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Sierra Club Lake Group

May-June 2017 Newsletter

Next Meeting: What's Up with Quagga Mussels?

An infestation of invasive quagga or zebra mussels would be just as devastating to the ecology of Clear Lake and the economy of Lake County as ever, but the subject seems to have fallen beneath the radar for the last couple of years. That does NOT mean that the county has forgotten about them, much less reduced its vigilance. At **6:30PM on Wednesday May 17** Mark Miller, who coordinates the Department of Water Resources mussel prevention program, will give a presentation on the measures being taken to strengthen protections against invasive mussels, measures that go beyond outreach to include both decontamination facilities and a crew of dock walkers. The meeting will be held at the Lower Lake Methodist Church social hall, 16255 Second St; as always it's free and the public is invited. Contact chair Ed Robey at 994 8304 or edrobey@wildblue.net for more information.

National Monuments under Threat

The Trump administration's hostility to environmental protection is no secret, and there have been rumblings about its intention to weaken public lands safeguards since well before the inauguration. The recent Executive Order "reviewing" a number of monument designations should have come as no great surprise, though the sweeping nature of the reevaluation -- including the Antiquities Act itself --

Save the Date:
Midsummer BBQ
Friday July 21.
Details inside!

and the large number of designations potentially under threat was even worse than expected. When the dust settled 22 terrestrial monuments and five marine reserves were on the hit list, with six in California, including the 330,000-acre Berryessa Snow Mountain national monument, two thirds of which is here in Lake County.

Although the Antiquities Act gives a president authority to create a monument, there is no legislative authority for a successor to reverse a designation, and no president has ever attempted to take such a step. The very broad public support for the BSM designation (con't)

(Monuments, con't) make it unlikely to be chosen as a test case. In the words of Congressman Mike Thompson, "the monument is now a vital and thriving part of our region's identity. I am fully confident that any good faith review will reaffirm the merits of Berryessa Snow Mountain and confirm our community's support for its designation as a national monument. Overturning its designation would be grossly out of step with the will of the public."

Vigilance is still necessary, not only for the continued existence of our own monument, but for them all. Bears Ears in Utah is probably most at risk: situated on more than 1 million acres of land that's sacred to Native Americans and home to tens of thousands of archaeological sites, it was designated by President Obama over the objections of the fossil fuel industry and local developers. "Once it's designated, it's designated," said Davis Filfred of the Navajo Nation. "This is sacred land."

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has been charged with making a recommendation on Bears Ears next month, and issuing a final report by the end of August.

In the meantime, comments are being collected and resistance is being mobilized -- stay tuned!

KONOCTI POST

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

Aguiar-Curry Proposes Help for Clear Lake

AB 707, authored by Lake County's Assemblywoman Cecilia Aguiar-Curry with Senator Mike McGuire as a principle co-author, would establish a Blue Ribbon committee for the restoration of Clear Lake, based in the Natural Resources Department and with broad local, agency, and scholarly participation. The committee will be charged with identifying factors contributing to poor water quality and strategies for improvement in both water quality and habitat, including identification of funding sources.

Previous legislative efforts to provide monetary assistance for Clear Lake have not been successful, but the omission of direct financial support from this bill increases the likelihood of its passage and—very important!—signature by the Governor. It is hoped that the authoritative nature of this committee will give extra weight to its recommendations, including those that require funding from the state. The Sierra Club is advocating for its passage.

Rent This Space

The Lake Group now accepting (in other words, selling) advertisements in this newsletter: a two-inch (business card size) ad like this costs \$25 per issue, or—Great Bargain—\$100 for a year (six issues) To submit an ad send an email to vbrandon@lakelive.info or call Victoria at 994-1931.

Watershed Books
Lakeport, California

305 North Main Street

707.263.5787

Dollar General: Yes and No!

When the Board of Supervisors heard Cross Development's appeal of the Planning Commission's unanimous second rejection of their proposed Middletown outlet on April 18 the arguments were virtually identical to those that have been voiced over and over again: multiple gross inconsistencies with the Middletown Area Plan, design standards suitable for a medium security warehouse, and a negative effect on visitor appeal. The argument was also made that instead of looking at these proposals individually it would be more productive to consider the impacts of a countywide infestation, and perhaps even a mandate to do so under the anti-piecemealing provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act. With two new supervisors since the last time the Board addressed the issue, many observers hoped that the BOS would reject the project this time around -- but despite the eloquence of the many comments from the community and despite a previous determination to assign authority over design review to the Planning Commission, Supervisors Moke Simon, Jeff Smith and Tina Scott voted to uphold the appeal and let the project move forward. Possible responses are currently under consideration.

Then came round two a week later. Again the Board heard an appeal against a unanimous Planning Commission rejection of a Dollar General, this one in the Clear Lake Riviera. Again major inconsistencies with the Area Plan had been identified; and again, the community spoke with a united and impassioned voice against the proposal, which they expected to have severe negative impacts on local businesses and their own quality of life.

There the similarity ended: when the day was over the Board had voted 4-1 to reject the appeal and kill the project, with the deciding factor in both cases apparently being the position of the home-district Supervisor.

Save the Date: Midsummer BBQ July 21

This year's party will be held at 5:30PM on Friday July 21, at Highland Springs Equestrian Center, 8900 Wight Way off Bell Hill Road. As usual, it's planned as a semi-potluck: the Club will provide a main dish, and guests are asked to bring beverages, and a side dish or dessert to share. To eliminate as many throwaways as possible, we're also asking guests to *please bring your own plates, napkins, and eating utensils*. It's always free, and all Lake Group members and their guests are very cordially invited. Our hosts Paul Marchand and Juliana Vidich also offer an opportunity to tour the facility and perhaps (if it's not too blistering hot) take a short hike: call Paul or Juliana at 279-1903 to make advance arrangements.

Lake Group Executive Committee

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Other contacts:

Steve Devoto (Outings): 279-8308,
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ExCom meetings are held at 7PM on the third 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

Outings

At press time, no Lake Group outings had been scheduled. Please visit sierraclub.org/redwood/outings for a list of offerings throughout Redwood Chapter.



Sierra Club Lake Group
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Petition Opposing Walmart Expansion

The long-anticipated Draft Environmental Impact Report on Walmart's proposal to expand its Clearlake store was released in March, with a May 1 comment deadline. If approved, the project would add nearly 40,000 square feet to the existing store, including full-service grocery facilities, hard liquor sales, and 24/7 opening hours. Everyone who has concerns about this project (which will affect the whole county, not just residents of Clearlake) is encouraged to download the EIR from the city's website (www.clearlake.ca.us) and check it out for yourself.

In the meantime Lake County Local has posted an online petition against the project: please take a moment to visit www.change.org/p/allowing-walmart-to-build-a-big-box-supercenter-in-our-community-is-simply-the-wrong-kind-of-growth-for-clearlake and add your name. The petitions will be presented to the Planning Commission or City Council (or both!) at a strategic future moment