

# VIEW

# from the West

*Riviera West/Harbor View Bimonthly Newsletter*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Riviera West

The American-British author Henry James wrote, "Summer afternoon-summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language." Summer is also a busy time for Riviera West as needed projects move ahead in clear weather, including:

The next section of the new pool fencing has arrived and will be installed soon.

We have contracted with the Dock Factory in Lakeport to replace the two walkways (piers) to the docks in the marina. The longer of the piers was damaged this winter and will be replaced first. The shorter pier to the boat launch dock is still usable until its replacement. The cost of replacement has been estimated at \$45,000 (less than expected).

A new security camera system has been installed. The new security cameras view four areas 24/7 and records movement in these areas (front parking lot, pool, office entrance, rear clubhouse door and area). A personal security device for our office administrator was also purchased.

The third annual Riviera West Bocce Ball Tournament will launch June 11. Four teams have registered for the tournament. If you have a last-minute team that wants to play, please inform the office no later than June 4.

The Board of Directors has set the annual assessment dues for 2024-2025 at \$455. This is the first dues increase in over ten years and represents a 7.6% increase to keep us in the solid financial condition we have enjoyed to date. Invoices will go out later in June and the assessment is due prior to July 31, 2024. You can also use a credit card to pay your dues on gozego.com (they charge a fee).

Be sure to enjoy your Riviera West facilities this summer. The view of the lake from our shaded picnic area in the marina is beautiful and our pool is sparkling and refreshing.

Cheers,

Philip Hartley, President, Riviera West Country Club Board of Directors

## Bocce Tournament 2024

The 2024 Riviera West Bocce Tournament will begin on Tuesday, June 11. Games are on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 4:30 pm. There are currently four teams (four players each) registered for the tournament. Matches usually last for about two hours and the bocce court is reserved for league use on those days and times. Each match consists of three games. The team that wins the most games wins the tournament and has their team's name engraved on the official Riviera West Bocce Trophy!

We encourage members to come by for the Tuesday and Thursday games, bring a snack and cheer their favorite team. We sometimes need an alternate player if one of the team members can't make it to a game. Let us know if you would like to play as an alternate.

If you have questions or are interested in playing, contact us at [rivierawest@gmail.com](mailto:rivierawest@gmail.com) or call the office at 707-279-8544.



June 2024

Issue 129



**Riviera West Country Club**  
**Harbor View Mutual Water Company**  
8475 Harbor View Drive  
Kelseyville, CA 95451  
707-279-8544 • fax 707-279-0118  
[rivierawest@gmail.com](mailto:rivierawest@gmail.com)  
[harborviewwater@gmail.com](mailto:harborviewwater@gmail.com)  
website: [www.rivierawesthoa.com](http://www.rivierawesthoa.com)

### Office Hours:

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday:  
9:00 am – 3:00 pm  
Friday 9:00 am – 3:30 pm  
Wednesday: Closed

### Riviera West Board:

President: Philip Hartley  
Treasurer: C. Richard Smith  
Secretary: Clelia Baur  
Director: Doug Moore  
Director: Bob Gunion

### Harbor View Mutual Water Company Board:

President: Norma Simmons  
Treasurer: Bob Lucatorto  
Secretary: Alexandra Milukhin  
Director: Carina DeHerrera  
Director: Chris Smits

### Regular Board Meetings:

Third Wednesday every other month beginning in January. Riviera West meeting is 4:30 PM; Harbor View meeting is 5:30 PM.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Harbor View Mutual Water Company

With the start of the new fiscal year in July, your Board of Directors will have a new look. President Norma Simmons will be stepping away after having served for over 20 years cumulatively. Also leaving the Board will be Chris Smits who joined it 6 years ago and has served as Secretary/Treasurer for five of those years. Working together, Norma and Chris have tackled projects both large and small, enhancing the service and reputation of our water company

Going forward, Carina DeHerrera, Bob Lucatorto, and Alexandra Milukhin will take over as President, Treasurer, and Secretary respectively. Under the leadership of our Head Operator Jeremiah Fossa and support from Operator Dominic Turner and Office Manager Elvia Cubilla, our water company consistently provides quality drinking water to all Riviera West homes.

