

# A Vision for Lake County

## On the Threshold

We stand at a critical moment in the life of Lake County:

Economic activity and population growth are promising a brighter future, yet simultaneously threatening to destroy what we treasure the most.

We must recognize that the choices we make and actions we take today will determine the quality of our lives and the health of the broader community of life in the years to come.



I offer this vision to declare my belief in our collective responsibility to one another, to the living community of life and to future generations in Lake County.

## Lake County, Our Home

Lake County, Our home, is alive with a unique beauty and community of life that has sustained humans for over 10,000 years.

Lake County has many special features, but three stand out with particular clarity:

- Natural beauty and the abundance of nearly pristine wild land;
- Charming small towns with their unhurried atmosphere and old-fashioned friendliness;
- An agricultural base typified by small farms producing high value crops.

All these characteristics have become rare in the modern world, and rarities to be cherished, not only for environmental reasons but because the economic well being of our community depends

upon them.

Ultimately, our well-being and vitality requires that we preserve a healthy watershed with its complex ecological systems intact, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters and clean air.

*The protection and preservation of this vitality is a sacred trust.*

I believe that we have what we need here in Lake County, both the means and the abilities, to maintain the natural magnificence and sustenance for our people and the natural systems that sustain us.



## Smart Growth



- Preserve the natural beauty and wide open spaces
- Preserve and enhance the small towns,
- Protect agricultural land
- Preserve ecological integrity and sustainability of our watershed

All living systems must grow and change, and so it is true here in Lake County. When facing growth, however, we must ask ourselves the question: “what is it that we want to grow?”

I believe that we must endeavor to grow long-term health, sustenance and vitality of our local people and our supporting natural systems over narrower short-term or outside interests.

To assume that all growth is beneficial to our future quality of life is perilous indeed.

In order to make the distinction between good growth and destructive growth, we must start by devising measurable standards for clean water, clean air, and ecological health. We must work for regulatory systems that support those standards, and insist that new developments work within them.

Specifically, every new subdivision or other form of expansion must:

- Include ecologically sound provisions for grading, drainage, waste disposal, and other infrastructure;
- Harmonize with the adjacent natural setting and surrounding community, and as much as possible avoid obstructing views or creating eyesores;
- Pay attention to the economical

use of Natural resources and include a sustainable energy option;

- Cluster structures in order to minimize roadways and infrastructure and to allow for the preservation of commonly owned open space;
- Incorporate green corridors, wildlife corridors, and open space as an integral part of its design;
- Protect archeological sites and wildlife habitat;
- Make provision for bicycle lanes, bus stops, or other transportation alternatives to private automobiles.
- As much as possible, new housing should be constructed within existing communities and draw upon existing public services, rather than consuming either farmland or natural habitat.
- New commercial development should take place within town centers, rather than being strung out along the highways.

*“THE PROBLEMS THAT EXIST IN  
THE WORLD TODAY CANNOT BE  
SOLVED BY THE SAME LEVEL OF  
THINKING THAT CREATED THEM”  
-ALBERT EINSTEIN*



## Local Vitality



*A sustainable community-based economy is vital to our future*

- Support locally controlled water, infrastructure, transportation and food
- Elected officials and vital community services must be efficient, effective and fully accountable to the people.
- Encourage & create sustainable local economies,
- Work for long-term local agricultural well-being,
- Address historical disconnections that impede meaningful community

Lake County must work to create a thriving local economy, with LOCAL control, with the goal that every one benefits.

Support locally controlled water, transportation, infrastructure, and food.

We must develop policies and systems that allow and encourage “we the people” to control the decisions that affect our lives, particularly water, roads, flood control systems, local food, local economy and growth. The most immediate recent examples are Lucerne’s fight over water and the flooding of our homes and businesses this past winter.

Elected officials and the delivery of vital community services must be efficient, effective and fully accountable to the people.

We must implement planning mechanisms that (1) encourage and allow citizens to develop and implement their own preferences for policies and spending priorities and (2) manage our infrastructure responsibly and with integrity. Debate must be open and transparent. Any plans must not only consider solving this year’s problems, but must also consider maintaining our infrastructure over time.

Encourage & create sustainable

local economies.

A sustainable community-based economy is vital to our future, vital for the health of local businesses and connected to the health of our local area.

Work for long-term local agricultural well-being.

Our policies must look closely at *real*/farm and community economics and help craft a way forward that will see Lake County farmers and businesses thriving, not just surviving. We must promote Agra-tourism as a key industry, and preserve Ag land

Address historical disconnections that impede meaningful community.

The deep history of Lake County saw oppression and destruction of native people. To restore true connection with this place requires an understanding and acceptance of that story from all points of view. Leaders must create opportunities to further our collective healing and to enable our community to become more connected to the land and each other.

## Competent, Visionary Leadership

- Education: Better access to higher education
- Transportation
- Preserve our commons: public parks, access to open space and the lake and its viewshed
- Water Quality and Local Control
- Sound sustainable management practices
- Address poverty as a local environmental, community and moral issue
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### Better access to higher education

The county has a role to play in ensuring that its residents have full access to higher education. More classes locally, better transportation options and better mentoring and encouragement of students who want to go to college or trade schools.

