

Laura Hall

From: Betsy Cawn <epi-center@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 12:31 PM
To: Laura Hall
Cc: Tom Jordan
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Upper Lake Biochar project, IS/MND UP 23-05: Public Comments

Dear Ms. Hall,

The following are my comments on the Upper Lake Biochar permit proposal, Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration UP 23-05:

Page 2: Item 16. PROJECT DISCRIPTION; tyopgraphical error in title.

Page 10: Item 18, 1st paragraph, refers to the Middletown Area Plan (not sure why) but does not include reference to the Upper Lake/Nice Area Plan. Later in the document, reference is made to the project's inclusion in the Shoreline Communities Area Plan, but not the Upper Lake/Nice Area Plan. Upper Lake does not fall within the Shoreline Communities Area Plan territory.

In the list of "other organizations" (bullet points), the word "Protection" is missing from the "Lake County Northshore Fire District."

Item 19 states that "The County sent out an AB52 Tribal Consultation Notification to all Tribal Nations on September 27, 2023. To date, no comments have been received." Although there is a check mark on the distribution list for reviewer solicitation of public comments on the Initial Study, it would be courteous to resend the AB52 Tribal Consultation Notification.

Page 38: Within the text for "GEO 1" analysis, references to "map unit 158" and "map unit 124" do not correspond to "Figure" references for maps included in the IS/MND document.

Page 46: Refers to Figure 3 - Soils Map in the first "Discussion" paragraph, but the map found on Page 39 is the Quaternary Faults Map. There is a reference to Figure 4 - Vegetation Map, but no maps are displayed following the references on Page 46.

Page 49: Third paragraph states that ". . .the project is in the Shoreline Communities Area Plan." The project is in the Upper Lake/Nice Area Plan.

Page 50: The discussion refers to the "Resource Management Division" of the Lake County Planning Department. Both terms are obsolete (but if there is indeed a "Resource Management Division" of the Community Development Department I would think it will be the "lead" agency for updating the Aggregate Resource Management Plan, which is part of the 2050 General Plan update project. Please clarify.

Page 53: States that "The Fire District is located in Lucerne approximately 8.6 miles from the project site," but the nearest station is on Main Street in Upper Lake, albeit not fully staffed, and next nearest is in Nice, both part of the Northshore Fire Protection District.

Page 53: In Item “a)” under Discussion, the word “entrance” is misspelled (third line of text).

Page 59: Regarding the Upper Lake Groundwater Basin, the Habematolel Band of Pomo Indians’ Running Creek Casino drilled its own wells for the project which described the water source as a separate basin sequestered from the Upper Lake Groundwater Basin by underground soil/rock separation from that basin. The biochar project site lies to the east of the Casino, and most likely would tap into the separate groundwater basin, which has not been quantified as such. Tribal management of the casino would most likely not find that the project’s projected annual usage will interfere with the casino’s water supply, but it would be courteous to ask them (as part of the AB52 consultation). Upper Lake County Water District manager Rachelle Henry will be able to confirm the casino’s source water supply, inasmuch as the District commented on the Bureau of Indian Affairs “Environmental Impact Report” for the project. Consultation with the ULCWD is appropriate, inasmuch as the District has authority in the District’s “Area of Concern” (see the 2007 Municipal Service Review provided by the Local Agency Formation Commission).

Page 59: “C&S Waste Solutions would provide waste services for the project site.” “Would”? “Could”? “Should”? The correct word is “will” — unless there is some question as to whether the provider has the capacity or not.

Attachment A, Pages 1-9: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan requirements for monitoring and reporting rely on the applicant, with no oversight or inspection by the permitting agency. All monitoring and reporting activities are prior to or during construction. Annual compliance reports for ongoing impacts of operations (AQMD, for example) should be included in the long-term MMRP (reference CEQA §15074).

Attachment A, Page 7, HAZ-3: Project requires a Hazardous Materials Business Plan and Risk Management Plan, compliant with Lake County Environmental Health Services requirements, during all phases of construction and ongoing operation. Reference Page 42 of the IS/MND, 3rd paragraph, and subsequent findings in HAZ-2 and HAZ-3.

Throughout: Maps are not readable; provide a link to the source pages or provide higher quality replication.

Respectfully yours,

Betsy Cawn
The Essential Public Information Center
Upper Lake, CA
707-275-9736

From: [Karola Kennedy](#)
To: [Laura Hall](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Automatic reply: Request for Review (RFR) for Major Use Permit (UP 23-05); Initial Study (IS 23-10) at APN 004-010-04:
Date: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 2:21:18 PM

Thank you for your message. Karola Kennedy is no longer employed by Robinson Rancheria as of 6/29/23. Due to my resignation, I am unable to answer this email. Please direct any current or future inquiries to both Luis Santana at lsantana@rrcbc-nsn.gov and Meyo Marrufo at meyo.marrufo@gmail.com. If you need to reach me, my email is k.kennedy.epa.19@gmail.com or (707)530-5320. Note that this original email will not be directly forwarded to Luis or Meyo.

Kind Regards, Karola

The content of this message is confidential. If you have received it by mistake, please inform us and then delete the message. It is forbidden to copy, forward, or in any way reveal the contents of this message to anyone. The integrity and security of this email cannot be guaranteed. Therefore, the sender will not be held liable for any damage caused by the message.