And with the help of Mary Terou and Bruce Kupferman, the Board provides oversight and accountability. Much of the Board's activities can be done via email, text, or phone call. Our current three-person Board is the minimum the water company needs to function. There are still two vacant positions to fill. Members can be appointed to the fill a Board seat until the next election in June of 2025.

**“Our current three-person Board is the minimum the water company needs to function. There are still two vacant positions to fill.”**

Volunteering to serve on the Board is a way to interact with some great people, utilize skills you've acquired through experience, and contribute to the community in a very real and tangible way. Could this be you? Norma Simmons or Chris Smits can answer your questions. You can reach them by calling the office at 707-279-8544.

We hope to see you at the Annual Meeting on June 15. Enjoy your summer! And remember every time you turn on the faucet or swim in our pool, Harbor View Mutual Water (and Mother Nature) made it possible.

Norma Simmons, President, Harbor View Mutual Water Company



## What is it Like to be a Harbor View Board Member?

**Interesting:** Serving on the Harbor View Board is a fantastic opportunity to be part of a unique not-for-profit enterprise. As a Board member, you will make important decisions that affect all of us. Most of all, you gain an insider's perspective on the operations, administration and management of this essential business. Board responsibilities are straightforward and there are only six regular meetings throughout the year.

**Educational:** Being on the Board opens up a world of learning opportunities. You can learn a lot about the Lake, our water plant, compliance measures, the science of water processing and much more. Our water operators are excellent teachers!

**Fulfilling:** A Board position automatically puts you in touch with your Riviera West neighbors. You will meet and interact with many people, which encourages a stronger, more cohesive community. Most of all, you will have the satisfaction of knowing you are contributing to both the day-to-day and long-term well-being of our neighborhood.

Do you see yourself as a member of the Harbor View Board? If you're interested or have questions, please call the office. We look forward to hearing from you!

## Important Dates

- ▶ June 2024: Reminder: Please send your proxy statement to the Riviera West office so that we receive it on or before 9:00 AM Saturday, June 15. It is important that a quorum of members is present at the Annual Meeting. Your proxy helps reach the quorum number. Thank you for your cooperation!
- ▶ Wednesday, June 5: Last day to RSVP for the Riviera West Members picnic on June 15. Contact Norma at 707-279-9604.
- ▶ Monday, June 10, 9:00 – 10:00 AM: Water Aerobics program opens for the season, weather and water temperature permitting.
- ▶ Tuesday, June 11, 4:30 PM: First game of the 2024 Riviera West Bocce Tournament. The first game of the season. Feel free to stop by and cheer on your favorite team!
- ▶ Saturday, June 15: 9:00 AM Riviera West Annual Meeting at the clubhouse.
- ▶ Saturday, June 15: 11:00 AM Harbor View Annual Meeting at the clubhouse.
- ▶ Saturday, June 15: 1:00 – 4:00 Annual Community Picnic for Riviera West property owners only.
- ▶ Friday, July 12, 5:30 PM: TGIF potluck party. Meet at the pool for a disco-theme pool party! Check your email for details.
- ▶ Wednesday, July 31, 3:00 PM Riviera West HOA annual assessment payment due.

### WATER COMPANY EMERGENCY?

If you cannot reach the office, call  
707-279-4143





## Riviera West Social Club Update

### Getting Ready for Summer

Every seat was filled for the first-ever **Portuguese dinner** on April 19. Members enjoyed a Portuguese specialty: Arroz de Marisco, a savory rice dish generously topped with shrimp, fish fillets, clams and mussels. A spicy vegetarian version was also offered featuring grilled vegetables. Appetizers included marinated olives and charcuterie. For dessert, diners sampled Port and hand-made gourmet truffles. Thank you to host Lisa Wentz and those who helped with preparation, set-up and clean-up.

