

Lassen/Lake Almanor Basin Regional Trails System Concept Plan

A Vision of the Almanor Basin Trails Coalition



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Concept Plan for a trails system within the greater Almanor Basin of Plumas County, California evolved from the personal interests of a few of the area's trail enthusiasts to a committed collaboration of many volunteers from county-wide government agencies, conservation groups, residents, and private companies.

We first wish to acknowledge the remarkable team at the National Parks Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program who have helped to guide our Almanor Basin Trails Coalition and to facilitate planning, outreach and document content. Linda Stonier provided staff support from RTCA to facilitate the meetings that helped guide our coalition. She also contributed (at the meetings and in between) ideas, advice, examples, input, editing and encouragement to help generate and structure the plan content. Then, she brokered the participation of designers

who then conducted a local charrette, created the illustrations, and conducted a public presentation to area attendees.

We hosted three RTCA landscape architects in July 2019 for a regional design workshop. After touring over 10 selected sites from our proposed trail network, the architects created artistic renderings of potential amenities including camp areas, trailheads, signs and other design elements used to help guide the development of our future trail system. The landscape architects included Sally Sheridan, Stephanie Shroud, and Chris Kent, a partner at PGA in Oakland, CA.

Locally Jim Richardson, National Park Service's Superintendent, Lassen Volcanic National Park, joined the planning discussions and outreach meetings to provide input and advice from his experiences and knowledge

Nils Lunder, with Mountain Meadows Conservancy (MMC) and Feather River Land Trust (FRLT), secured the RTCA grant for all the RTCA staff support mentioned above and convened and coordinated the formal meetings that formulated the Concept Plan and generated content. Lively discussions and active group engagement were documented by Nils and input into plan content. Nils also played an important role in generating all the professional maps for outreach meetings and the Concept Plan to insure consistency and accuracy. Nils jointly led our public outreach meetings and discussed issues and questions from attendees.

Carlos España, a volunteer with Almanor Recreation and Park District (ARPD), and Charlie Plopper with MMC and ARPD, added their insights and knowledge from past involvement with the Plumas County Active Transportation Plan, Caltrans grant programs, and the Almanor Water Trails Map development.

Carlos and Charlie researched potential trail alignments, generated applicable parcel maps, field walked and obtained gps data for key alignments and conducted detailed discussions with property owners about their potential participation in trail development. They actively participated in content development and coordination of the final Concept Plan production. Carlos helped coordinate outreach meetings, prepared displays and jointly led public outreach meetings.

Janie Ackley and Stacey Kronner, with the Almanor Ranger District of the National Forest Service, actively attended planning and outreach meetings, provided content and reviews, and gave key insight on current Lassen National Forest plans, desires and requirements to locating trail segments near Lassen National Forest lakeside properties.

From the beginning, there was a desire among Coalition members to bring near lake trails to both Lake Almanor and Mountain Meadows Reservoir in order to form a connected system within the Almanor Watershed. A broader network was recommended by Elizabeth Norton of Lassen Land and Trails Trust to include Lassen County connections to the west end of the Bizz Johnson Recreation Trail through Clear Creek and Westwood. Elizabeth teamed with Matt McClain, Lassen County Trails Coordinator, to provide input on county road and private timberland property opportunities to add trail alignments to achieve these connections. Both attended planning meetings, generated maps and content information, and had discussions with potentially interested property owners.

Elizabeth also documented comments during public meetings and was actively involved in formulating final text sections and editing drafts. She took on the role of final text editor to make the text as accurate and correct as time allowed.

Ron Lunder and Peggy Fulder, both with MMC and Lake Almanor Watershed Group participated in planning and outreach meetings with ideas focused on Westwood and Mountain Meadows Reservoir and well as many other locations. Ron also provided vehicle support for field meeting including the RCTA architect workshop tour.

Alisha Wilson with the Maidu Summit Consortium attended meetings and provided background on the then current Maidu activities, their interests in a trail system, and planned areas of potential joint trail development.

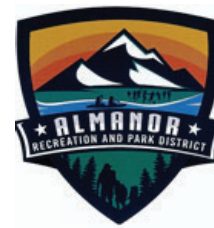
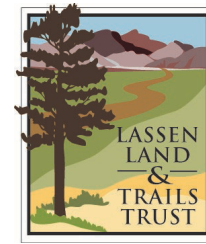
Jim Graham and John Mannle, Plumas County Public Works, provided much support on area history and ownership, the status of roadways for trail alignment considerations, background on Rogers Airport growth plans and clearance requirements, Caltrans/County plans and requirements for easements/encroachments, and created cost estimates for potential trail design and construction opportunities.

Anne-Marie Cannon, with PG&E attended initial meetings and recommended the trail coding naming system that was adopted for the various trails.

We are also grateful to all the community members who attended our public meetings and the workshop tour and gave their comments, opinions, and encouragement on the building of a local trail system.

Lastly, the actual Concept Report formatting, assembly and publication was created by staff from the RTCA, Stephanie Shroud and Carlos Flores. Their ideas, experience and efforts were very valuable in producing an impressive and well-designed Concept Plan.

The work of these collaborators is recognized and appreciated. Their efforts and perseverance were an inspiration to finishing the document. We trust that this Concept Plan will form the basis for the Almanor Basin community to plan and build a quality, both regional and local hiking and biking system for community health, vitality and economic development.



Mountain Meadows
Conservancy

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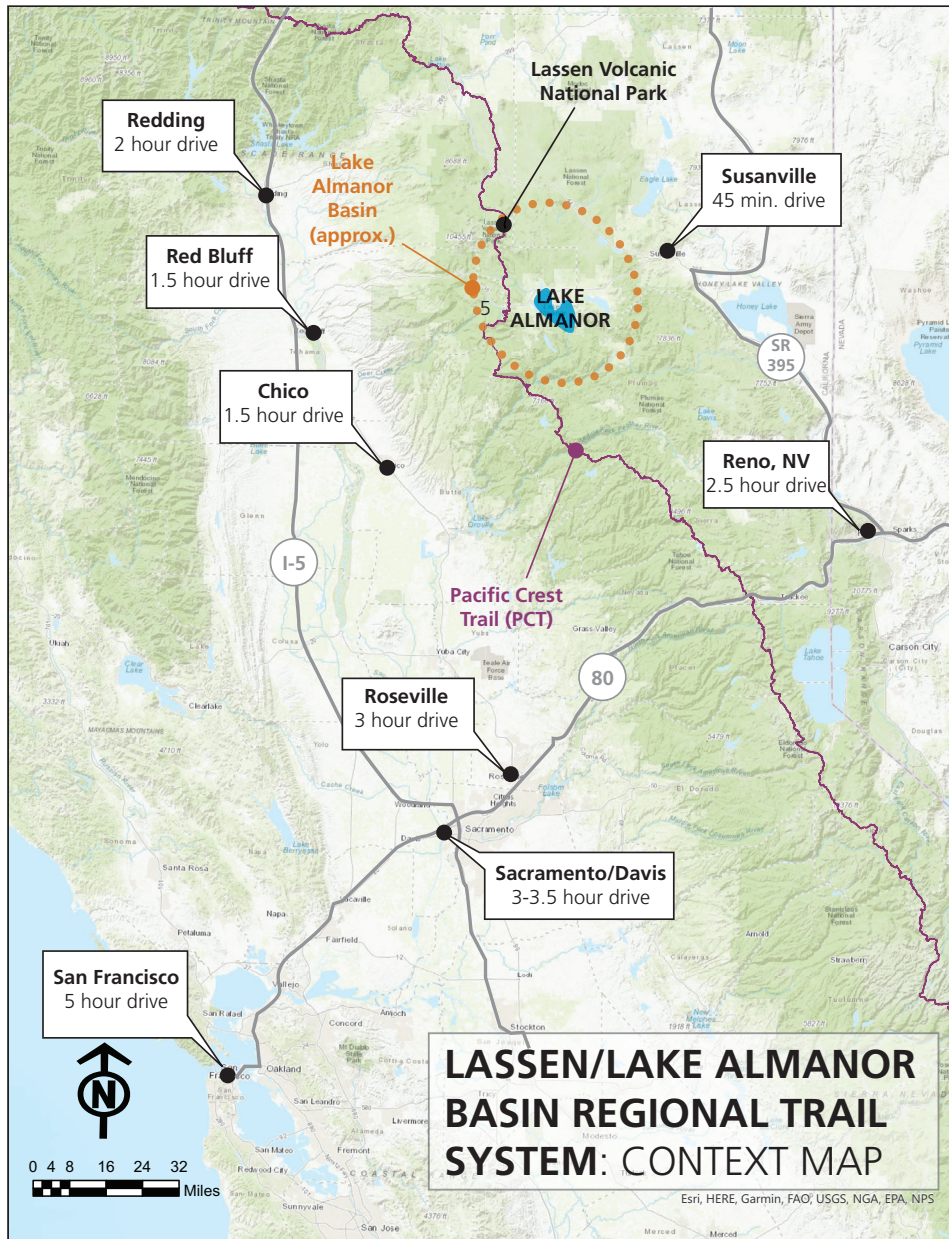
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Lassen/Lake Almanor Basin Regional Trails System Concept Plan



Map 1.1 Lassen/Lake Almanor Basin Regional Trail System: Context Map.

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction

The purpose of this conceptual plan is to describe a network of trails that will connect communities within Plumas County's Lake Almanor Basin project area (Area), located in northeastern California [Map 1.1]. This plan will serve as a tool that guides the planning, design, fundraising, construction and maintenance of the proposed trail network. The plan was written by members of the Almanor Basin Trails Coalition (Coalition), who have a passion for outdoor recreation, community vitality, economic development, and the preservation of open space in the Area. Coalition representatives included the Mountain Meadows Conservancy, Almanor Park and Recreation District (ARPD), Lassen National Forest,

Lassen County, Lassen Land and Trails Trust, Plumas County, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Lake Almanor Watershed Group, Lassen Volcanic National Park, Lake Almanor Chamber of Commerce, Feather River Land Trust, and staff from the National Park Service Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. Further, this document was influenced by many members of the public who attended community meetings related to trails and recreation in the Area.

This is a conceptual trails plan. It is not describe exact locations or types of amenities to be constructed, nor does it include detailed budgets or engineered plans for specific features. It is considered a tool to convey a vision for a trail network in the Area. It also conveys a sense of what the Coalition is working toward and where amenities

such as trailheads and road crossings may be located. Before trail segments are constructed additional planning and design will be needed. This plan is a living document that will be updated as needed by people involved with the development of recreational trails in the region.

Need for a Regional Trail System

Additional formal, non-motorized trails in the area have been the strong desire of the Almanor Basin and Westwood communities for many years. The area has national forest lands surrounding the communities where trails and trailheads can be reached by vehicle trips of 10 minutes to an hour. Lassen National Park (45 minutes to an hour to the west) offers wonderful

opportunities for outdoor adventures for our communities. However, the relatively flat areas near Lake Almanor and Mountain Meadows Reservoir are mostly private or federal lands. There is one near-community, regional trail along the west shore of Lake Almanor that connects various residential and commercial areas (known as census designated places).

The regional economy of the area has been negatively impacted by reduced timber production and by the Great Recession in 2008 such that a declining and aging population was occurring as of 2018 Census data. The 2020 Plumas County Community Health Assessment reported that the county has over 3 times the opioid death rate (per 100,000 persons) in 2018 than the State of California, and in Plumas County, more than half of adults have been overweight or obese from 2014 through 2019. A need to address health issues by any means is critical to improve the health of the population in the area.

Having recreational opportunities in the immediate areas of living and work centers have been nationally shown to positively improve community health, enjoyment and tourism opportunities.

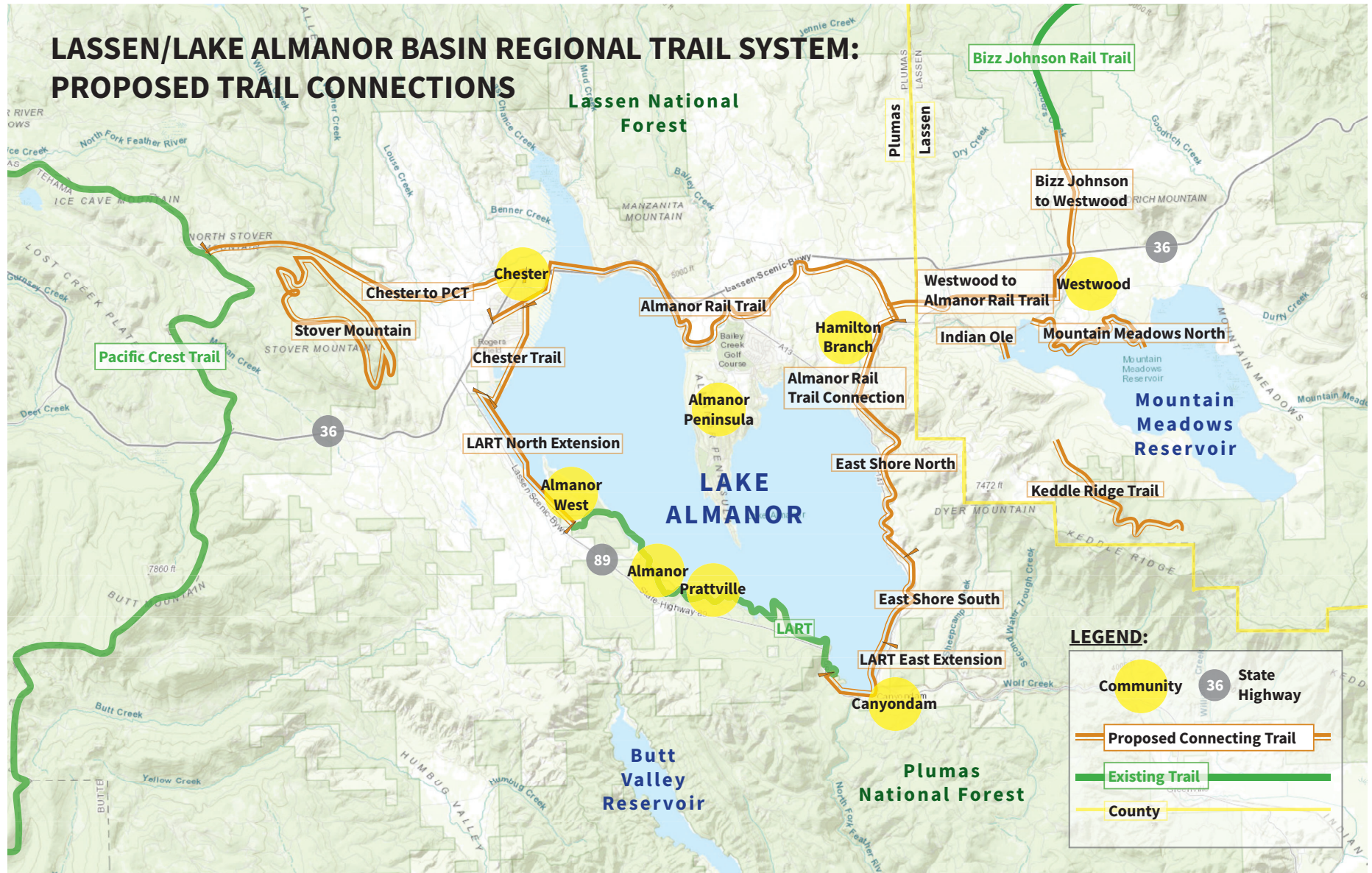
Guidelines for having a recreation park within a 10-minute walk from homes is a statewide goal. And alternate “active transportation” modes of connecting community members to workplaces, schools, and parks/trails is state policy for health, reduced gas emissions, and community connectivity. With these issues in mind, Plumas County began outreach for creation of an Active Transportation Plan. Several members of the Almanor Basin Trails Coalition took the opportunity to provide the County with extensive ideas and alignments for in-community and regional trail locations that connect the communities in proximity to Lake Almanor and offer immediate or near-community access to active transportation modes.

These ideas grew out of long held dreams of a system of “trails around the lake” and a connection from Lassen Volcanic National Park on the west to the “Bizz Johnson National Recreation Trail” on the east.

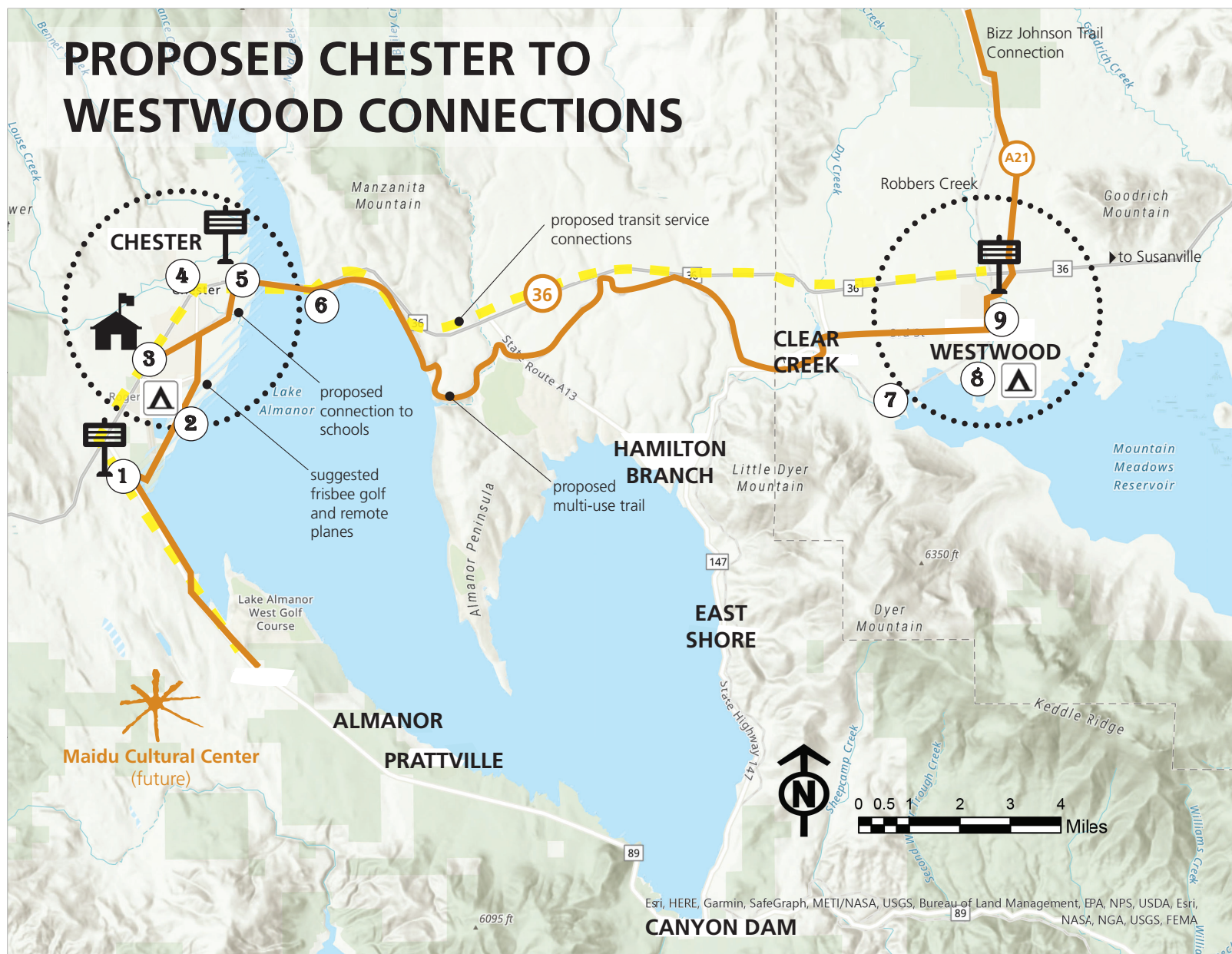
Overview of the Regional Trail System

The project area [Map 1.2] is located within the Almanor Basin of the North Fork Feather River watershed in northeastern California in both Plumas and Lassen Counties. The western boundary is the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. The project area then continues east to the community of Westwood and the western terminus of the Bizz Johnson National Recreation Trail. The northern extent of the area is Lassen Volcanic National Park and the southern boundary is Canyon Dam at the intersection of State Routes 89 and 147. This trails project will connect the communities (census designated places) of Chester, Prattville, Almanor, Lake Almanor West, Canyon Dam, East Shore, Lake Almanor Peninsula, Lake Almanor Country Club, Hamilton Branch, Clear Creek and Westwood [Map 1.3].

The area is known for its stunning beauty, natural diversity, excellent fishing and hunting, and abundant wildlife viewing opportunities. Lake Almanor and nearby Lassen Volcanic National Park attract thousands of visitors annually, primarily during the



Map 1.2 Lassen/Lake Almanor Basin Regional Trail System: Proposed Trail Connections.

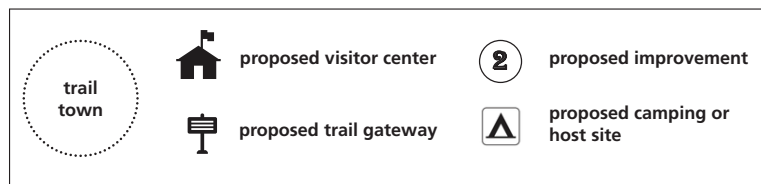


Map 1.3 Chester to Westwood Connections.

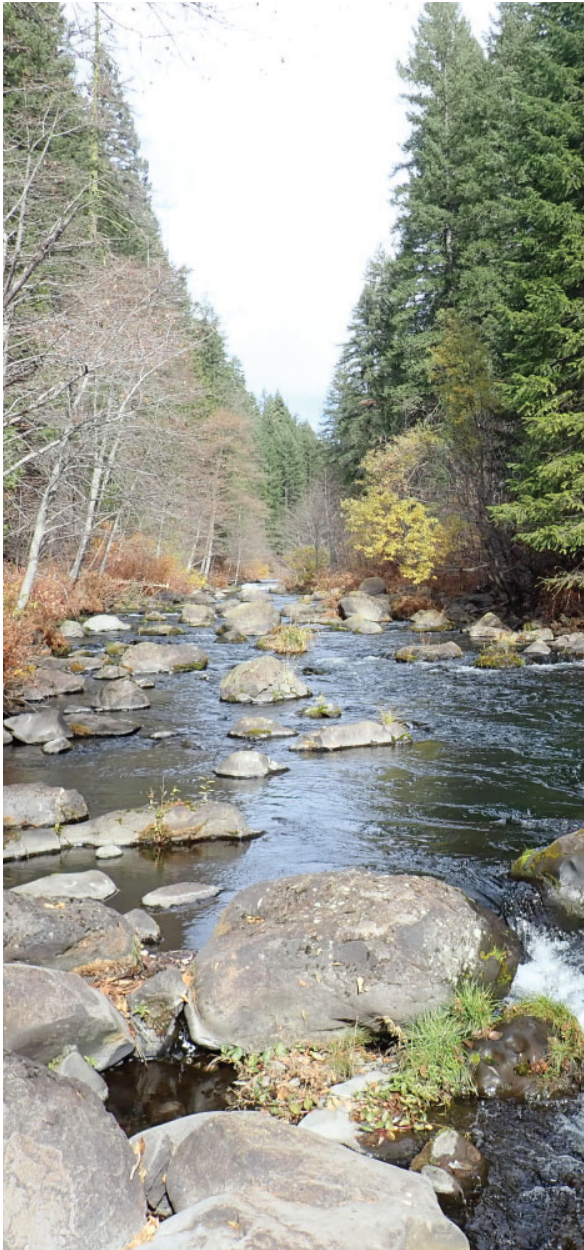
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

- 1 **Super Ditch Gateway:** a USFS site that offers a transition from forest to town. It will consist of a kiosk (interpreting Maidu history and culture, volcanic legacy, the “super ditch” and its hydrology, orientation and safety), parking (for 20+ cars), improved pads for portable restrooms, transit stop, and picnic tables/benches.
- 2 **Chester Meadows:** Parking (for 15+ vehicles), vault toilet, a boardwalk to shore, interpretive panels, shoreline birds, USFS host (camp/rv).
- 3 **Almanor Ranger District Visitor Center:** This visitor center should have amenities for trail users and serve as a welcome center for the trail network and the region.
- 4 **Almanor Recreation Center:** contains a nature trail, restroom, and orientation, and hosts events.
- 5 **Olsen Barn Preserve Gateway:** parking (for 20+ vehicles); transit turnaround loop, kiosk with orientation information, interpretation about dairy and the surrounding area, and info about safety, regulations, and the Feather River.
- 6 **Catfish Beach:** Non-motorized boating access to Lake Almanor, parking (for 6+ vehicles), picnic area, interpretation, and pads for restrooms.
- 7 **Indian Ole:** Parking (for 6+ vehicles), non-motorized boating access to Mountain Meadows Reservoir, nature trails, Maidu stories, orientation and safety information.
- 8 **Moutain Meadows Campground:** Equestrian use, parking (for 15+ vehicles), nature trails, picnic tables/benches, educational panels, restrooms, campground, connection over creek.
- 9 **Westwood Depot Visitor Center:** This visitor center should have amenities for trail users and serve as a welcome center for the trail and the region.

MAP LEGEND:



For more information about these proposals, see the “Phase One Design Proposals” document, prepared by the National Park Service, in the appendix of this Concept Plan.



snow-free months to enjoy boating, swimming, camping, hiking and bicycling. Lake Almanor, Mountain Meadows and Butt Valley are the three largest reservoirs in the Area, managed by Pacific Gas and Electric for hydroelectric generation. Lake Almanor is the second largest reservoir in California by surface area.

Communities in the area were established in the early 1900s to house workers in the timber, mining and agricultural sectors. Resource extraction continues today, primarily industrial timber production, but jobs in those sectors have been declining over the past three decades. Now, local communities are implementing economic strategies that leverage the abundant open space with outdoor recreation to attract visitors, new businesses, and residents. Currently, the local economy is very dependent on seasonal visitors. The population of the Lake Almanor Basin can increase by 600 percent during the peak tourist season in July and August. During the winter months, tourist visits are greatly reduced.

Vision, Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Vision

We envision a system of multi-use, easily accessible trails that connect visitors and residents to the beauty of the Almanor Basin/Upper North Fork Feather River Watershed. Our trails provide year-round recreational access, on both land and water, to our region's rich natural and cultural heritage. Their popularity stimulates our regional economy. Sustained by public and private stewardship, our trail system facilitates environmental learning, cultural literacy, and improved health in our communities.

Goals

1. Develop a comprehensive plan of regional land and water trails for the Almanor Basin/Upper North Fork Feather River watershed.
2. Prepare an interpretive plan for the Almanor Basin/Upper North Fork Feather River Watershed trail network.
3. Expand trail access to natural and cultural resources and to open space especially for community residents.
4. Improve awareness of watershed health in the Lake Almanor/Upper North Fork Feather region through sustainable trail development and interpretation.
5. Involve all interested agencies, organizations, businesses, landowners, residents, and visitors in trail planning, implementation, interpretation, education, and stewardship efforts.

Objectives

1. Expand existing trails, locate new trails closer to communities, and link communities together by working with willing public and private landowners.
2. Enhance and maintain existing trails.
3. Implement well-designed and low-maintenance motorized and non-motorized trails in the region.
4. Develop interpretive themes relevant to the natural and cultural features of the region that are accessible by the trail system.

Strategies

1. Implement a regional adopt-a-trail program.
2. Assist with interpretation and development on Maidu lands acquired from PG&E and enhance linkages with other regional trails.
3. Enhance environmental education through trail stewardship projects and field trips.
4. Expand volunteer engagement in trail development and stewardship



Benefits of Trails to the Area

The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy affirms: “Trails and greenways are often seen narrowly when it comes to their benefits. People tend to focus on the recreational or environmental aspects of trails and greenways, failing to see the big picture—the total package of benefits that a trail or greenway can provide to communities, including public health, economic and transportation benefits, and even the effect on community pride and identity.” When seen as a whole, the evidence about the far-reaching benefits of trails and greenways is compelling, especially given the minimal public investment involved compared to other transportation projects with the same community goals.

Quality of Life

The 1990s gave rise to new understanding of how California’s open space contributes to “community well-being” besides resource consumption. Community well-being is more than just jobs and income. It encompasses other quality of life attributes, such as physical and mental health, safety, social equity, education, arts/culture, and recreation.

Compared to many other places, northeastern California is blessed with diverse natural and cultural resources, along with clean air and water. This setting provides bountiful opportunities for year-round outdoor recreation. Research shows that spending time in natural areas and having opportunities to view and experience nature helps

reduce stress, depression, anxiety, attention deficit and hyperactivity, and exhaustion. In today’s increasingly electronic world, it is important to find more ways to expose people to nature, wildlife, and other cultural assets. Interpretation of these resources will also increase people’s appreciation for and stewardship of these treasures.