From: [Larry Kahn](#)
To: [Laura Hall](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter against the proposed wood processing plant on highway 20
Date: Monday, June 17, 2024 5:11:43 PM

Larry Kahn

June 16, 2024

Why I don't want to live next to a wood processing bioenergy plant:

There are many reasons and fears allowing a wood processing plant next to my home. I have lived here for eighteen years and I enjoy the peace and quiet my home offers. I grow hay for horses and I fly my little Cessna around. I was happy when there was a beautiful vineyard next door. Then about five years ago the county bought it. The first mistake they made was letting all the grapes die on the vine. They made no attempt to have someone come in and process the grapes. By my estimate they lost about half a million dollars in potential revenue. Nobody cared. Then they proceeded to use prison labor to remove the infrastructure. You can guess how that went. There are still giant piles of wire and PVC pipe lying around. The county doesn't even follow their own fire abatement rules. They have allowed weeds grow unmolested for years. Some weeds are over six feet tall. The place is a fire trap during the summer. Below ground the prison labor created more problems. They used chainsaws to cut the grape vines at ground level. How is that a problem? If someone wanted to grow any new crops they would now have to dig out all the grape roots. What should have been done was to use a tractor or loader to pull the vines out of the ground instead of leaving all the stumps. It can still be corrected but with a lot more time and expense. It doesn't appear that the people in charge of managing these properties know anything about anything. Four years ago I attempted to lease the property so I could expand my hay business. I must have called and sent messages at least twenty five times. I was constantly calling E. J. Crandell. Everytime I got the run around. He would get back to me, he would have his staff look into it. Not once did he ever return one of my messages and calls. It was my understanding that the purchase of the Robinson Vineyard was for flood control and future riparian water shed to help clean up Clearlake. Upper Lake was supposed to be a destination/vacation type of place. Now you want to add a wood processing plant to the main corridor. It's my understanding that there is already a place in Kelseyville processing wood. Surely there must be a place closer by that would be better suited to the transport of wood products from one plant to the next. Also the plant is only going to be 2,600 square feet. But it's going to be another tent building. 2,600 square feet is the size of a house. Why do they need so much acreage? For years I was told the purchase of these properties was to help with flood control and Clearlake cleanup. Federal money was used for that purpose. I was even approached by the county with the intent of purchasing my property. I declined and so did my neighbor to the east of me.

My other concerns are noise and smells. Laura Hall informed me that the plant would be one thousand feet away from highway 20. Maybe that makes it look nicer from the highway. Unfortunately my house is also a thousand feet from the highway. The prevailing winds go from the west to the east. That means any noise or smell will be coming right at me. This doesn't seem fair to me. This year without any advance warning my property taxes went up by six thousand dollars. I believe that if this plant goes in my property value will go down substantially. I can't help but wonder how difficult it will be to convince the property tax people. I also wonder if this year's property tax increase wasn't connected to the wood processing project. I asked Laura Hall how much the plant will be paying on the lease. She didn't know. Maybe I would be willing to pay a greater amount to grow hay. I was never asked. I'm aware that this project is backed by Indian money. It appears to me that they have the clout to get what they want. I wonder how hard the county tried to get the most money for their property. Has the county done anything with regards to maximizing the revenue for this place. I doubt it. Four years ago I wanted to lease it and I got nowhere and now the Indians come and it appears to be getting pushed through without any oversight. I'm fairly certain there will be problems between me and the processing plant. I know I will have to get a lawyer involved. I guess I'm the little guy getting pushed around without any compensation for my troubles. I'm a believer that bribes and double dealing goes on. I have no proof but this just smacks of some sort of underhanded deal. I'm hoping someone will come forward and be honest about how these deals go through.

From: [Mireya Turner](#)
To: [Lowell Grant](#)
Cc: [Laura Hall](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Upper Lake Bio Char project
Date: Tuesday, June 18, 2024 9:30:21 AM

Hi Lowell,
Thank you so much for taking the time to send in your comments. We will add it to the project's public record.
Cordially,

Mireya G. Turner, MPA
Director
Community Development
255 N. Forbes St.
Lakeport, CA 95453
Phone: (707) 263-2221
Fax: (707) 263-2225
Email: mireya.turner@lakecountyca.gov

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-----Original Message-----

From: Lowell Grant <lowellzgrant@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 18, 2024 8:41 AM
To: Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Upper Lake Bio Char project

Hello Mireya,

I understand that the public comment period for this proposed project ends later this month and being a long time resident of the area, with a background in air quality I just wanted to make a brief statement that I hope you will enter into the record.

As you know, the site proposed is at nearly the very lowest point of our air basin and on cool, still mornings, which are very common, the inversion caused by dense, cool air sinking below the warmer air above traps and concentrates pollutants and odors right at ground level. Where the people live, many of whom are older and sensitive receptors. There's a large mobile home park just down the road, almost adjacent to the proposed site.

After reading the materials provided to the public, it's impossible to quantify the potential impact on local residents because there's absolutely no information about the actual process. There's no data provided about the emissions that can be expected in either the release of criteria pollutants or odors.

I believe that the public should be given much more information about this project before any rational discussion can begin. In speaking with Doug Gerhardt, director of the Lake County Air Quality Control District, I'm told that there hasn't even been a request for a permit for this project, so they haven't yet begun to investigate further.