Our international theme was soon followed by a long-time Riviera West favorite, the **Cinco de Mayo celebration**, on May 4. Hosts Norma Simmons and Susan Lucatorto sourced authentic tamales from a local mom-and-pop vendor. The dinner included taquitos, home-made chile verde, Mexican rice and beans, appetizers and seven-layer dip, plus dessert. See pictures below!

The Tenth annual **Riviera West Community Yard Sale** at the end of May was once again an impressive success. Eighteen households participated this year, with customers coming from all around the County and beyond. Thank you Norma Simmons and helpers for once again taking care of all the logistics.

### Upcoming Spring Events:

**Saturday, June 15 – Annual Community Picnic, 1 PM – 4 PM:** Every year Riviera West hosts a get-together for our property owners. This year, it's a picnic starting a few hours following the annual Board meetings. Refreshments include a taco stand provided by noted Lake County caterer Rosey Cooks, along with side dishes and dessert. Soft drinks, beer and wine will be served, and you are welcome to bring along your own beverages in addition. When you arrive, please sign in at the heron park next to the clubhouse. We will host a Bocce contest at the recreation park, along with easy coaching on how to play. **RSVP by June 5 to Norma at 707-279-9604.** There is a \$5 per person RSVP fee, to be paid in advance. We cannot accept payment on the day of the picnic. Thank you.

**Friday, July 12, 5:30:** TGIF! Join us for a disco-theme pool party hosted by Tina Cruz and Amber Chatwin. Meet at the pool deck for summertime fun with friends and neighbors!

**TGIFs:** Summer is when we encourage our members to organize TGIF parties on (mostly) Friday evenings. TGIFs are informal, potluck events. Just bring an appetizer to share and relax at the clubhouse, or by the pool or marina. TGIFs are hosted by one or more members. We can answer questions and provide assistance if this is your first time hosting a TGIF.

Questions? Send us an email at [rwccsocialclub@gmail.com](mailto:rwccsocialclub@gmail.com).



## Riviera West Community Picnic 2024

Saturday, June 15, 1:00 - 4:00 PM

**All Riviera West property owners are invited to the annual community picnic! Join neighbors and friends for food, games and music.**

**Taco Stand**

- Hand-made tacos by Rosey Cooks
- Traditional side dishes
- Salad and Dessert

**Bocce Contest**

- No experience needed
- Fun and friendly competition
- Prizes!

### RSVP • Riviera West Members Only

\$5 per person reservation fee is required (No charge for children 12 and under)  
Your reservation must be received by Wednesday, June 5  
Email [rwccsocialclub@gmail.com](mailto:rwccsocialclub@gmail.com)  
or call Norma at 707-279-9604 to reserve your ticket.  
Complimentary sodas, beer and wine will be served.  
You may bring your own choice of beverage in addition.  
When you arrive please sign in at the heron garden next to the clubhouse.



## Cinco de Mayo Party, May 4





*Adorable trouble-makers: Riviera West's deer. Thanks to Chris Smits for use of the picture.*

## Rules and Regulations Deep Dive

### If you didn't know, now you know

The HOA rules apply to all Riviera West property owners. Following our rules maintains neighborhood harmony, enhances our quality of life and protects our property investment. We will feature a few randomly chosen rules in each newsletter. A complete copy of the Riviera West governing documents is available at [rivierawesthoa.com](http://rivierawesthoa.com).



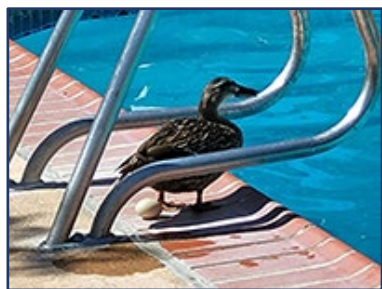
### Architectural Control and Planning Committee Guidelines for Shade Structures Placed on the Ground

A shade structure may be considered by the ACP if it meets the following conditions:

