

# Blue Ribbon Committee for the Rehabilitation of Clear Lake (Committee)

**Meeting #36**  
10:00 am-1:00 pm  
December 18, 2025

## Meeting Summary<sup>1</sup>

### Committee Attendees:

- Supervisor Brad Rassmussen, Lake County Board of Supervisors
- Wilda Shock, Lake County Economic Development Corporation
- Daniella Santana, Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake
- Sarah Ryan, Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians
- Rob Morgan, Koi Nation
- Luis Santana, Robinson Rancheria
- Chair Eric Sklar, Committee
- Harry Lyons, Lake County Resource Conservation District
- Rebecca Harper, Lake County Farm Bureau
- Scott Hornung, Lake County Special Districts
- Jennifer LaBay, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Jay Lund, UC Davis
- Patricia (Patty) Franklin, Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians

### Action Items:

1. Sam Magill, Sacramento State University College of Continuing Education (CCE) will update the Committee's Proposition 4 Funding Recommendation Proposal to include other data sources and studies beyond UC Davis and the US Geological Survey. **Complete**
2. Sam will follow up with California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) staff to determine the applicability of Proposition 4 funding for land acquisition. **NOTE:** CNRA staff confirmed Proposition 4 funding can be used for land acquisition unless specifically prohibited by an individual bond section.
3. Committee members approved the Proposition 4 Funding Recommendation Proposal with modifications discussed below.
4. Committee members approved the 2025 Annual Report with modifications as discussed below. Sam will revise the Report and submit to CNRA on or before December 31, 2025. **Complete**
5. Committee members approved the Scotts Creek Sediment Reduction and Habitat Enhancement Planning Project letter of support. Chair Eric Sklar will sign the letter on behalf of the Committee. **Complete**
6. The Moleaer Nanobubble harmful algal bloom (HAB) mitigation proposal team will provide toxicity information to Committee members at the next Committee meeting.
7. Eric and Sam will follow up with UC Davis Hypolimnetic Oxygenation staff to discuss the availability of Proposition 4 funds in advance of the next Committee meeting. **Complete**
8. Sam will follow up with Committee members to schedule 2026 Committee meetings as soon as possible. **Complete**

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<sup>1</sup> Except as specifically noted, all comments reflected in the summary were derived from Committee Member statements. Where applicable, specific responses are provided to individual comments/questions.

## Meeting Overview

### Welcome and Introductions

Sam Magill, Sacramento State University College of Continuing Education (CCE), opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda. A quorum of the Committee was present (see above).

Committee Chair Eric Sklar provided opening remarks and thanked participants for attending. He noted the Committee is moving into “Phase 2”: numerous projects have been recommended by the Committee and funded by the State of California. Several of these larger scale projects are moving into a pilot phase that could last 2-4 years that will help set the stage for the next 10 to 20 years of work. As pilot projects produce results, the Committee will be utilized to recommend Clear Lake-wide treatment for harmful algal blooms (HAB) and other issues for future funding. In addition to the pilot projects already recommended by the Committee, Eric noted a number of additional projects will be presented during the meeting for future consideration. To sync with state legislature budget timelines, the future recommendation of these projects may need to be accelerated by the Committee.

### Process for Recommending Proposition 4 Funding

Sam reviewed a proposal for recommending projects for dedicated funding under Proposition 4. The draft proposal is available online [here](#). Following the presentation, the following discussion was recorded:

- Eric noted the funding from Proposition 4 can be thought of in two primary “buckets”: one for continuation or expansion of large-scale pilot projects after they are deemed successful; the other for smaller projects that can move forward right away.
- Sarah Ryan asked if we can carve out some of the Proposition 4 funding for community, planning, and study projects? It could be helpful to identify both the types of funding available and the projects they could be applied to.
  - Eric noted bond funding is generally reserved for physical capital improvement projects. Other types of projects may be better suited for State General Fund or other sources with fewer restrictions.
- Sarah noted page 2 of the proposal suggests proposals should rely on the scientific reports of UC Davis and the US Geological Survey, but added that multiple other critical studies could be utilized as well, including the Central Valley Water Board/Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP), Tribal cyanotoxin monitoring and research, and multiple others.
  - Sam will update the document to reflect these additional data sources (**see Action Item #1**).
- Jay Lund suggested it was a good approach, and suggested the Committee could develop a bibliography of major data sources to utilize for future projects and general public awareness. Sarah noted the Big Valley Data Clearinghouse project recommended by the Committee is getting started and will develop this type of list. Upon completion, the Clearinghouse could be linked to on the Committee’s website.
- Luis Santana asked if Proposition 4 funding can be used for land acquisition projects.
  - Sam noted that at the March 19, 2025 Committee meeting, California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) staff mentioned funding could be used for land acquisition. Sam will follow up with CNRA staff to confirm the availability of funds for land acquisition (**see Action Item #2**).