Trails also foster social interaction and relationship building with other trail users in a pleasant setting. There is an emerging sector of people, particularly young millennials and retirees, who are more mobile and are making decisions about where to live based on quality-of-life factors, including access to parks, trails, and other outdoor recreation venues.

Health

Trails and greenways create healthy recreation and transportation opportunities by providing people of all ages with attractive, safe, accessible and low- or no-cost places to cycle, hike, jog, ride horses or snowshoe/ski. Trails help people of all ages incorporate exercise into their daily routines by connecting them with places they enjoy and want to use. Communities that encourage physical activity by building trails can see a significant effect on public health and wellness. This type of recreation directly and indirectly improves local economies, decreases health care-related costs by improving overall health.

Transportation/Livability

In addition to providing a safe place for people to recreate, greenways and trails often function as active transportation corridors. Trails can be a crucial element to a seamless urban or regional multi-modal transportation system. Both Lassen and Plumas Counties have incorporated active transportation into their county transportation plans, relying upon trail

facilities to move people around in a safe and efficient manner. The ability to avoid busy streets and highways, and travel through natural areas by non-motorized means, is a large factor in a community’s “livability” quotient.

- Local trail users often community trails multiple times per week, and trails are a valuable part of residents’ quality of life.
- Trails are often associated with higher property value, especially when a trail is designed to provide neighborhood access and maintain residents’ privacy.

Conservation/Environment

Linear greenspaces, including trails and greenways, have all the traditional conservation benefits of preserving green space, but also have additional benefits by way of their linear nature. They help preserve important natural and cultural landscapes and provide needed links between fragmented habitats to protect plant and animal species. They also can be useful tools for wetland preservation and the improvement of air and water

quality. In addition, they allow humans to experience nature with minimal environmental impact.



Economic Revitalization

Many trail studies confirm trails provide a positive return on the investment in the form of healthier communities, healthier people, and more robust economies. They are strong assets that make communities better places to live, work, play, and do business. Business impacts include business revenue, employment, and employee earnings. In addition to the direct effect that visitor spending has on businesses, visitor spending has a ripple effect in the community as employees and business owners spend their earnings, and local and state governments receive more tax revenue.

Another major benefit of regional trails, within a vacation and second home destination like the Almanor Basin, is attracting additional tourists and increasing the duration of visits. Trail tourism allows money to be spent in rural towns and in more economically disadvantaged areas. Many of the people traveling to a trail and spending a night or more in the area are economically well off and have significant discretionary income. This spending can help attract new businesses near trails and increase sales tax revenues.

The economic effects of trails and greenways are sometimes readily apparent (as in the case of new trailside businesses) and sometimes not. There is no question that countless towns across America have experienced an economic revitalization due in whole or in part to trails. Investments made in building and maintaining trails are outweighed by the revenue they bring to a community. A study of Maryland's Northern Central Rail Trail found the state received \$303,000/year in trail-related tax income while the trail's management and maintenance costs were \$192,000/year. In Vermont, many tourists stay one day longer in Stowe than in the state's other resort areas. This extra day, and the revenue it generates, are attributed to the Stowe Recreation Path, a 5.5-mile multi-use trail.

In January 2017, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced the 750-mile Empire State Trail, a new initiative placing New York State at the forefront of national efforts to enhance outdoor recreation, community vitality, and tourism development. Approximately 400 miles of the Trail already exists in discrete, disconnected segments. When completed by the end of 2020, the

Empire State Trail will be a continuous 750-mile route spanning the state from New York City to Canada and Buffalo to Albany, creating the longest multi-use state trail in the nation. New York's vision for the Empire State Trail is: "Connecting us all to New York's extraordinary experiences, people and places." The trail website states New York expects to host 8.6 million visitors annually across the 750-mile route. In terms of health benefits: "Studies show that every \$1 invested in recreational trails yields \$3 in direct medical benefit."

The most ambitious trail project of all is the Great American Rail-Trail, spearheaded by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC). Spanning 3,700 miles from Washington, DC to the Puget Sound in Washington, this multi-use trail is more than 52 percent complete using existing rail trails along abandoned rail corridors. RTC envisions local communities along the trail will see new economic opportunities and community vitality.

When completed, the proposed Almanor Basin trails network in this concept plan will be greater than the sum of its parts. It will convert

Lassen and Plumas Counties into “trail destination attractions” because of the diversity of trail experiences offered.

Historic Preservation/Community Identity

Many community leaders have been surprised at how trails have become sources of community identity and pride. These effects are magnified when communities use trails and greenways to provide access to historic places and

tell their stories. Many trails themselves preserve historically significant transportation corridors such as the Bizz Johnson National Recreation Trail.

Greenways can be catalysts for transforming eyesores such as abandoned rail corridors or neglected river fronts, old mill sites and business districts into the community centerpieces. Trails often become a focus of community pride and a means of preserving and celebrating what is special about a town (that “sense of place”). Nearby Susanville could be an example of this with the conversion of the Wendel Line to a trail and restoration of the Susan River and Paiute Creek through the city. In Dunedin, Florida, after the abandoned CSX railroad was transformed into the Pinellas Trail, the downtown went from a 35 percent storefront vacancy rate to a 100 percent storefront occupancy with a waiting list for available space.

Studies have also shown that nearby recreation areas and trails increase the value of residential and commercial property. And concerns about an increase in crime or other negative effects from trails have not been validated.



The Setting

The Lake Almanor region is an important scenic, recreational, and economic resource for Plumas and Lassen Counties and the broader community of northeastern California. The lake and the surrounding forest lands have long been managed for sustainable timber production, and the area is a magnet for the economically important tourism and recreation industry. As California grows, more and more people are seeking vacation homes and rentals in the Area.

The region is located in the transition zone between the Sierra Nevada to the south, Cascade Range to the north and west, and the Great Basin province to the east. The region contains volcanic peaks and flat, wet meadows. The area east of Lake Almanor is a large plateau that gently drains into the Mountain Meadows Reservoir and into Hamilton Branch, a tributary to Lake Almanor.

Lake Almanor is the second largest reservoir in California by surface area, with a storage capacity of over one million-acre feet. The reservoir receives runoff from the Upper North Fork

Feather River, the Hamilton Branch and various smaller streams. Lake Almanor, Mountain Meadows, which is located upstream of Lake Almanor, and Butt Valley, which is located downstream of Lake Almanor are all reservoirs managed by Pacific Gas and Electric for power generation, recreation and water storage for irrigation users in the Central Valley. These reservoirs are the upper-most water storage facilities of the California State Water Project. These three reservoirs supply about one third of the annual capacity of the downstream Orville Reservoir, which also supply domestic users in Southern California, such as the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Most of the land in the Upper North Fork Feather River watershed is dominated by conifer forests, intermountain valleys and volcanic peaks. Development and population is concentrated in the towns of Chester, Westwood and near the shores of Lake Almanor.

Regional/Community Character

First nation people occupied the region for thousands of years. During the summer months, they spent time in the high elevation areas where they hunted and gathered food, and managed the landscapes for food production and collected basket making materials. During the winter months, some would travel to more temperate climates at lower elevations.

European settlers began to occupy the region in the 1850s. These settlers set up homesteads, ranches, dairies, mines and mills to build the infrastructure required to live and produce goods. Primary industries were logging, mining, agriculture and tourism.

Westwood was built as a company town by the Red River Lumber Company in the early 1900s to house employees working at the lumber mill or in the woods falling and transporting logs to the mill. The lumber mill closed in the 1950s and the town has struggled since that time to regain its identity and economic prosperity. According to the 2013-2017 Census numbers the population was 1,662, down from 1,998

at the 2000 census. Westwood is the hometown of mythical logger Paul Bunyan and his blue ox, Babe.

The area around Chester was first developed as a number of cattle ranches. Over time it became a summer recreation destination. A lumber mill was constructed by the Collins Pine Company in the 1940s and provides stable employment to 1,900 local residents. Chester serves as the retail center for the Lake Almanor Basin and derives a significant portion of its economy from the summer tourist season, which extends from mid-May through early September. 2013-2017 Census data indicated that the population of Chester was 2,274, down from 2,316 in the 2000 census.

Both Chester and Westwood are surrounded by large tracts of private land owned by a few landowners including Collins Pine Company, Sierra Pacific Industries, Pacific Gas and Electric, and the heirs of the Walker family that developed Westwood. There are also large swaths of land that are owned by the federal government and managed by the United States Forest Service (Forest Service). Because of these



land ownership patterns, development adjacent to the communities is constrained.

There are a number of small communities around Lake Almanor including Canyon Dam, Almanor, Prattville, Lake Almanor Peninsula, Hamilton Branch and East Shore. Several planned communities were constructed near Lake Almanor (Bailey Creek, Lake Almanor Pines, Lake Almanor Country Club, Lake Almanor West, and Foxwood). All of these communities provide housing to both year-round residents as well as seasonal residents who purchased summer vacation homes.

Prior to the Great Recession in 2008, there were several additional new communities planned for the region that would have added thousands of new residential and commercial structures. However, those projects did not occur. Future development is not forecasted in the long term in this Area due to declining population and a slowdown of key economic indicators.

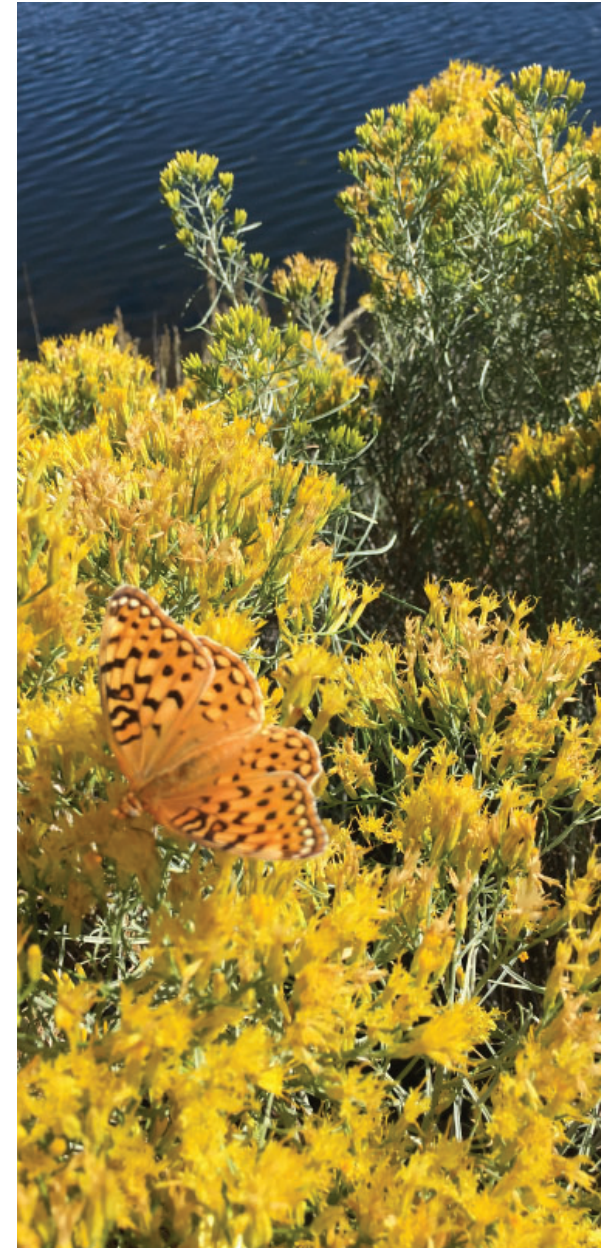
Natural and Cultural Resources

Vegetation

The region is dominated by conifer forest types, which cover approximately 84 percent of the watershed area. Other vegetation types include mixed riparian woodlands and willow thickets, freshwater seeps and marshes, bogs, fens, montane meadows, montane chaparral and northern oak woodlands, which account for 6 percent of the land area. Areas inundated by reservoirs account for the remaining 10 percent of the watershed area.

Wildlife

Within the region there exists a diversity of habitats that support a wide variety of wildlife species. Approximately 470 wildlife species potentially occur in the watershed. Numerous federal and State of California special status animal species including the grey wolf, bald eagle, California spotted owl, osprey, goshawk, and pine marten are known to occur in the watershed.



Cultural Resources

Pre-Contact

The Mountain Maidu have lived in the Area from time immemorial. The Maidu people inhabited mountain valleys in the region. They lived primarily in village communities with a main village or a group of smaller settlements led by a chief or headman. They carefully nurtured the land and the land nurtured them.

The locations of villages were dictated by access to food resources including acorn, deer and anadromous fish and by features such as rivers, streams, springs, clearings, meadows, and flat upland areas. Most meadow areas were wet or swampy year-round, thus villages were usually established on upland locations along the edges of these areas. Life happened in these villages; children were born and raised, people died, people gathered, celebrated, mourned, and food was prepared and stored for the winter months. A majority of the Maidu people lived in these villages for most of the year. Some Maidu followed a yearly cycle of hunting and gathering seeds and fishing in the lowlands along rivers and

streams during the cooler months. They returned to hunt and gather in the higher elevations during the summer months.

Contact Period

The arrival of European Americans into the Mountain Maidu's traditional lands greatly transformed Maidu population and culture. By the 1830s, trappers made contact with the Maidu. Many Maidu populations were decimated by purposeful genocide (murder), as well as diseases. In 1833, many Maidu populations were decimated by a malaria epidemic. Other diseases that impacted the Maidu people included measles, smallpox, tuberculosis and others. Over time, the rivers and forests of the Feather River watershed were modified by Euro-American settlement activities (towns, ranches, mines, roads, railroads, and hydroelectric development). Conflicts increased between Maidu populations and Euro-American settlers which resulted in further decline in the Maidu population. Some traditional gathering areas became void of all foods (especially root varieties) by modified land management practices. With their food sources interrupted, many Maidu people starved to death .



Lassen/Lake Almanor Basin Regional Trails System Concept Plan

Many of the Maidu were forcibly transferred to reservations. Others chose to remain in the Big Meadows area (present day Lake Almanor) living among the new settlers. Some Maidu were granted land allotments and found employment in ranching and logging operations. Many of these allotments were located in rocky, hilly areas and over time were taken from the Maidu by illegal means leaving the owner with nothing. Many Maidu currently live in the region where they are actively engaged in preserving their belief systems, their cultural traditions and nurturing the land. Numerous local efforts have been, and are currently being made to incorporate Maidu people, and their age-old wisdom of land stewardship into current land management activities.

The Maidu Summit Consortium is a local nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Native American heritage, culture, and land of the Mountain Maidu.

The Consortium is formed of nine Mountain Maidu groups, two federally recognized tribes, nonprofits, and grassroots organizations located in Plumas and Lassen Counties in Northern California. They are working to receive ownership to approximately 4,000 acres of Pacific Gas and Electric land that

was previously occupied and nurtured by the Maidu people. These lands will reconnect the Maidu with their ancestry. Trails and other public facilities are proposed for some of these properties to ensure Maidu history lives on.



Existing Trails, Plans, and Policy Framework

There are three existing public trails within the Area. During the planning process, the Coalition identified additional trail segments that would make existing trails more accessible to local communities:

The 2,650-mile Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) forms the western boundary of the Area. This internationally known recreational trail receives the most use between June and September. The project area lies approximately halfway along the PCT between Mexico and Canada. One of the proposed trail segments (R-1 Chester to PCT) would connect the PCT to Chester.

The Bizz Johnson National Recreation Trail (Bizz) has its western terminus approximately 4 miles north of Westwood off County Road A21. The Bizz extends 25.4 miles eastward to the community of Susanville in Lassen County. It cuts through the thick pine

woodlands of the high country before descending into the scenic Susan River Canyon, passing numerous historic sites such as tunnels and trestles along the way. The Bizz follows the route of the old Fernley and Lassen Railroad line, which was established in 1914 for transporting logs and milled lumber to and from the Red River Lumber Company Mill in Westwood. The mill closed in 1956, and in 1978 Southern Pacific Railroad received approval to discontinue use of the old line. The Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service spearheaded conversion of the corridor to a trail.

Trail users can hike, mountain bike, cross-country ski, snowshoe, fish, horseback ride and camp on the Bizz. This Plan includes a 4-mile segment that would connect its current terminus at Mason Station Trailhead into the town of Westwood (R-5 Bizz Johnson to Westwood).

The Lake Almanor Recreation Trail (LART) winds through a mixed conifer forest with spectacular views of Lake Almanor, Dyer Mountain, and Lassen Peak. This paved, non-motorized trail provides numerous public access points

for users to jump on. This Plan includes the addition of several trail segments that would ultimately connect the LART to Chester and to the day use recreation sites along the southeast shore of Lake Almanor (R-4 Chester Trail, R-7 LART, East Extension, R-8 LART North Extension).





Planning Process

In 2014, several trails enthusiasts met in Chester to discuss how they could better collaborate to facilitate the development of recreation trails in the Area, that group initially called itself the Caribou Alliance for Trails. Their primary interest was in having more community-based trails and the improvement of nearby Forest Service trails and trailheads.

In 2015, some members of that group began work on the development of the Almanor Basin Water Trail project. The goal of the project was to create a stronger sense of community and collaboration among business owners based on serving the needs of kayakers, canoe users, and paddle boarders. The group developed the Almanor Basin Water Trail Map, to stimulate more nature-based tourism around the three local water bodies by showing opportunities for these popular and growing sports. The map included information on local flora and fauna, as well as history of the native Maidu people, fishing and cultural information and locations of businesses. Maps were sold to businesses for promotion and

offered for sale at many prominent locations. Feedback from businesses, tourists and the community was and is very positive.

Concurrent to that effort, Almanor Recreation and Park District (ARPD) worked with the County of Plumas to incorporate a long time Almanor Basin “Trails Around the Lake” concept for local and regional bike routes and for regional trail segments into the County’s Active Transportation Plan (ATP). That Plan was finalized in January 2018 and it includes most of the proposed trails discussed in this Plan. The public outreach associated with County meetings for ATP input provided a clearer picture of community desires and follow-up planning activities.

In 2017, several of these different organizations saw the need for more public input and a larger consensus for developing a regional trail network. They coalesced into the present Coalition. A grant proposal was presented to the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program for planning assistance. Since that time the Coalition has been receiving assistance and

guidance from National Park Service staff for this concept plan and the graphic renderings presented in the plan. Three public outreach meetings were held to show progress and receive added ideas and community direction. An online and paper survey was developed to determine community preferences on walking, hiking and bicycling. Feedback from these efforts has been incorporated into this plan.

Lassen/Lake Almanor Basin Regional Trails System Concept Plan



Map 2.1 Lassen/Lake Almanor Regional Trails Overview.

SECTION 2: THE VISION

System Overview

We envision a beautiful system of seamless, multi-use trails that run through and connect to various communities around Lake Almanor by anchoring to the existing shoreline Lake Almanor Recreation Trail and continuing with connections to the existing Bizz Johnson Trail to the east in Lassen County and the Pacific Crest Trail to the west in Tehama County [\[Map 2.1\]](#). A consistent system of gateway information locations and convenient trailheads, and wayfinding signage will provide visitors with information, amenities, and comfortable and safe outdoor travels.

The following is a list of trail segments and proposals for improvement and connection to incorporate them into a regional system.

Area trails:

- A-1 Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT)
- A-2 Bizz Johnson National Recreation Trail
- A-3 Lake Almanor Recreation Trail (LART)

Regional trails:

- R-1 Chester to PCT
- R-2 Stover Mountain
- R-3 Almanor Rail Trail
- R-4 Chester Trail
- R-5 Bizz Johnson Trail to Westwood
- R-6 Westwood to Almanor Rail Trail
- R-7 Lake Almanor Recreation Trail, East
- R-8 Lake Almanor Recreation Trail, North
- R-9 Hamilton Branch
(Almanor Rail Trail to A-13)
- R-10 East Shore, North
(Maidu Cemetery to A-13)
- R-11 East Shore, South
(PG&E Picnic Area to Maidu Cemetery)

Local trails:

- L-1 Mountain Meadows, North
- L-2 Indian Ole Trail
- L-3 Olsen Barn Loop Trail
- L-4 Collins Pine Nature Trail
- L-5 Keddie Ridge Trail

A-1: Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail

Internationally known, stretching 2,650 miles from Mexico to Canada, the “PCT” passes within 7 miles west of the center of Chester, CA, and is the westerly anchor for the Lassen/Lake Almanor Basin Regional Trails System.

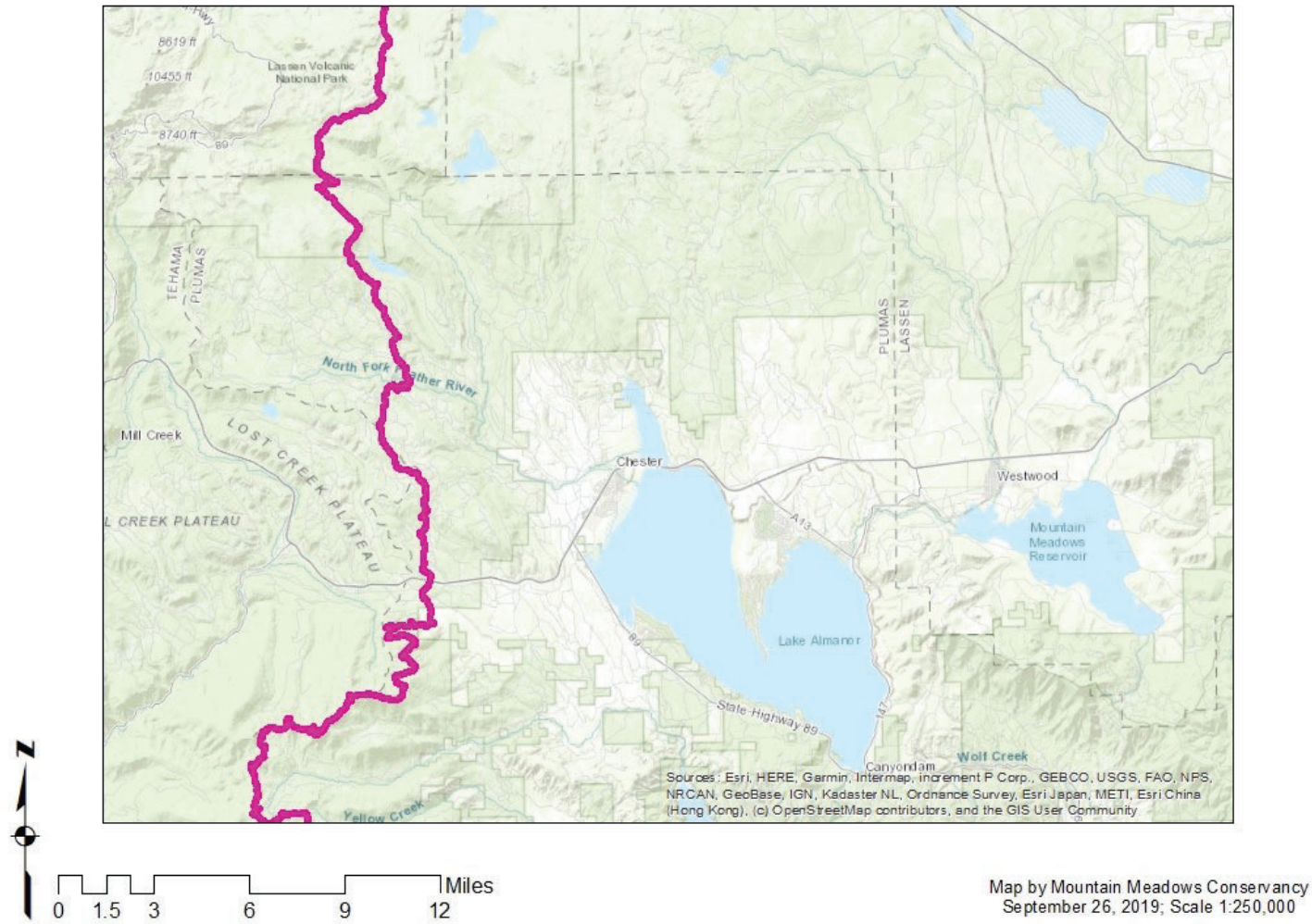
Segment Length: approximately 55 miles

Landowner: County of Plumas, Lassen National Forest (Almanor Ranger District), Plumas National Forest (Mt. Hough District), Lassen Volcanic National Park, Collins Pine, Sierra Pacific Industries, Baccala Ranch,

Adjacent communities: Chester



A-1 Pacific Crest Trail



A-2: Bizz Johnson National Recreation Trail

One of first official “Rail Trails” in the region, the “Bizz” is a multi-use, Lassen County route that extends westerly 25.4 miles from the Susanville Rail Depot to County Road A-21 (just 4 miles north of Westwood, CA), following the beautiful but rugged Susan River canyon.

Trail Segment Length: 25.4 miles

Landowners/Managers: Bureau of Land Management and US Forest Service

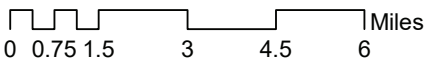
Adjacent communities: Susanville and Westwood



A-2 Bizz Johnson Recreation Trail



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Map by Mountain Meadows Conservancy
December 19, 2020; Scale 1:150,000

A-3: Lake Almanor Recreation Trail (LART)

Following the west shore of Lake Almanor, the “LART” is a winding, paved, 12-mile, multi-use trail extending from the Canyon Dam Boat Launch in the south to a trailhead north of the Almanor Campgrounds and just south of the Almanor West community.

