KUHLA'NAPO WETLAND PRESERVE

(Pronounced Koo-LAH-nah-poh)
Formerly the Wright-Keithly Preserve, the Kuhla'Napo Wetland Preserve is an important part of Big Valley Wetlands Protection Plan.

PRESERVE BACKGROUND

With an outpouring of community support, the Lake County Land Trust (LCLT) purchased the Wright family ranch and, three years later, the adjacent Keithly family ranch.

These properties are part of the CA Department of Fish & Wildlife's Big Valley Conceptual Area Protection Plan, valued as preservation-priority parcels because of their benefit to Clear Lake and its watershed's health. This area has also been identified as the top preservation priority because of the special qualities found here, such as vital wetland and shoreline habitat for Clear Lake hitch (*Lavinia exilicauda chi*) .



American Pelicans enjoy the winter wetlands on Kuhla'Napo. Photo: S. Euston 2025.

These two LCLT acquisitions are the ancestral home of the Kuhla'Napo people. Kuhla'Napo is Pomo for water lily people and according to local archaeologist and tribal elders, the site probably housed a historical settlement of water lily people who used the lake and delta daily. The LCLT is partnering with Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians in co-managing and stewarding the Kuhla'Napo Preserve.

To honor this history, the name for this protected land is the Kuhla'Napo Wetland Preserve. The Preserve is home to black-tailed deer, California quail, wild turkey, raptors, waterfowl such as white pelicans, grebes, black bass, catfish, otter, mink, as well as habitats that support special status species including Clear Lake hitch and western pond turtle. Habitats found on this property range from lake to creek to freshwater marsh and riparian areas, and from pasture to valley oak woodland. There is even a small vernal pool! It's an important conservation project for so many reasons besides how breathtakingly beautiful it is.

EDUCATION

The Pitzer Foundation is funding the construction of two educational platforms on the Preserve. One is on the northeast levee and the other is on the intersection of the northeast and east levees. These will have seating and educational panels and are ideally placed for wildlife viewing.

LCLT is currently proceeding with a project to reconnect 32 acres of historic wetlands to Clear Lake. These wetlands were separated from Clear Lake by a levee approximately 50 years ago. Prior to obtaining permits and environmental clearances, biological studies, wetlands delineation, and cultural resources surveys were completed. The permitting process is underway.

LCLT is working with the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians and FlowWest on the Manning Creek Delta Restoration Project, which will restore Manning Creek and reconnect it to its historic delta. Read on to learn more!



LAKE COUNTY LAND TRUST

SCHEDULE A VISIT

Contact the Lake County Land Trust at 707-262-0707 or email us at LCLT@LakeCountyLandTrust.org to arrange a visit by appointment.

The Kuhla'Napo Preserve is located at 446 Soda Bay Rd., in Lakeport, CA.

Manning Creek Delta Restoration Project

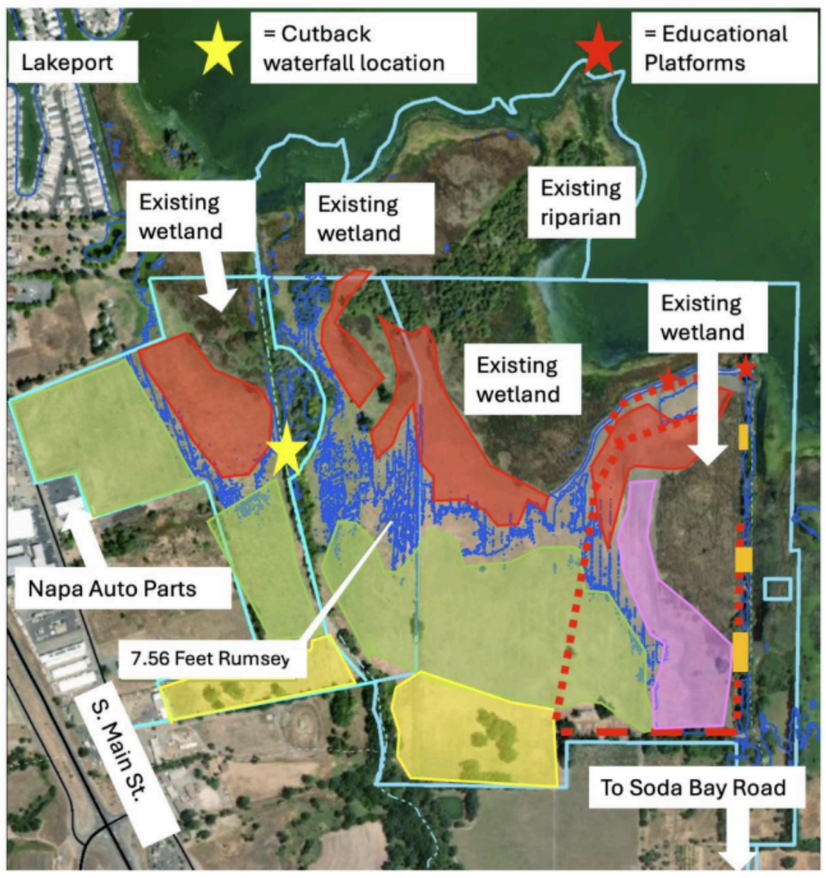
This project is only possible through a collaborative partnership between Lake County Land Trust, Big Valley Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and FlowWest.

PHASE 1: CONCEPT, HYDROLOGIC, AND ENGINEER PLANNING

In 2024 the Lake County Land Trust was awarded a $1.18 million grant to create plans and designs for Manning Creek Delta Restoration on the Kuhla'Napo Wetland Preserve. This grant is being administered by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and is being funded through California Climate Investing fund.

Thanks to this grant, over the next three years, the project partners will create a fully engineered and permitted restoration design that will demonstrate how the hydromodified lower manning creek will be reshaped and the adjacent wetland restored, in hydrology and vegetation, to provide a more suitable and improved habitat for Clear Lake hitch.





A major focus of the project is the cutback waterfall on Manning Creek, an important spawning ground for Clear Lake hitch. During years with modest rainfall, the waterfall becomes a passage barrier for Clear Lake hitch, who are not skilled jumpers like salmon. The CDFW -funded restoration plan will provide the needed resources for Lake County Land Trust staff, FlowWest engineers and biologists, and Big Valley tribal partners to best design a fully restored wetland and downstream tributary system that will not only help the Clear Lake hitch recover, but improve lake and stream shoreline habitat and provide for traditionally important cultural spaces for Lake County tribes.

PROJECT CONCEPT TIMELINE AND FUNDING PARTNER INVOLVEMENT

Document	Restoration Plan (Vision) MOU & co-Management Plan	Plan to Achieve the Vision FlowWest/BVBPI engineered design	Implement Plan Future FlowWest/BVBPI/LCLT Grant Application	Plan to Maintain Restored Lands Long Range Stewardship Plan
Funding Source: BVBPI	CDFW grant	CDFW grant	TBD grant	CCLT Project Advancement grant
Funding Source: LCLT	CCLT Capacity Building grant	CDFW grant	TBD grant	CCLT Project Advancement grant

LCLT = Lake County Land Trust

BVBPI = Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians

CCLT = California Council of Land Trusts

CDFW = California Department of Fish & Wildlife

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- Department of Conservation Climate Smart Land Management Program
- California Wildlife Conservation Board
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife grant through the California Climate Investments Funding

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