- Sarah asked if UC Davis has already been awarded Proposition 4 funding for the Hypolimnetic Oxygenation pilot project.
  - Eric confirmed no Proposition 4 funding has been allocated.
- The Committee agreed the overall proposal with changes as noted above is appropriate (**see Action Item #3**).

#### Peer Review Schedule and Process Updates

Sam reviewed updates to the Committee’s peer review proposal for future projects. Eric noted a robust peer review will help decision makers in the administration and legislature allocate funds faster. The peer review process is based on a two-tiered system where project proposals would receive an initial review by recognized experts in applicable fields to help guide Committee recommendations. A second, in depth review would be conducted for large scale projects or pilot projects seeking to expand their footprint after initial results become available. In both cases, the Committee would have an opportunity to approve peer reviewers. The output of all peer reviews would serve as an important data point for Committee recommendations in the future. Following the presentation, the following conversation was recorded:

- Sarah noted the Technical and Socioeconomic Subcommittees should have a role in the first tier review.
- Jay commented the Committee and its Subcommittees should have a central role in determining which level of review is needed for individual projects.
- Daniella Santana noted the Subcommittees could help develop a roster of peer reviewers.
- Jennifer LaBay agreed the Subcommittees should play an expanded role in the peer review process.

#### 2025 Committee Annual Report

Sam presented the Committee’s DRAFT 2025 Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature. This Report is a requirement of the Committee’s founding legislation (AB 707) and serves as a high-level summary of the Committee’s activities each year. Following presentation of the Report, Sam asked Committee members to consider what additional information is needed, which parallel efforts (such as the Clear Lake Hitch/Chi Summit and Task Force) should be included, and what images Panel members would like included. The following discussion was recorded:

- Brad Rassmussen asked for inclusion of outcomes from the 2025 Clear Lake Hitch/Chi Summit in Section 4 of the Report. Felipe La Luz, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, noted the 2025/26 Summit is broken into three parts: a series of since workshops, a small group meeting of local and Tribal leaders, and a leadership summit (anticipated for February/March 2026). Although a complete summary of the Summit is not available by the December 31, 2025 deadline for the Report, a list of outcomes to date could be incorporated.
- Brad noted the Committee and Subcommittee Roster in the Report needs to be updated to reflect current membership.
- Rebecca Harper requested the list of projects in Appendix B be updated to reflect current contract status for listed projects.
- Jennifer commented AECOM has been replaced by Blue Cycle Technologies for the algae harvesting project in Appendix B.

- Scott noted section 4, paragraph 2, sentence 3 contains a typo that should be modified to read, "...critical cultural *species*."

Following discussion of the Report, Sam requested approval of the Report by all Committee members present. All Committee members present approved the Report with modifications discussed above (**see Action Item 4**). Note that Patricia Franklin had to leave the meeting before the vote was taken.

#### Letter of Support for Scotts Creek Sediment Reduction and Habitat Enhancement Planning Project

Harry Lyons presented a draft letter for the Committee's consideration in support of the Lake County Resource Conservation District grant application for the Scotts Creek Sediment Reduction and Habitat Enhancement Project. The Project seeks to develop plans for remediation and restoration of portions of Scotts Creek experiencing significant bank erosion and channel incision. Restoration of the channel and bank stabilization are expected to significantly reduce sediment transport into Middle Creek and Clear Lake itself. Upon completion of a planning document, the RCD will seek funding for physical restoration; future reaches of the Creek may be suitable for additional restoration projects.