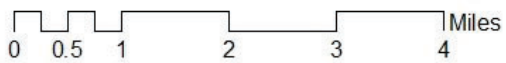
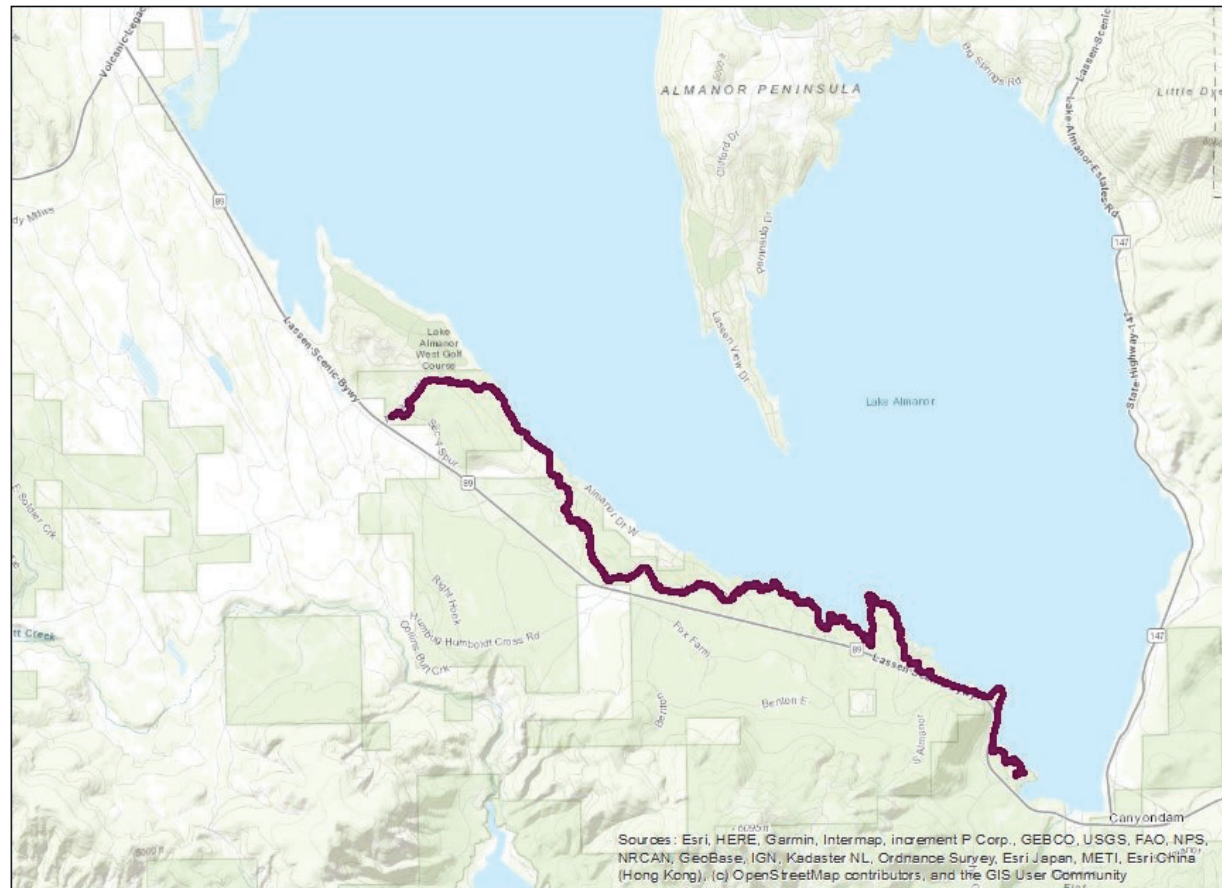
Trail Segment Length: 12 miles

Landowner: US Forest Service (Almanor Ranger District), PG&E

Adjacent communities: Almanor, Lake Almanor West, Prattville and Canyon Dam



A-3 Lake Almanor Recreation Trail



Map by Mountain Meadows Conservancy
September 26, 2019; Scale 1:80,000

R-1: Chester to PCT

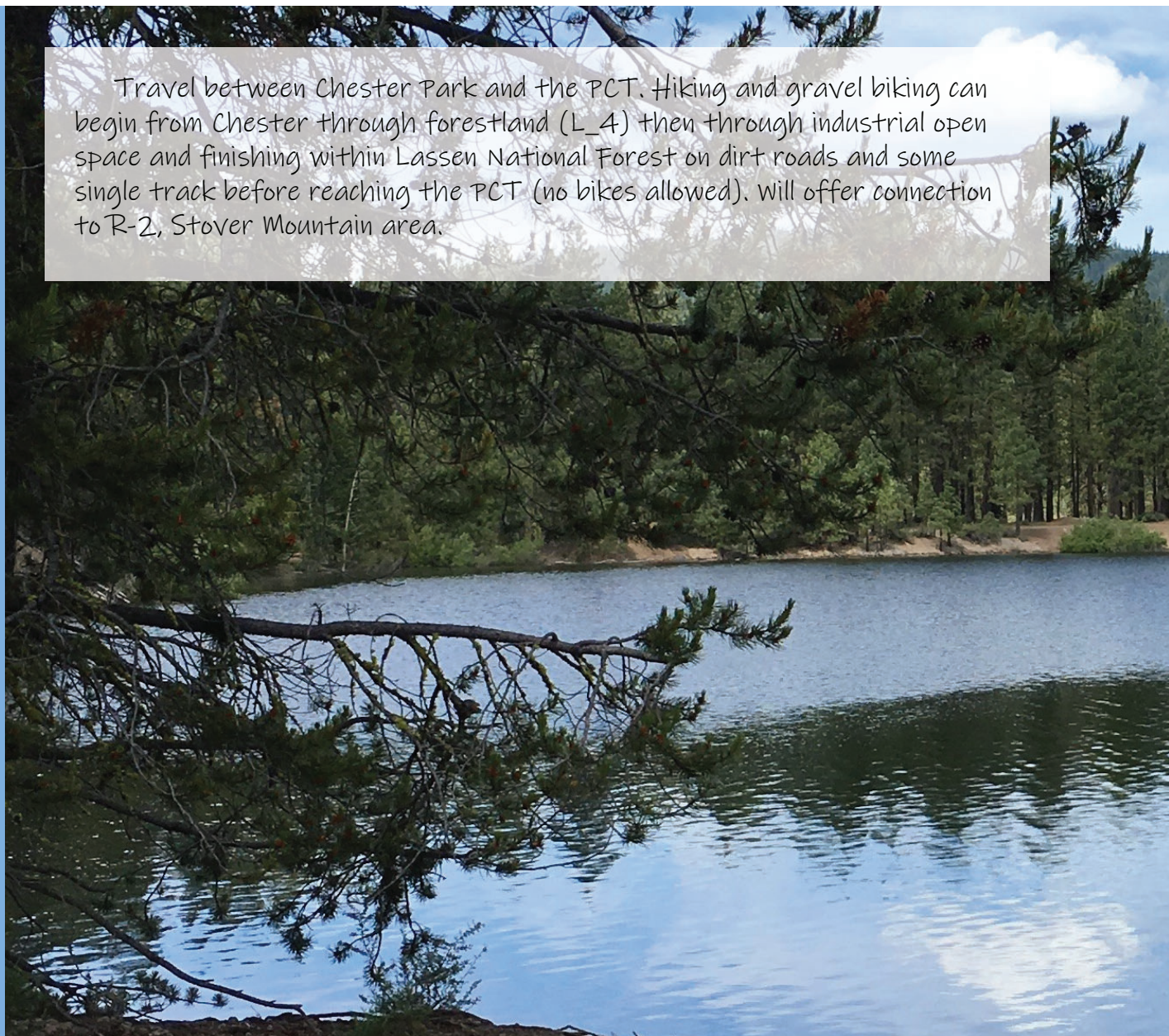
Will serve as a non-motorized, direct connection between the Collins Pine Nature Trail (L-4) in Chester and westerly 5 miles to the Pacific Crest Trail (A-1) following logging roads and Forest Service trails, traversing next to Lockerman Canyon and Stover Mountain scenic views.

Trail Segment Length:
approximately 5 miles

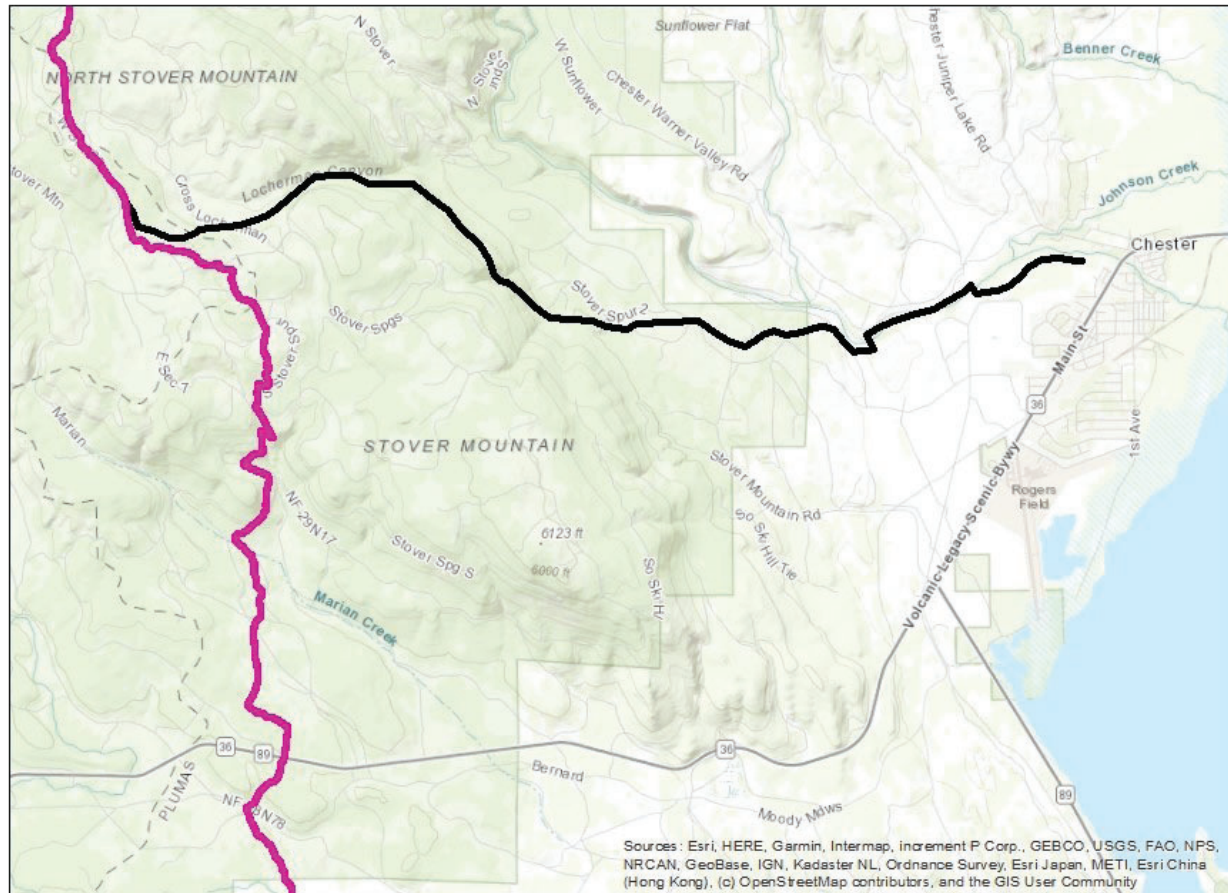
Landowner: Lassen National Forest (Almanor Ranger District), Collins Pine, Sierra Pacific Industries

Adjacent communities: Chester

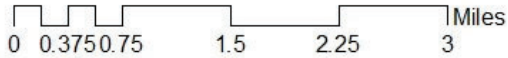
Travel between Chester Park and the PCT. Hiking and gravel biking can begin from Chester through forestland (L_4) then through industrial open space and finishing within Lassen National Forest on dirt roads and some single track before reaching the PCT (no bikes allowed). Will offer connection to R-2, Stover Mountain area.



R-1 Chester to Pacific Crest Trail



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Map by Mountain Meadows Conservancy
September 26, 2019; Scale 1:60,000

R-2: Stover Mountain

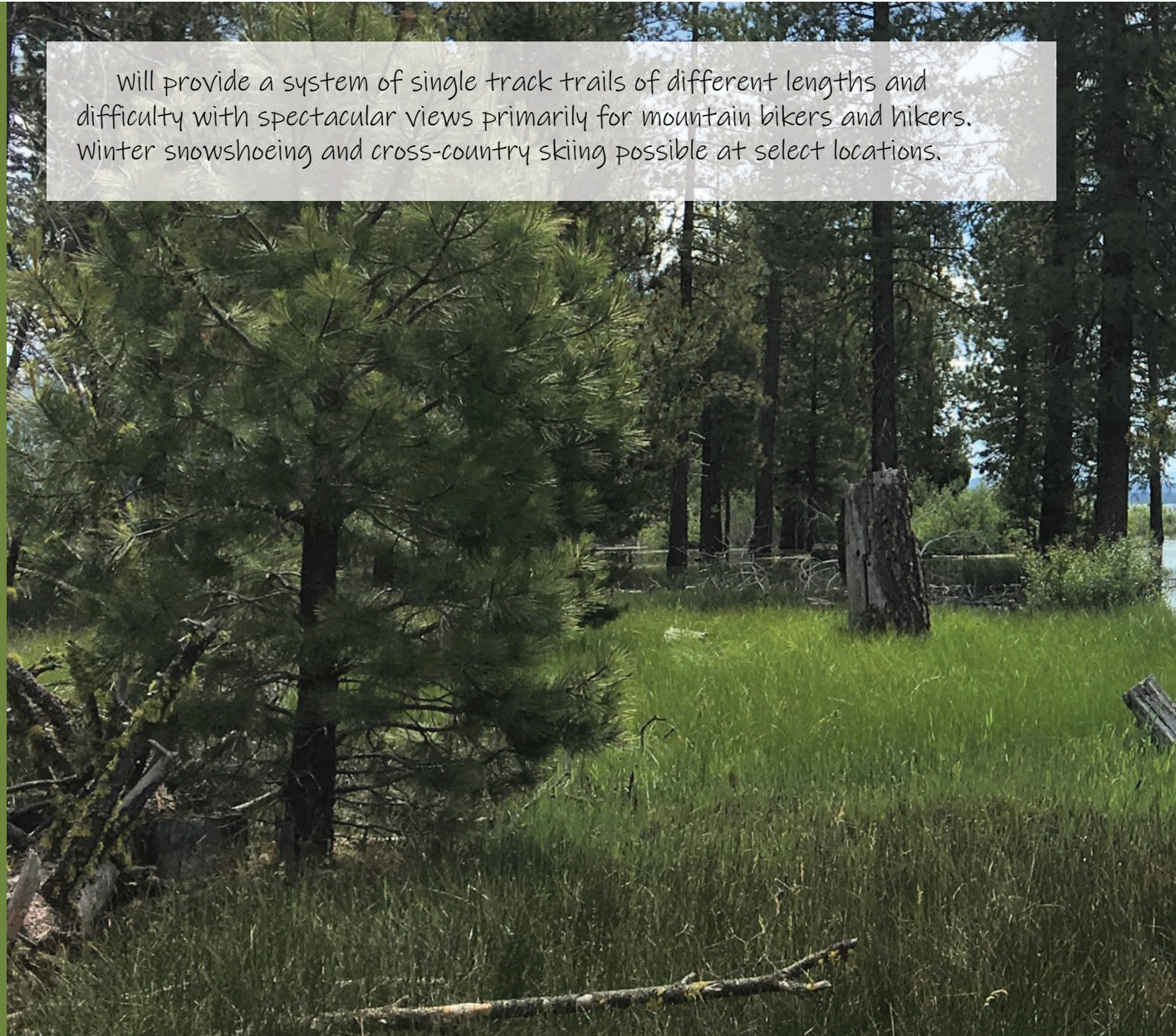
Proposed loop trails for hiking and a range of mountain biking skills having challenging segments and exciting views. Presently the routes do not exist.

Trail Segment Length:
approximately 12 miles

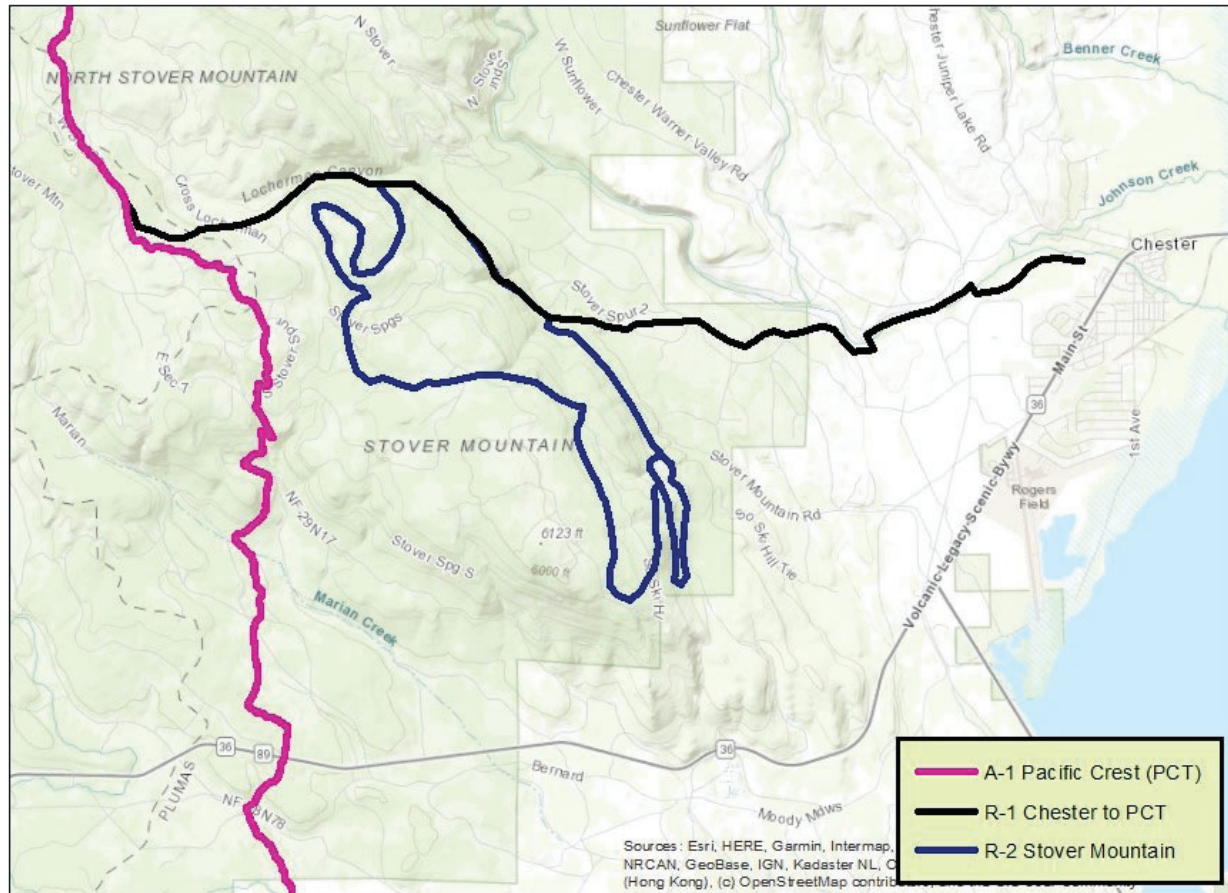
Landowner: Lassen National Forest
(Almanor Ranger District)

Adjacent communities: Chester

Will provide a system of single track trails of different lengths and difficulty with spectacular views primarily for mountain bikers and hikers. Winter snowshoeing and cross-country skiing possible at select locations.



R-2 Stover Mountain Recreation Trails



Map by Mountain Meadows Conservancy
September 26, 2019; Scale 1:60,000

R-3: Almanor Rail Trail

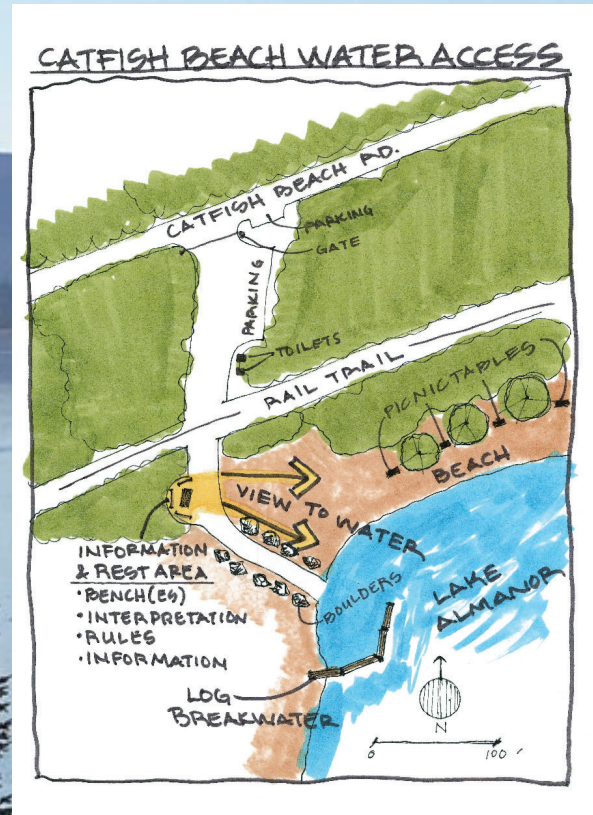
This 12-mile historic railroad alignment extends from the Collins Pine Mill, through Chester, through forest timberlands along the north shore of Lake Almanor, and ending at Clear Creek Junction at State Route 147. Here, timber products are trucked to the junction are loaded on rail cars for scheduled connections to the BNSF railroad.

Trail Segment Length: 12 miles (portions in use or contention)

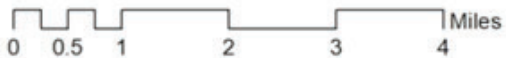
Landowner: Collins Pine Company under their past rail company, Almanor Railroad

Adjacent communities: Chester, Bailey Creek, Clear Creek, Foxwood, Lake Almanor Country Club, Hamilton Branch.

Gently sloped (<3%), former rail bed grade within forest/timberlands with panoramic lake and mountain views, creek crossings and interesting geology and wildlife viewing. Includes long distances of gently curved, down slope or upslope sections (direction dependent) over some high embankments and some interesting canyon cuts. Lakeshore swimming, fishing, kayaking, paddle boarding activities are possible. And smooth gravel surfaced rail bed is planned for gravel biking, some road biking and easy mountain biking. Selected trailheads will have accessible sections. Includes winter snowshoeing and cross-country skiing opportunities.



R-3 Almanor Rail Trail



R-4: Chester Trail

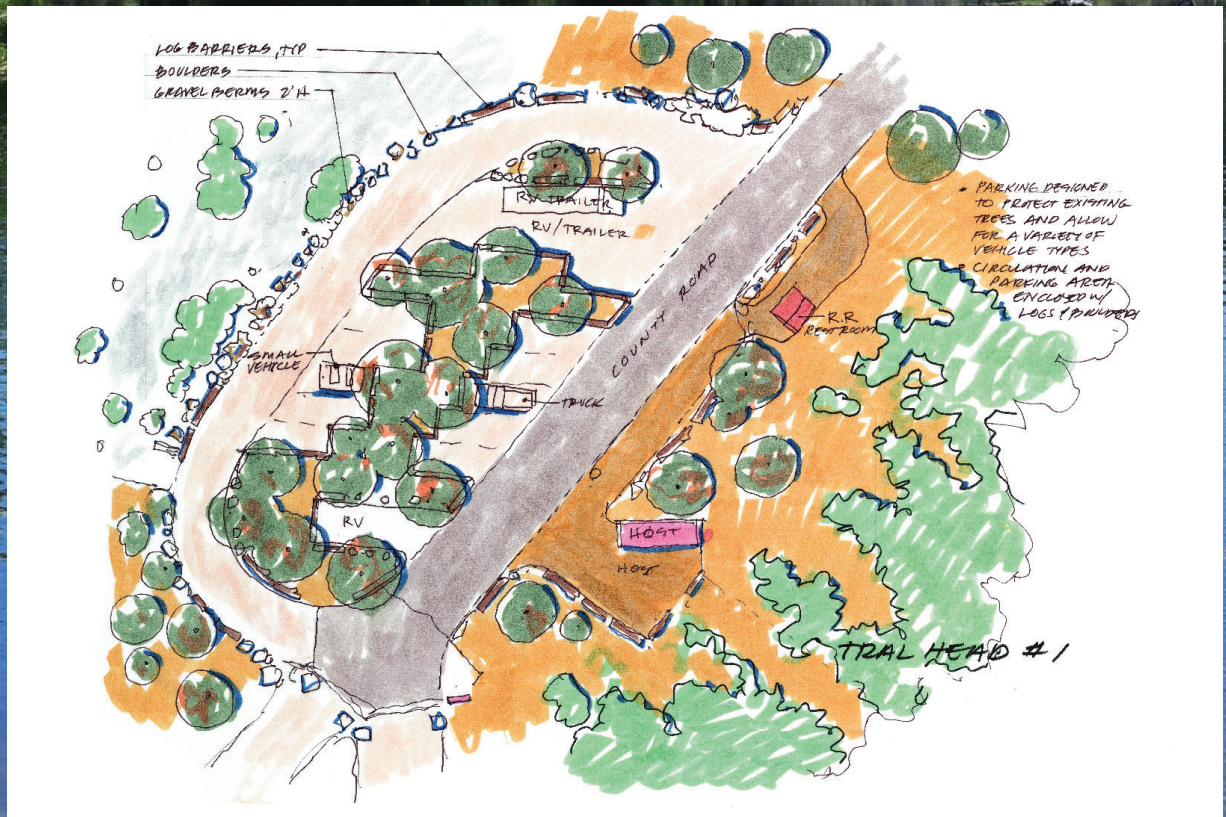
A planned 3-mile, multi-use trail to connect a gateway location along State Route 89, near State Route 36, to the east edge of Chester via First Avenue joining existing bike lanes serving both Chester Elementary and Chester Middle and High Schools and terminating at Main Street.

Trail Segment Length: 3 miles

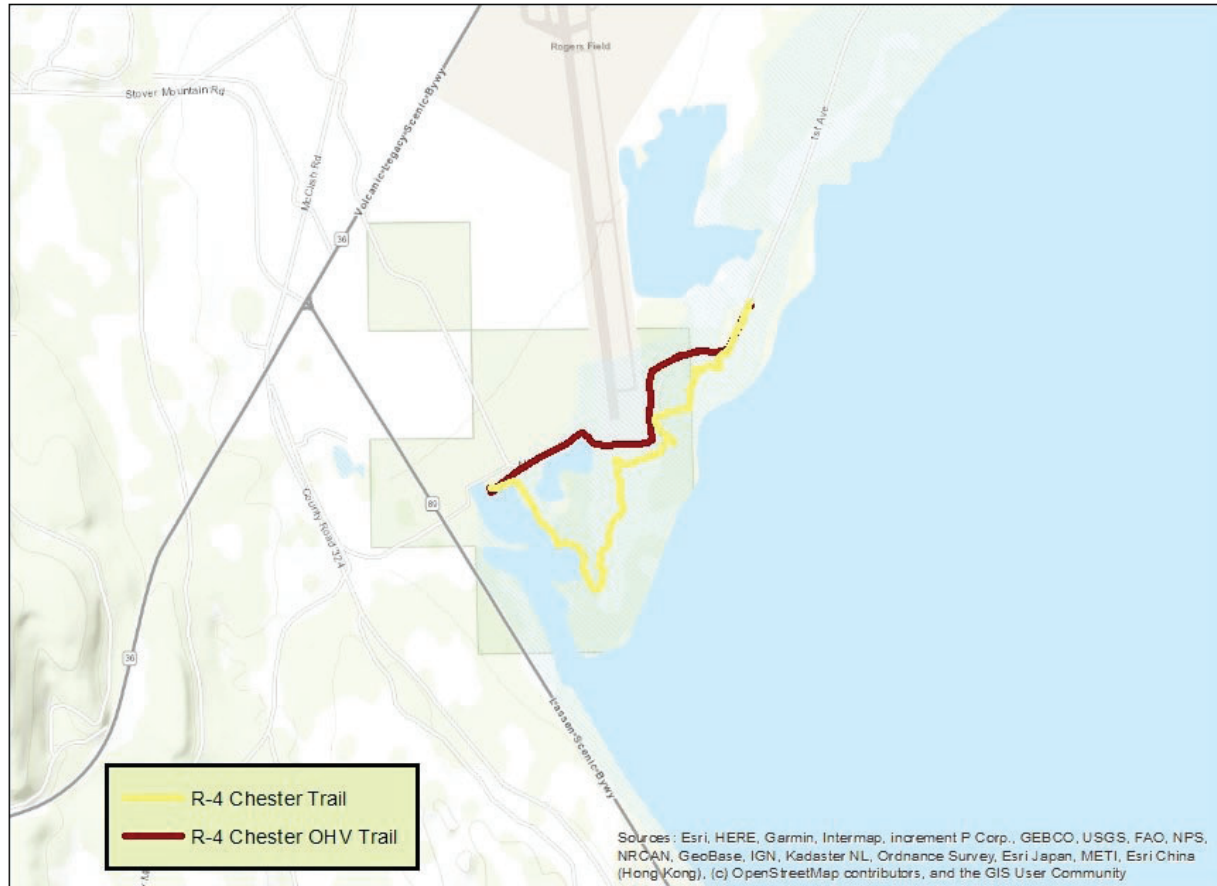
Landowner: County of Plumas, US Forest Service (Almanor Ranger District), PG&E

Adjacent communities: Chester

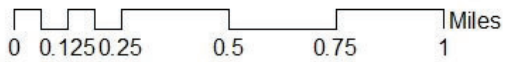
Includes Class II and "share the road" pavement, from First Avenue and Highway 36 to a formal trailhead south where First Avenue pavement ends. Gravel biking and hiking continues west over flat shoreline areas with expansive views and active wildlife. Future amenities will offer picnicking/parking/ birding areas; with winter snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. An existing, separate dirt road presently offers motorized, off-road travel.



R-4 Chester Trail



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Map by Mountain Meadows Conservancy
September 26, 2019; Scale 1:20,000

R-5: Bizz Johnson Trail to Westwood

Proposed connector trail from current terminus of Bizz Johnson Trail at Mason Station into Westwood, terminating at the Westwood Visitors Center.