- ▶ Placed in the back yard, not sides or front of the lot or on a deck.
  - ▶ Anchored to the ground on at least all four corners to prevent movement, sagging, leaning or susceptibility to damage by high winds.
  - ▶ Made of sturdy metal or wood framing, including the roof slats.
  - ▶ The roof panels may be made of sturdy plastic in approved colors. On certain models, the roof slats may be covered with sun-filtering fabric.
  - ▶ All elements of the shade structure must be maintained in good condition, i.e., no faded, torn, broken, sagging or rusting parts or any other part creating an unkempt appearance.
  - ▶ Material colors must be white or neutral earthtones. (submit color samples for approval).
  - ▶ In the ACP application property owners will submit building plans or, if using a prefabricated unit, submit manufacturer's specifications and diagrams. Also included are optional colors or materials owners intend to use, along with grading/lot preparation and measures to anchor the structure to the ground.
  - ▶ Property owners are advised that in some cases, lot preparation may involve getting a grading permit from the Lake County Building Department.
  - ▶ The structure must be set a minimum of five feet from any property line.
- [Click Here](#) to access the Governing Documents page on our website.

## Pool Opens for the Summer 2024 Season

The Riviera West pool opened on Friday, May 24, at the beginning of Memorial Day weekend. The exact opening date is determined by our ability to efficiently maintain a comfortable water temperature, which is dictated by the weather. Our water aerobics program will begin Monday, June 10, 9:00 – 10:00 AM.



### No Ducks on the Pool Deck

Please do not feed or encourage the ducks at the pool!

A pair of mallard ducks is trying to make their home at the Riviera West pool. The Lake is the best place for them to raise their family! So if they try to share the pool deck with you, please shoo them off as well as you can. It will be better for them and for the ongoing cleanliness and health of our swimming pool.

## Marina Repairs Move Forward

The peaceful, secluded Riviera West marina is one of our members' favorite amenities. We maintain two sets of docks for the use of community members. The same card key that you use for the pool gives you access to the marina. The larger of the two docks is for general use; boat tie-ups, fishing, swimming or just enjoying the Lake. The smaller dock serves as a loading and unloading dock for the boat launch ramp. The tall, wooden walkways (piers) that serve each dock are about 50 years old and are in need of replacement. This winter a large tree adjacent to the pier for the larger dock fell and took out 26 feet of the pier. At present there is no access to the larger dock. The smaller dock is still accessible.

At the May 15 meeting, the Riviera West Board voted unanimously to contract with the Dock Factory in Lakeport to replace both piers. We will also contract with AMD Construction to demolish the old piers. Work will start on the larger dock pier first and the smaller dock pier will remain in service until work has been completed on the larger dock pier.

Unfortunately, the timeline for completion is lengthy due to Dock Factory's availability and the time needed to acquire necessary materials for the replacement piers. We are hoping that it will be completed about 10-12 weeks from now. We all look forward to a refreshed and refurbished marina. While repairs are underway, please continue to enjoy the marina with its views of the Lake and its wildlife. The shady picnic park on the lakeshore is for members to enjoy, with tables and barbecues. There are also restrooms located at the marina.

## Clubhouse Welcome Sign Replacement

The strong winds of a winter storm tore apart the vintage Riviera West sign that had been in place since the late 1960s. The hand-made wooden sign had weathered considerably and we were already planning for a replacement. After the storm, a new aluminum sign with graphics based on our logo now welcomes visitors to our clubhouse and office.



Left: Our venerable and much-repaired plywood sign. It was placed at the parking entrance in the late 60s. Last winter's powerful wind storm left it in pieces.

Right: The new sign was produced by Sheldon Signs in Lakeport. Based on our logo, the graphic is fade-resistant digital output laminated to a sturdy aluminum base.

## Swimming Pool Update

### Regular Hours

Monday - Friday: 11am - 8 pm  
Saturday, Sunday and Holidays:  
10 am - 8 pm

### Lap Swim Hours

Monday - Friday: 10 am - 11 am  
Saturday, Sunday and Holidays:  
9 am - 10 am

## Upgrades Large & Small

**Pool Fencing:** At each of our recent Board meetings, we have kept members updated on the new pool fencing project. The project is being managed in phases; each new fence section is installed as we can purchase the materials and arrange for labor. We ask members to be patient as the installation continues while the pool is open for the 2024 season.

