



SIERRA
CLUB

FOUNDED 1892

explore,
enjoy,
and protect
the planet

Sierra Club Lake Group

November-December 2016 Newsletter

Next Meeting: Water Water Water

At **6:30PM on Thursday November 17** Lake Group will host a presentation by Department of Public Works Director Scott DeLeon on one of the most important and least understood segments of local government, the Lake County Watershed Protection District. The District is charged with protecting water quality, excluding or controlling invasive species such as quagga mussels, conducting long term planning, monitoring groundwater, and engaging in many other activities that are essential to protecting the environment, maintaining our quality of life, and making long term prosperity possible. Nothing could be more important than what the District does -- but few people even know it exists. The meeting, which is free and open to the public as always, will be held in the Board of Supervisors chamber in the Courthouse, 255 N. Forbes in Lakeport. For more information contact chair Ed Robey at 994 1931 or edrobey@wildblue.net.

Medical Cannabis Cultivation Regulations: A Work in Progress

In 2015 California adopted legislation establishing the first statewide medical marijuana regulatory system, including cultivating, processing, transporting, testing, and distributing cannabis. Patients would still be allowed to grow their own marijuana, with limitations and subject to local ordinances, but collectives and cooperatives would slowly be phased out.

The new rules allow local governments broad latitude to establish their own permitting requirements and local regulations that can be stricter than those imposed by state law; with input from a broad variety of stakeholders, the county Community Development Department is currently drafting an ordinance tailored to local needs and desires, and the Planning Commission is conducting

**Holiday Party
Friday Dec 9:
details inside!**

a series of public workshops in which Lake Group has been an active participant.

The Sierra Club's primary concern is to reduce or (better) eliminate immensely destructive cartel grows on public lands, with subsidiary objectives of reducing or eliminating rogue grows on private lands, minimizing environmental damage from permitted cultivation, adding a high value crop to (con't)

(marijuana, con't) Lake County's agricultural mix, and bringing the growers out of the shadows and into the community.

None of those objectives will be realized unless current and future growers apply for permits and come into compliance, and we are concerned that the rules now being proposed will make this unnecessarily difficult, or even impossible for many. The proposed ban on outdoor growing in Rural Residential zoning is particularly problematic.

Rules governing patients and caregivers also seem unreasonably rigorous. Forbidding outdoor growing within community growth boundaries is based on the desire to prevent nuisance odors, but little is gained by banning outdoor growing on larger parcels in rural areas when substantial setback requirements can be met. The footprint is so tiny—smaller than most bedrooms—that the nuisance potential from odor seems almost nonexistent in these circumstances. In contrast, the massively increased energy consumption from indoor cultivation will be very real indeed.

Nor do environmental safeguards seem adequate. Cannabis is a notoriously thirsty crop, and groundwater supplies in most potential growing areas have never been measured or monitored. Surely applicants for commercial permits should be required to demonstrate a legal right to an adequate supply of water. Proposed setbacks for watercourses seem adequate, but permit requirements regarding slope should be based on the gradient of the garden site itself, not the average cross slope of the parcel.

Three Planning Commission hearings have already been held, and at least another two are scheduled, at a special meeting on November 10 at 10:30am and a regular session on November 17, time still to be determined. The hope is to present a comprehensive regulatory ordinance to the Board of Supervisors in January, a schedule that may or may not be possible to implement. In the meantime we urge all concerned citizens to participate in the discussion. To receive advance meeting notice with supporting documents, send a request to Mireya.Turner@lakecountycalifornia.gov.



Watershed Books
Lakeport, California

305 North Main Street
707.263.5787

Outings

At press time, Lake Group had no hikes scheduled. If any are planned later they will be posted to the Group website, sierraclub.org/redwood/lake. For outings elsewhere in Redwood Chapter, check the Outings tab at sierraclub.org/redwood.

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.

We're having a party!