Trail Segment Length: 4.0 miles

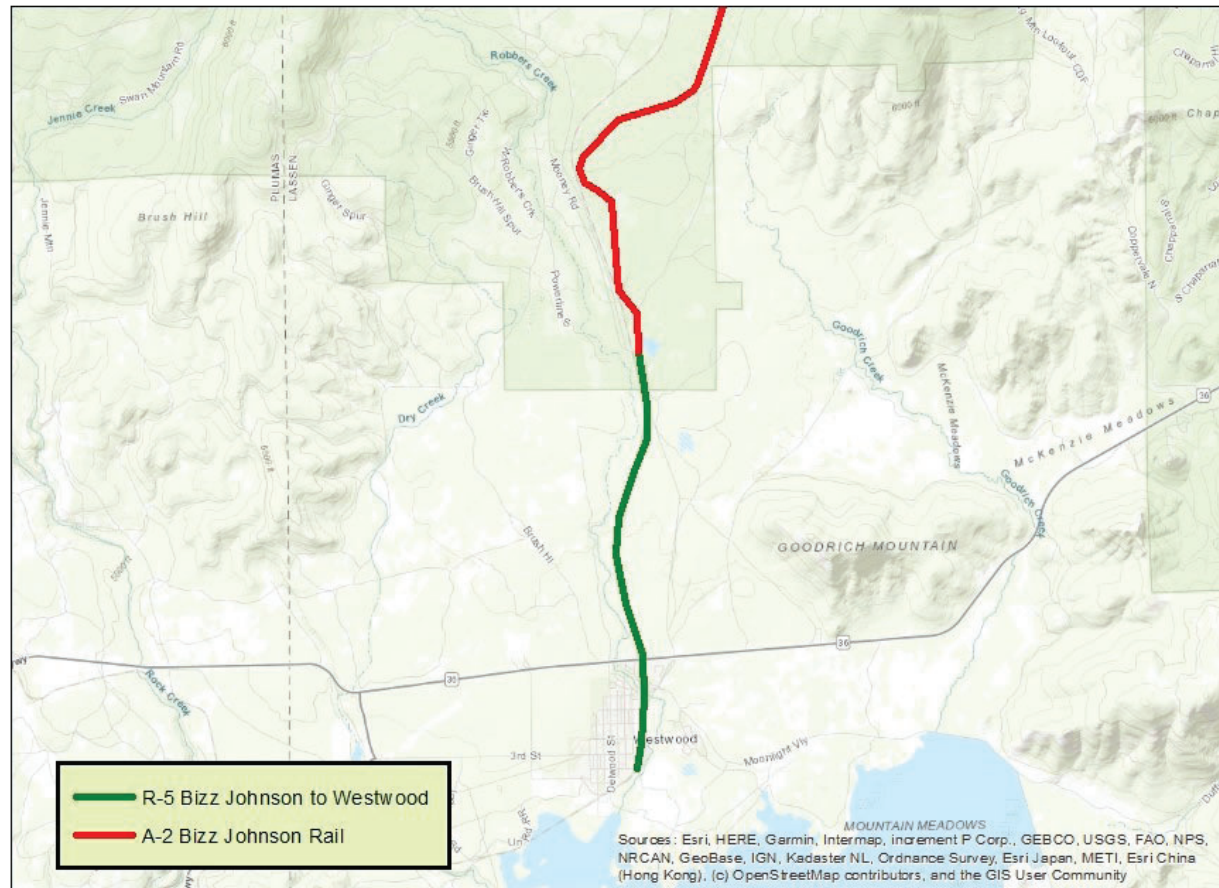
Landowners/Managers: Beaty and Associates, Lassen County, US Forest Service, Caltrans

Adjacent communities: Westwood

Hiking and bicycling through forest/timberlands over gently sloped, compacted natural surfaces with sections for viewing meadows on the way to the quaint community of Westwood with dining and overnight accommodations.



R-5 Bizz Johnson to Westwood



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Map by Mountain Meadows Conservancy
September 26, 2019; Scale 1:80,000

R-6 Westwood to Almanor Rail Trail

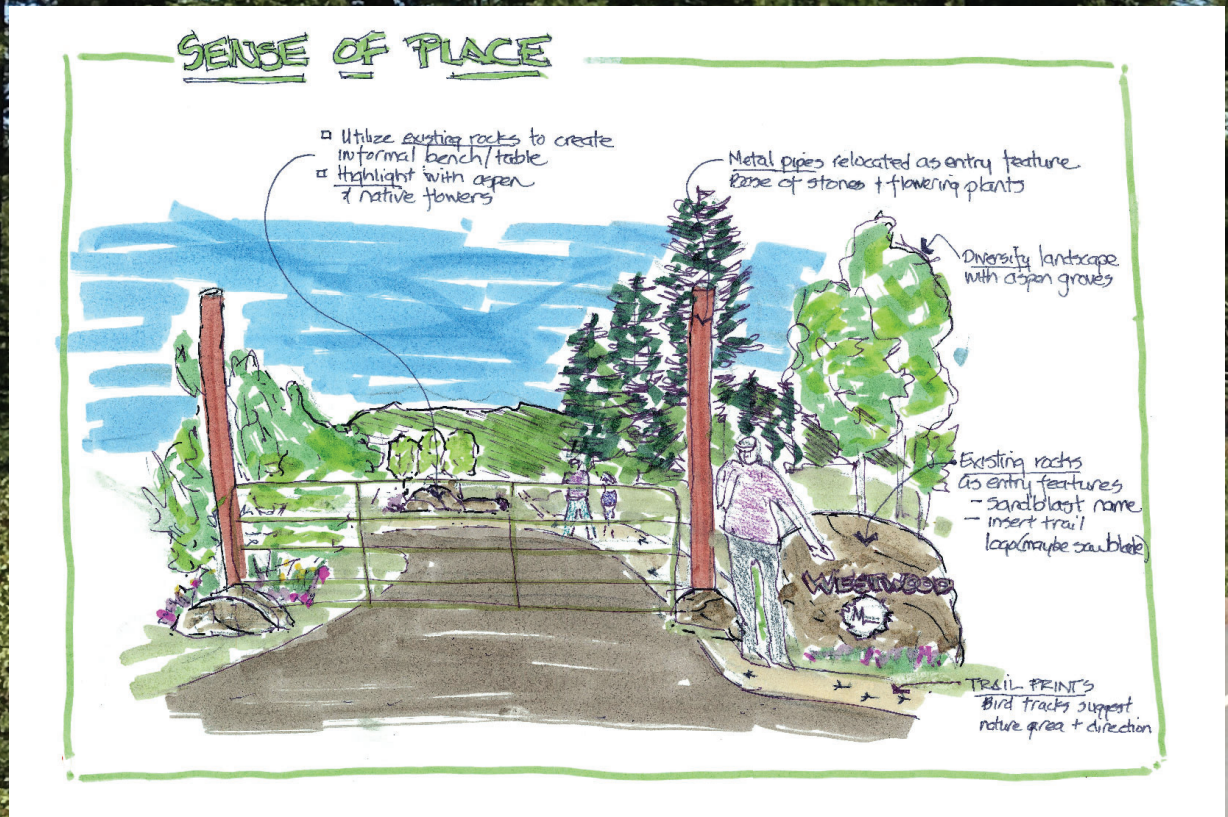
Proposed connector trail from Westwood Visitors Center to terminus of proposed Almanor Rail Trail, most likely will follow A-21 (Mooney Road) to State Route 147.

Trail Segment Length:
Approximately 4.0 miles

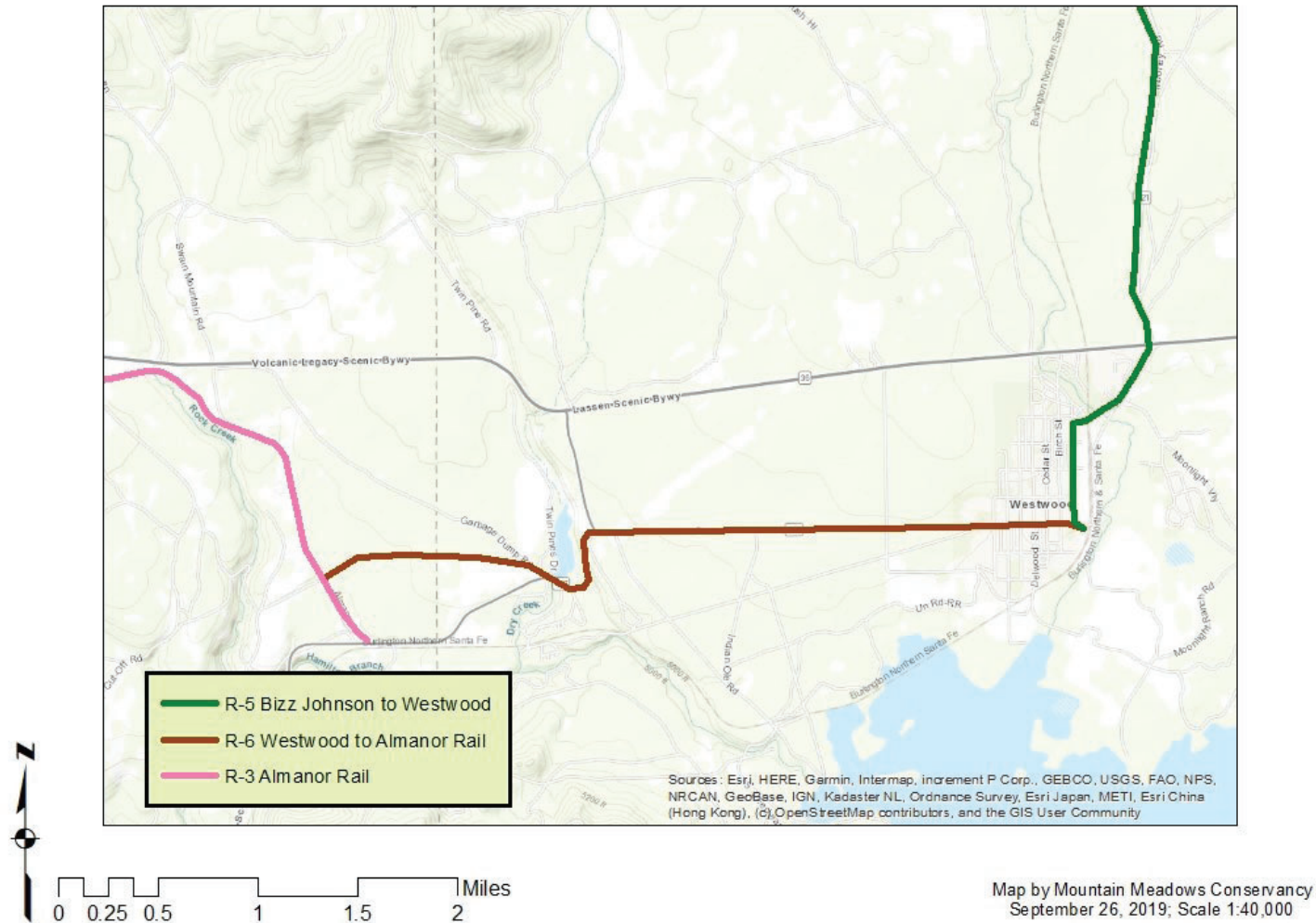
Landowners/Managers: Sierra Pacific Industries, Beaty and Associates, Caltrans, Lassen County, Plumas County

Adjacent communities: Westwood and Clear Creek

Forestland bicycling over a low volume, but high speed asphalt County Road A-21 offers Class II or "share-the-road lanes". Communities of Westwood and Clear Creek provide rest areas, restrooms and quaint scenic views.



R-6 Westwood to Almanor Rail



Map by Mountain Meadows Conservancy
September 26, 2019; Scale 1:40,000

R-7 Lake Almanor Recreation Trail, East

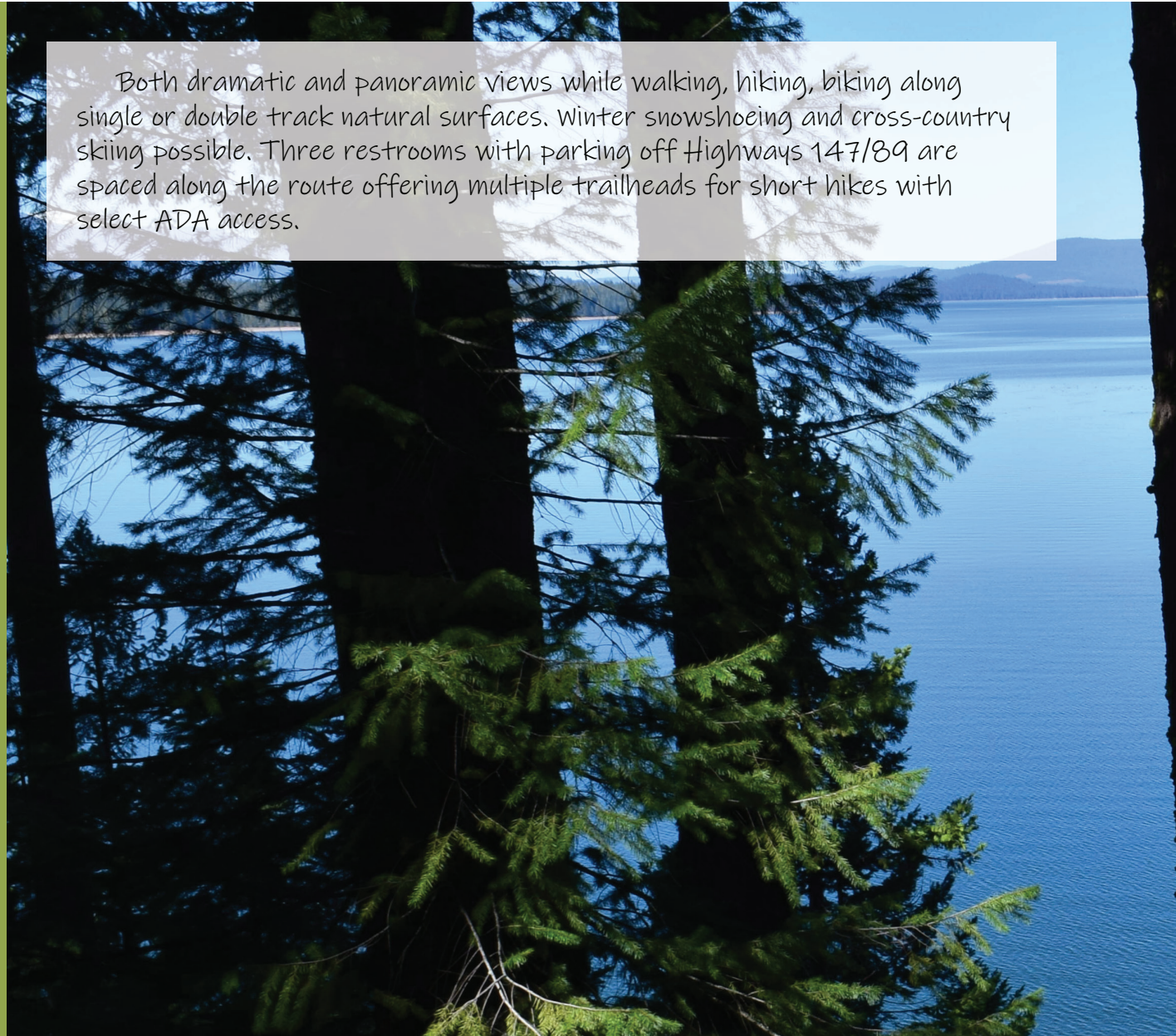
Near the south end of the LART (A-3) at the south end of Lake Almanor exists several PG&E recreation facilities including parking, picnic tables and restrooms, all with stunning vistas. This planned 3-mile multi-use trail will connect Canyon Dam Picnic Area, Scenic Overlook, and East Shore Picnic Area.

Trail Segment Length: 1.3 miles

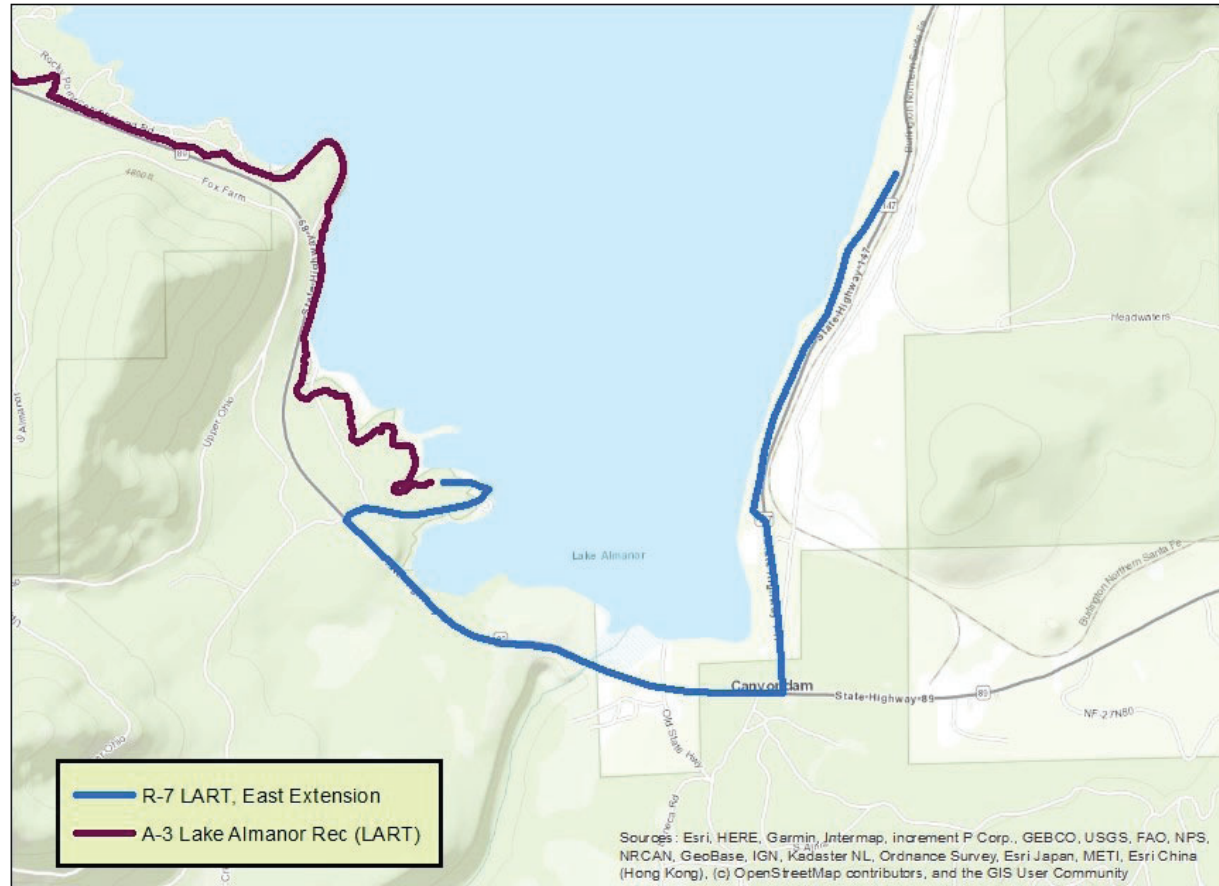
Landowners/Managers: Pacific Gas & Electric Company

Adjacent communities: Canyon Dam

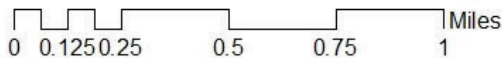
Both dramatic and panoramic views while walking, hiking, biking along single or double track natural surfaces. Winter snowshoeing and cross-country skiing possible. Three restrooms with parking off Highways 147/89 are spaced along the route offering multiple trailheads for short hikes with select ADA access.



R-7 Lake Almanor Recreation Trail East Extension



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Map by Mountain Meadows Conservancy
September 26, 2019; Scale 1:20,000

R-8 Lake Almanor Recreation Trail, North

This segment provides the opportunity to extend the very popular existing LART to the north approximately 3.7 miles along the west shoreline of Lake Almanor, to connect the community of Almanor West, and to bring the LART closer to Chester.

Trail Segment Length: 3.7 miles

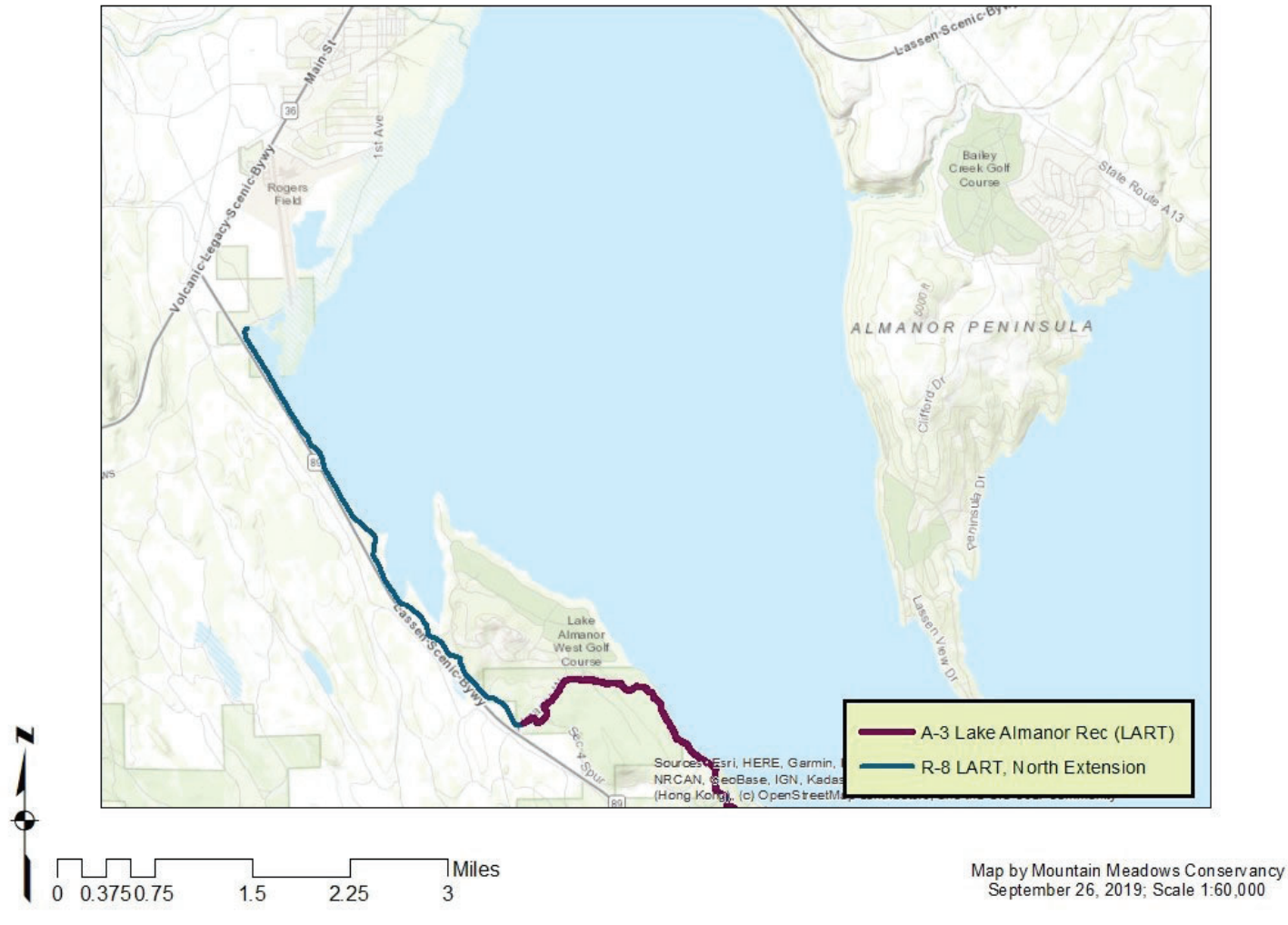
Landowners/Managers: Caltrans

Adjacent communities: Almanor West, Chester

Forestland and lakeshore asphalt pathway with stunning lake views and opportunities for picnicking, swimming and wildlife viewing. Offers walking, hiking, biking over a paved, road-separated, multi-use trail. Winter snowshoeing and cross-country skiing possible near the shoreline.



R-8 Lake Almanor Recreation Trail North Extension



R-9 Hamilton Branch (Almanor Rail Trail to A-13)

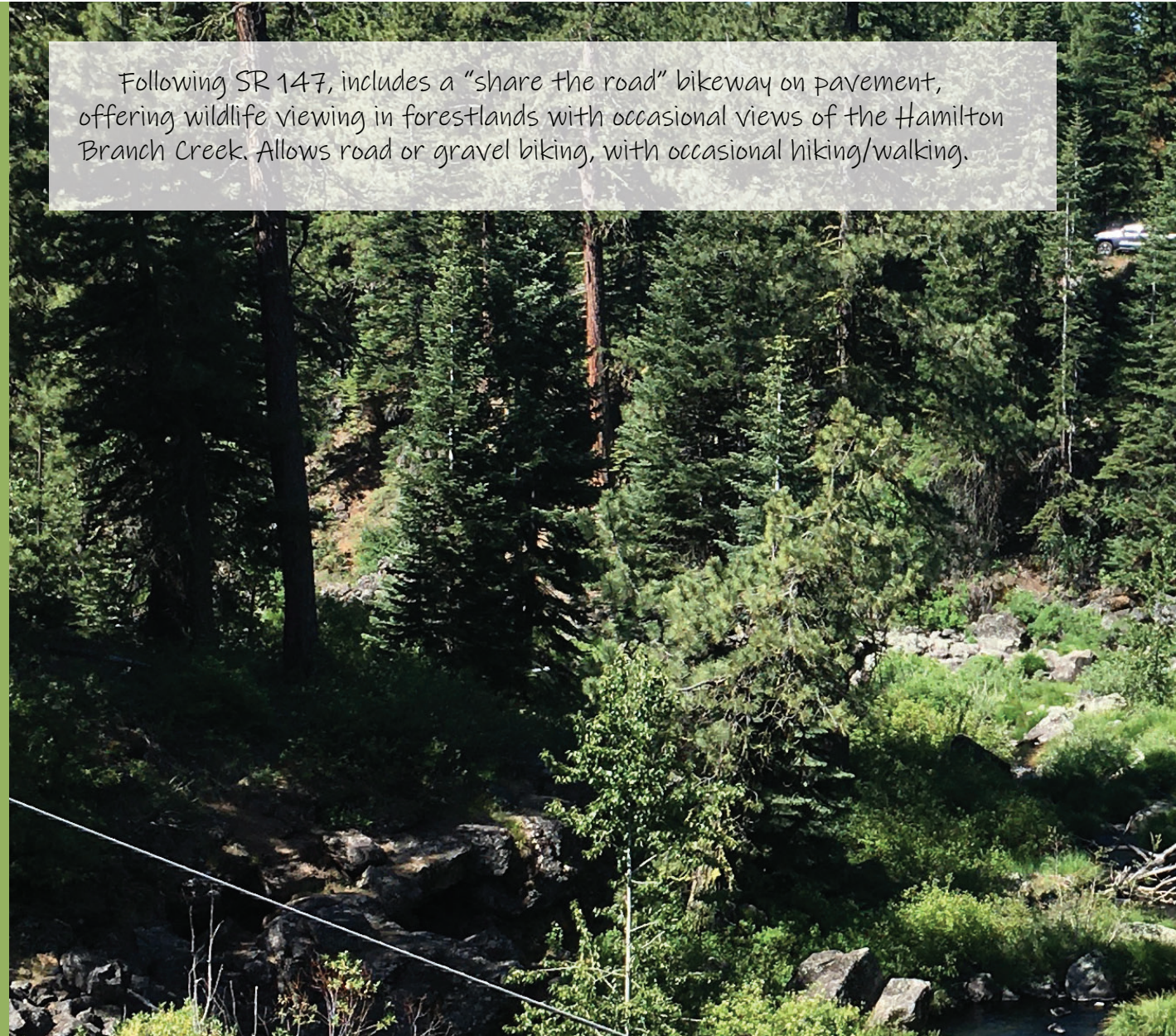
This segment will connect the Almanor Rail Trail to County Road A-13 and provide a connection between the communities of Hamilton Branch and the East Shore to the Almanor Rail Trail.

