

# **Almanor Basin Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting**

## **Minutes; March 9**

Present: Ryan Burnett; Aaron Seandel; Mike Mitzel; Vince Gannon; Dave Durkin; Peggy Fulder

### **6:08 Call to Order**

### **6:02 Review & Approval of Agenda**

Aaron made a motion to approve the agenda and Mike seconded; the agenda was approved unanimously without changes.

### **6:05 Review & Approval of November 10, 2010 and January 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes**

Mike made a motion to approve both sets of minutes and Vine seconded; the minutes were approved unanimously with some changes to fix typographical errors.

### **6:15 Introduction of Guests and Public Comment Period**

Residents: Marie Dean Kenyon; Nancy Ryan; Margie Strite; Regina Diehl; Pamela Birdsall; Heather Upton; Greg and Lori Smith; Dave Bruker; Charles Plopper; and Arnold Selk. Sherry Mitchell-Bruker (Lassen NF); Kate West (Chester Progressive); Sherrie and Lee Thrall; Brian Morris (Plumas County); Jason Moghaddas (Feather River Land Trust); and Ron Lunder (Mountain Meadows Conservancy). Lisa Marcus provided the following public comments:

"I have lived in Lake Almanor since 2005. Until a month ago, I had never heard of cloud seeding. We moved to this area due to the pollutants in the water of southern California, we had legitimate health concerns, due to rocket fuel in our water supply. We moved to this area because it appeared to be pristine, and a healthy place to raise our family. When I first learned of cloud seeding, I had a lot of questions. I've made several calls inquiring as to what is cloud seeding, who is doing it, for what purpose, when did this start, what chemicals are being used, are there any health concerns, and how does this benefit our community. After, numerous calls to local agencies, PG&E, the EPA and environmental groups, I have to say I am concerned. I would like to start out by saying, I am not here to hurt our community, our business or decrease our property values. I am here this evening to raise awareness, to discuss the concerns of not only myself but other people in our community that have similar concerns and questions. So far, this is what I know. Apparently, cloud seeding has been going on for some time, not only here, but also across the country. The people of Shasta have the same concerns and questions that many of us do. However, they have organized, and have placed cloud seeding on the ballot. One of my early calls was to the EPA. I had an interesting conversation with Thomas Ferriol. Mr. Ferriol told me, "That cloud seeding is not monitored by the EPA. The EPA covers below 3000 feet. He said that, PG&E's cloud seeding is not regulated and that I should be concerned!" My next phone call was to PG&E to find out what chemicals they use in cloud seeding. They took my name and phone number, and said they would have someone call me back. That was three weeks ago. This week, I left a message for their meteorologist, Byron Marler. I hope to hear back from him soon! Having given you my story, I would like to ask a few questions that I have shared with several people that have joined us tonight. We feel that we have the right to know what chemicals are dropped over our community. This is our first question. What chemicals are used in cloud seeding? We would like to see PG&E's "Environmental Impact Report". What studies have been done, to make PG&E feel confident that we will not be harmed? We would like to see PG&E's Cloud Seeding, "Cost Benefit Analyst." All large

corporations have them prior to such an undertaking, examining the effects on the population and environment. Are the chemicals safe? If not, then why not disclose them to us? What makes PG&E believe these chemicals are safe? What data/studies and proof do they have that cloud seeding is a low health risk to our community? We would like a breakdown of PG&E's cloud seeding chemicals, quantities, and how often PG&E seeds via chemtrails or any other method. This question I ask our water agencies and PG&E. Are these chemicals in our water supply? Is our water safe to consume? How do you know? As consumers, we should have the right to know if our water is safe. PG&E should disclose the chemicals used in cloud seeding to our water agencies, and they should test for those chemicals specifically. What benefit is cloud seeding to our community? Who benefits from cloud seeding? My research directs me to the major beneficiary of extra water. PG&E, uses the extra water to supply their hydroelectric power plants. PG&E also, profits from the sale of the water to various water agencies. Is the water safe to drink? How safe are PG&E's nucleating generators? How do you know? Two of the listed cloud seeding chemicals, via the web are, Silver and Aluminum Oxide. Are they safe and at what levels? I do not claim to be a chemist, but what I have read is that these chemicals can be toxic. SILVER IODINE: Is on the list of chemicals appearing in "Toxic Chemicals subject to section 313 of the emergency Planning and the Right-to-know Act of 1986 (EPA 1987b). According to the EPA, any release into the environment of more than 1 pound of Silver Nitrate or 1000 pounds of silver alone, should be reported to the National Resource Center. Silver is known to cause kidney problems. ALUMINUM OXIDE: Is known to cause neurological disorders. LIQUID PROPANE and SULFUR HEXAFLUORIDE: Are also listed as cloud seeding chemicals. Is there an environmental impact from releasing these substances into the air? Last, question, If we are at 114% snow pack currently, why continue to enhance precipitation?"

An email from Charlie White of PG&E was then read:

I am not PG&E's expert on cloud seeding, but I can give you some background on the program. The precipitation enhancement conducted by PG&E in the Almanor Basin, commonly called "cloud seeding," stimulates clouds to produce more snowfall than they would otherwise by enabling additional snowflakes to form and fall as snow. Winter orographic cloud seeding has been conducted in California since the early 1950s—one of the longest records of cloud seeding in the world. Cloud seeding has been conducted in many areas in California, but the most continuous programs have been in winter over the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Our cloud seeding program is intended to augment snowfall and snowpack. The additional snowpack melts and runs off, providing more water for various uses such as hydroelectric power, agriculture, municipal and industrial needs, recreation, and endangered species habitat enhancement. PG&E utilizes ground-based generators that use silver iodide as the active seeding agent. A review of the current world-wide published literature in terms of the effects of silver iodide seeding materials indicate that there are no known adverse impacts to human health or the environment and that cloud seeding operations result in negligible additions to the soluble silver levels in a watershed (silver iodide is considered insoluble in water). This limits the degree to which it can become "bioavailable" in the environment. Studies of the health and environmental impacts of cloud seeding have been performed the Upper North Fork Feather River Project during relicensing as well as other cloud seeding projects elsewhere in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. All studies completed to date have found no adverse human health or environmental impacts associated with cloud seeding and the chemicals used in the cloud seeding operations. Let me know if you have any additional questions."