Following the presentation, Committee members were asked to approve the letter of support with Eric signing on their behalf. Jennifer LaBay noted that as the manager for the Central Valley Water Board 319H program, she will abstain from the vote. Although funding is provided by the State Water Resources Control Board, the regional boards act as grant administrators. All other Committee members approved the letter of support (**see Action Item #5**).

2:00:48

#### 2025/26 Proposals for Consideration

Sam requested presentations from proposal teams seeking funding for new projects in 2025/2026. The following presentations were provided (subsequent questions and conversation from the Committee are presented as sub-bullets):

- Angela DePalma Dow, Executive Director, Lake County Lake Trust, presented a proposal for the Lake County Conservation, Restoration, and Stewardship Improvement and Capacity Building Project. This project seeks to improve education and outreach on Land Trust properties and other public spaces to increase knowledge and stewardship of the Clear Lake environment, improve the accessibility of existing Land Trust properties, and develop conservation plans for current and expected Land Trust properties. The project is expected to cost \$604,450 over three years from execution of a contract, and includes a \$100,000 match of local funds.
  - Sarah asked if the proposal includes funding for the acquisition of new lands, or if it is targeted more for management of existing properties. Angela responded the project is primarily focused on the management of existing properties and planning for the acquisition and management of future properties.
  - Eric commented that projects can be funded through a variety of sources, and the Committee can endorse projects to increase the likelihood of receiving funds from other sources such as the Wildlife Conservation Board. Land acquisition is not specifically covered by the Committee, but conserving wetlands and wildlands is within its mission. Angela noted this project is really focused on management activities and planning for acquisition, since those activities are often not funded by other grants.

- Rebecca asked if there was a sense of which properties the Land Trust is interested in acquiring. Angela responded there are approximately 180 acres currently being looked at for acquisition, primarily near major Clear Lake Hitch/Chi creeks and tributaries.
- Jay noted the Committee is primarily focused on basin-wide issues impacting Clear Lake, as opposed to the management of (potentially) thousands of individual parcels, and asked how this project fits in with restoration of the Lake itself. Angela responded the Land Trust is involved in direct restoration efforts; this proposed project would allow the Land Trust to more effectively manage existing lands and plan for future acquisition, including partnering on larger, long-term efforts consistent with the mission and vision of the Committee.
- Sam presented a proposal from Mendocino College for an Environmental Education Pathway on behalf of Mendocino College President Timothy Karas. This effort seeks to develop an applied science pathway focused on environmental education using natural resources in Lake and Mendocino Counties for field/lab research. The proposal was recommended for funding by the Committee in 2023. Sam noted no additional approval is needed by the Committee at this time; the existing General Fund allocation from 2025 will cover all anticipated costs of \$75,000.
  - Eric asked if any Committee members were *opposed* to requesting the use of existing general fund allocations for the effort. No opposition was recorded. Jay suggested materials and curriculum resulting from the effort be publicly available and shared with other entities in the region.
- Fred Feyrer, US Geological Survey, presented a proposal for Clear Lake Hitch/Chi monitoring. The purpose of this proposed project is to continue Clear Lake Hitch population monitoring and conduct a comprehensive analysis and synthesis of the monitoring data; outcomes and data will help guide the Committee and federal, state, and local authorities to better manage the environmental quality and economic conditions for the communities surrounding Clear Lake. This effort is expected to cost \$1,388,330 over three years from allocation of funds and execution of a contract.
  - Sarah noted the proposal includes a USGS contribution of roughly \$300,000 in cost sharing. Fred confirmed there is some cost sharing available, but the funds must be used for very specific purposes. For example, it can't be used to support third party consulting firms, but can be used to help defray labor and travel costs for USGS and local partners.
  - Sarah asked if the resulting Hitch monitoring data would be added to the existing body of publicly available information utilized by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and others working on Hitch conservation. Fred confirmed that it will be and could help alleviate some of the pressure environmental programs are facing under the current administration.
  - Eric asked if there is any pressure on USGS generally and the Fish and Wildlife Service specifically from the administration that may impact current Hitch listing discussions under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Fred confirmed that funding for this issue originates outside of environmental programs and is unlikely to be impacted by the current administration. Coordination is still ongoing between federal agencies and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on Hitch listing under ESA and long-term species recovery efforts.
- Clint Hanson, Shane Hoyt, and Chris Stephan, Moleaer, provided a proposal on nanobubble treatment pilot project for HAB mitigation in Clear Lake. This technology has been successfully deployed in other California waterbodies, most notably Lake Elsinore in Southern California. This project, sponsored by the Lake County Watershed Protection District, will deploy a barge-