Trail Segment Length: 2.2 miles

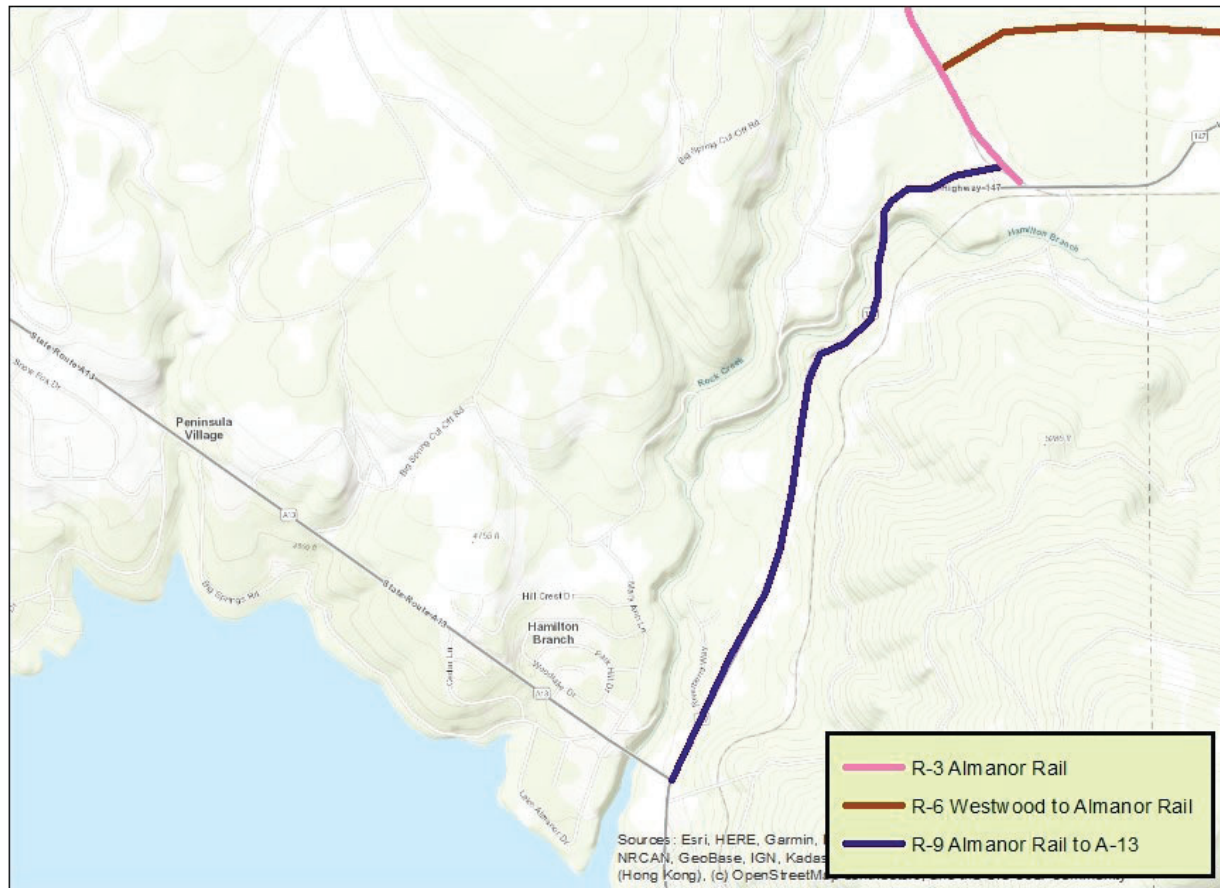
Landowners/Managers: Private, Sierra Pacific Industries, Caltrans

Adjacent communities: Hamilton Branch, East Shore, Clear Creek

Following SR 147, includes a “share the road” bikeway on pavement, offering wildlife viewing in forestlands with occasional views of the Hamilton Branch Creek. Allows road or gravel biking, with occasional hiking/walking.

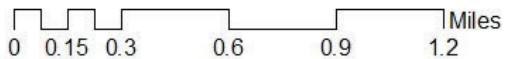


R-9 Almanor Rail to Hamilton Branch



- R-3 Almanor Rail
- R-6 Westwood to Almanor Rail
- R-9 Almanor Rail to A-13

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetM



Map by Mountain Meadows Conservancy
September 26, 2019; Scale 1:40,000

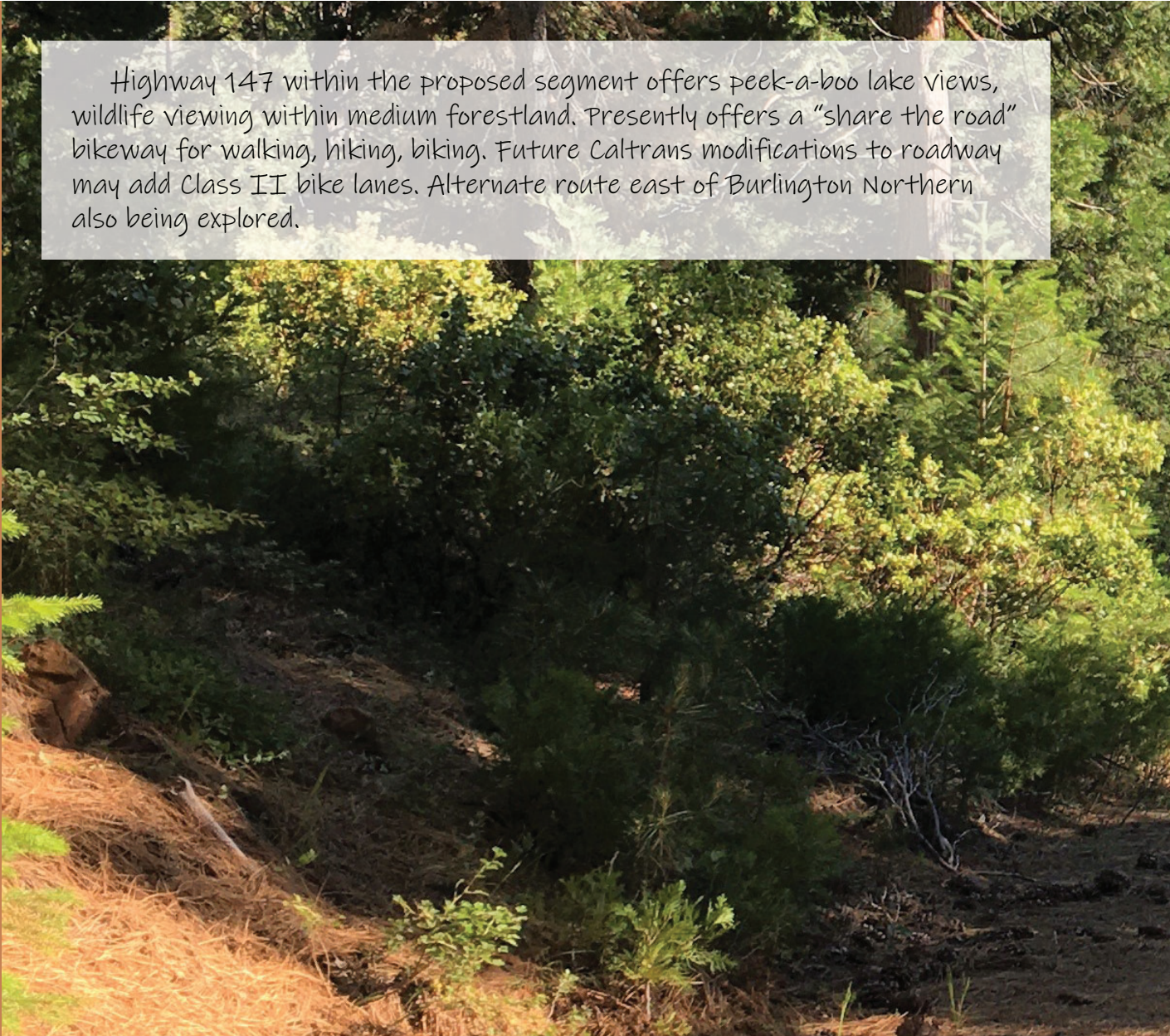
R-10 East Shore, North (Maidu Cemetery to A-13)

A proposed segment that will connect the communities of Hamilton Branch and the East Shore with a varied topography and views of the forest, Lake Almanor and surrounding mountains, ultimately connecting with segment R-11.

Trail Segment Length: 4.25 miles

Landowners/Managers: Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI), Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF), Maidu Summit Consortium (MSC), Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), private landowners

Adjacent communities: Eastshore, Hamilton Branch

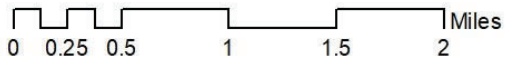


Highway 147 within the proposed segment offers peek-a-boo lake views, wildlife viewing within medium forestland. Presently offers a “share the road” bikeway for walking, hiking, biking. Future Caltrans modifications to roadway may add Class II bike lanes. Alternate route east of Burlington Northern also being explored.

R-10 East Shore North



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Map by Mountain Meadows Conservancy
September 26, 2019; Scale 1:40,000

R-11 East Shore, South (PG&E Picnic Area to Maidu Cemetery)

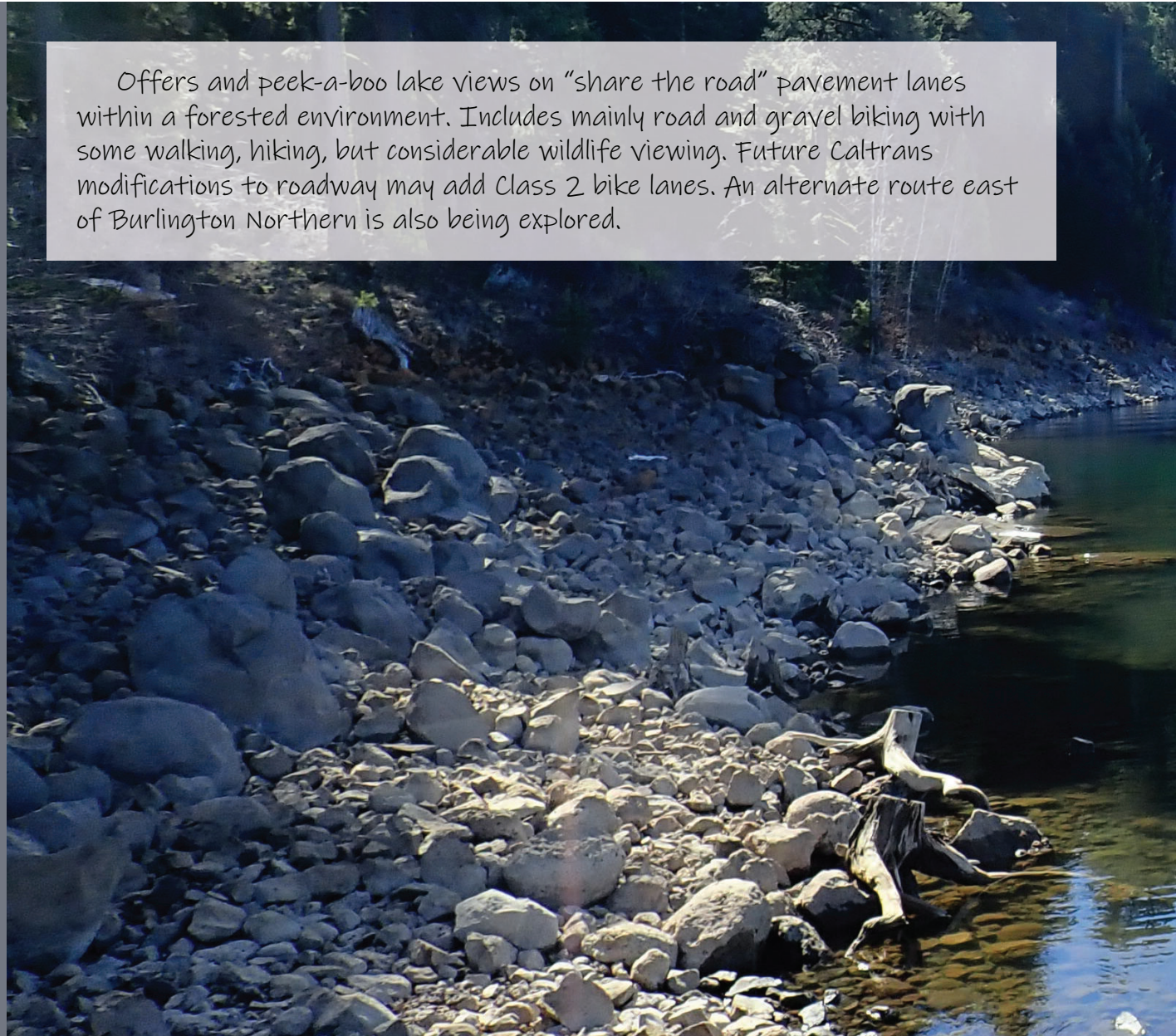
As the east shoreline continues north of PG&E's East Shore Picnic Area, this segment provides an important route on the east side Burlington Northern Santa Fe Right of Way and crosses PG&E and Maidu lands to create an out and back trail to a scenic hilltop (elevation 5,247 ft.).

Trail Segment Length: 3.5 miles

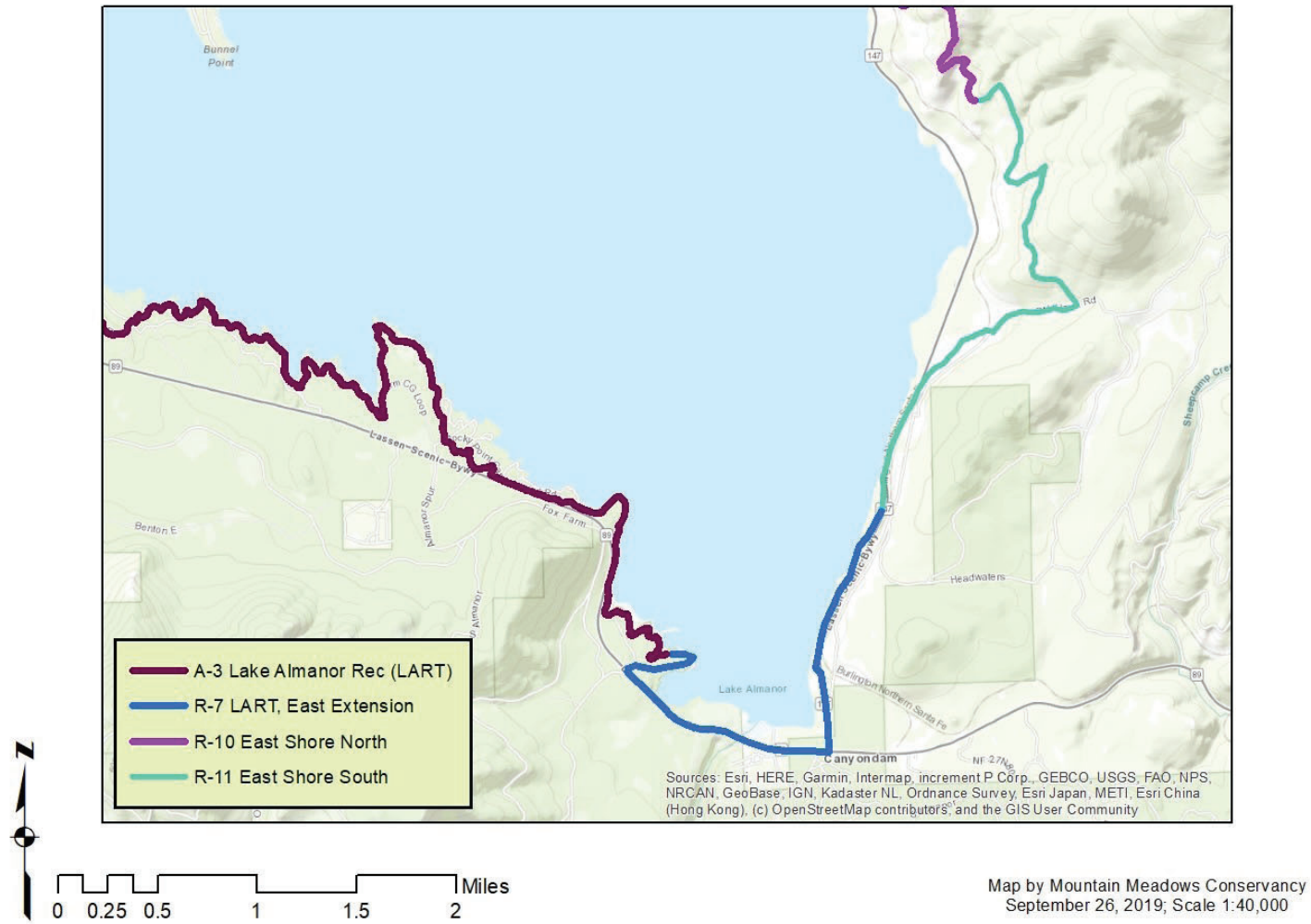
Landowners/Managers: Pacific Gas & Electric Company, Maidu Summit Consortium

Adjacent communities: Canyon Dam, Eastshore

Offers and peek-a-boo lake views on "share the road" pavement lanes within a forested environment. Includes mainly road and gravel biking with some walking, hiking, but considerable wildlife viewing. Future Caltrans modifications to roadway may add Class 2 bike lanes. An alternate route east of Burlington Northern is also being explored.



R-11 East Shore South



L-1 Mountain Meadows, North

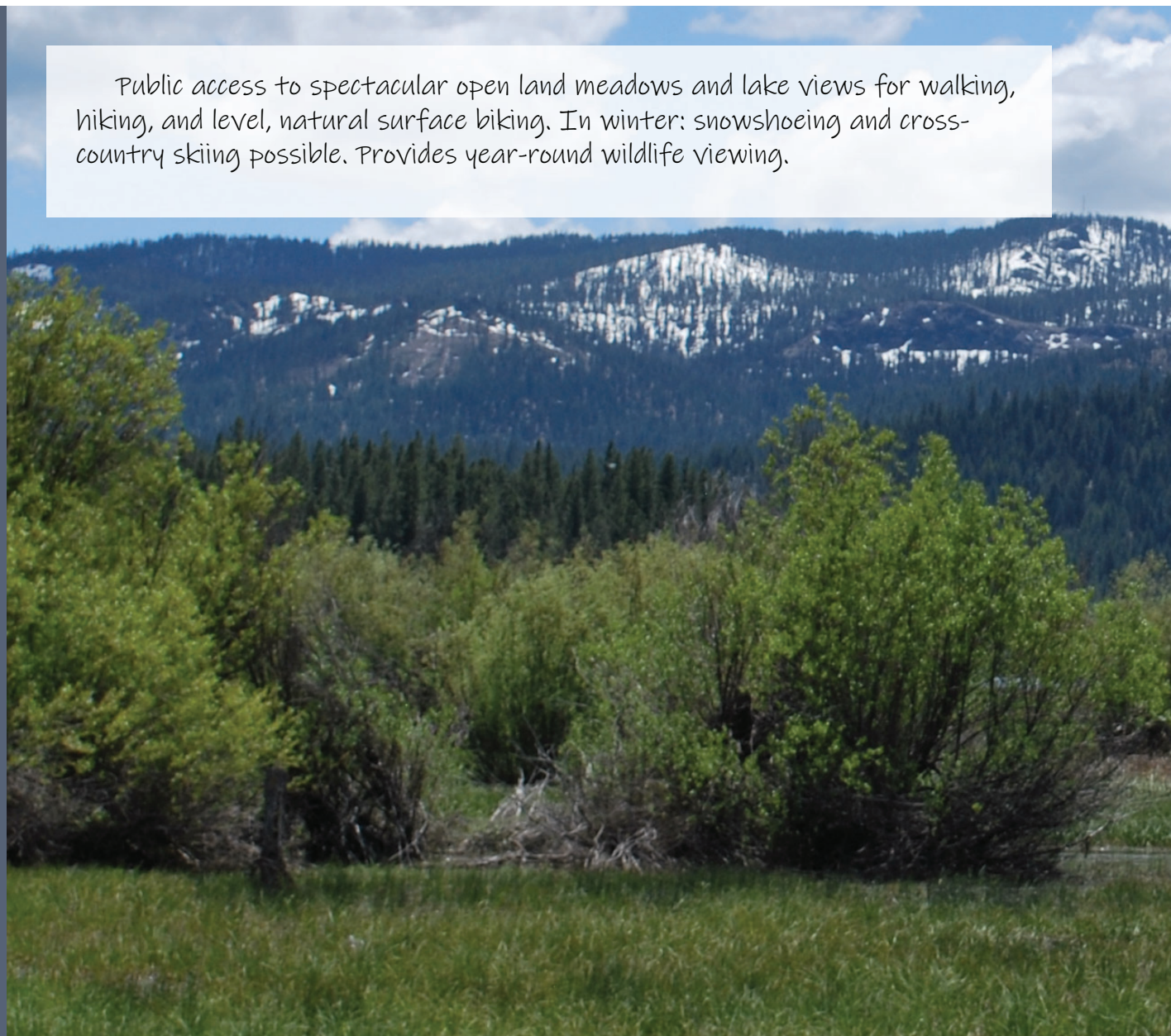
This segment will provide visitors with an opportunity to explore the north shore of the Mountain Meadows Reservoir with abundant wildlife viewing, grasslands, forests and stunning views all within walking distance to the community of Westwood.

Trail Segment Length: 5 miles

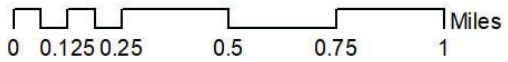
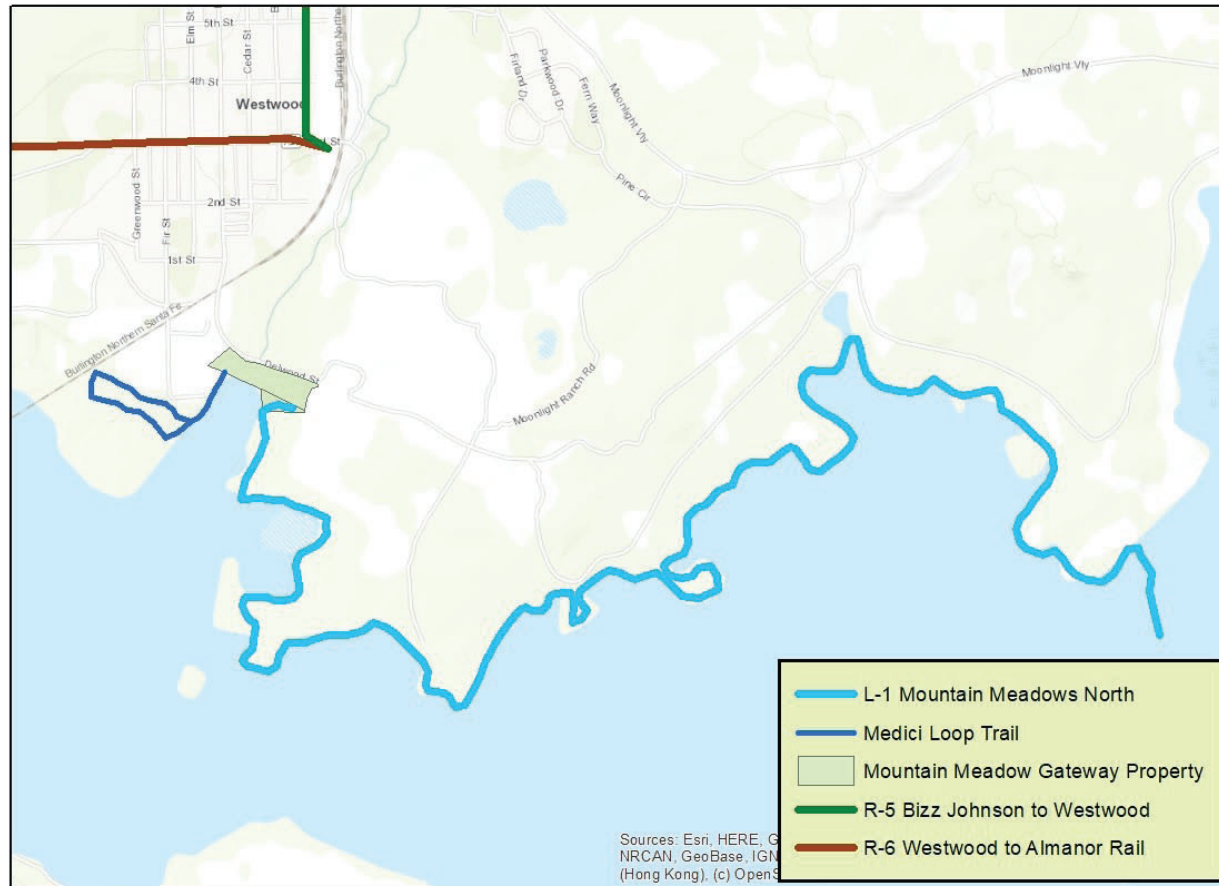
Landowners/Managers: Pacific Gas and Electric, Feather River Land Trust

Adjacent communities: Westwood, Clear Creek, Hamilton Branch

Public access to spectacular open land meadows and lake views for walking, hiking, and level, natural surface biking. In winter: snowshoeing and cross-country skiing possible. Provides year-round wildlife viewing.



L-1 Mountain Meadows North



Map by Mountain Meadows Conservancy
September 26, 2019; Scale 1:20,000

L-2 Indian Ole Trail

A one-mile walking path that follows the shoreline near Indian Ole Dam. Tailhead and boat launch facilities, picnic tables, benches and interpretive signs make this an accessible destination for walkers, birders, anglers and human powered boating.

Trail Segment Length: 1 mile

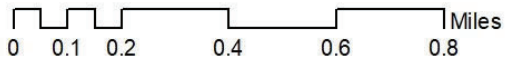
Landowners/Managers: Pacific Gas and Electric

Adjacent communities: Westwood, Clear Creek, Hamilton Branch

Remote small boat/kayak launch into Mountain Meadows Reservoir on lovely forested shoreline. Offers peaceful walking, hiking, and level, natural-surface biking and significant wildlife viewing, spectacular open space viewing with kayaking, paddle boarding, and fishing. Winter allows snowshoeing and cross-country skiing if entry roads are plowed.



L-2 Indian Ole



Map by Mountain Meadows Conservancy
September 26, 2019; Scale 1:16,000

L-3 Olsen Barn Loop Trail

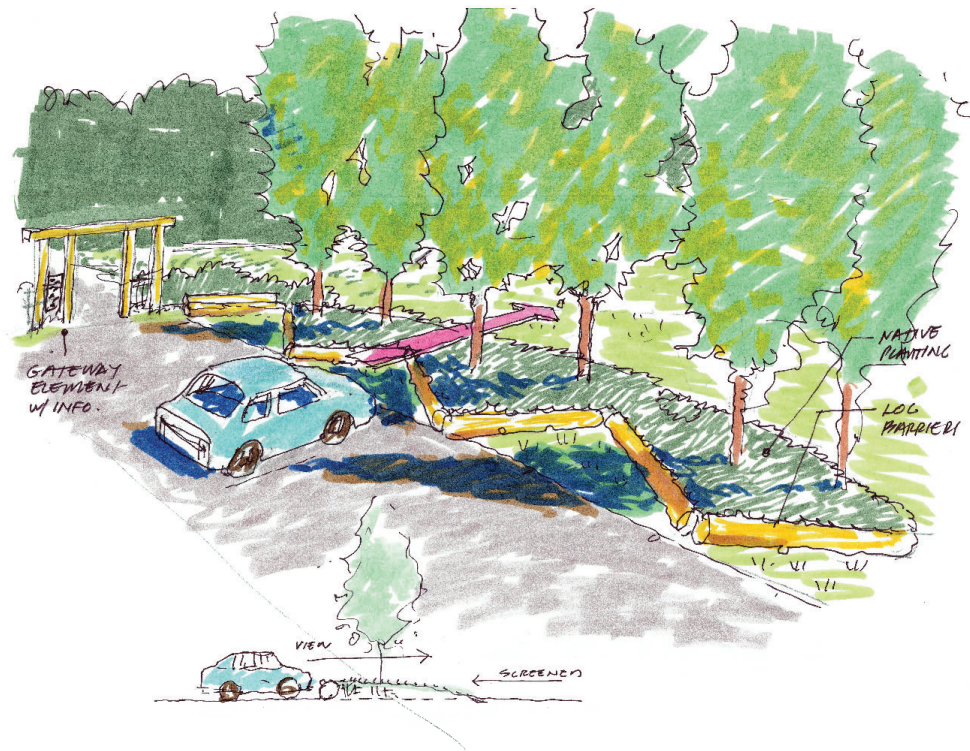
A one-mile walking path leads visitors around the Olsen Barn Meadow with views of Lake Almanor, surrounding mountains, wildlife and the North Fork Feather River and the historic Olsen Barn within walking distance to the community of Chester. Parking, information kiosk, benches and picnic tables are available for visitors.

