cumulative impacts of blanketing the county with unsightly formula retail outlets could be severe, but the system is set up in a way that makes it impossible to evaluate the consequences of the project as a whole: instead, they have to be considered one store at a time.

Upper Lake Town Hall chair Gene Palleno wants to try a different approach. He wants the Board of Supervisors to devise a plan for a moratorium on formula retail outlets while the Planning Department revises the Minor and Major Use Building Permit Ordinance to prevent non-conforming box, chain and formula stores from imposing a design and format that is not in the best interests of the community. If this idea sounds promising to you, please let your supervisor know what you think. A message can be left for any of them at 707 263 2368.

Big Changes in Guenoc Valley

For the past couple of years Lake Group has been eagerly awaiting specific information about a proposed resort development on the Langtry Estate in Guenoc Valley. The property—the largest single landholding in Lake County—was purchased by an overseas investor in 2016, who reputedly intended to develop it as a series of very high end “boutique” hotels. Langtry Farms continues to operate the vineyards and winery under a long-term lease.

A concrete proposal is now finally ready for environmental review: as currently conceived the project would include five hotels, resort residential units, single-family homes, commercial space, and associated infrastructure, to be developed in multiple phases over many years.

Obviously immense benefits and immense negative impacts are both possible. In hopes of maximizing the former and minimizing the latter, Lake Group intends to take advantage of all opportunities for engagement, starting with scoping meetings to be held on May 15, at the Courthouse in Lakeport from 10AM to noon, and at the Middletown Community Room from 6-8PM. The purpose of these meetings is to gather community input on the subjects to be considered in the Environmental Impact Report.

To receive copies of the Initial Study and Project Summary, contact Community Development Director Michalyn DelValle, michalyn.delValle@lakecountyca.gov.



Sierra Club Lake Group
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Outings

*MAY 11, 8AM-2PM -- free "Hike of Hope" to Wright Peak on Mt Konocti hosted by Lake Family Resource Center's California HOPE project, a short term community based project helping Lake County residents recover from wildfires. The six-mile round trip hike is considered difficult because of the elevation gain; all are welcome to join for the full hike or a portion. Wear sturdy shoes, bring a reusable water bottle, lunch, a sunhat and sunscreen. Water and snacks will be provided. For more info visit www.lakefrc.org/calhope or call 707-349-5203.

*MAY 11, 8:15AM -- monthly guided nature walk at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park, led by park docent Roberta Lyons. A tour of the historic ranch house will follow the walk, which should last between 1 1/2 and 2 hours. Rain cancels. More info: info@andersonmarsh.org or 995-2658.

MAY 26 -- moderate Lake Group hike from Robert Louis Stevenson Park to Table Rock on Mt. St. Helena. Enjoy spectacular views to the north and the Napa Valley wine country. Meet at eastern RLS parking lot at 9:30 am. Bring snacks, lunch and water and sturdy shoes. Reservation required; maximum 10 participants. Leader Julie Kreis at 707-987-9040 or tikaljak@yahoo.com

*not a Sierra Club event