Lake Group's annual holiday party has been scheduled for 6PM on Friday December 9, at the Lower Lake Methodist Church Community Room, 16255 Second St in Lower Lake.

As always this festive event is completely FREE to Club members and their guests, and will be organized as a semi-potluck, with the Club providing the main dish. Guests should bring beverages and a side dish, salad or dessert to share as well as their own re-useable plates, glasses, and eating utensils.

RSVPs (please!) may be made by calling Ed at 994-8304 or sending an email to edrobey@wildblue.net.

Middle Creek Progress Report

It has been acknowledged for a long time that the single most important thing we can do for the health of Clear Lake is to implement the Middle Creek Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration Project.

First proposed more than twenty years ago, this project would breach the geriatric (and dangerous) levees that "reclaimed" 1600 acres of wetlands north of Rodman Slough in the 1930s and 40s, and by restoring natural filtration significantly reduce the overload of nutrient-laden sediments that currently cause rampant growth of invasive aquatic weeds and uncontrollable "blooms" of cyanobacteria, commonly called blue green algae. The project will also provide invaluable wildlife habitat, improve breeding and rearing conditions for the threatened Clear Lake Hitch, and offer significant recreational opportunities.

The Army Corps of Engineers would provide most of the funding, but it's up to the county to acquire the necessary properties. Millions of dollars in state funding has already allowed the purchase of substantial acreage from willing sellers, but until recently the acquisition process seemed to be stalled. So it is very heartening indeed to report that on September 20 the Board of Supervisors approved the expenditure of more than \$2 million to acquire several additional parcels crucial to project implementation.

In the meantime, a group of concerned citizens has formed the Middle Creek Restoration Coalition (MCRC) with the mission of

- Advocating for the prompt completion of the Middle Creek Project
- Mobilizing stakeholder support
- Encouraging local, state and federal agencies to collaborate and provide funding
- Promoting planning for the benefit of Clear Lake water quality, fish and wildlife, public recreation and the economy of Lake County

Visit middlecreekrestoration.org to learn more.

Lake Group Executive Committee

Ed Robey (Chair, Treasurer, Political Chair): 994 8304, edrobey@wildblue.net

Cheri Holden (Vice Chair), 263 5787
cherisierraclub@gmail.com

Win Stiles (Secretary): 367-1593, win@w-s.com

Victoria Brandon (Conservation Chair, newsletter editor, webmaster): 994-1931,
vbrandon@lakelive.info

Tricia Evans (Membership Chair),
tricialouevans@gmail.com

Carolyn Ruttan (Water Chair), 295-0333,
caninoridge@digitalpath.net

Other contacts:

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

ExCom meetings are held at 7PM on the third Wednesday of every other month, at locations that vary. All members are cordially invited to attend, but requested to contact the Chair first to confirm time and location

Calendars!

Lake Group's supply of 2017 Sierra Club calendars has arrived, and they are gorgeous as always, full of spectacular nature photographs reminding us of the wonders we have to explore, enjoy, and protect. Both the wall and appointment versions are available at the discounted price of \$12. To be sure of getting as many as you want, reserve in advance by sending an email to vbrandon@lakelive.info or calling Victoria at 994 1931. Calendars will also be available at the Lake Group meeting on November 17, at our annual holiday party on December 9, and at Watershed Books, 305 N. Main in Lakeport.

KONOCTI POST

www.konoctipost.blogspot.com

a lake county naturalist's blog

TAKE A RAMBLE. IT'S FREE.



Sierra Club Lake Group
PO Box 1686
Lakeport, CA 95453

Sierra Club Endorsements

President of the United States:	Hillary Clinton	Prop 56, Cigarette Tax:	SUPPORT
Vice President:	Tim Kaine	Prop 58, Bilingual Education:	SUPPORT
Congress, District 3:	John Garamendi	Prop 59: Overturn Citizens United:	SUPPORT
Congress, District 5:	Mike Thompson	Prop 67: Plastic Bag Ban:	SUPPORT