Trail Segment Length: 1 mile

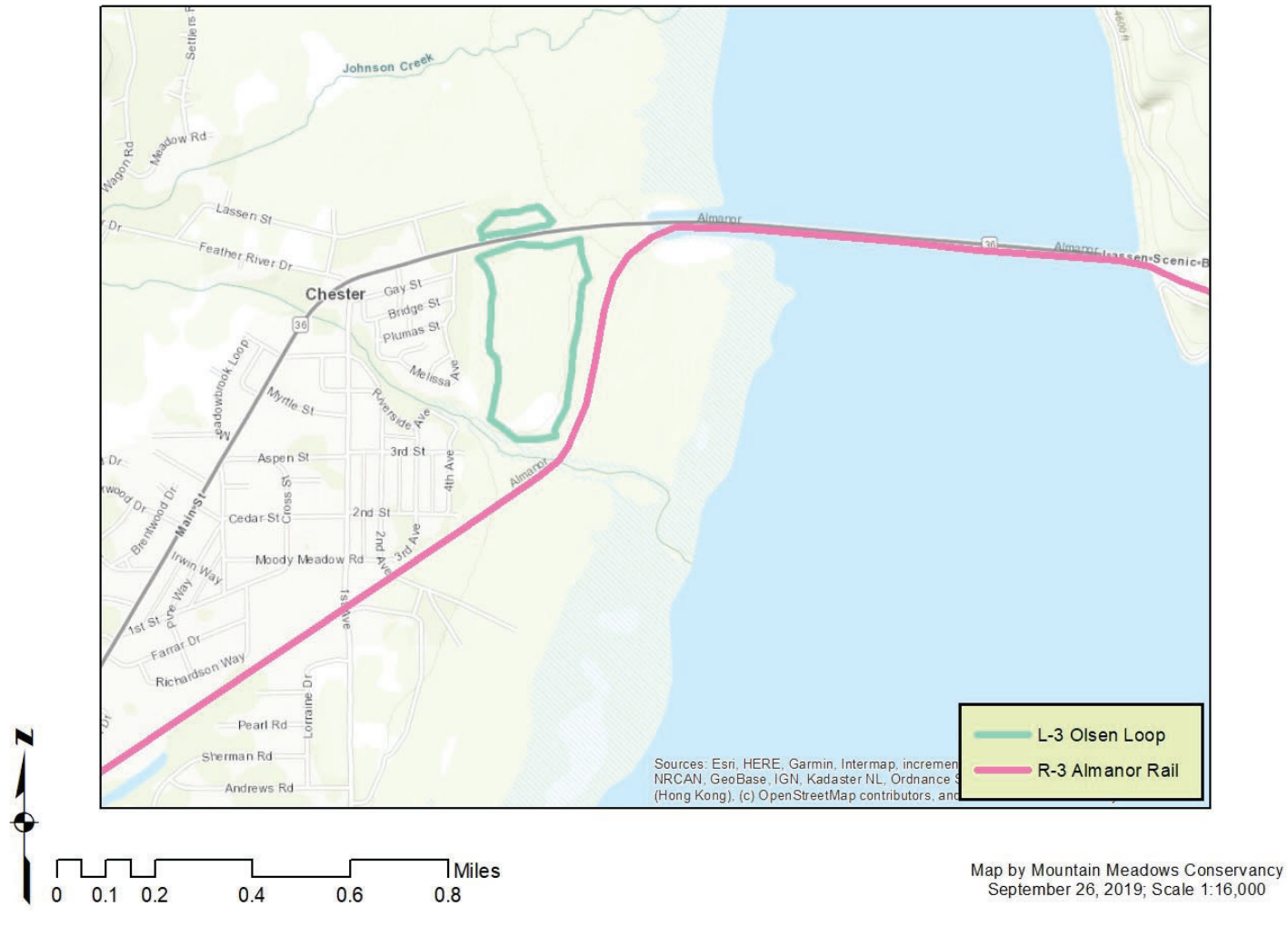
Landowners/Managers: Feather River Land Trust

Adjacent communities: Chester

Historic 1800s hand-sawn barn structure. Offers strolls, hiking, biking, over soil and grass mowed surfaces. Spectacular open space/meadow views and sunrises/sunsets. Access to the North Fork Feather River and an old 1930's train bridge (requires foot traffic only and special care). Winter snowshoeing and cross-country skiing possible with significant wildlife viewing year round.



L-3 Olsen Barn Loop Trail



L-4 Collins Pine Nature Trail

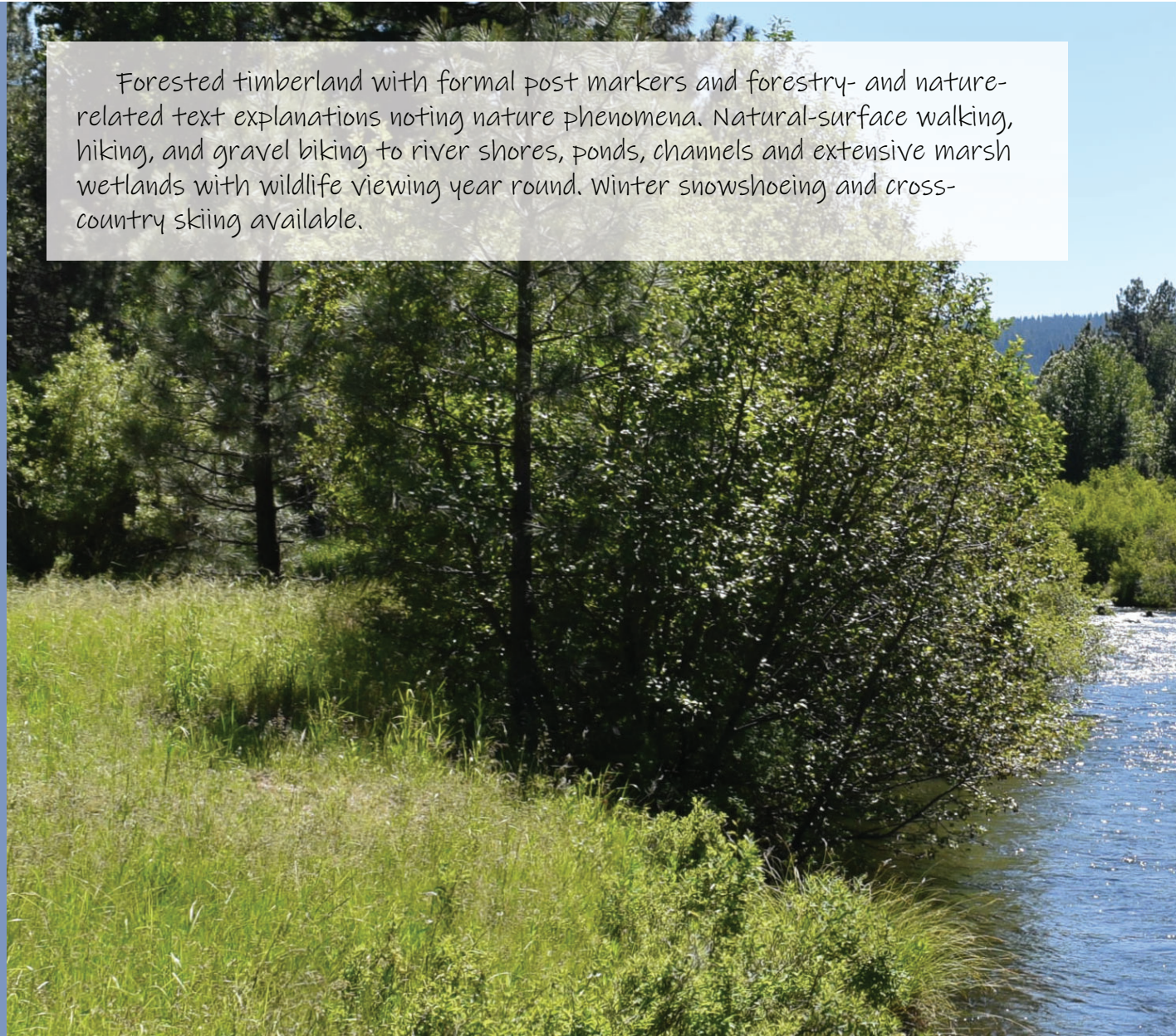
Within Chester, north of the Truman Collins Sports Field, is a 2-mile figure “8” nature trail with directional “tree blaze” markings, natural single track pathways, 12 station posts signifying “points of interest”. The trail has extended paths to the scenic North Fork Feather River and to a natural marsh with abundant wildlife for viewing and peaceful contemplation.

Trail Segment Length: 2 miles

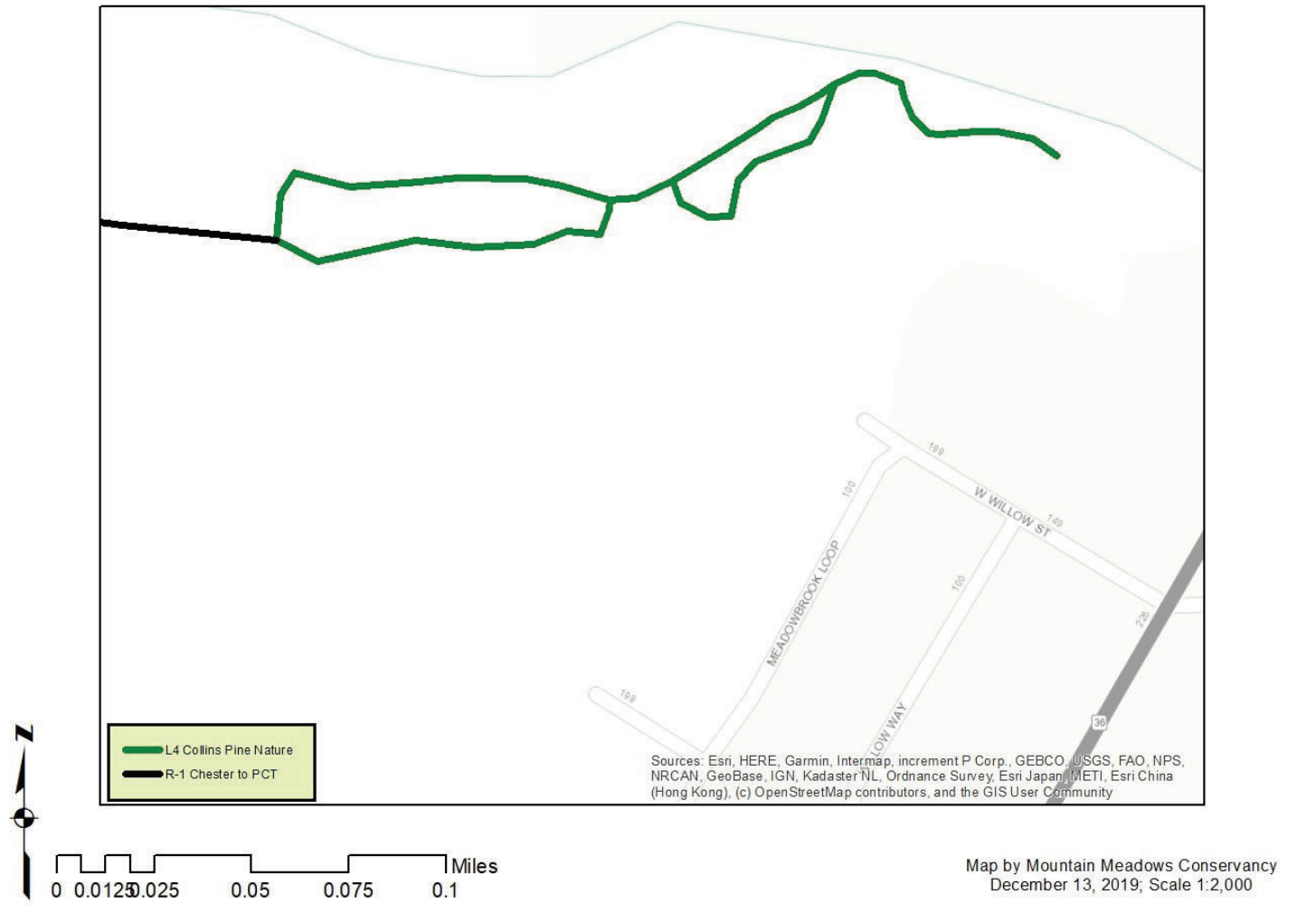
Landowners/Managers: Collins Pine Company

Adjacent communities: Chester

Forested timberland with formal post markers and forestry- and nature-related text explanations noting nature phenomena. Natural-surface walking, hiking, and gravel biking to river shores, ponds, channels and extensive marsh wetlands with wildlife viewing year round. Winter snowshoeing and cross-country skiing available.



L-4 Collins Nature Trail Overview



L-5 Keddie Ridge Trails

The existing trail system follows a high alpine ridge with stunning views, rugged terrain and unique forest habitats.

Trail Segment Length:
Approximately 4.9 miles one way

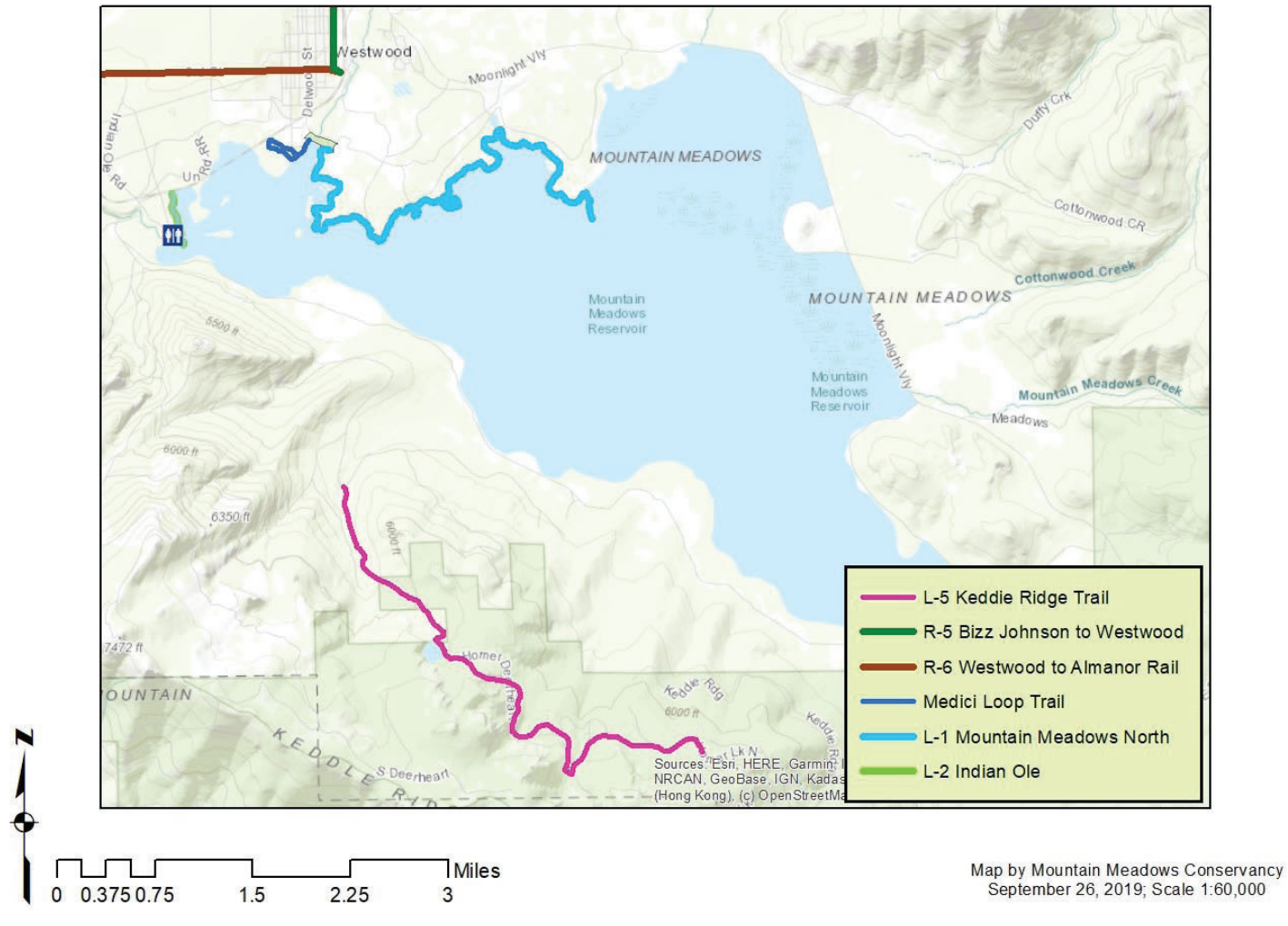
Landowners/Managers: Lassen National Forest

Adjacent communities: Westwood and Greenville

Forest and timber land hiking with peek-a-boo views of mountains and lakes spectacular open space, and wildlife viewing.



L-5 Keddie Ridge Trail and surrounding area

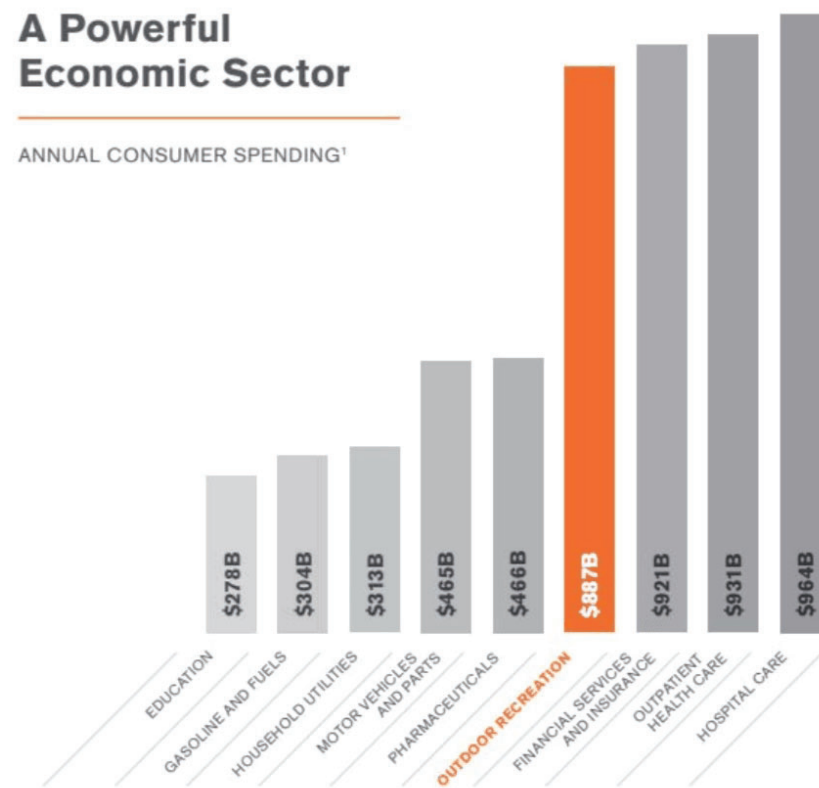


SECTION 3: MAKING IT HAPPEN

Planning Strategies

Realizing the Popularity and Benefits of Recreation Trails

The growing economic sector of “Outdoor Recreation”, as a portion of annual consumer spending, is significant within the U.S. economy. The Almanor Basin offers many outdoor recreation elements (camping, fishing, water sports, snow sports, etc.), but has yet to realize the economic, as well as conservation, benefits of hiking and biking. Consumer spending for just the trip-related portion of the combined “Trail Sports” and “Wheel Sports” subsector categories (hiking and biking) is \$259 Billion (see chart below) --higher than the trip-related portions of any other outdoor

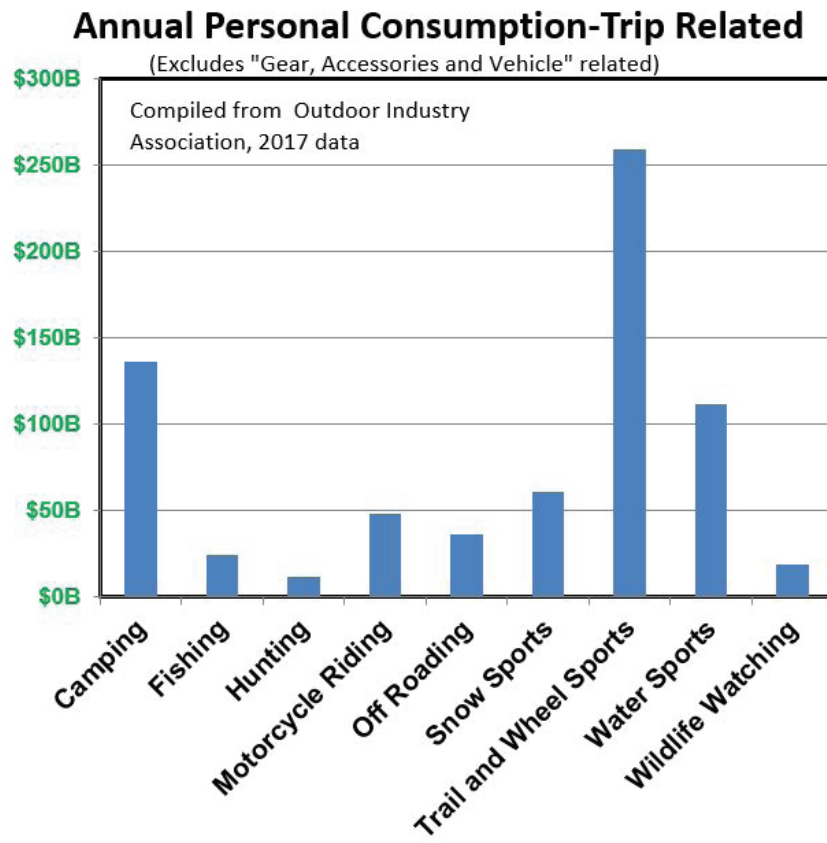


¹ Bureau of Economic Analysis, Personal Consumption Expenditures by Type of Product

category (Outdoor Industry Association, 2017). It is the trip-related spending by tourists that is the economic benefit to recreation destinations, whereas major purchases of recreation equipment typically occur near their home counties.

When recreation-based communities add attractive and popular hiking and biking infrastructure, they can receive a higher amount of trip-related consumer spending and these improvements will assist the community in achieving:

- a higher quality of life and community identity,
- healthy exercise that's close to home for all age groups,
- conservation benefits from preserving green space, and cultural/biological resources, and
- local economic growth and historic preservation.



As a result of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy said: "... in the early days of the pandemic, trail use soared, spiking more than 200% nationwide on average compared to last year. Since then, increased trail use has sustained at 75% higher than in previous years, and most Americans say that having safe spaces to walk, bike and be active outside right now matters more than ever" (Brandi Horton, September 3, 2020, "Join the Trails Movement" email). The Lassen/Lake Almanor Basin Regional Trail System will provide these safe spaces that are close to home for residents and visitors to the area.

Working in partnership with Almanor Basin Trails Coalition members and local tourism and economic development groups, to develop and promote a system of trails with

wayfinding signage and interpretive signage for strolling, hiking, and biking can be the key to implementing local goals to expand tourism during the shoulder seasons, stimulate local economies, and boost community vitality and pride.

ACTION: Develop a local multiagency round table to implement a network of active transportation elements within our key communities and regionally within the Almanor Basin for recreational and economic benefits.



Establishing the Need for More Active Transportation

Several of the regional trail segments identified in this Concept Plan are based on alignments originally proposed by the public during the planning process for the Plumas County Active

Transportation Plan (ATP) for the Almanor Basin. This collaborative effort began in 2015 and ended with adoption by the Plumas County Transportation Commission in early 2018.

Currently, only one Class I area trail exists near Lake Almanor communities

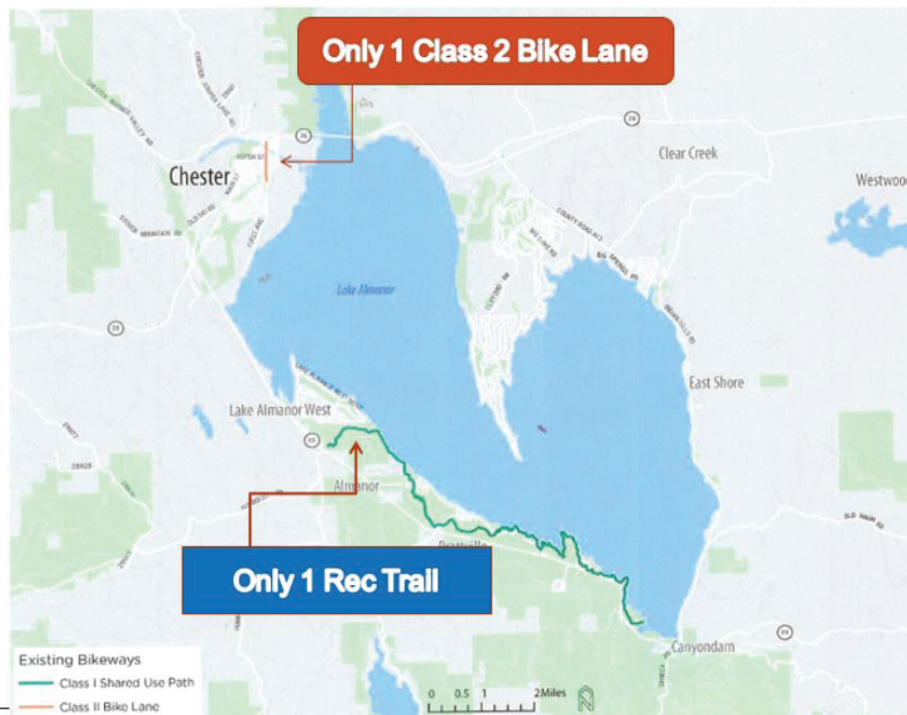
and only a few streets in Chester have a designated bike lane.

After extensive public input to develop the ATP, the County and Caltrans will now consider these proposed trail alignments in their future planning for active transportation within the Basin. As such, these proposed alignments are also eligible for transportation funding as well as grant funding from many other sources.

The trail segment selection also fulfills a long-held dream to have a series of local trails easily or directly accessible from the communities around Lake Almanor (“Trails around the Lake” initiative). This will provide:

- safe, non-motorized pathways that connect communities to nearby schools, business districts, and recreation amenities,
- healthy opportunities to recreate within proximity of homes and businesses, and
- a trail network that will draw family friends and tourists not only during the summer vacation months, but also during spring, fall and winter, like other “trail towns” across the country.

Existing Near-Community Rec. Trails



The proposed trail segments will include connectors to the existing PCT on the west and the existing Bizz Johnson National Recreation Trail in the east. This interconnected trail system will enable both short and long distance cycling and potentially tour cycling, making the Almanor Basin and Chester true “Gateways” to the Lassen Volcanic National Park and Lassen National Forest.

problematic. Property owners with sizeable and contiguous parcels in the region include industrial timberlands, national forests, highway rights-of-way, and utility corridors. Each has their own policies on

- public land access,
- planning and approval requirements,
- ownership transfer, easement acquisition, or land leasing
- design and construction standards, and
- cost of acquisition

Identifying Potential Trail Segments and Alignments

All of the proposed trail corridors in this plan are conceptual in nature. No project will be adopted without the concurrence of the entity/entities that have jurisdiction over the property.

The selection of the limits of proposed trail segments (beginning and end points) was primarily based on current landownership and existing alignments. Identifying a single property owner for an alignment allows quick determination of owner interest and their acquisition requirements. Selecting alignments across numerous parcels with multiple owners is always



Developing positive relationships with property owners to determine their interests and requirements is in progress for several trail projects. The trail proponent generally enters into an easement, long term lease or acquisition agreement with the landowner, which spells out the details for a right-of-way (ROW) acquisition method, due diligence on the ROW, transaction terms, and completing the acquisition steps. Grants are also pursued to fund various phases of trail development including land acquisition, engineering inspections of trail infrastructure, environmental planning, public outreach, design, construction and maintenance.

ACTION: Continue to work with community stakeholders and property owners to identify trail opportunities, in particular:

1) Secure owner agreement on a right-of-way (ROW) acquisition method, perform due diligence on the ROW, and complete the acquisition unless the owner wishes to develop the entire ROW.

2) Identify grant funding opportunities for the various phases of trail segment development which generally involve due diligence and acquisition, environmental planning, design, construction and maintenance.

3) Outreach to community members and stakeholders on planning and development progress for ideas and preferences.

Implementation Strategies

Steps toward Trail Segment Implementation

This Concept Plan is a guide for continued identification of and planning for each trail segment to achieve the vision of an interconnected trail system.

Some of the proposed trail segments have fewer barriers for implementation than other trails. Some will be funded in phases and some in total. Some will be funded by the existing landowner or a combination of landowner donations, third party private funds, and public agency grant funds. Phases will be scheduled as funding becomes available and landowner agreements are executed. Realistically, the time period for implementation of all the phases for a particular trail project can be three to ten years.