mounted nanobubble treatment unit in Soda Bay, with an expected primary treatment area of 350 acres and a secondary treatment area of 200 acres. A total of \$2,815,400 is requested for the pilot project.

- Eric asked if the proposal team can provide an estimated cost for treatment of all known HAB hotspots in Clear Lake. This information could be useful in assessing the lake-wide cost of treatment if the pilot project is successful.
- Sarah noted Lakeport is one area in Clear Lake that does not typically have meaningful cyanotoxin levels or HAB issues. The current project site may not show meaningful improvement in HABs or toxin levels. The project team is open to other potential sites, and the pilot will include a robust monitoring program to assess the efficacy of the technology in Clear Lake. The nanobubble barge is much easier to relocate to other areas within the Lake than traditional oxygenation systems.
- Daniella commented that the City of Lakeport recently removed native vegetation in the area and suggested this project should monitor for how it improves habitat (in addition to HAB mitigation).
- Sarah asked if the proposed system creates any toxins as a byproduct of treatment. Clint responded the Moleaer system uses a low enough concentration of ozone nanobubbles (.2ppm) that it has no known toxicity to other, non-targeted organisms. This has been confirmed by third party monitoring and data analysis. Moleaer will share this information at the next Committee meeting (**see Action Item #6**).
- Scott asked how long after treatment HAB blooms can return. Chris responded the system must be run continuously to realize the full benefits of treatment, although three units in Lake Elsinore produce enough oxygenation to provide 80% saturation of the lake.
- Wilda Shock asked if the units create any recreational impacts. Chris responded there have been no recreational impacts in other areas where the units are deployed. In fact, recreational usage has increased in Lake Elsinore, as the units must be continuously run to keep the lake open for visitors. Outreach is an important component of the project to educate visitors and communities on the benefits of the effort; this is included as part of the proposal.

#### Tribal Ecosystem Restoration Alliance EcoCultural Fire Restoration Updates

Thea Maria Carlson, Tribal Ecosystem Restoration Alliance (TERA) provided an update on the TERA EcoCultural tule restoration effort recommended by the Committee in 2022. Temashio Anderson, board president, TERA, provided opening remarks and an overview of TERAs mission and work to bring back local indigenous knowledge for stewardship of the environment. The Ecocultural tule restoration seeks to uplift and revitalize Tribal traditional management of the Clear Lake shoreline, document the benefits of cultural fire, and develop best practices. It includes up to 10 tule burns along the shores of Clear Lake, all of which will include extensive site preparation and post-fire monitoring to document the rate of native species recovery and tule growth. It includes a wide range of Tribal, local government, NGO, and state agency partners. Burns are expected in October 2026-February 2027; data synthesis and a full project report will be completed in early 2028. TERA contractor Nicholas Cruz reviewed the proposed monitoring plan to study the impacts of EcoCultural tule restoration on vegetation, wildlife, water quality, and cultural benefits such as the quality of tule regrowth for basketry.

Thea closed by discussing future TERA needs, including potential additional funding to continue monitoring beyond 2027, support for a tule nursery and tule planting efforts, and future burn implementation to maintain sites.

Following the presentation, the following discussion was recorded:

- Sam noted the planned burning period coincides with the fourth quarterly meeting of the Committee in 2026, and asked if a site visit may be possible. Thea confirmed that observers are appreciated and encouraged to attend.

### Public Perception Survey

Chris Coulter, SCI consulting, presented an overview of the Clear Lake Public Perception Survey recommended by the Committee for funding in 2021. The effort seeks to better understand the public's understanding of issues impacting the health of Clear Lake and build support for sustainable local funding for Lake County's MS4 program and lake management. 7,000 surveys were mailed/distributed to property owners and focus groups were held with the Committee's Socioeconomic Subcommittee. 809 responses were received, creating a statistically valid response rate.