I hope that this proposed project will be fully vetted and that the public health continues to be the concern of all regulatory authorities.

Thanks for your time and continued efforts to do the right thing for all of us.

Sincerely,

Lowell Grant

From: [Mireya Turner](#)
To: [Dustin Hoaglen](#)
Cc: [Laura Hall](#); [Michelle Irace](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Upper Lake Bio Char Production Concern
Date: Thursday, June 27, 2024 1:31:48 PM

Dear Mr. Hoaglen,
Thank you so much for taking the time to send in your comments.
I have cc'd our Principal and Senior Planners to make sure your input is included in the public record.
Cordially,

Mireya G. Turner, MPA
Director
Community Development
255 N. Forbes St.
Lakeport, CA 95453
Phone: (707) 263-2221
Fax: (707) 263-2225
Email: mireya.turner@lakecountyca.gov

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-----Original Message-----

From: Dustin Hoaglen <dhoaglen@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2024 1:04 PM
To: Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Upper Lake Bio Char Production Concern

To Meirya Turner,

I'm writing to express my concerns about the bio char production facility proposed for Upper Lake off Highway 20. My family has had a home near Rodman Slough and Bloody Island for decades, not far from the proposed site. I'm concerned about how this facility threatens the clean air Lake County is known for and the water that runs past the facility and my family's property to Rodman Slough.

How do we know this biochar production facility doesn't threaten the clear air we breathe and the clean water running from Middle Creek to Clear Lake?

What about the potential noise for local residents from the facility itself and the traffic caused by large diesel trucks going to/from the site?

The 260+ page proposal barely skims the surface of my concerns and the proposal downplays the potential effects of this project. This project should have a full environmental impact study conducted by an unbiased group unaffiliated with Lake County and this project.

This is NOT the location for this project. It should be in a remote area away from homes, schools, businesses, and waterways. Thank you for taking the time to reconsider this deeply concerning project.

My final question to you is...
Would you want a biochar production facility in YOUR backyard?

Sincerely,

Dustin Hoaglen

From: [Mireya Turner](#)
To: [jacoblong](#)
Cc: [Laura Hall](#); [Michelle Irace](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Upperlake project
Date: Thursday, June 27, 2024 5:35:16 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hello,

Thank you for your comment. It will be included in the public input section of the public record.

Cordially,



Mireya G. Turner, MPA

Director

Community Development

255 N. Forbes St.

Lakeport, CA 95453

Phone: (707) 263-2221

Fax: (707) 263-2225

Email: mireya.turner@lakecountyca.gov

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From: jacoblong <jacoblong144@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2024 3:59 PM
To: Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Upperlake project

I am fundamentally against the new project as it endangers the health of my children by exposing them to toxic chemicals in the air. As a permanent resident of Upperlake, I demand a cleaner environment for their growth and development.

RECEIVED

July 11, 2024

Mireya G. Turner – Director
Community Development
255 N Forbes St., Rm. 323
Lakeport, CA. 85453

JUL 15 2024

LAKE COUNTY COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT DEPT

and

CDD/Planning Commission
255 N. Forbes St.
Lakeport, CA. 85453

Dear Director Turner and Planning Commission:

This letter replaces my previous which had multiple typos. I am writing in regard to the proposed Bio-Char and electric generation plant in Upper Lake.

Bio-Char, similar to charcoal, is a recent development in some sectors of the agricultural community. It is not so well known or widely accepted as other natural bulk soil ammendments like lime, gypsum, compost or animal manures.

A thoughtful farmer will want a complete chemical analysis of this material, and perhaps advice from a soil scientist before applying it to his/her land. There will be questions regarding the interaction of this material with existing soil chemistry, microorganisms and existing crops. In orchards and vineyrd special equipment would likely be needed to spread the material as opposed to just dumping and pushing it around in an open field.

There are examples in both Mendocino and Humboldt counties of use of co-generation ash or bio-mass conversion ash (burning of wood waste) on agricultural lands. A very large volume of ask was created and disposal was a problem. It was offered to farmers free of charge to spread on their land.

I accepted multiple truckloads on a properety I was farming in Humboldt County. I required a chemical analysis of the ash. It contained some heavy metals of concern but not at levels thought to be harmful. Results can vary with the source. I have heard some negative stories regarding the co-generation facility in Fort Bragg.

Ash and Bio-Char are not the same but it is unknown what volumes of each might be coming out of the proposed plant.

When I was still farming small grains in Upper Lake I contacted the County about leasing the subject property, 755 E. Hwy 20. It is excellend agricultural soil. But on inspectiion I found there was a huge amount of trash from the poorly planned and incomplete removal of the vineyard. The sad thing is, at that time, it was still a producing vineyard and the County could have leased it. For my purpose, no way I could afford to remove the trash which consists of piles of pressure treated stakes and coils of drip tube. Probably talking dozens of dumpster loads. Worse, the vines were cut off at ground level rather than being uprooted. They have continued to grow forming a thick mat along with the blackberries.

From a planning perspective, the property has excellent agricultural soil and is surrounded by existing vineyards and farms. The portion which will remain above lake level could probably be divided into 2-3 family farms similar to the adjacent.

In siting an industrial operation dependent on the forest resource, is it better to bring the resource to town or site the operation nearer the forest?