Recent Success Examples of Trail Segment Phase Implementation

1. May 13, 2020 for Trail Segment R-8, LART North Extension: As Caltrans District 2 was progressing with their State Highway Operation and Protection

Program (SHOPP) activities to resurface State Route (SR) 89 between Lake Almanor Dam to Highway 36, several discussions took place between Coalition members and Caltrans District 2 staff. The member's plan was to position a multi-use, non-motorized recreation trail within the Caltrans right of way

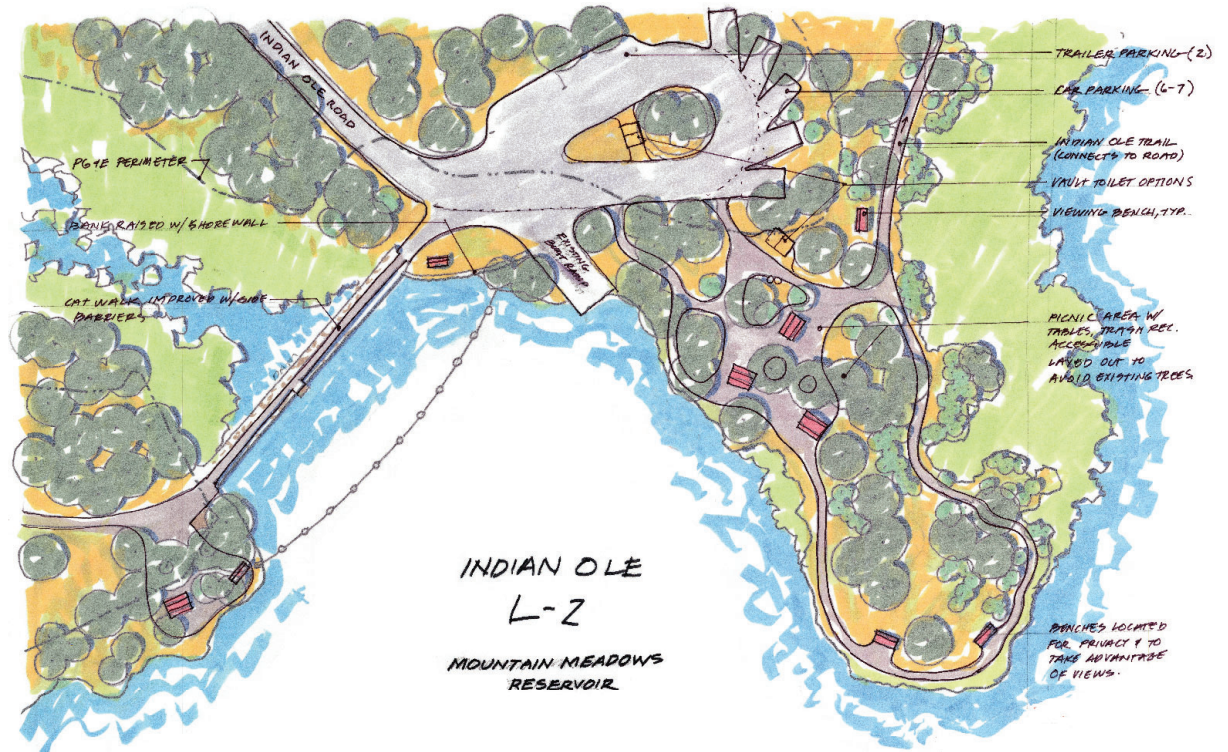
(ROW), close to the Lake. The proposal would extend the existing 12-mile, paved Lake Almanor Recreation Trail (LART) northward from the Almanor West trailhead to the end of the "Super Ditch" channel where there is an informal trailhead on Forest Service land off SR 89. The Plumas County Department of Public Works supported this idea and provided the cost estimate for a 3.7-mile paved trail. The proposed trail was ranked high by District 2 and Caltrans Headquarters as a potential addition to their list of current 2020 SHOPP projects. On May 13, the California Transportation Commission approved a \$2.5 million add-on to the SR 89 SHOPP budget for the Lake Almanor Recreation Trail North (LART North), to be constructed by 2025. This segment will be a wonderful addition to the Almanor Basin for the "Trails around the Lake" initiative. The dedicated work of many people at Caltrans District 2, Plumas County Department of Public Works and the Coalition over the last four years made this extension a reality.



2. December 12, 2019 for Trail Segment R-3, Almanor Rail Trail: On this date, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) awarded a grant to Almanor Recreation and Park District (ARPD) to conduct title and technical studies as due diligence to receive a donation of the Almanor Railroad right of way (ROW) parcels. Earlier in the year, the ROW owner, Collins Pine Company in Chester, had expressed interest to Coalition member ARPD to donate their 12 mile, 100-foot wide ROW to them. The railroad is currently railbanked as a public trail to the Company. It includes a scenic, gently sloping, cleared rail bed that begins in Chester and extends eastward to SR 147 at Clear Creek Junction. During the SNC grant award process, a formal Donation Agreement was created to implement terms of a “fee simple” transfer. This agreement is contingent on acceptable outcomes of the due diligence, title and technical studies, and the requirements of the Donation Agreement. If successful, the property will then be transferred to ARPD. This donation offer is yet another reminder of the company’s generosity and dedication to improving the quality of life and recreation opportunities for the Chester and Almanor Basin communities. These studies are to be completed by 2022.

3. June, 2018 for Trail Segment L-1 for Mountain Meadows North: As an initial step, an 8-acre property south of Westwood was purchased in June of 2018 by Coalition members Feather River Land Trust (FRLT) and Mountain Meadows Conservancy (MMC) as a partnership. The property (“Mountain

Meadows Gateway”, or “Gateway”) was purchased to create a public access point to the Mountain Meadows Reservoir (MMR) and public trailhead near the town of Westwood. In the Summer of 2018, a crew worked to remove tons of scrap metal and solid waste, demolish two run-down sheds, and develop a



small walking trail network. Public meetings have been held to plan future work on the property. FRLT received the Conservation Easement for the MMC. A public parking area will be opened in 2020 and will provide improved access to the stunning shoreline of Mountain Meadows Reservoir and the planned trails.

4. August 2018 for Trail Segment L-2 for Indian Ole Dam: The Pacific Forest and Watersheds Stewardship Council awarded a grant to MMC for the Indian Ole Dam Public Access Enhancement Project. Property land surveys and environmental permitting are nearly complete. Detailed planning is underway for an improved parking area, picnic facilities, a walking trail, a toilet, maps and interpretive signs that highlight the cultural significance of the Mountain Meadows to the Maidu people. This project will be completed in 2021.

5. 2015 for Trail Segments L-3 Olsen Barn: The 107-acre Olsen Barn property was purchased by Coalition member Feather River Land Trust (FRLT) for conservation of the 1800's barn and historic meadows property.

Progress on property improvements has continued and includes 1 mile of mowed grass and dirt trails.





6. 2015 for L-4 Collins Pine Nature Trail: By 2015, the existing Collins Pine Nature Trail, built in the 1990's was in need of enhancement and added trail routes. Coalition member ARPD created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) allowing them access to maintain the trail and install enhancements for the public to enjoy. The trail now includes a geo-referenced trail map with interpretation of numbered observation posts; bridges were installed over water crossings; and directional signs guide hikers to different points of interest. Further trail additions are planned which may eventually become part of trail segment R-1, Chester to the PCT.

7. In November 2020, the Lassen County Resource Advisory Committee granted \$80,000 to Trails Coalition member, Lassen County, to complete due diligence for a 4-mile trail connector from Mason Station to Westwood (Bizz Johnson Trail to Westwood R-5). This work includes completion of ground surveys, engineering inspections, and environmental planning prior to obtaining an easement from the private property owners to construct this connector.

Currently (2021) Predicted Trail Segment Priorities

Prioritizing Trail Segment Acquisition and Development

At this Concept Plan stage, prioritizing the many trail segments is a challenge. Trail segments can be grouped into Near-, Medium- and Long-term priorities. As further efforts continue, the priorities will likely change and this Section 3 will be edited and updated.

Near-term priority

The basic criteria for Near-term priority categorization are landowner's documented acceptance of the proposed segment alignment and proposed improvement features, formal identification of development requirements, and demonstrated sources of funding of all or portions of development. At this time, the following

Near-term segments are the highest priority projects:

- R-3 Almanor Rail Trail
- R-5 Bizz Johnson Trail to Westwood
- R-8 Lake Almanor Rec. Trail, North
- L-1 Mountain Meadows, North
- L-2 Indian Ole Trail
- L-3 Olsen Barn Loop Trail
- L-4 Collins Pine Nature Trail

Medium-term priority

The basic criteria for categorizing Medium-term priority segments are evidence of landowner's acceptance of trail use along a proposed alignment, identification of development requirements, and identification of potential funding sources. At this time, the Medium-term segments lack some criteria elements for those of the Near-term and will require more time to complete planning and scoping. These include:

- R-4 Chester Trail
- R-7 Lake Almanor Rec. Trail, East

- R-10 East Shore, North (Maidu Cemetery to A-13)
- R-11 East Shore, South (PG&E Picnic Area to Maidu Cemetery)

Long-term priority

The remaining trail segments are categorized as Long-term priority. These are going to require more collaboration with local landowners, state agencies and other project partners to implement. They include:

- R-1 Chester to PCT
- R-2 Stover Mountain
- R-6 Westwood to Almanor Rail Trail
- R-9 Hamilton Branch (Almanor Rail Trail to A-13)

Management and maintenance

Management and maintenance for the proposed trail segments will be a collaborative effort between agencies, volunteers, and non-profit organizations. At this time, the responsibility of developing the management and maintenance strategies for the proposed trail segments will be the responsibility of the Coalition member who is implementing the project and/or the landowner. Agreements will be developed on a case-by-case basis as the segments are developed.

ACTION: A maintenance and stewardship plan should be prepared for each trail to keep it in good condition. A Volunteer Program and an Adopt-a-Trail Program should be implemented from the local communities, which could include business sponsors, senior volunteers, inmates, and youth green job training opportunities.

Unique Opportunity In Chester

Chester has a unique opportunity to provide coordinated active transportation improvements for both

Chester Main Street and Lassen/Lake Almanor Regional Trails

For years, residents have asked when will Caltrans make improvements to Chester Main Street (SR 36). Caltrans has recently updated their 10-year State Highway Operation and Protection



Program, and planning for Chester Main Street, between SR 89 to Myrtle Avenue will begin by 2021. Repaving Main Street will begin in 2026. Generally, “repaving” means just that, the existing pavement is either overlaid or reconstructed depending on its condition. And “repaving” is done just to the limits of

existing pavement boundaries. Over the years Caltrans and the California Transportation Commission (CTC) have created new safety standards like configuring streets to reduce speeds through the design of bulb-outs, and adding accessibility walkways and crossings for pedestrians. An example

is the “recent” improvements by Caltrans in Greenville, California. These standards have been included in their documents like Complete Streets and Main Street, California.



Additionally, the CTC is promoting and implementing “active transportation” elements that include bike lanes, safe walkways, and trails. The planned “repaving” of SR 36 in Chester will now include State funding for some elements of Complete Streets and Active Transportation.

In 2009, Chester residents created a plan to reconfigure Main Street which described many improvements to the highway including traffic slowing, bike lanes, sidewalks and attractive landscaping, etc. At that time, immediate funding to implement the plan was not available since Caltrans plans and budgets their highway improvements 20 years out. Funding could now be available for pedestrian and bicycle improvements if included in the 2026 Main Street repaving project.

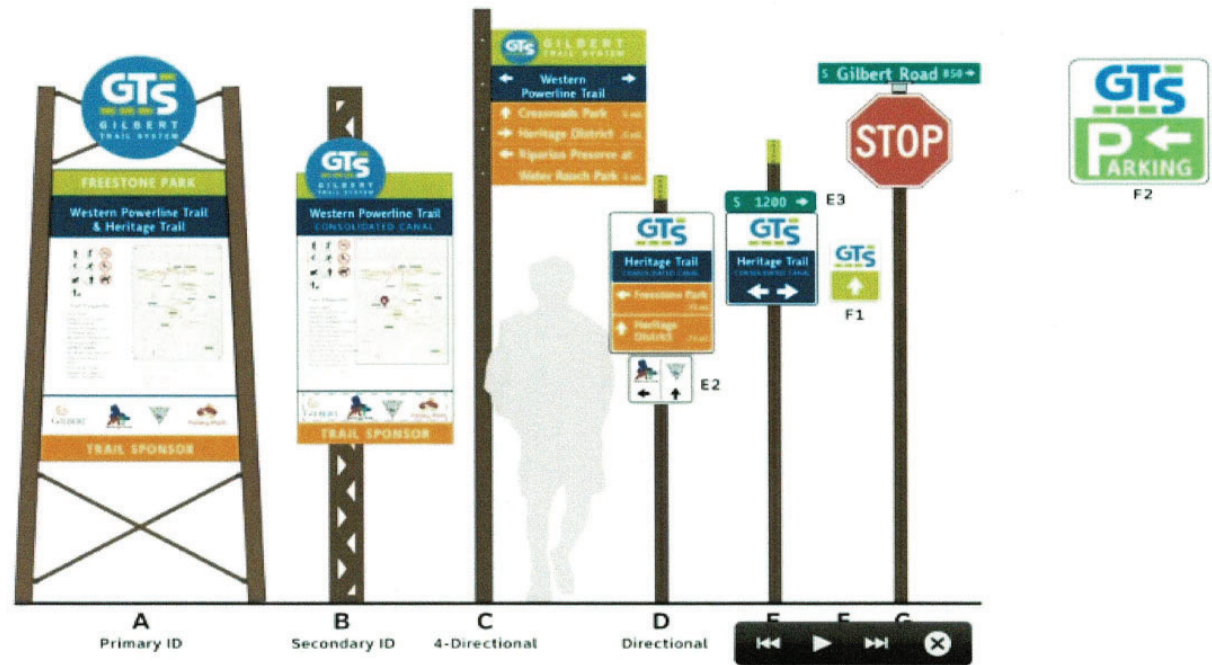
The Chester community and others in the Basin can start planning for the kinds of improvements they would like to see. The 2009 Chester Main Street plan can be dusted off and evaluated for compliance with new standards for Complete Streets and Main Street, California and Active Transportation Program guidelines for bike lanes and trails/sidewalks. Citizens

can identify the best traffic calming, accessibility guidelines, bike lane designs and sidewalks, and other features they desire in advance of Caltrans planners and designers coming to town. Greenville planners will tell us that being prepared for Caltrans and being assertive about what the community

needs will get favorable results.

Another ideal planning element to work on is a wayfinding system. This includes the types of signage to direct visitors to historic buildings and places (Olsen Barn), to typical services (motels) and places of interest (museums, parks,

SIGN SYSTEMS



libraries) both on the Main Street and around the community. Signage also guides visitors to local and regional trail information hubs, trailheads and to the trails themselves. Community signage types could be one color, and trail-related signage types could be another. Wayfinding elements are fun and helpful to visitors and new residents, can tell the story of Chester and the Almanor Basin, and convey a sense of vibrancy and vitality to the community.

If community stakeholders form working groups to establish the look and function of various multi-modal transportation elements like bike lanes, walking paths/sidewalks, landscaping, underground utilities, and a coordinated wayfinding system, the quality of life and prosperity of Chester may increase. Main Street is more than just a 4 to 5 lane state highway, it's the town center. It's the first impression many people will get of Chester and determine whether to stop or just drive on through.



Grant Funding Opportunities

Numerous agencies provide lists of their grant programs on their websites. In the Almanor Basin, significant support and information is provided by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. They track funding opportunities not only for their projects, but from many different public and private funders. The following is an example listing for trails and recreation projects from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy in 2020:

The **EPA Local Food, Local Places Grant** (due October 30) helps small, rural communities develop local food enterprises such as farmers markets, cooperative grocery stores, community kitchens, and food hubs.

The **CA Department of Parks and Recreation Aquatic Center Education Program** (due October 30) enhances basic boating safety through the provision of on-the-water training programs for the general public.

The **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Economic Development Grant Program** (pre-applications due November 1) supports the creation of economic development initiatives for low-income people such as business incubators and community-owned businesses.

The **Conservation Alliance Grant** program (due November 1) protects threatened wild places throughout North America.

Annie's Homegrown Grants for Gardens (due November 2) supports school gardens that grow fruits, vegetables, herbs, or grains.

The **USDA Rural Energy for America Program** (due November 2) provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements.

The **Department of Transportation Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects Program** (due November 2) funds projects to construct, reconstruct, or rehabilitate transportation facilities within or near federal and tribal lands.

The **USDA Rural Energy for America Program** (due November 2) provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements.

The **US Fish and Wildlife Service Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Grants** (due November 5) support neotropical migratory bird conservation projects and foster international cooperation for initiatives that will perpetuate healthy bird populations.

The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation (due November 10) provides grants to support a variety of project types, including environment and wildlife protection activities, where a small amount of money can make a big difference.

The **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Museums for America grant** (due November 16) strengthens the ability of museums to serve the public through projects that promote lifelong learning, museums as community anchors, and stewardship.

The IMLS Inspire! Grants for Small Museums Program (due November 16) strengthens the ability of small museums to serve the public through projects that promote lifelong learning, museums as community anchors, and collections stewardship.

The Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase II Grants (due November 17) fund the implementation of on-the-ground watershed management projects by established watershed groups.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors Program (due November 18) provides funds to enhance and improve the quality of priority big-game winter range, stopover areas and migration corridors on federal and private lands.

The **CA Department of Parks and Recreation Statewide Park Program** (due December 14) funds the development of new parks, and the expansion and renovation of existing parks, in underserved communities.

Temper of the Times Foundation Advertising for the Environment Grants (due December 15) help nonprofit organizations underwrite advertising designed to promote the conservation and restoration of native wildlife, plants, and ecosystems.

The **CA State Water Resources Control Board Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Grants** (due December 18) support projects that reduce and mitigate the effects of nonpoint source pollutants, such as sediment, pesticides, and nutrients, on impaired water

bodies. Post-fire recovery projects may be submitted for areas affected by fire where the fire has occurred in the last two years and the area has been covered by an emergency proclamation by the California Governor.

The **Kids Gardening Youth Garden Grant** (due December 18) provides resources to plan and expand youth gardens.

The **USDA Community Connect Grant Program** (due December 23) supports improvement in broadband speed in rural, economically challenged communities.

The **FM Global Fire Prevention Grant Program** (due December 31) provides seed funding to support a wide array of fire prevention, preparedness, and control efforts.

The **USDA Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program** (due January 11) helps establish community forests by funding acquisition of private priority forest land to prevent conversion to non-forest uses.

Patagonia Foundation

Environmental Grants (due January 31) support innovative work that addresses the root causes of the environmental crisis and seeks to protect both the environment and affected communities.

Additional Resources

Community Power Resiliency Grants for Cities, Special Districts, and Tribes

Funding is available from the California Office of Emergency Services to support cities, special districts, and tribes with additional preparedness measures in response to power outage events. Funding will support the procurement of fixed and long-term emergency electrical generation equipment, the development of continuity plans, the conduct of risk assessments for critical infrastructure, the creation of post-event reports and public education materials, and/or the purchase of supplies to prepare for electric disruption. Requests for Proposals are available from the Cal OES website. Applications for funding are due October 30, 2020.

California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Per Capita Proposition 68 Funding

Funding through state Proposition 68 is available on a per-capita basis to jurisdictions within California for the acquisition and development of parks. The aim of the program is to rehabilitate existing infrastructure and to address deficiencies in neighborhoods lacking access to the outdoors. Applications for funding are due December 31, 2020. For more information, visit the DPR Per Capita Program website.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Accepting Applications for Grants

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) issues grants to public agencies, nonprofits, and eligible tribes for projects that restore, protect, and enhance Sierra Nevada watersheds and communities. These grants are awarded under three separate programs: Forest & Watershed Health, Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities, and Vibrant Recreation & Tourism. Proposals are accepted on a continuous basis and will be considered on a quarterly cycle, starting July 2020. Visit the SNC Grants Webpage for more information.

Grant-Writing Workshops

SNC Grant Writing Workshops are available to help build the capacity of organizations that serve the Sierra Nevada Region. Workshops are now available as an online webinar. Contact your SNC Area Representative to organize or attend a workshop.

California Grants Portal

The California State Library recently launched the California Grants Portal, a single website to find all state grant and loan opportunities offered on a first-come or competitive basis.

APPENDIX: NPS Package



Almanor Basin Trails Coalition volunteers and NPS-RTCA staff. Top row: Charlie Plopper, ARPD & MMC; Sally Sheridan, NPS; Nils Lunder, MMC & FRLT; and Chris Kent, a partner at PGA in Oakland, CA. Bottom row: Stephanie Shroud, NPS; Carlos España, ARPDConnections.

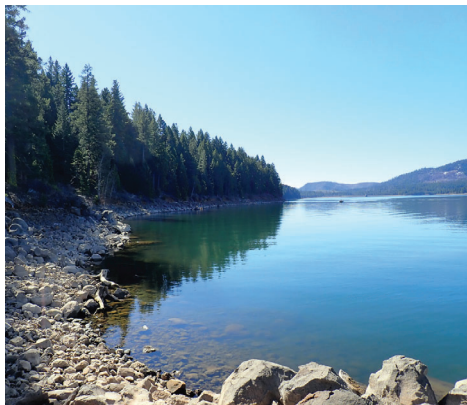
Staff from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, together with Almanor Basin Trails Coalition (ABTC) volunteers, and volunteer landscape architect Chris Kent, conducted area tours to see planned trail and trail-head locations, create creative renderings of thematic settings and potential trail features, and present findings and drawings at an ABTC Outreach meeting at the Almanor Recreation Center's community building during July 18-20, 2019.

This Appendix presents their work products and concept recommendations.

PHASE ONE DESIGN PROPOSALS



**Lassen/Lake
Almanor Basin
Regional Trail
System**



**Prepared by the
National Park Service
Rivers, Trails and Conservation
Assistance Program**

**Design ideas from dedicated
community members and volunteer
landscape architects**

July 2019

LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

Orientation, Access and Enjoyment!



Made with assistance from National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
 Lake Almanor Basin Regional Trails | Draft Concept Plan | September 2019

Concept

The rich culture, history, and outdoor recreation found along the myriad of trails in the Lake Almanor Basin is unveiled through a visible, attractive and understandable hierarchy of access areas and orientation information. Providing this welcoming experience for the Lake Almanor Basin Trail System offers residents and tourists alike the opportunity to enjoy and recreate in the breathtaking scenery of the area. Three major gateway areas provide visual cues and areas for trail users to access the recreational amenities of the trail system. A trail hub located in Chester is a gathering place for events, celebrations, and staffed to provide regional trail information. Staging areas offer limited parking, orientation information, and improvements unique to that area. Directional signage on the highways point to trail access areas. Taking advantage of the regional transit system by locating trail access points at the transportation stops tie the trail into other communities and provides multimodal transit opportunities. Referring to historic trail corridors, such as the Lassen and Maidu trails now covered by the lake, brings history to life.

Key Design Features

Three gateway locations announce and welcome trail users to the Almanor Regional Trail System: the existing Westwood Visitor Center, Olsen Barn property (with the Olsen Barn being a gateway element of sorts), and USFS property (Transition Gateway) near the super ditch. These sites offer parking, information kiosks, picnic areas, nature trails, interpretive features, art, and restrooms. Highlighting the entrances to these areas with some sort of entry feature clearly signifies that these are key trail nodes:

- **Transition Gateway:** Entry sign to convey the theme “From forest to town.” This gateway includes a transportation stop, nature and recreation trails, picnic areas, vault toilets, twenty parking spots, a trail kiosk, kayak launch, and lots of topics for interpretive art or signs, such as the Volcanic Legacy Trail, Maidu history, or the “super Ditch” workings. Graded pads area available to stimulate seasonal economic opportunities such as food trucks, bike rentals, or special events.
- **Olsen Barn:** Entry feature conveys the theme “from pastoral to town.” A transportation stop connects riders to the trail system, twenty parking spots, controlled access to the trails, restrooms (at Olsen Barn), trail kiosk that provides interpretive and educational materials relating to the history and natural resources of the area.
- **Westwood Visitor Center:** “from town to trail.” Entry feature utilizes existing concrete remnants of historic jail. Although not adjacent to the trail system, information and orientation can be sited at the existing center or parking area. A small trail map directs users to Mountain Meadows via existing pedestrian sidewalks or roadways.



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A **Trail Hub** is proposed at either the Timbers Restaurant/adjacent hotel or as a new build about 100' east from Main St. down the trail. Either way, this is an in-town welcome and orientation area that can double as a visitor center, trail headquarters, event center (imagine the range of Lake Almanor Basin Trail events!), restroom facility, potential trail camping and overnight areas. Parking is dependent on size of center. Current trail conditions, events, locations, and information is located here. A partnership Trail Hub is located at the existing USFS headquarters, with trail information and orientation and restrooms available.

Staging Areas are located throughout the trail system are located in areas not immediately apparent to the general passerby and will be designed to accommodate a variety of vehicles types. All staging areas are discovered via the trail or via directional signage off the highways. They include limited parking, orientation and regulatory signage, nature trails, picnic and seating areas, interpretive art or signs, and where appropriate, kayak launching facilities and vault toilets. Pop-up seasonal business opportunities exist on graded pads that double as overflow parking.

Directional Signage: As a majority of the trail system is separate from vehicular and pedestrian corridors, clear directional signage for trail access is imperative. Simple directional signs are located on Hwy 36 and 89 and throughout the main street in Chester.

Feedback to Date

- USFS does not want to maintain restrooms at “gateway” on their property.
- Partner with Jeffroes Produce to help adopt the trail and clean up signs
- The heirarchy of access/orientation may set the tone and brand for the trail system. Elements should be repeated throughout the entire Basin.



LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

Close-to-Home Trail Experience



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Concept

Developing an intra-town trail system with thematic experiences is accomplished by simple orientation signage and thematic trail development. The existing trails and beautiful Feather River overlooks are hard to find by the casual visitor, as well as by many local residents. Packaging and marketing a Chester trail system that links to the greater Lake Almanor Basin Regional Trail benefits the residents, business owners, and visitors.

Connecting the current nature trail near Almanor Recreation Center with community hubs such as the library, schools and parks brings recreation close to civic centers; connecting the rail-trail corridor from Olsen Barn to the community brings nature to town, and clearly designating 1st avenue as a pedestrian corridor offers a hard surface trail.

Having good maps and orientation available at hotels, businesses, and civic areas offers tourists a self-directed close-to-town nature and recreation experience.

Key Design Features

Improving existing roads and streets with a bike and/or pedestrian lane can be an instant win for locals and visitors to experience the west side of Main Street and enjoy the Feather River, Recreation Center and nature trail, hospital and the Mill Museum.

If safe crossings were installed, trail users could connect to the Olsen Barn as well as to the proposed "Trail Hub."

Improving the existing rail bridge over the Feather River makes the rail-trail from Olsen Barn to the schools and other community buildings a key link to get recreation and nature appreciation close-to-home.

Creating a series of cultural walks through the community, historic sites, schools, and providing scenic overlooks, is implementable through trail loops and improved streetscapes linking to the Lake Almanor Basin Trail.

Feedback to Date

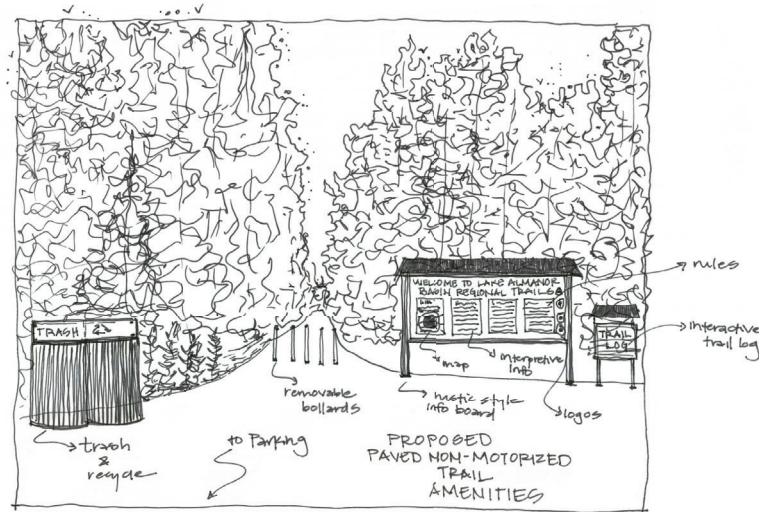
- Camping might be available at the church grass area.



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LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

Typical Trail Gateway



Concept

Providing a cohesive design with welcoming orientation information helps guide and inform trail users. Consistent materials such as wood, metal and stone help tie the design together, and a logo and map identifies the trail and “you are here” location.

Key Design Features

Hard surface material links to parking area. Orientation and informational kiosk orients trail users and provides important information and interpretive possibilities. Removable bollards control off-road trail use while enabling emergency access. An interactive trail log records trail use while providing emergency information if necessary. Bearproof trash and recycle cans help keep the area pristine and located adjacent to parking area for easy maintenance.

Feedback to Date

- Too many bollards for bikers to pass through without dismounting; creates an accident risk. 1-2 bollards are sufficient for a 10-12 foot wide path.



