

## what is a water loop?

Water loops are recreational waterways on a lake, river, or ocean between specific locations, containing access points and day-use and/or camping sites for the boating public. Water loops emphasize low-impact use and promote stewardship of the resources, while providing healthy outdoor activity.

Lake County Water Loop maps can be found online at [www.lakecounty.com](http://www.lakecounty.com) or at Lake County Visitor Centers.



## don't move a mussel!

Help protect Lake County's beautiful lakes and creeks by preventing the spread of harmful plants, animals, and other organisms, such as Quagga and Zebra mussels. These aquatic nuisance species can hitch a ride on boats, trailers, clothing, gear, etc., and then spread to other bodies of water. If conditions are right, these invasive species can severely impact the aquatic ecosystem. Each time you leave any water body, be sure to thoroughly clean, drain, and dry all items that come in contact with water.

## boat inspections

To protect local water bodies from invasive species, the County of Lake requires that certain types of vessels be inspected prior to launching in Lake County waters. While kayaks and canoes currently are exempt, information about the inspection program is available through the Lake County Mussel Hotline: (707) 263-2556 or [www.co.lake.ca.us/mussels](http://www.co.lake.ca.us/mussels)

## reporting water pollution

If you see anything suspected to be pollution or disturbance of the waterways, report it immediately by contacting the Lake County Sheriff's Department at (707) 263-2690.



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This is one in a series of Lake County Water Trails Brochures, published as a cooperative effort of the County of Lake, and the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program.

Photographs courtesy of Lyle Madeson, Redbud Audubon Society, Laura Lamar, Thomas L. Taylor, ttaylor@entrix.com

## leave no trace

- Plan ahead and prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Respect wildlife—observe from a distance.
- Avoid disturbing wildlife especially during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young.
- Leave what you find. Examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Leave rocks, plants, and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Respect the privacy of landowners.
- Always ask permission before entering private land; unless otherwise posted, assume it is private property.
- Don't litter.
- Remember sound carries across water more clearly than on land; avoid loud noises or boisterous behavior.

## the unique clear lake hitch

For thousands of years, the Clear Lake hitch was a mainstay in Native American diets. Hitch were once so abundant that millions would clog the lake's feeder streams each spring. Natural causes and encroachment have diminished the population, which is now recognized as a "species of special concern."

Native to Lake County, the Clear Lake hitch is part of the minnow family. Throughout most of their lives, Clear Lake hitch remain hidden in the waters of Clear Lake, but each spring the population breaks into a spectacular spawning run up the Clear Lake tributaries. Thousands of splashing hitch attract a wide array of hungry wildlife, which line the banks. While spawning times vary, the best months to find Clear Lake hitch are March and April. Prime viewing areas include bridges over Kelsey and Adobe creeks.

Recognizing the significance of the native hitch, in 2004, the Lake County Chi Council was formed to gather data, increase public awareness, and help protect and restore the population. Government funding also has enabled the Tribes to tag and count hitch and to develop a hitch hatchery to strengthen their numbers.



## watch for these other species:



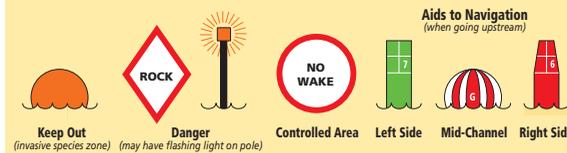
## paddling safety

All canoes, kayaks, and inflatable rafts must carry a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (life jacket) for each person on board. Before setting out, boaters should become knowledgeable about local conditions such as currents, rapids, flow levels, weather, and hazards.

- Test new or unfamiliar equipment before use.
- Leave word with a responsible person concerning your destination and when you will return.
- Always make sure your craft is in good repair.
- Securely fasten all gear within the craft or in waterproof containers that will float high and be easily retrievable.
- Learn how to swim; learn first-aid techniques and CPR.
- Paddlers are harder to see from other vessels. Keep paddling groups together. Avoid long lines.
- Watch for and avoid hazards such as fallen trees, brush, fences, bridge abutments, or old pilings.
- Do not boat under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Additional recommended equipment: protective foot gear, extra paddle, anchoring device, bailing device/sponge, boating maps, flashlight, compass, first-aid kit, boat-repair materials, hat, sunglasses, whistle, sunscreen, waterproof storage bags, emergency light, water, GPS unit, cell phone, knife, and a 50- to 100-foot throw rope.