I have one final question about Bio-Char from the perspective of carbon sequestration. Why is an industrial operation to make Bio-Char better than just leaving the dead and down material in the forest to decompose and return to forest soils? What is the net carbon footprint?

Thank you.

John LaBoyteaux
P.O. Box 613
Upper Lake, CA. 95485
helenthemelon46@gmail.com

July 10, 2024

Mireya G. Turner – Director
Community Development
255 N Forbes St., Rm. 323
Lakeport, CA. 85453

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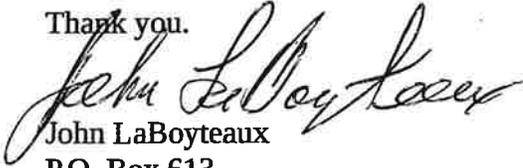
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From a planning perspective, the property has excellent agricultural soil and is surrounded by existing vineyards and farms. The portion which will remain above lake level could probably be divided into 2-3 family farms similar to the adjacent.

In siting an industrial operation dependent on forest resource, is it better to bring the resource to town or site the operation nearer the forest?

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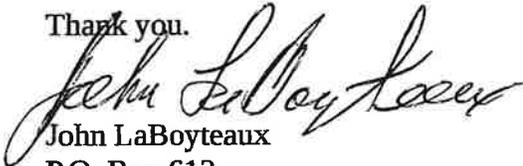
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John LaBoyteaux
P.O. Box 613
Upper Lake, CA. 95485
helenthemelon46@gmail.com

From: [Mireya Turner](#)
To: [Michelle Irace](#); [Laura Hall](#)
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] AG Forest Wood Processing Bioenergy Project - Please vote no for the health and safety of the citizens of Upper Lake
Date: Tuesday, July 16, 2024 9:21:50 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Public Input for the Biochar project.



Mireya G. Turner, MPA

Director

Community Development

255 N. Forbes St.

Lakeport, CA 95453

Phone: (707) 263-2221

Fax: (707) 263-2225

Email: mireya.turner@lakecountyca.gov

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From: Julia Carrera <julia.inspector@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, July 15, 2024 2:14 PM

To: Dist3 PlanningComm <dist3planningcomm@lakecountyca.gov>; Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov>; Christinapricesells@gmail.com

Subject: [EXTERNAL] AG Forest Wood Processing Bioenergy Project - Please vote no for the health and safety of the citizens of Upper Lake

Good Morning Mr. Brown,

I am a resident of Upper Lake. More specifically I own three parcels on the north end of Main St..

Our community suffers from significant flooding due to older homes being built without stormwater plans, lack of storm drains, lack of fall in the failing culvert storm drain system, illegal grading, lack of culvert/tributaries/creek clearing and maintenance. In some cases, water has been diverted from flowing into our creeks to flowing into our homes. In addition, we have a faulty levee system that has over 30 years of deferred maintenance that poses a high risk of levee breach resulting in a good portion of Upper Lake being under 10ft. of water, including the parcel this AG Forest Project is proposed on. (I refer you to the Department of Water Resources December 2021 Feasibility Study on the Upper Lake Levee System on line - there is a simulation of what will happen to this parcel in a flood event). It should also be noted that this parcel is on the state designated Scenic Highway 20, which, according to the state

general scenic preservation guidelines, does not allow industrial plants, which this project is.

A bit of history on this proposed project parcel: This parcel is zoned Prime Ag Lands. Originally there was a vineyard there. The county purchased this parcel for flood control only, similar to the parcel behind 3 Brothers Plaza, used to be Pear Orchard and purchased by county for flood control only. The adjacent neighbor to the proposed Ag Forest Wood Processing site, Mr. Kahn, has requested of Supervisor Crandell the opportunity to lease the property from the county for the expansion of his hay production for the last five years. He has yet to receive communication back from Supervisor Crandell or anyone in the county (I refer you to the WRTH June meeting video). Mr. Kahn's hay production is a good use for this flood prone prime Ag Lands property. Last year, the county voted to lease the property to the Scotts Valley Tribe for 1 dollar a year, which appears to be under market value. Mr. Kahn continues to want to lease this property for far more than 1 dollar a year.

I completely and wholeheartedly support such a biochar/wood chip industrial facility project. I do not support this project on this particular proposed parcel. I support it somewhere other than on this particular parcel or in a floodplain in Upper Lake on our designated Scenic Hiway 20. Indeed, we need to process the standing and fallen dead wood in and on our national forest and I support this. I understand from the Dept. of Forestry, they have invested \$500,000 into this proposed project. Wouldn't it be a positive opportunity for all, if the Dept. of Forestry offered a site on one of their parcels closer to the national forest? They are the largest landowner in Flood Zone #8, the flood zone in Upper Lake this parcel is located in.

As our district 3 Planning Commission Representative, you hold the trust of the citizens of Upper Lake to make a decision based on public health and safety. I don't see how this particular site for this particular project would support public health and safety, particularly in a flood condition. The woodchips and biochar industrial project would clog up all drainage systems needed to recess flood waters, leaving our community underwater for who knows how long, unnecessarily. This can be avoided by placing the project somewhere else. In addition, the condition of Elk Mountain Road is horrendous and does not support large trucking of trees or chips from the national forest to this proposed flood zone/scenic hiway 20 site. And, there is the scenic hiway preservation program that is mandated on California scenic hiways. The state has strict prohibition/restrictions on industrial type projects and requires the local agencies to mandate a scenic protection plan. .