**Security Cameras:** With the clubhouse and common areas unstaffed on evenings and weekends, security is a consideration. Last month we installed a new security system that monitors key areas around the pool and clubhouse. This includes the mailbox and garbage pick-up areas. The cameras record any movement, which staff can monitor remotely.

**Gate Repair:** The marina gate required repair after someone damaged it with a vehicle. Please drive slowly on the marina access road and use care when proceeding through the gate.

## New Clubhouse Improvement Committee

A Clubhouse Committee has been formed to assist the Board in identifying improvement projects to the Clubhouse/Office building. This Committee will consist of five volunteers who will meet at approximately 10 am on a Wednesday once a month or more if needed.

The scope is to develop a multi-year improvements plan, research the cost of labor and materials, and submit the findings to the Board for feedback and/or approval. For more information about the committee, contact Chris Smits by calling the office at 707-279-8544 before July 1, 2024.

## Reminder: Don't Miss the Annual Meetings – And the Member's Picnic!

### Riviera West and Harbor View Annual Meetings

Every year Riviera West and Harbor View Mutual Water Company host annual meetings at the clubhouse for all of our members. Refreshments will be served courtesy of the Riviera West Social Club.

Upcoming budget plans, committee updates, fire safety progress and facility improvements are some of the topics the Riviera West Board will be reviewing. Harbor View Mutual Water Company Board and Staff will update property owners on budget, facilities, processes and administration.

We encourage you to attend! Your input and participation are important to our community. The meetings and the picnic are both great ways to meet and socialize with neighbors.

**Riviera West Annual Meeting:**  
Saturday June 15, 2024, 9 AM

**Harbor View Mutual Water Company Annual Meeting:**  
Saturday, June 15, 2024, 11 AM

**Annual Community Picnic:**  
Saturday, June 15, 1:00 – 4:00  
(See page 3 for more information.)

## STOP! IT'S TOO TOXIC TO TRASH!

Household hazardous waste (HHW) includes products that contain ingredients that are harmful or dangerous to humans, animals, and the environment. HHW DOES NOT GO IN THE TRASH. It must be taken to a facility for proper disposal. Below are various types of HHW.

**CORROSIVES:** acids, bases, batteries, drain or pipe clog remover



**IGNITABLE:** paints (dry or wet), petroleum-based products, polishes, gasoline



**REACTIVE:** pool chemicals, hydrogen peroxide, iodine, perchlorates



**TOXICS:** poisons, pesticides, gardening chemicals, ammonia, solvents



**MISCELLANEOUS:** propane tanks, smoke detectors, fluorescent lamps



Please do not dispose of these items in the trash!

For proper disposal, take them to the proper facilities listed below.

Household hazardous waste is strictly prohibited in all garbage, recycling, and organic waste.

The locations below accept the following household hazardous waste materials.

Customers are limited to a maximum of 15 gallons of combined HHW items.

Visit [www.CandSwaste.com](http://www.CandSwaste.com) for more information.

### LAKE COUNTY TRANSFER STATION

230 Soda Bay Road, Lakeport | (707) 234-6400

**MOTOR OIL** – 5-gallon daily limit

**ANTIFREEZE** – 5-gallon daily limit

**COOKING OIL** – 5-gallon daily limit

**OIL FILTERS** – 3 Per customer Daily, this helps eliminate businesses who should be paying for the disposal of their waste.

**BATTERIES** – lithium ion, automotive, and household

**FLUORESCENT LIGHT TUBES** – 60 linear feet per customer, House holds only. Businesses must make appointment and pay for disposal.

**LATEX PAINT** – 15-gallon limit per customer Daily.

**HOME GENERATED SHARPS** – 1 Gallon Limit (Syringes and hypodermic needles must be properly packaged and sealed in an approved, puncture-proof container to be accepted)

### CLEARLAKE RECYCLING CENTER

16015 Davis Street, Clearlake | (707) 234-6400

**MOTOR OIL**

**ANTIFREEZE**

**BATTERIES** – lithium ion, automotive, and household

**LATEX PAINT**

**SHARPS/NEEDLES** in sharps approved containers only, 1 gallon limit. Household only, all businesses must make an appointment and pay for the disposal of their waste.