## regulatory or advisory markers



## cold water dangers

Capsizing or falling overboard into cold water can cause immediate health problems, ranging from disorientation and hyperventilation to heart attack. Cold water quickly numbs hands and feet and saps overall strength. To increase your chance of survival in cold water:

- Always wear a personal flotation device (life jacket).
- Get out of the water as fast as you can since you get colder faster in water than air.
- Dress properly.

## in case of emergency, call 911

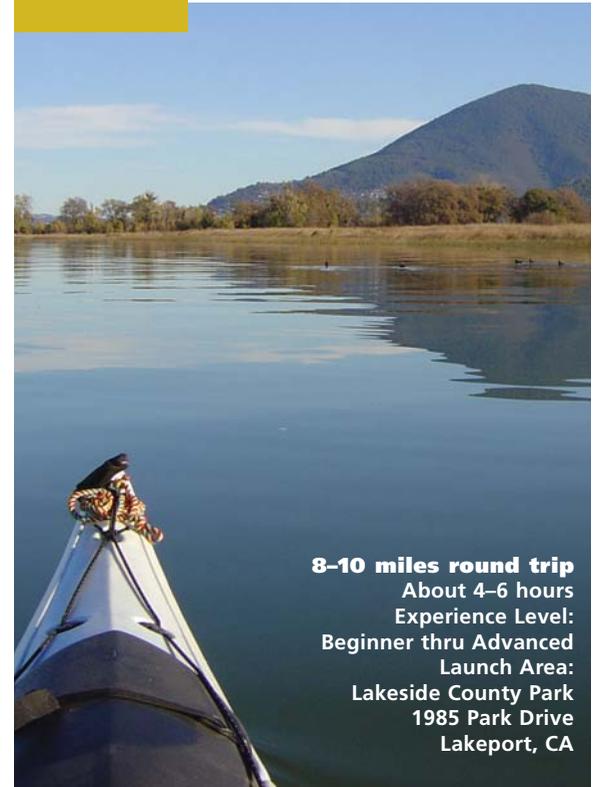
## info and resources

Lake County Water Resources: (707) 263-2341  
 Lake County Parks & Recreation: (707) 262-1618  
 Lake County Sheriff (*non-emergency*): (707) 263-2690  
[www.lakecounty.com](http://www.lakecounty.com); [www.konoctitrails.com](http://www.konoctitrails.com);  
<http://watershed.co.lake.ca.us/>

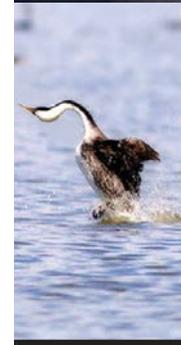
## Clear Lake Water Loop 6

konocti  
regional  
trails

Long  
Tule Point  
wetlands & wildlife



**8-10 miles round trip**  
 About 4-6 hours  
 Experience Level:  
 Beginner thru Advanced  
 Launch Area:  
 Lakeside County Park  
 1985 Park Drive  
 Lakeport, CA