I think it important to note that the WRTH (Municipal Advisory Council) has a vacant seat on the Council representing Upper Lake. This seat has been vacant since March 2023. Therefore any WRTH input is lacking full representation from the Upper Lake community, who is directly affected by this proposed project.

I hope you will consider voting **against** this location for this project, but in support of the project on a non-flood zone parcel off a scenic designated highway and not on Prime Ag Lands. Perhaps a Dept. of Forestry parcel, which are abundant just outside Flood Zone #8 and close to the Mendocino National Forest.

We can do better!

Thank you for your consideration,

Julia Carrera

9695,9697,9705,9707,9725A, 9725B Main St. Upper Lake

--

Julia Carrera, MS
9695 Main St.
Upper Lake, CA 95485
707-354-2131

Unity is the Future

From: [Karola Kennedy](#)
To: [Laura Hall](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Automatic reply: Request for Review (RFR) for Major Use Permit (UP 23-05); Initial Study (IS 23-10) at APN 004-010-04:
Date: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 2:21:18 PM

Thank you for your message. Karola Kennedy is no longer employed by Robinson Rancheria as of 6/29/23. Due to my resignation, I am unable to answer this email. Please direct any current or future inquiries to both Luis Santana at lsantana@rrcbc-nsn.gov and Meyo Marrufo at meyo.marrufo@gmail.com. If you need to reach me, my email is k.kennedy.epa.19@gmail.com or (707)530-5320. Note that this original email will not be directly forwarded to Luis or Meyo.

Kind Regards, Karola

The content of this message is confidential. If you have received it by mistake, please inform us and then delete the message. It is forbidden to copy, forward, or in any way reveal the contents of this message to anyone. The integrity and security of this email cannot be guaranteed. Therefore, the sender will not be held liable for any damage caused by the message.

From: [Mireya Turner](#)
To: [Kimberly Hammond](#)
Cc: [Shannon Walker-Smith](#); [Laura Hall](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Upper lake project
Date: Thursday, June 27, 2024 5:39:46 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear Ms. Hammond,
Thank you for your comment. It will be included in the public record.
Cordially,



Mireya G. Turner, MPA
Director
Community Development
255 N. Forbes St.
Lakeport, CA 95453
Phone: (707) 263-2221
Fax: (707) 263-2225
Email: mireya.turner@lakecountyca.gov

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From: Kimberly Hammond <kimberlyhammond2@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2024 3:51 PM
To: Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Upper lake project

I have lived in upper lake my whole life. I am opposed to the upper lake project.

Kimberly hammond 7077149338

From: [Larry Kahn](#)
To: [Laura Hall](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter against the proposed wood processing plant on highway 20
Date: Monday, June 17, 2024 5:11:43 PM

Larry Kahn

June 16, 2024

Why I don't want to live next to a wood processing bioenergy plant:

There are many reasons and fears allowing a wood processing plant next to my home. I have lived here for eighteen years and I enjoy the peace and quiet my home offers. I grow hay for horses and I fly my little Cessna around. I was happy when there was a beautiful vineyard next door. Then about five years ago the county bought it. The first mistake they made was letting all the grapes die on the vine. They made no attempt to have someone come in and process the grapes. By my estimate they lost about half a million dollars in potential revenue. Nobody cared. Then they proceeded to use prison labor to remove the infrastructure. You can guess how that went. There are still giant piles of wire and PVC pipe lying around. The county doesn't even follow their own fire abatement rules. They have allowed weeds grow unmolested for years. Some weeds are over six feet tall. The place is a fire trap during the summer. Below ground the prison labor created more problems. They used chainsaws to cut the grape vines at ground level. How is that a problem? If someone wanted to grow any new crops they would now have to dig out all the grape roots. What should have been done was to use a tractor or loader to pull the vines out of the ground instead of leaving all the stumps. It can still be corrected but with a lot more time and expense. It doesn't appear that the people in charge of managing these properties know anything about anything. Four years ago I attempted to lease the property so I could expand my hay business. I must have called and sent messages at least twenty five times. I was constantly calling E. J. Crandell. Everytime I got the run around. He would get back to me, he would have his staff look into it. Not once did he ever return one of my messages and calls. It was my understanding that the purchase of the Robinson Vineyard was for flood control and future riparian water shed to help clean up Clearlake. Upper Lake was supposed to be a destination/vacation type of place. Now you want to add a wood processing plant to the main corridor. It's my understanding that there is already a place in Kelseyville processing wood. Surely there must be a place closer by that would be better suited to the transport of wood products from one plant to the next. Also the plant is only going to be 2,600 square feet. But it's going to be another tent building. 2,600 square feet is the size of a house. Why do they need so much acreage? For years I was told the purchase of these properties was to help with flood control and Clearlake cleanup. Federal money was used for that purpose. I was even approached by the county with the intent of purchasing my property. I declined and so did my neighbor to the east of me.