### LAKE COUNTY HAZ-DROP

Household hazardous waste is collected from Lake County residents the third Friday and Saturday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at rotating ends of the lake for convenience to all residents in Lake County. Visit the Household Hazardous Waste page on our website [www.CandSwaste.com](http://www.CandSwaste.com) for the Haz-Drop schedule.

**BATTERIES** – lithium ion, automotive, and household

**PAINTS**

**SOLVENTS**

**GASOLINE**

**PESTICIDES & HERBICIDES**

**POOL CHEMICALS**

**ACIDS**

**CORROSIVES**

**SHARPS**

**ARTISTS SUPPLIES**

**ANTIFREEZE**

**TOXIC CLEANERS**

**FLUORESCENT LIGHT TUBES & CFLS**

**PROPANE TANKS** – 5 gallons and smaller

**PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES** – non narcotic

**MERCURY THERMOMETERS & THERMOSTATS**

**BLEACHES & DYES**

**PHOTOGRAPHY CHEMICALS**

**OIL / OIL FILTERS**

**CELL PHONES**



## Boat Races Liven up the Weekend

Riviera West members had a front-row seat to view custom and collector cars and boats at the Buckingham Test and Tune weekend on May 20 and 21. The vintage speedboat race was exciting, with the roar of the engines heard throughout the community. The event was held at the Buckingham Golf Club. [Click here](#) to read the story on LakeCoNews.com.

Left: Bird's eye view of the boat races from North Heights Drive. Right: Riviera West members Diane and Frank Stawicki brought their vintage Corvette to the classic car show.

Thanks to Chris Smits for use of the photos.



## What Happens After Your Lot is Inspected?

If your lot has no dangerous fire fuel issues, your only task is to continue keeping it clear. If your lot is found to be out of compliance with the lot-clearing policy, you will receive a written citation. The citation will provide information about the type of policy violation found on your property.

You would then have 45 days from the date of the notice to bring the lot into compliance with the fire prevention standards outlined in section 2 of our fire prevention policy.

Trained members of the Fire Prevention Committee will conduct a follow-up inspection of your lot. If it is still not cleared, you will be assessed a fine based on the guidelines outlined in the [Riviera West Fire Prevention Policy and Procedure](#). You may appeal the Committee's findings, but there is a time limit; instructions are included in the Fire Prevention Policy and Procedure.

- ▶ To be sure you receive timely notices, be sure you complete the Contact Information Form every year. This was sent to you in the annual member information packet. Each property owner is responsible for making sure we have your email, phone number and street address.
- ▶ If you have questions or need more information at any point during the lot inspection process, please call us.

Did you clear your property after you received a citation? If so, please contact the office and let us know your lot has been cleared so we can take your property off the list. And thank you for helping protect Riviera West from wildfire.

### Do you need help clearing your lot?

The Riviera West office keeps a list of local lot-clearing and tree management vendors. [Click here](#) to view the list or call the office for more information.

Note: we do not endorse or verify any of these vendors; it is up to you to check into their qualifications.

## Reminder: Free Chipping Day is July 17

Every year during the summer months, Riviera West arranges a free chipping service for members. This is part of our ongoing effort to reduce fire fuels, making our community more resistant to wildfire. Only our property owners are permitted to have their branches and brush chipped and removed under this program.

### Chipping Day is July 17 this year.

Contact the office at 707-279-8544 with the address of your chipping pile. If you are not on the list, we cannot ensure your pile will be removed. Brush put out at the curb after July 17 or not conforming with the chipping guidelines will not be removed and will be the sole responsibility of the property owner.

To be sure your branch and brush piles are picked up, please follow our Dos and Don'ts guidelines:

### Chipping Day Dos

- Important: Oleander is toxic. Keep oleander limbs separate from other materials.
- Stack material next to the road so the chipping crew can easily reach the pile.
- Tree trunks and limbs must be smaller than 6 inches in diameter.
- Stack all chipping material neatly and evenly with ends facing the road.  
Keep your piles under 5 feet high.
- Keep your pile less than 12 feet long.

