

# 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 today will determine the quality of our lives and the health of the broader community of life in the years to come.**



We offer this vision to declare 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 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.

We 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 larger community of life.



## Our Way Forward

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?”** 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 should start by devising measurable standards for clean water, clean air, and ecological health, working for regulatory systems that support those standards, and insisting that new developments work within them.

Specifically, the Sierra Club Lake Group believes that 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



## Resources

Principles of ecologically-sound growth can be found at [smartgrowth.org](http://smartgrowth.org). These include: Preserving open spaces, directing development toward existing communities, allowing for mixed land uses.

We urge local leaders to follow the lead of the U.S. council of mayors and governments around the world in endorsing the United nations-sponsored Earth Charter (available at [earthcharter.org](http://earthcharter.org) as a statement of our collective values and guiding principles.