

Public input needed for Mount Konocti planning

By Tiffany Revelle--Staff reporter

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LAKE COUNTY The verdict isn't in yet on whether motorcycles, horses or dogs will be allowed on trails leading to the top of Mount Konocti.

The consensus so far is that humans are welcome, according to Lake County Public Services Director Kim Clymire. He held the first in a series of public input meetings about possible public uses for the mountain on March 11 in the Lake County Board of Supervisors Chambers, inside the Lake County Courthouse in Lakeport. The next meeting will be held March 25 at 6 p.m. at the same location.

"We want to leave the mountain as natural as we can it's all about preservation and conservation," Clymire said.

Hikers can expect to have access to the mountain early in 2010, according to Clymire. He is working on developing a master plan for the mountain that will take into consideration whether to allow other uses. Clymire said wildlife, rare and sensitive plant types, soil types, historical sites and cultural resources need to be identified, and fire management plans need to be developed, as well.

Clymire said he plans to hold two meetings in Lower Lake in May, on dates to be announced.

The county is in the process of buying a combined 1,689 acres on four of the mountain's peaks, including Wright Peak, Buckingham Peak, Howard Peak and South Peak. Of the total, the Lake County Board of Supervisors purchased 176 acres last year for \$1.2 million.

Clymire said the conditions of the sale allow day use only and prohibit motor vehicles. Exceptions to both conditions can be arranged, he said. After more than 27 years of trying to purchase land on top of the mountain, Clymire learned early in 2007 that the Fowler Family Trust offered the county

first right of refusal on the land in the interest of preserving it.

The deadline to close escrow on the remaining acreage is coming up in December, according to Clymire. The county has money budgeted for all but \$100,000 of the \$2.6 million price for the land, according to Clymire, and fundraising efforts continue. He said the more money the county can save through fundraising the better.

"Money we save will go toward the acquisition of additional property on the mountain," Clymire said.

Clymire said the county hopes to acquire "a few hundred acres" between Buckingham Peak and the land the county is currently purchasing in order to have hiking trails from Clear Lake State Park on the lakefront and the top of the mountain.

For more information, visit www.preservekonocti.org, or call the Lake County Public Services Department at 262-1618.

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