### Chipping Day DON'Ts

- Do not stack brush over existing vegetation or the roadway.
- No roots – dirt and rocks in the roots damage machinery.
- No mud or dirt. Do not drag your branches through mud or dirt.
- Do not cross-stack piles.
- No bulldozed or machine-stacked piles.
- No rocks, berry vines, tree stumps or construction material.
- No poison oak or Scotch broom in the pile.

## Interesting Lake County Facts: Who Lives in Lake County?

Demographic data from the United States Census Bureau:

US Census figures estimate that in July 2023, Lake County's population was about 67,878 people which was about .5% less than in 2020. Almost 24% of the population is 65 years of age or older and there are 4,615 Veterans living in Lake County. Almost 14% of those under the age of 65 have a disability; and 8% do not have health insurance. Almost 87% of us are high school graduates or higher, but only 18% have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Median household income is \$56,259 with a per capita income of \$34,020; while 17% are at or below the California poverty line of \$39,900 for a family of four.

Of the approximately 26,487 households in Lake County, 92% of these households have computers but only 83% have a paid broadband internet service. Of the total housing units, almost 70% are owner-occupied with a median value of an owner-occupied house at \$291,300. Median gross rent is \$1206 a month. [Click here](#) to view the census data in more detail.

## It's Not Too Soon to Start Fire Planning and Preparation

Fire season will be here sooner than we think. Getting a head start makes planning easier. Following are some ideas to help you get started.

### Harden your home

Structures can catch fire from radiant heat, direct contact with fire from houses or trees nearby, or from ember cast – the distribution of burning embers caused by high winds during a fire.

Statistics show that at least 90% of all wildland-related structure fires occur within a five-foot "Zone Zero" ignition area. Authorities stress the importance of clearing a five-foot perimeter around your house and removing all combustibles in this zone. Maintaining this five-foot clear space is the most efficient action you can take to protect your house from ember cast during a wildfire.

Remove flammables on and around your roof and along exterior walls. Wildfires can create their own weather patterns, and strong winds can blow glowing hot embers onto your roof, against your walls and onto flammable materials near your house.

Items to remove if they are within five feet of your home:

- ▶ Flammable landscaping bark (decorative rock is a good alternative)
- ▶ Leaves, yard waste, weeds, grasses, plants
- ▶ Shrubs and branches
- ▶ Pine needles and leaves on the roof and in the rain gutter
- ▶ Wood piles
- ▶ Flammable objects such as wooden pallets, lawn furniture, toys, storage boxes, etc.

### Be ready to evacuate – and practice evacuation

Planning and packing for evacuation ahead of time is the best investment you can make in saving lives during fire season. And fire authorities agree: the key element is to EVACUATE EARLY. Leaving at the first sign of danger improves your chance of survival and allows responders to come in and try to save our homes.

- ▶ Familiarize yourself with alternate routes out, including paths for walking out. Explore all possible routes now, before the stress and chaos of an approaching fire.
- ▶ Evacuate with one vehicle. The fewer vehicles on the road, the easier the evacuation will be for everyone, including emergency response agencies.
- ▶ Evacuation to the lake may become necessary. In recent fires, people survived in swimming pools, creeks and ponds. It's a good idea to pack flotation devices for your family.
- ▶ Stay tuned to the Sheriff's Office and reliable news sources for up-to-date information.

### Strategic steps

- ▶ Have a family conference about the evacuation process and conduct a family evacuation drill
- ▶ Pack a go-bag of essentials for people and pets
- ▶ During fire season, keep your gas tank full and your cell phone charged
- ▶ Know how to open your garage if the power is out
- ▶ Program emergency numbers into your phone
- ▶ Keep out-of-area family informed about your evacuation plans and locations

Plan back-up resources as cell signals and internet service may be interrupted

### Packing your "go-bag"

Pack your bag in advance with the most essential items and keep it accessible in case you have to leave immediately.