Aaron stated that this issue might need to be discussed more in a forum format.

It was announced that The Mountain Meadows Conservancy is working on a watershed plan.

### **Items for Discussion and Potential Action**

#### **1. Speakers: Jason Moghaddas and Brian Morris**

The discussion began with an explanation of the background of the program and an overview of lands and stipulations for conservation easements. The FRLT has applied to hold the easements for land in the Humbug, Mountain Meadows, Butt Lake and Lake Almanor areas. The County's role is to seek fee title, and the mouth of Bailey Creek is one area they are looking at and it's where lakefront is located. The lakefront project will dedicate that open space to a public entity and they negotiating with the county. The Collins pine railroad also goes through this area. Aaron asked what the land designated for and Brian answered that the conservation easement does not create affirmable obligations. They have 6 beneficial values and they want to see these properties managed for these, such as fuels management, and habitat improvement. Ryan asked is there is other access to that piece of land and Jason said that access is only possible through the railroad tracks or the lake. Jason added that the conservation easements are flexible to enough to consider trails, as they aren't management plans or a part of FERC. It was asked if the stewardship council is going to provide money for improvements, and Jason answered that it is not but they are looking for match dollars/partnerships, etc. The Maidu have applied for fee title for Lake Almanor lands, but this only 4,000 acres.

#### **2. Water Quality Monitoring**

Aaron gave a synopsis of the program and the history of other monitoring that has occurred on the lake and that in 2009 the DWR couldn't do it anymore so the current sampling program began. Aaron described the parameters used and described the results from the 2010 sampling. The lake's health is satisfactory and temperature has not varied too much, however the cyanobacteria results were a factor to be concerned about but no one is at risk right now. Aaron then described the financial situation of the monitoring program. Another \$5000 has been committed and he is fairly sure that Dr. Johnston can develop a plan that will be acceptable. One part of the cost is the general liability insurance that the county requires Dr. Johnston to carry that totals \$2800. Aaron asked Sherrie and Brian if the county could waive that requirement. Aaron said monitoring requires Dr. Johnston to be on the lake 4 times a year and if the county can't waive the requirement, then Dr. Johnston will need to amend the contract. Ryan stated that a 5-year plan was needed and Emily stated that a provision for that is in the grant. Sherrie shared that the county is negotiating with the developers of Lakefront under the development agreement for their contributions through homeowners association. Sherry of Lassen National Forest suggested we look into the EPA Clean Lake Program for funding.

### **General Plan Update**

Ryan talked about the progress made on the goals/policies comments and Sherrie said that every decision that affects the health of the lake all goes back to development plans, which are based on the General Plan. Sherrie stressed the importance of the general plan and Brian stated that one way to proceed is to comment/edit the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of draft maps that should be coming out shortly. Emily said she would coordinate with Randy to determine when that is. Additionally, the next round of public input for the general plan will go through ABWAC for this area.

## **Updates and Announcements**

Vince Gannon: Reported on the Tea Party meeting, which was the third part of a series on forestry. Jay Francis was a guest speaker and spoke about forestry as 'use' or 'non-use' in terms of the transportation plan. Jay outlined the concept of use v. non-use and the social benefit in terms of recreational use. Chester – Seneca hospital wants to open the clinic. Issue coming up in Westwood. Public meeting will occur soon.

## **Supervisor's Corner**

Sherrie reported that the county had appealed the Plumas NF travel management plan after meeting with the forest supervisor and having an appeal denied by the regional forester. The county needs to decide if they want to sue or go the political route. To that end they are looking at other rural counties with limited resources that have similar problems and want to form a coalition. They are looking at inviting neighboring counties to send two reps to Plumas to meet with the forest service. Jon Kennedy and Sherrie are going to work on that and to beef up the coordinating council. Sherrie announced she is on the board of the non-profit that oversees the volcanic scenic byway and will look at it from an economic standpoint. There could be a visitor center on the east shore/canyon dam area in conjunction with the national forest, national park and businesses. There are preliminary funds for this. Regarding the railroad, Collins pine put in for the same thing to negotiate with Almanor railroad and they talked to each other and Collins now has an agreement to do railbanking for the trail. So they met – had the county transportation person and others to figure out how to help and to assure them that the county would bring resources.

Sherrie provided an update on the trail and they have met with Collins Pine and although they want to do the trail, they have different ideas of what they want and once they have a plan, they will meet with the county. SPI has concerns about the part of the trail going through their land.

Ryan asked if the scenic byway is incorporated into the general plan and Sherrie answered that it is as a component of the transportation plan. Ryan asked a committee will be formed to address the trail and Sherrie answered that the county won't be in charge and thinks a group of local people would be involved, but it depends on what Collins wants. Ryan offered ABWAC as a group to help with the trail planning.

Sherrie also announced that the new recreation center is nearly complete and will be an alternative to Memorial Hall.

## **Next steps**

- Get letter and questions from Lisa and send cloud seeding questions to Charlie White.
- Determine General Plan map status. Make sure Carol Bornhorst comes to the next meeting.

**Meeting Adjourned at 8:08 pm**