My other concerns are noise and smells. Laura Hall informed me that the plant would be one thousand feet away from highway 20. Maybe that makes it look nicer from the highway. Unfortunately my house is also a thousand feet from the highway. The prevailing winds go from the west to the east. That means any noise or smell will be coming right at me. This doesn't seem fair to me. This year without any advance warning my property taxes went up by six thousand dollars. I believe that if this plant goes in my property value will go down substantially. I can't help but wonder how difficult it will be to convince the property tax people. I also wonder if this year's property tax increase wasn't connected to the wood processing project. I asked Laura Hall how much the plant will be paying on the lease. She didn't know. Maybe I would be willing to pay a greater amount to grow hay. I was never asked. I'm aware that this project is backed by Indian money. It appears to me that they have the clout to get what they want. I wonder how hard the county tried to get the most money for their property. Has the county done anything with regards to maximizing the revenue for this place. I doubt it. Four years ago I wanted to lease it and I got nowhere and now the Indians come and it appears to be getting pushed through without any oversight. I'm fairly certain there will be problems between me and the processing plant. I know I will have to get a lawyer involved. I guess I'm the little guy getting pushed around without any compensation for my troubles. I'm a believer that bribes and double dealing goes on. I have no proof but this just smacks of some sort of underhanded deal. I'm hoping someone will come forward and be honest about how these deals go through.

From: [Mireya Turner](#)
To: [Laura Hall](#); [Michelle Irace](#)
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] UL Bio plant proposal
Date: Thursday, June 27, 2024 2:34:28 PM

Mireya G. Turner, MPA
Director
Community Development
255 N. Forbes St.
Lakeport, CA 95453
Phone: (707) 263-2221
Fax: (707) 263-2225
Email: mireya.turner@lakecountyca.gov

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-----Original Message-----

From: Linda Bushta <bushta3@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2024 2:33 PM
To: Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] UL Bio plant proposal

As a longtime resident of Upper Lake, I have serious concerns about the proposal to build a facility near our town to process wood into byproduct.

First and foremost is our air quality. Upper Lake has clean air of which we are very proud. Nothing is more important to us than the air we breathe. I question how a facility such as this planned one could keep particles from exuding and polluting the air?

Highway 20 is dangerous. Getting the public to slow to 45 through our town is always a challenge. We have no policing and the CHP are few and far between. Adding large trucks to the traffic is a hazard.

We have three schools in Upper Lake. Our district serves the North Shore from Lucerne to Blue Lakes. We need to consider the students and how the traffic and commotion of industry will affect them. I feel a more "off the beaten path" facility would be a better fit for this plant.

I believe a longer period of discussion and public input should be allowed for this project. Many voters in Upper Lake have no idea it is even in the works for approval. Please extend the date for public comment for this project.

Sincerely,
Linda Bushta
P O Box 505
Upper Lake, CA 95485

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Mireya Turner](#)
To: [Lowell Grant](#)
Cc: [Laura Hall](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Upper Lake Bio Char project
Date: Tuesday, June 18, 2024 9:30:21 AM

Hi Lowell,
Thank you so much for taking the time to send in your comments. We will add it to the project's public record.
Cordially,

Mireya G. Turner, MPA
Director
Community Development
255 N. Forbes St.
Lakeport, CA 95453
Phone: (707) 263-2221
Fax: (707) 263-2225
Email: mireya.turner@lakecountyca.gov

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-----Original Message-----

From: Lowell Grant <lowellzgrant@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 18, 2024 8:41 AM
To: Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Upper Lake Bio Char project

Hello Mireya,

I understand that the public comment period for this proposed project ends later this month and being a long time resident of the area, with a background in air quality I just wanted to make a brief statement that I hope you will enter into the record.

As you know, the site proposed is at nearly the very lowest point of our air basin and on cool, still mornings, which are very common, the inversion caused by dense, cool air sinking below the warmer air above traps and concentrates pollutants and odors right at ground level. Where the people live, many of whom are older and sensitive receptors. There's a large mobile home park just down the road, almost adjacent to the proposed site.

After reading the materials provided to the public, it's impossible to quantify the potential impact on local residents because there's absolutely no information about the actual process. There's no data provided about the emissions that can be expected in either the release of criteria pollutants or odors.

I believe that the public should be given much more information about this project before any rational discussion can begin. In speaking with Doug Gerhardt, director of the Lake County Air Quality Control District, I'm told that there hasn't even been a request for a permit for this project, so they haven't yet begun to investigate further.

I hope that this proposed project will be fully vetted and that the public health continues to be the concern of all regulatory authorities.

Thanks for your time and continued efforts to do the right thing for all of us.

Sincerely,

Lowell Grant

From: [Michelle Irace](#)
To: [Mireya Turner](#); [Lynne Kary-Rana](#)
Cc: [Laura Hall](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] meeting about Biochar project
Date: Friday, June 28, 2024 9:55:25 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

Good Morning Lynne,

I am also jumping in to let you know that all of the documents can be found online at: [AG Forest Wood Processing Bioenergy Project \(ca.gov\)](#)

Thank you for your interest in this project,



Michelle Irace

Principal Planner, Community Development Department
255 N. Forbes St. Lakeport, CA 95453
Phone: (707) 263-2221 x 38121
Email: michelle.irace@lakecountyca.gov
STAY CONNECTED:



From: Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov>
Sent: Friday, June 28, 2024 8:26 AM
To: Lynne Kary-Rana <lynnekary@gmail.com>
Cc: Laura Hall <Laura.Hall@lakecountyca.gov>; Michelle Irace <Michelle.Irace@lakecountyca.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] meeting about Biochar project