K-12 education issues are best handled by locally elected school boards. However, the County can help by adopting policies that create a compelling local economic vision and a thriving local economy.

### Improved Transportation

The County must urge the APC to adopt an overarching set of guidelines for transportation planning and spending. The current area plan is a start yet must be expanded with a statement of priorities that include focus on existing infrastructure and improving the participation, usability, and cost effectiveness of public transportation.

Preserve our commons: public parks, access to open space, to the lake and its views.

Lake County holds a unique opportunity as a living, thriving community, provided we preserve

our *Sense of Place*. Public policy must actively preserve our commons and our access to both the lake and open spaces. These places belong to all.

### Water Quality and Local Control

Health begins with local water quality—we need innovative ways to enhance natural systems and address dumping, and toxic runoff.

The Cache Creek Watershed forum is an active forum addressing water use and quality issues. All supervisors should actively participate.

Sound, fiscally responsible, sustainable county management practices

From weed control to community redevelopment, all aspects of county work must be performed with current and future community health in mind.

### Work to Alleviate Local Poverty

Poverty is a moral issue and contributes to community problems. While county government cannot directly alleviate poverty, government leadership can initiate community conversation and support those engaged in works of justice.

*WE MUST CREATE  
MEASURABLE GOALS FOR  
CLEAN WATER, AIR, ECO-  
SYSTEM AND SOIL HEALTH  
AND FOR OUR QUALITY OF  
LIFE*



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## Imagine...

In 20 years time, our overall quality of life in Lake County has improved over life here today. We have not only preserved the unique beauty and agricultural nature of our area, but our local communities have created a strong "sense of place." Our ecosystems are thriving: our pure waters team with life, our air is clean and our soils are seasonally renewing and alive--all are in better condition than when we began.

Our people see and experience our land differently than we do today. We work together to preserve and protect our watershed. We grow much of our food locally and are able to meet

most of our own basic needs and those of the most vulnerable among us. We find that once our basic needs are met, that our lives are primarily about being more, not having more.

**Growth:** We will have grown our sense of community, our cultural and local heritage, and our health and the health of our wildlife and ecosystems.

**Economy:** Our local economies are thriving and we are well on our way to not only living sustainably within our watershed, but also improving the health of it.

**Purpose:** Our children understand that we all play an active ongoing role in Lake County's restoration and

## Our Way Forward

If we are to create a positive future together...

We must create measurable goals for clean water, air, eco-system and soil health and for our quality of life the next five and ten years.

We must identify the regulations and systems, which must be in place or changed to support our collective vision.

We must insist that any growth or expansion contribute to growing what we most value: our wide open spaces, our charming town centers and our agricultural and natural heritage.

Fundamental changes in thinking are needed if we are to alter the patterns of activity that harm our communities, our people and our ecosystems.



To realize our highest aspirations, we must first adopt a sense of collective responsibility--identifying ourselves with the *whole* community of life in this unique place.

Indeed, everyone shares responsibility for our collective future.



## About Denise Rushing

Denise's candidacy can be summed up as follows: To actively preserve Lake County's natural health and beauty, and enhance local community well being for current and future generations.

Denise was born and raised in Northern California and has lived most of her adult life in rural areas throughout the North State. She earned her Bachelors Degree in engineering from Stanford University where she studied alternative energy and environmental science and a Master's Degree in Culture and Spirituality from Holy Names College in Oakland, CA.

Denise's business career spans over two decades and includes executive leadership at a number of technology firms: including Sage Systems, CellNet Data Systems and Invensys. Up until 1996, she held a variety of leadership positions at PG&E, including manager of customer operations in Shasta Division (Redding), Industrial Energy Efficiency Engineer in Yuba City, CA and PG&E's Corporate Director of Energy Efficiency Programs and Manager of Clean Air Vehicle Programs.

Denise is proud to call Lake

County home. She is an environmental engineer, an organic grower and regenerative ecological designer (certified permaculturist) in Upper Lake. As an active community member, Denise serves on the Lake County Area Planning Council, the Lake County Sierra Club executive committee, and she founded a group interested in local sustainability. In the past, she has served on the board of the Shasta County Economic Development Corporation, the Board of the Yuba-Sutter Legal Center, the United Way Allocations Committee, She has also coached youth basketball, served as parish Pastoral Council president for her Catholic parish and was an active member of numerous youth programs including PTA.

Denise founded Dancing TreePeople Organic Orchard and Garden in Upper Lake, California, where she and her partner care for 11 acres of walnuts and are implementing organic agriculture, permaculture principles and sustainable living. As co-founder and principal of Bay Energy Systems, an energy-efficiency technology systems company, Denise also launches and manages environmentally beneficial technologies. She is the mother of two college students, a licensed private pilot and a registered Mechanical Engineer. This is her first bid for elective office.

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