- ▶ Cell phones and chargers, laptop, power supply, back-up drives
- ▶ Driver's license, insurance information and important documents
- ▶ Medication, medical devices, copies of prescriptions
- ▶ Cash and credit cards, safe deposit keys, other important keys
- ▶ Bottled water and compact, high-energy snacks
- ▶ Food and water for pets
- ▶ Personal hygiene and sanitation necessities
- ▶ Flashlight and extra batteries
- ▶ Contact information (good idea to print out your contact list)
- ▶ Change of clothing and sturdy shoes

### Online resources for preparation and evacuation:

- ▶ CalFire *Hardening Your Home* web page: [www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/get-ready/hardening-your-home/](http://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/get-ready/hardening-your-home/)
- ▶ CalFire Incident Page: <https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/>
- ▶ US Department of Homeland Security evacuation info: <https://www.ready.gov/evacuating-yourself-and-your-family>
- ▶ Kelseyville Fire Protection District: <https://kelseyvillefire.com/>
- ▶ Lake County Sheriff's Office: <https://www.lakesheriff.com/>
- ▶ Lake County Office of Emergency Services: <https://www.lakesheriff.com/1394/About-OES>



## Wildlife of Riviera West

### Western Skink

These tiny, secretive reptiles are part of the Riviera West ecosystem, though sightings are significantly rarer than the common Western Fence Lizard. Young Western Skinks have distinctive, electric blue tails. Their size range is from 4" juveniles to adults about 8" long.

Skinks are known to easily shed their tails, a tactic they use to trick predators. The broken-off tail continues to flip around on the ground, distracting the predator while the lizard escapes to grow a new tail over time. Skinks are preyed upon by birds, snakes, larger lizards, and small mammals (including pet cats). If you see them on your property, you're in luck. Skinks help keep the bug population under control; their diet includes crickets, flies, grubs and caterpillars, grasshoppers, cockroaches, earwigs, slugs, small spiders and many other small insects.

#### Physical description

"The western skink is a small, slim, striped lizard with shiny scales, short legs and a long bright blue tail. The bright blue tail fades with age to dull blue, gray or brownish gray. Adults are 2 to almost 3 inches snout to vent length with a tail that is 1.5 to 2 times the body length. The mid-dorsal (topside) stripe is brown and bordered on each side by alternating dark (brown or black) and light (cream, beige, or gray) stripes. The underside is light without markings. The tail is easily shed. Males develop a reddish tinge on the sides of the head and chin during the breeding season.

Hatchlings and juveniles are similar to adults, but the coloration is more intense and the tail is always blue.

#### Ecology and life history

They often occur near water such as creeks or ponds, but also occur in dry habitats far from water.

Western skinks are active during the day but are alert, secretive and rarely seen in the open. Most are found by turning rocks and woody debris. They are quick and agile; it is not uncommon to see only a flash of blue as they escape into woody debris or rocks. In areas without woody debris, searching under shale-like rocks at the base of basalt outcrops can be particularly productive, especially if the rocks are in contact with the ground."<sup>1</sup>

Female skinks take great care of their eggs. Western skink females construct nest chambers that are several centimeters deep in loose moist soil. Typically these chambers are located under surface objects, especially flat stones, logs, and sometimes in or near rock outcrops.[4] The females remain guarding the nest until the young leave the nest. Female western skinks will defend their nests from predators, repair their nests, and even bask in the sun and then return to the nest to provide additional heat.<sup>3</sup>



Western Skink  
(*Plestiodon skiltonianus*)

The common garden skink relies purely on the movement of its prey when hunting. When hunting, the skink will either hide and wait for prey to come by or actively pursue it (this depends on how hungry it is).

Once it has caught its prey, it shakes it around vigorously to kill it before swallowing it whole. Once it has had one meal, it begins to actively pursue prey for a short while with its newfound energy.<sup>3</sup>

#### References:

1. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
2. Photo courtesy of CaliforniaHerps.com
3. Wikipedia.com