Good morning,

Thank you for taking the time to send in your questions. Most, if not all your questions have been analyzed in the Initial Study, the environmental analysis for the project. I have cc'd the Project Planner, Laura Hall, so she can send you that document. Alternatively, you are welcome to stop by our department, at the address below, to review it at your convenience. Laura is out of the office today, but will respond to your request for information next week.
Cordially,



Mireya G. Turner, MPA

Director

Community Development
255 N. Forbes St.
Lakeport, CA 95453
Phone: (707) 263-2221
Fax: (707) 263-2225
Email: mireya.turner@lakecountyca.gov

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From: Lynne Kary-Rana <lynnekary@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2024 9:17 PM

To: Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] meeting about Biochar project

HI- How is this new venture going to affect the surrounding area?

Roads and traffic are a mess already. Heavy trucks going up and down?

Noise?

Does it Smell?

Make a lot of light at night?

I wish there was a public meeting about this, Not everyone is on social media.

Lynne Kary-Rana

concerned citizen because not enough information is being given to us

From: [Mireya Turner](#)
To: [Mary ann Hansen](#)
Cc: [Laura Hall](#); [Michelle Irace](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Upper Lake project
Date: Thursday, June 27, 2024 5:34:50 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear Ms. Hansen,

Thank you for your comment. It will be included in the public input section of the public record.

Cordially,



Mireya G. Turner, MPA
Director

Community Development
255 N. Forbes St.
Lakeport, CA 95453
Phone: (707) 263-2221
Fax: (707) 263-2225

Email: mireya.turner@lakecountyca.gov

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From: Mary ann Hansen <maryannhansen80@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2024 3:54 PM
To: Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Upper Lake project

Hello, I am opposed to this project. I believe it will be to environmentally negative for our community. I have been a Upper Lake resident for over 30 years.

Sincerely, Mary ann Hansen. 707-533-3854.

From: [Mireya Turner](#)
To: [Laura Hall](#); [Michelle Irace](#)
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Upper Lake Bio Char project
Date: Thursday, June 27, 2024 1:24:38 PM

Public Input for Biochar project.

Mireya G. Turner, MPA
Director
Community Development
255 N. Forbes St.
Lakeport, CA 95453
Phone: (707) 263-2221
Fax: (707) 263-2225
Email: mireya.turner@lakecountyca.gov

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-----Original Message-----

From: Terra Morris <terradmorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2024 12:33 PM
To: Mireya Turner <Mireya.Turner@lakecountyca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Upper Lake Bio Char project

Hi Mireya,

I am writing to you in regards to the proposed bio char production facility off Highway 20 in Upper Lake. This project is of great concern to my family and local residents who would be affected by the noise, emissions, and traffic caused by a facility in this location. The proposed site is less than a quarter mile from the entire Upper Lake School district including Upper Lake Elementary School, Upper Lake Middle School, and Upper Lake High School.

Any hazardous emissions and noise from the facility will affect the community and all of the local schools. Traffic from the large trucks bringing bio mass to the production and removing bio char from the facility would affect that narrow section of Highway 20 that serves as a main thoroughfare, not just for Lake County residents, but for California residents accessing coastal areas from the Sacramento Valley.

The proposed site sits on a watershed and wildlife corridor that runs from parts of Middle Creek to Rodman Slough. My family has lived on the property across the street since the 1850s and work hard to maintain a safe space for wildlife to move from the ridges and valleys to the marsh land on Clear Lake. There is an underground passage and wildlife corridor that runs under the highway from my family's property to the other side of Highway 20 to allow for safe crossing to Rodman Slough. With the proposed facility on the other side it threatens this safe passage for wildlife. The location would also threaten the waterways that are of great concern for the Lake County Watershed Project and the middle creek marsh lands and ecosystem restoration project.

There are many other concerns about this project based on the unknown and lack of information being shared. I don't see any benefit to Upper Lake and the surrounding community and school system. This is the wrong location for a bio char production facility in Lake County. I urge you to consider other locations and to put the health and safety of our local community and wildlife above a proposal that has zero positive benefits for Upper Lake.

At minimum there needs to be more time for public input and inquiry before a life changing decision is made in our community.

Sincerely,
Terra Morris
875 Old Lucerne Rd.
Upper Lake, CA 95485

Western Region Town Hall District 3, County of Lake

Mireya G. Turner, Director
Community Development Department
255 N Forbes Street
Third Floor, Room 323
Lakeport, CA 95453

The Western Region Town Hall has initiated this letter to express our concerns regarding the proposed AG Forest Wood Processing Bioenergy Project.

We realize that the proposed project is complex in it's implementation and represents a considerable investment in time and funds.

We in no way are expressing a negative opinion of the project or it's goals.

We are concerned that the project has not been presented to the Upper Lake community in a timely fashion.

Specifically, there has been no community engagement regarding any of the potential impacts of the project, including traffic, noise and management of onsite materials.

Also, some presentation of pertinent facts concerning the process to the Town Hall would have been welcomed.

Local citizen interest in the nature of and the extent of, this project is high, as witnessed by the large turnout at the June WRTH meeting.

A complete presentation of the project to the Town Hall would be much appreciated.

