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the planet

# Sierra Club Lake Group

## March-April 2018 Newsletter

### Next Meeting: All About Goats Rue

The first Lake Group general membership meeting of 2018 will be held at **6:30PM on Thursday March 22, in the Round Room at Mendocino College**, 2565 Parallel Dr. As always, the meeting is free and open to the public. Botanist Larry Ray will join us to discuss an ongoing project to eradicate an infestation of Goats Rue (*Galega officinalis*) on Cow Mountain. This federally listed noxious weed is toxic to livestock and wildlife; although uncommon in California, it was discovered in Eightmile Valley near the headwaters of Scotts Creek in 2011. With funding from the state Water Board, the BLM, county Agriculture Department, and Lake County RCD have been working collaboratively for the past two years to control the infestation, with what looks like great success. For more information about the project, visit [www.lakercd.org](http://www.lakercd.org). For more information about the meeting contact Conservation Chair Victoria Brandon, [vbrandon@lakelive.info](mailto:vbrandon@lakelive.info) or 707 994 1931.

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### Middletown Dollar General: Not Dead Yet

After years of jockeying back and forth, last May the Board of Supervisors gave what looked like a decisive ruling against this project. On the grounds that substantial evidence had been presented that the project “does not meet the spirit and intent of the Middletown Area Plan,” the BOS upheld a previous Planning Commission decision that it “is not consistent with all of the mandatory findings for the approval of a Design Review.”

Now the applicants have come back to the county to request a modification of their previously granted Use Permit, downsizing the proposal from 9100 square feet to 7225 square feet. Since the Use Permit was contingent on Design Review, and failed to pass that bar, there are strong grounds for arguing that it became

null and void, and that any development proposal has to start from the beginning.

Whether or not that argument is valid, nothing has changed to make the design less objectionable, or—what really matters—to bring it into consistency with the Middletown Area Plan. As determined by the BOS last spring, this project “does not reinforce Middletown’s small town character, but rather, detracts from it.”

The Sierra Club agrees completely with this conclusion.

Another important consideration related not only to Middletown but also to the other Dollar General proposals has never been addressed. What is the cumulative impact of blanketing our county with cut rate cookie cutter chain store projects? Although the original (con’t)

(Dollar General, con't) application submitted by Cross Development says otherwise, there is no question that they intended all along to construct numerous outlets. This procedure is integral to their business plan and essential to keep restocking costs down. To be anything like complete, the county's environmental review has to address the consequences of this multifaceted invasion.



## Ranch House Tours Resume

When the contents of the historic Ranch House at Anderson Marsh Ranch House were evacuated during the August 2016 Clayton Fire, it became evident that the property needed major cleaning before the furniture and other historic artifacts could be returned. Because the chronic underfunding of the State Parks system meant that money to clean and maintain the Ranch House was not available, the Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association (AMIA) agreed to scrub the inside of the house and to assume the responsibility of keeping it clean. Ranch House tours had to be suspended until this work was completed, .

It's a great pleasure to report that free public Ranch House tours resumed on February 10, and will be scheduled on an ongoing basis throughout 2018.

For information about tours and nature walks, or about supporting AMIA's campaign to keep Anderson Marsh State Historic Park thriving and available to the public, contact AMIA at 707-995-2658 or [info@andersonmarsh.org](mailto:info@andersonmarsh.org).

### Lake Group Executive Committee

Denise Rushing (Chair, Political Chair): 560-1166, [denise@productfrog.com](mailto:denise@productfrog.com)

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Tricia Evans (Membership Chair), [tricialouevans@gmail.com](mailto:tricialouevans@gmail.com)

Carolyn Ruttan (Redwood Chapter Delegate), 295-0333, [carolyn.ruttan@clerc.co](mailto:carolyn.ruttan@clerc.co).

### Other contacts:

Steve Devoto (Outings): 279-8308, [sdevoto@mchsi.com](mailto: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](mailto:vbrandon@lakelive.info)—not only does this save some trees, it also benefits the Group financially.

## KONOCTI POST

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

**a lake county naturalist's blog**

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

# Middle Creek Project Breakthrough!

For years it has been acknowledged that the single most important thing we can do to improve the ecological health of Clear Lake is to complete the Middle Creek Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration Project. The project would to eliminate flood risk in the area and restore approximately 1,650 acres of “reclaimed” agricultural land at the north end of Clear Lake as a functional wetland, with a significant beneficial effect on watershed health, Clear Lake water quality, wildlife habitat, and recreational potential.

Several years ago substantial state grant funding allowed the county to buy about half the properties in the project area (a necessary first step), but further progress has been stalled for quite some time.

Now thanks primarily to the efforts of the Middle Creek Restoration Coalition, the logjam appears to be broken. The Coalition, which includes Lake Group, came together in the spring of 2016 to act as a catalyst by coordinating local efforts and raising awareness among state agencies and legislators. Their endeavors included an invitation to Assemblywoman Cecilia Aguiar-Curry to tour the site, a tour that took place in October 2017.

On February 13 she announced that by working with Secretary John Laird of the California Natural Resources Agency and the Department of Water Resources she had secured \$15 million in additional bond funding to purchase the remaining properties in the project area. “Last year, in my AB 707, we were able to establish a Blue Ribbon Committee to guide the future of Clear Lake water and watershed quality and regional economic development, \$2 million for Clear Lake research and a stewardship plan, and \$5 million in the water bond on this year’s ballot to protect the Lake,” she said. “This grant for the Middle Creek Restoration Project will continue those efforts, reduce flooding, restore wetlands, and reduce the amount of nutrients flowing into Clear Lake. Gov. Brown, Secretary Laird and Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon have been tremendous partners in our efforts to make Lake County’s future brighter, cleaner and more prosperous.”

## Outings

APRIL 15 -- moderate Lake Group hike to Table Rock on Mt. St. Helena from Robert Louis Stevenson Park. Enjoy spectacular views to the north and the Napa Valley wine country. Meet carpool at 9:15 am at Mugshots coffee shop on corner of Hwy 29 & 175 in Middletown, depart 10:15 am from parking lot of RLS State Park. Bring snacks, lunch and water and sturdy shoes. Reservation required. Maximum 10 participants, leader Julie Kreis 707-987-9040 [tikaljak@yahoo.com](mailto:tikaljak@yahoo.com)

MAY 20 -- Lake Group hike to the summit of Mt. St. Helena. On a clear day see spectacular views including much of the San Francisco Bay area and possibly viewing mountain ranges in a 360 degree panorama including Mt. Shasta! Bring water, lunch, binoculars & snacks. Meet to carpool at 9:15 am Mugshots Middletown coffee shop on corner of Hwy 29 & 175 or 10:15 am at Robert Louis Stevenson parking lot. Reservation required. Maximum 10 participants, leader Julie Kreis 707-987-9040 [tikaljak@yahoo.com](mailto:tikaljak@yahoo.com). Rain cancels.

**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 Outing Chair Steve Devoto at 279-8308 or [sdevoto@mchsi.com](mailto:sdevoto@mchsi.com).



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