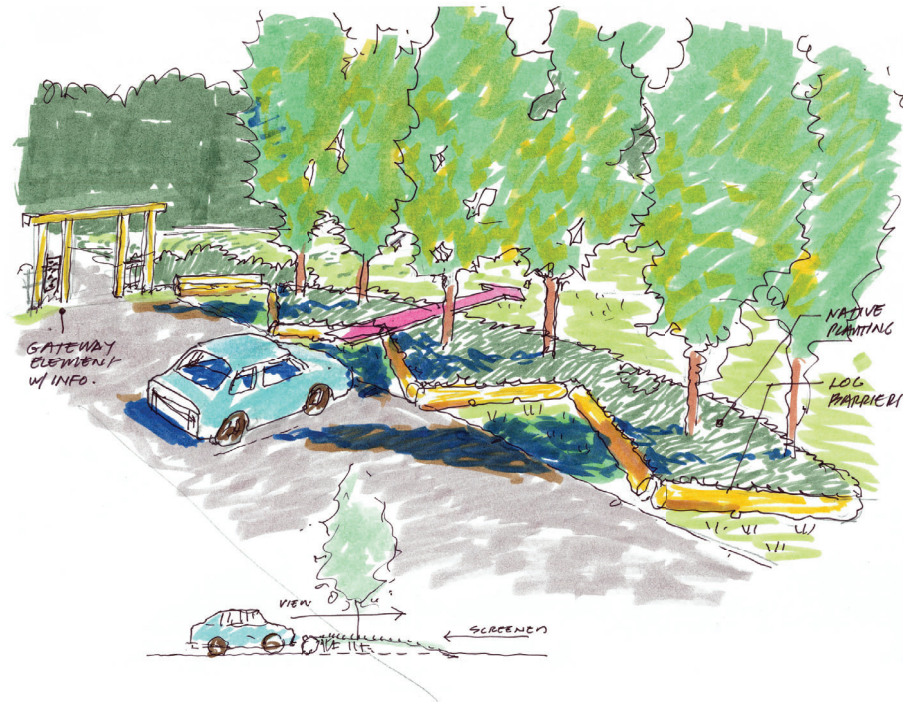
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LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

Olsen Barn



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Concept

The Olsen Barn property is a natural “gateway” to the Almanor Basin Recreational Trail system as well as to the town of Chester. The key to assimilating access improvements is to creatively site road access, parking, and trail orientation and connections all while enhancing and protecting those incredible pastoral views and sensitive habitats.

Integrating parking successfully into the wide open spaces at Olsen barn can be best accomplished by defining the parking spots with felled logs, adding a small planted berm and vegetation buffers to screen not only views into the open space, but views back to the parking area from Olsen Barn.



Key Design Features

An entry feature helps welcome users to the site and incorporates some sort of gateway element that includes orientation, regulatory and interpretive information.

Carefully sited parking spots are screened from the open fields at Olsen Barn with landscaped berms and groves of trees which allow views from the parking and parked cars but screen the parking from view. The trees also shade the parking and allows some people to remain in the car while others use the trails and explore. Log beams define the parking spots while controlling traffic.

A gate helps define the transition between parking and the trail, and the trail alignment parallels the highway and also connects to the spur trail to Olsen Barn and into Chester. Existing vegetation is protected and enhanced with additional plantings.

A gateway kiosk or informational area orients the user to the trail and property. Restrooms may be found at the Olsen Barn.

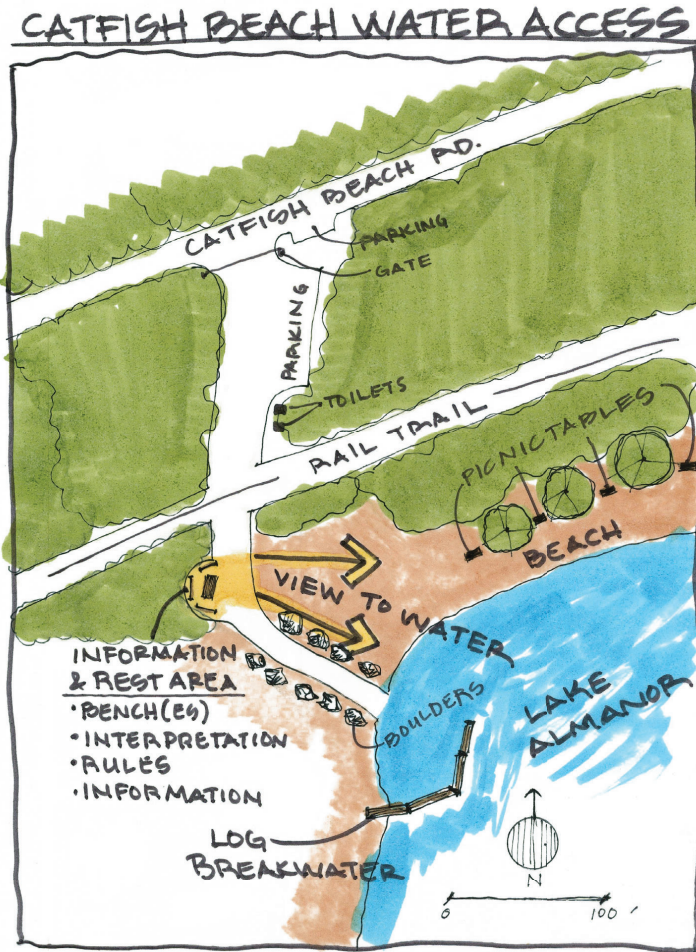
Feedback to Date

- Secure pedestrian bridge over Feather River to connect to town and schools
- Need some RV or bus parking at Olsen Barn?
- Affords picturesque views of Olsen Barn
- Key issue: provide staging amenities that reinforce sense of place that originally attracted the visitors. These amenities should be designed to reduce the amount of impact on the native flora and fauna while simultaneously allowing more people to use the area.

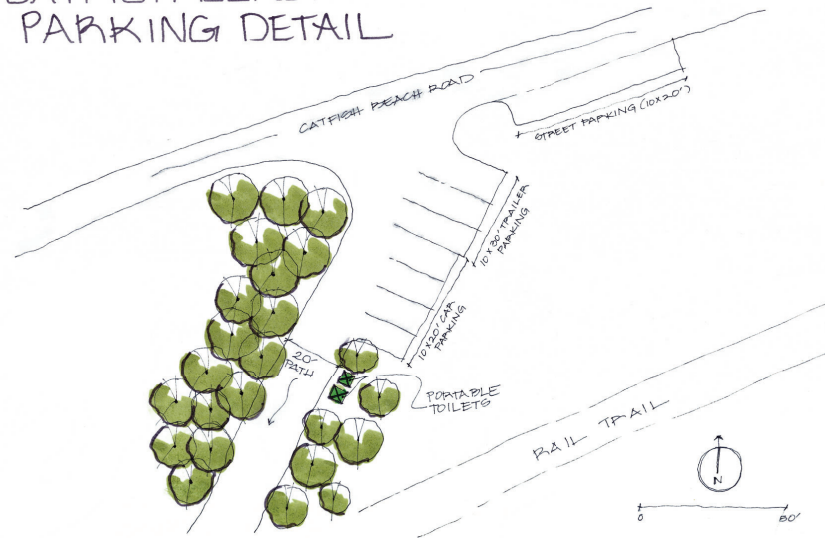


LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

Catfish Beach



CATFISH BEACH PARKING DETAIL



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Concept

One of the few trail access points from Highway 36 leads to a magical, crescent shape beach adjacent to the trail corridor. Clear access signs on the Highway and road lead to limited parking, toilets, trail and the trail system's only water access site.

Key Design Features

Limited parking for cars and trailers provides designated user areas. The parking area provides enough room for RV's and trailer to maneuver and back-up.

An information plaza is sited to take advantage of lake and beach views while welcoming and orienting the user (and providing a rest area along the steep path).

Boulders lining the boat access help direct the traffic, and a log breakwater helps for an easy entrance.

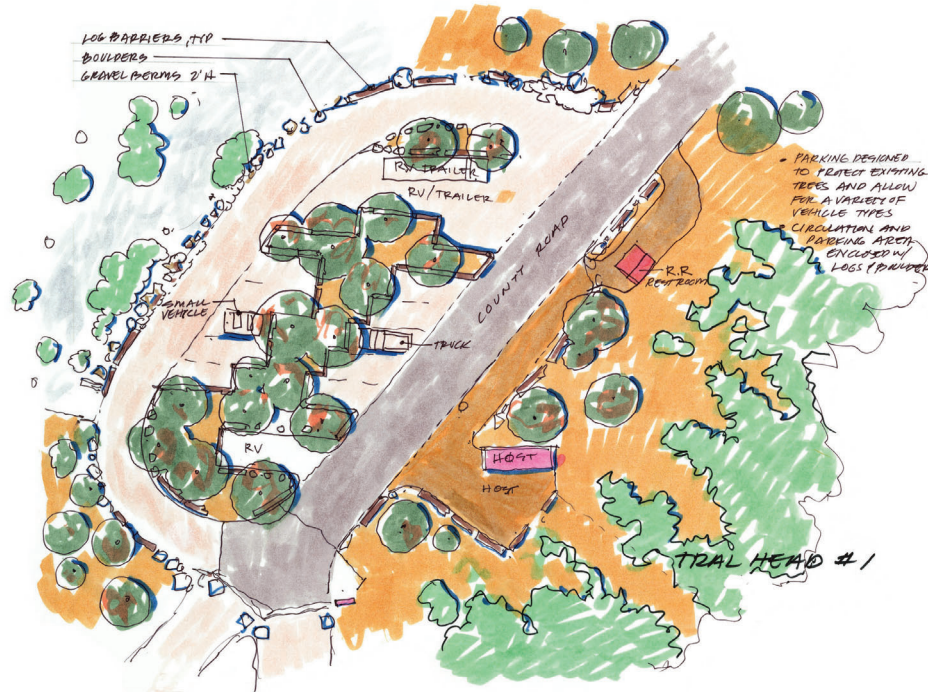
Removable bollards on the trail help control motorized traffic while allowing for emergency use.

Feedback to Date



LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

"USFS Landing"



Concept

Trailhead #1 area is transformed from an off road vehicle user area with informal lake access to a user friendly, safe area with designated trail and lake access, parking, restrooms and a "host" station with 24/7 personnel.

The terminus of First Avenue provides an excellent connection to the community of Chester, and the existing, slightly used paved road offers a beautiful trail opportunity to those needing hard surface trails.

Interpretive opportunities are abundant—from the natural resources of Lake Almanor, to gravel extraction methods, to land use neighbors such as USFS, PG&E, and nearby airport.



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Key Design Features

In partnership with the USFS, a campground host area is located in an area that provides excellent “eyes on the park” as well as a source for any emergency needs.

Parking is designed to preserve and protect existing trees, sensitive vegetation, and allow for a variety of vehicle types.

Circulation and parking areas are designated with boulders and logs, and gravel berms situated in key areas help with off road problems.

A restroom is located near parking and trail information may be found near the transition between the road ending and USFS dirt trail.

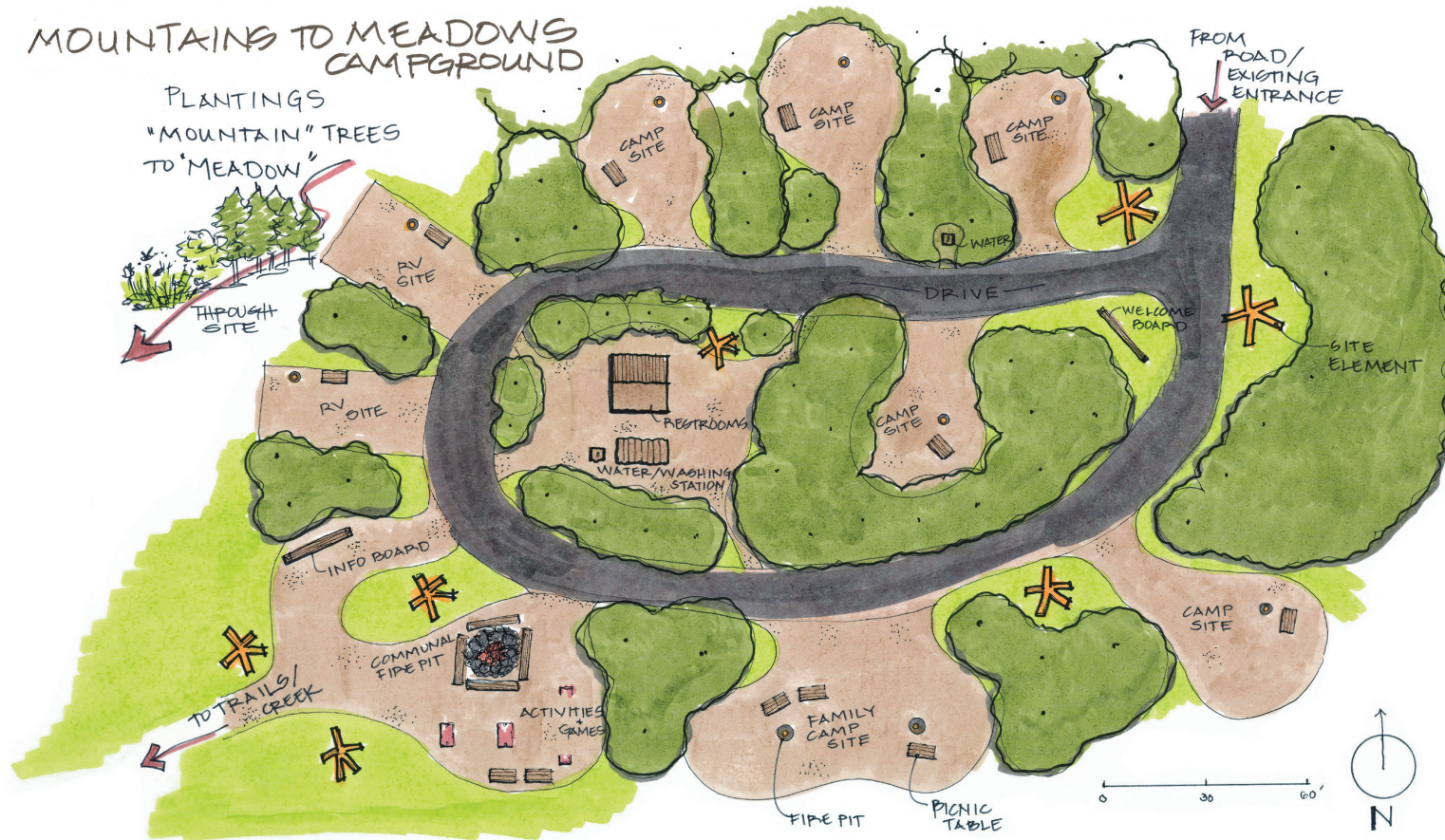
Feedback to Date

- Change the name of Mosquito Landing to something else that doesn't imply swarms of mosquitos attacking you.
- Relocate Site Host station to opposite side of road to avoid marshy areas.
- Develop a boardwalk system to lake to encourage birdwatching and kayak access.
- Overnight use?



LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

Mountain to Meadows



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Concept

One of the two public parcels on the shore of Mountain Meadows Reservoir offers a perfect venue for overnight camping and group events. Adding trees and shrubs to existing vegetation adds privacy between camp sites while protecting views to and from the Reservoir.

Key Design Features

Users are welcomed to the area with a good signage, information and eclectic site art.

Individual, family and RV camping sites are self contained and have picnic tables and BBQ stations.

A communal area features a communal fire pit, places to sit and eat, and family-friendly activities and games.

A common restroom and washing station is centrally located. Trail access to the lake is clearly marked.

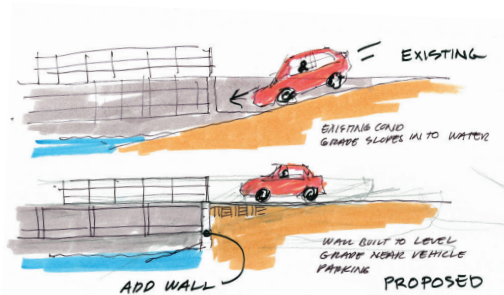
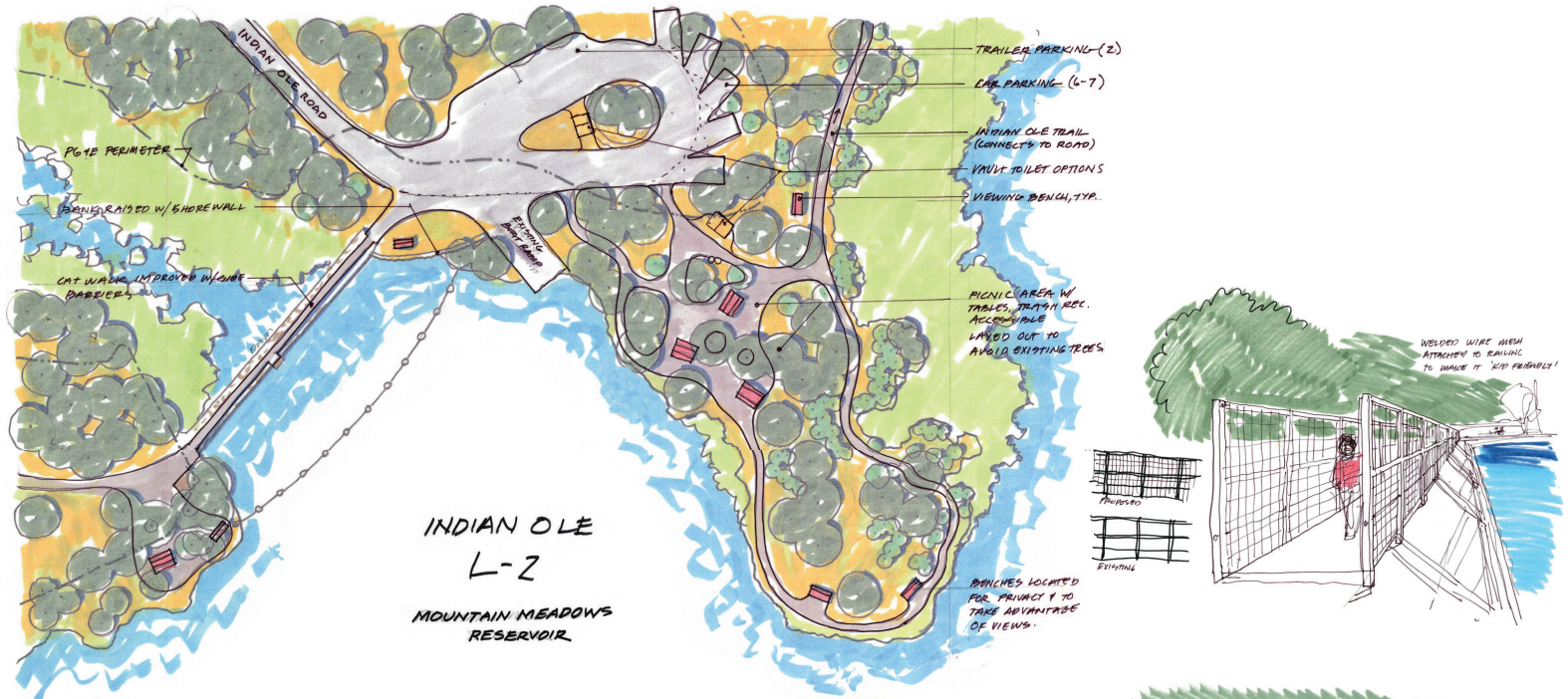
Feedback to Date

- Equestrain use?
- Fire danger?
- Host?
- Walking distance to town-- located less than 1.2 miles to retail and restaurants



LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

Indian Ole @ Mountain Meadows Reservoir



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Concept

Enhancing the existing access and amenities at Indian Ole with more defined parking areas, a shoreline loop trail, orientation and informational signage, and picnic and seating areas add to the enjoyment of this beautiful waterside area. Vault toilets and trash cans help curb dumping and human impacts. Interpretive opportunities include history of the Reservoir and cultural changes over the years. Formalizing the boat launch area and adding a raised parking area may help with any unintended entrances!

Key Design Features

Designated parking area includes room for 2 trailers, 7 cars, a vault toilet and circular drop-off area.

Welcoming signage includes regulatory and safety information.

A new shorefront loop trail connects to Indian Ole Road and provides a beautiful stroll through the trees and along the shoreline.

Benches and picnic areas are sited carefully for privacy and to take advantage of the stunning views over the lake and to the uninterrupted distant hills.

A raised shorewall helps delineate parking and boat launch area.

Wire mesh attached to the railing of the narrow dam bridge helps protect small children and dogs from falling.

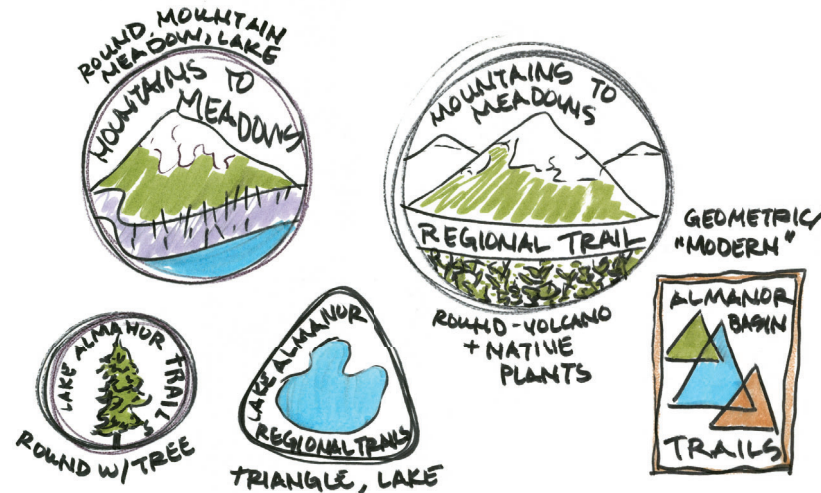
Feedback to Date

- Walkway cannot be made accessible
- Enforced catwalk feels too much like a prison-- Perhaps it should say 'protective screening added to walkway', Not 'enforced' .



LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

Logo



Concept

A striking and memorable logo is one of the easiest methods to brand the Almanor Regional Trail System. Elements can include the name of the trail, a unique landform or water feature, animals or plants—anything that rings true to the area. Shapes can be round, square, triangular, but should be easily reproduced and identified. Colors can reflect the earthy surroundings, water, or just be vibrant in themselves.

Key Design Features

Easily understood, visualized, and reproducible on signs, t-shirts, marketing materials, etc.

Feedback to Date

- Is the logo for the regional system, for parts of the trail, complementary to other merging trail systems?

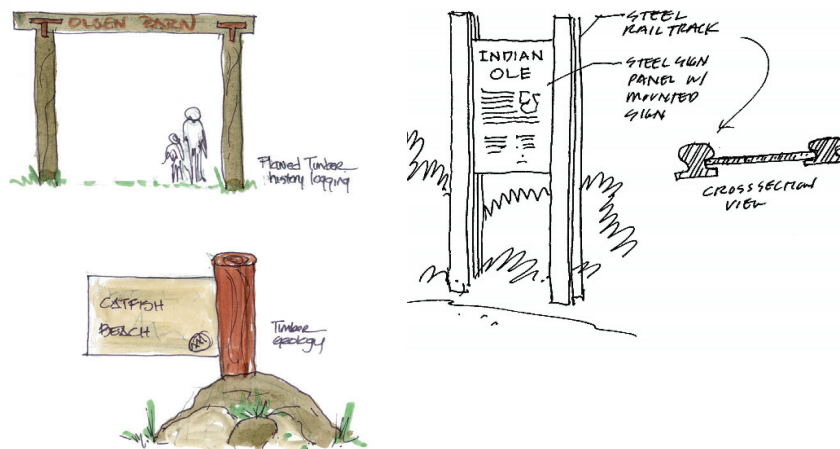


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LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

Site Amenities: Signage and Entrances

ENTRANCE



Concept

Creating a signage brand and system unique to the Almanor Regional Trail System helps identify access and trail locations in a cohesive and memorable fashion. A set of design standards can be created that may be replicated along the entire system lending cohesion and recognition.

Key Design Features

Design standards include gateway entrance features, informational kiosks, interpretive panels, mile markers, and directional signs leading users from the roads to the access areas. Natural materials such as logs (planned or rough), boulders, steel, and other local materials are cost efficient and fit into the landscape.

Feedback to Date

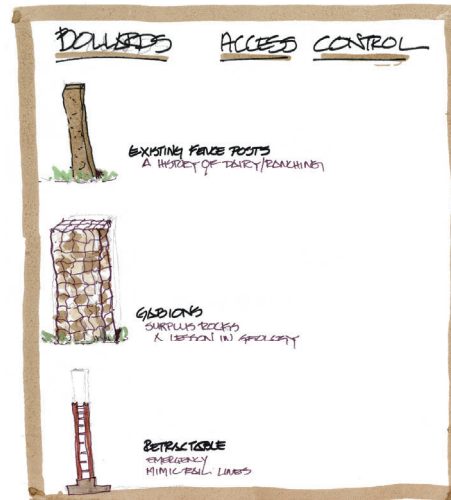
- Coordinate with Volcanic Legacy themes and materials.



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LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

Site Amenities: Bollards



Concept

Although utilitarian in use, bollards provide a great medium to define trail themes and provide aesthetic solutions to access and parking issues. Depending on needs, they may be removable for emergency and event use or permanent structures to prevent off road use and control access. Using local materials or remnants helps with cost while providing authentic materials and look.

Key Design Features

Use vernacular from the landscape as the basis for design: wood fence posts are remnant of the dairy era, while gabion structures filled with local stone can illustrate the richness of the local geology.

Feedback to Date

- 1-2 bollards are sufficient for a 10-12 foot wide path.



LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

Site Amenities: Picnic Tables



Concept

Siting picnic tables in key areas along the trail near parking and trash receptacles offers a place to sit and enjoy the trail and surrounding areas.

Key Design Features

Split log design keeps costs down while using local materials and fitting into surrounding landscape.

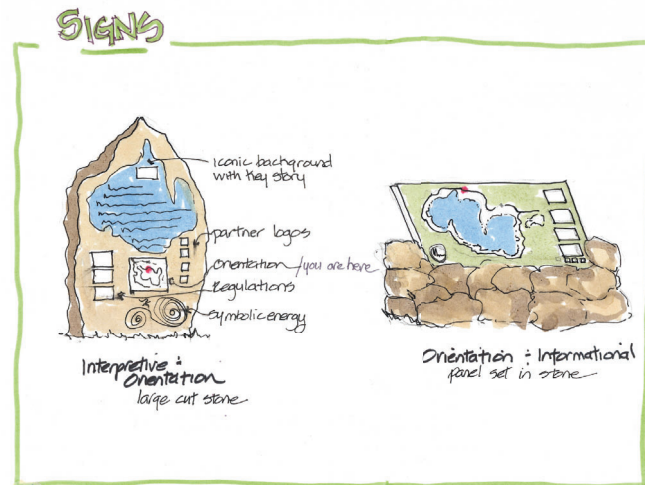
Feedback to Date

- Some concerns about potential vandalism to the wood were expressed at the community open house.



LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

Site Amenities: Trail Signage



Concept

Trail signs do not have to be generic and/or cookie cutter design and instead offer a unique frame for trail information. With the rich geology in the Almanor Basin, this information can be integrated into large stone slabs or installed on stone foundations.

Key Design Features

Large boulders or stone slabs can be planed flat and installed vertically in the landscape with orientation and other information inserted or etched into that plane. Or, a stone base using local materials may be constructed and an informational panel may be inserted on top. Each Orientation sign includes an iconic background of the lake with a "you are here" location, partner logos, regulatory information, and perhaps a symbolic image.

Feedback to Date



LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

Site Amenities: Trash Receptacles

*Concept*

Keep trash bins contained and in a designated area.

Key Design Features

Using log slats as a corral style ties into the natural materials while keeping trash cans in a convenient area.

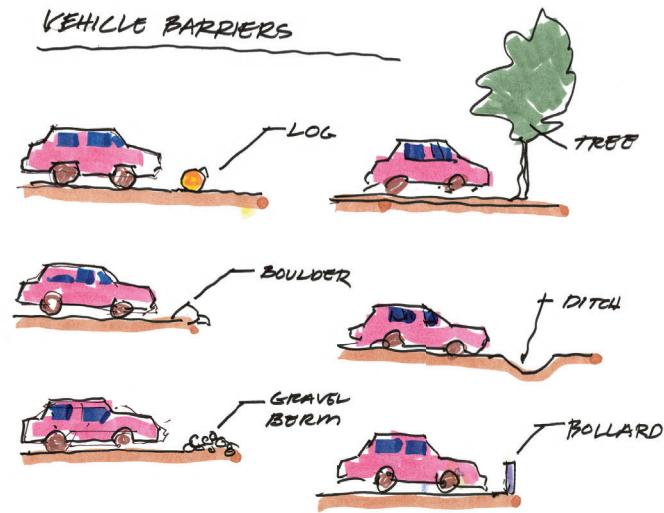
Feedback to Date

- Need bear-proof solutions
- Keep accessible for trash pick-up



LAKE ALMANOR BASIN REGIONAL TRAILS

Site Amenities: Vehicle Barriers



Concept

Vehicle barriers can be strategically designed and constructed in the landscape to help define informal parking spots and to curb off road access to sensitive areas

Key Design Features

Solutions range from natural materials such as logs and boulders, to more constructed elements such as gravel berms and bollards.

Feedback to Date

- Suggest the illustration on vehicle barriers only show low wheel stops so low rider cars (which are many) don't crunch their fenders.



Almanor Basin Trails Coalition

Updated 12/22/2020