Respectfully,

Tim Chiara
WRTH Chairman

WRTH Council Members:

Tim Chiara, Chairman
Linda Alexander, Records Keeper
Thomas Aceves, Member

David Eby, Member
Kathryn Parankema, Member
Claudine Pedroncelli, Member

From: [Lynne Kary-Rana](#)
To: [Laura Hall](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Legal Notice for Use Permit UP 23-05; IS 23-10, AG Forest Wood Processing Bioenergy Project:
Date: Wednesday, October 9, 2024 10:54:30 AM

My concern

Elk Mt Road is pretty messed up already and isn't really maintained nicely as it is.

Having lots of extra vehicles connected to this project will mess it up even more.

After the fires we had a lot of large trucks going up and down.

Also, I have some concern about smell. There are some really bad odors happening in Redwood Valley associated with business.

On Wed, Oct 9, 2024 at 9:35 AM Laura Hall <Laura.Hall@lakecountyca.gov> wrote:

Dear Agencies and Stakeholders,

Please see the attached Legal Notice for Use Permit UP 23-05 AG Forest Wood Processing Bioenergy Project. This project proposes to construct a wood processing bioenergy facility at 755 E. State Hwy 20, Upper Lake, CA 95485 (APN 004-010-04). The Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS 23-10) was posted to the State Clearinghouse (SCH Number 2024040980) on April 23, 2024, for a 30-day review period, and now the project is scheduled to go before the Lake County Planning Commission for approval consideration on October 24, 2024, at 9:35 a.m. (please refer to the attached Legal Notice for additional information).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Senior Planner Laura Hall at laura.hall@lakecountyca.gov or 707-263-2221.

Sincerely,

Laura

October 3, 2024

Mireya G Turner – Director
Community Development
255 N Forbes St., Rm. 323
Lakeport, CA. 95453

CDD/Planning Commission
255 N Forbes St.
Lakeport, CA. 95453

Lake County Board of Supervisors
255 N Forbes St.
Lakeport, CA. 95453

Dear Director Turner, Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

At the recent meeting of the Upper Lake Town Hall Council we heard a presentation from the Scott Valley Energy Corporation (SVEC) about their proposed project in Upper Lake. We learned a lot about how pyrolysis electric generation from wood waste is supposed to work. A number of questions and issues remain.

The main purpose of the proposed facility in Upper Lake is a wood grinder, making small wood chips from larger ones. The smaller chips are needed to fuel the pyrolysis process in a limited way in Upper Lake but primarily in other locations yet to be developed. It seems to me the system has to work as a whole and any failure could result in a build-up of raw material, chipped product and bio-char on the project site.

This is an industrial operation and like my neighbors I would prefer to see it on an industrial site or ideally an abandoned saw mill site in or near the National Forest.

The County acquired the former Robinson Lake Vineyard at 755 E. Highway 20 as part of the Middle Creek Restoration Project. It was said to be cheaper to acquire the vineyard than to construct a new levee to protect it. The lower portions of the property will return to the Lake while approximately 50 acres will remain above the 100 year flood level. The SVEC project would be located in that area.

Since acquisition of the property, the County's administration and management has been something of a train wreck.

1. It was a producing vineyard which the County could have leased when acquired.
2. Instead, somehow it was decided to remove the vineyard using County employees and possibly CCC crews. The vineyard was not removed in the normal manner and the job was never completed.. Pressure treated stakes and rolls of irrigation pipe were piled on the sides of the property and not

removed. The vines were sawed off at ground level and continue to grow together with the blackberries.

3. Two Upper Lake farmers inquired about leasing the property. Lease values for non-irrigated land can be \$50 to \$100 per acre.

4. I do not know how the Scott Valley Tribe of Pomo came to lease the property for a very low rental value. Perhaps the County realized that the multiple trash piles and incomplete vineyard removal would be an obstacle to an agricultural tenant.

5. However the SVEC project will require only 5 acres. So why was the entire property leased?

The property is excellent agricultural soil surrounded by other agricultural uses. The County will have added costs associated with the project. SVEC pays no taxes. If the County decides to permit this project, why not modify the lease to reflect the needed 5 acres and require SVEC to remove the trash from the balance of the property and shred the blackberries and remaining grape vines? The County could then lease the majority of the property to an agricultural tenant.

As a practical matter SVEC will have two tele-handler loaders on site which could lift the trash into dumpsters. Maybe a dozen large dumpsters per year during dry months would be a reasonable rate of progress. SVEC will have to do this anyway because much of the trash is within the area they intend to utilize. Shredder mowers are available for rent or hire.

This project seems an innovative combination of old (wood gas) and new (controlled pyrolysis) technology. The linear electric generator runs on a narrow line between "combustion" and "oxidation". The entire plan is dependent on a broader market (more linear generating facilities) for the small wood chips. It is also dependent on a market for bio-char. The profitability of bio-char also seems to involve "carbon credits" a NOT widely understood concept. But I believe "carbon credits" can be sold to offset more polluting industries. This was not discussed at the Town Hall. I am still questioning whether the total carbon footprint of the project, from gathering material in the forest, initial grinding, hauling, second loading and grinding and finally electric generation is a net carbon sequestration benefit. This also was not discussed thoroughly at the Town Hall.

Whether or not this project proceeds, it seems to me the County could do better with the former Robinson Lake Vineyard property.

With continued interest.

John LaBoyteaux