Respondents listed the perceived drivers of reduced water quality in Clear Lake, with wetland loss, agricultural runoff, and internal loading (or sediment-based nutrient recycling) listed as the top three causes. Chris noted focus groups specifically listed human-caused impacts as the largest contributor to water quality issues including runoff, septic issues, and habitat/ecosystem alteration. A significant majority of all respondents believe current water quality conditions are worse than they were 200 years ago or more.

Additionally, the survey asked if property owners would support a fee to support clean water programs. A significant majority (62.5%) supported a \$9.75 per parcel fee and 58.8% supported a \$22.50 fee. Conversely, less than 40% of total respondents said they would definitely or probably not support similar fees. Key issues respondents hope a fee would address include safe recreation, trash and pollution remediation, and a reduction in HABs/cyanotoxin production. These outcomes support proceeding with a revenue mechanism analysis and a future fee study to support potential local ballot measures.

After the presentation, the following discussion was recorded:

- Rebecca noted roughly 10% of surveys were returned and asked if this is a high enough response rate to justify moving forward with a potential ballot measure. Chris noted further outreach is needed to build support for a potential ballot measure, but this is in line with normal response rates for these types of efforts.
- Sarah noted that previous county special tax efforts have required 66.6% approval rates. A special tax was chosen to ensure dedication of funds for specific issues due to a perception that funds could be shifted to other areas. Chris noted property-related funds are required to be used for their stated purpose under Proposition 218 requirements, and only require a simple majority of property owners only.

### Public Comment

Public comment is reported below in the order received. This time was assigned for members of the public wishing to comment on any matters before the Committee:

- Stephen McCord, UC Davis, noted the UC Davis Hypolimnetic Oxygenation pilot project relies on Proposition 4 funding, and asked if there was a timeline for release of funds.
  - Eric said funding is in flux. There is a delay in the release of Proposition 4 funds. Eric and Sam will follow up with UC Davis following the meeting to provide more information (**see Action Item #7**).
  - Angela requested her name be updated in the Annual report to reflect an updated title and organization (executive director, Lake County Land Trust).
  - Angela announced “Xabatin Big Lake Big Science” will be screened on January 11<sup>th</sup> at 2pm at the Silver East Theater in Lakeport. The film highlights many of the key environmental issues Clear Lake experiences. Tickets are free, but registering in advance is recommended.
  - Betsy Cawn noted the County of Lake Water Resources Department is responsible for implementation of the Stormwater Management Program, and suggested someone from the RCD connect with Water Resources and the Clean Water Program Management Council, which is responsible for the implementation of the stormwater management plan.
  - Dr. Jeanine Pfeiffer asked if anyone from the Lake County Water Resources Department is on the Committee, and if not, why. Sam responded that AB 707 (Aguiar-Curry, 2017) governs the membership of the Committee, and includes County representatives from the Board of Supervisors, economic interests, environmental groups, agricultural interests, and public water suppliers. Modification to the membership would require amending this legislation at the State level.
  - Dr. Pfeiffer asked when projects recommended by the Committee will provide updates on their results during a public meeting. Sam noted the County has provided numerous reports on its projects recommended by the Committee and will continue to do so moving forward. Similarly, UC Davis has provide numerous updates at previous meetings. Other projects will provide updates as results are made available.
  - Dr. Pfeiffer asked if TERA has plans for a tule nursery and tule replanting. Thea confirmed that TERA received a small grant for a pilot nursery where it was able to collect tule seeds and explore propagation methods and techniques. This effort produced useful results to show how tules can be propagated on a larger scale, but more funding is needed to significantly impact the amounts needed for the entire Clear Lake shoreline.
  - Betsy expressed concern the County may have used project-specific funding recommended by the Committee for other efforts such as Sustainable Groundwater Management Act activities. Utilizing funding intended for Committee recommended projects for other efforts can undermine public trust for things like a property fee measure.

#### Closing Comments and Adjourn

Eric Sklar concluded the meeting and wished participants and Committee members Happy Holidays. Sam noted he will follow up with Committee members to schedule 2026 meetings (**see Action Item #8**).