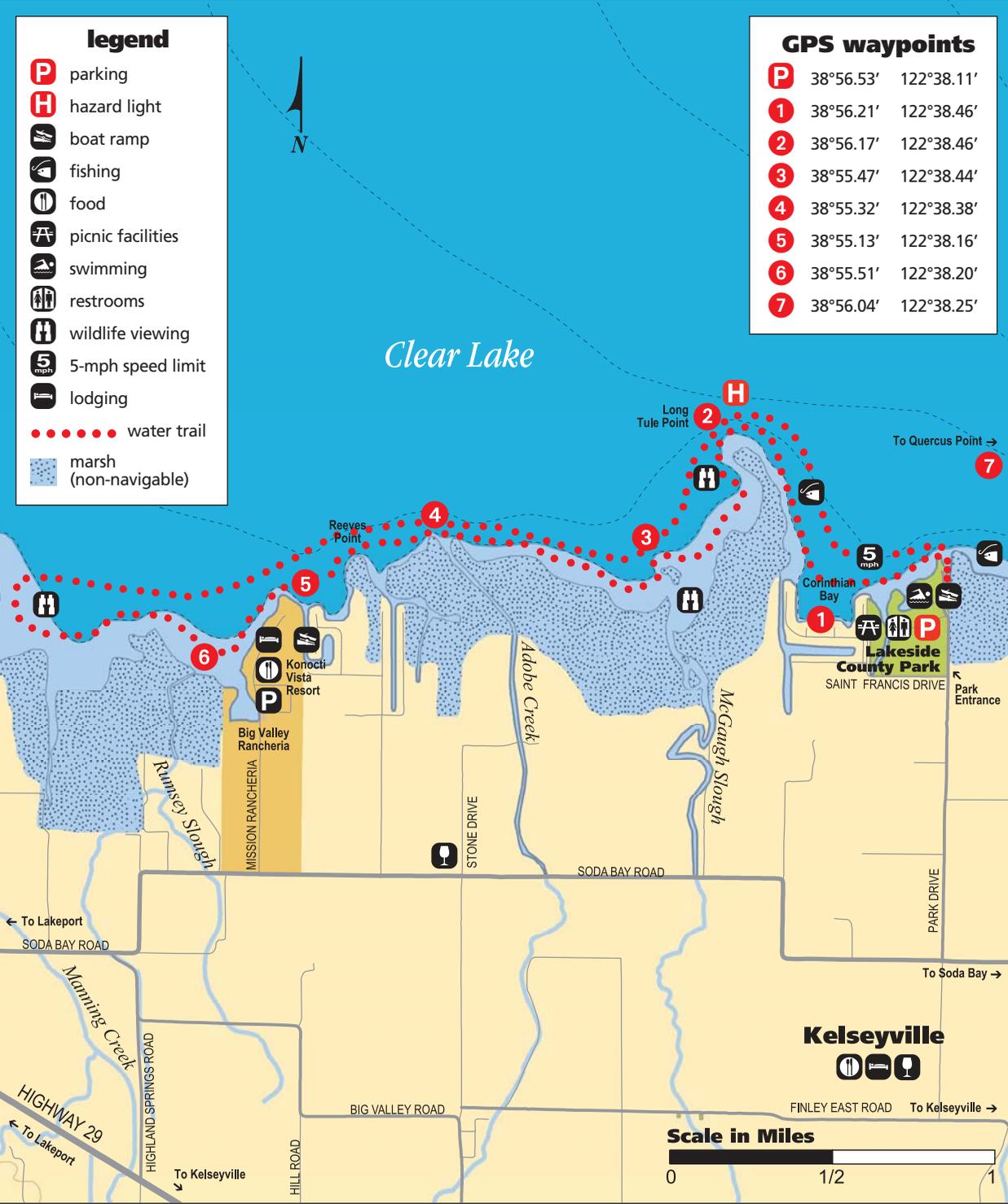
- Wetlands, tule reeds
- Migratory waterfowl route
- Views of Mount Konocti
- Grebe nesting areas
- Heron rookeries
- Hitch spawning run
- Picnic spot

## Lake County Visitor Information Center

6110 East Highway 20, Lucerne, CA 95458  
 (707) 274-5652 | (800) 525-3743 | (800) LAKESIDE  
[www.lakecounty.com](http://www.lakecounty.com) | [info@lakecounty.com](mailto:info@lakecounty.com)



# Clear Lake Water Loop 6: Long Tule Point Wetlands & Wildlife



## trail description



Put-in at the boat ramp, or at this sandy beach at Lakeside County Park

A bucolic paddle along Clear Lake's largest remaining natural shoreline, past cottonwoods and ancient oaks and small waterfront hamlets. Far-reaching views of Mount Konocti, the Mayacamas mountains, and the north shore. On calm days, this is a gentle paddling experience; when the wind kicks up, it is best to hug the shoreline. A great alternate paddle during summer and early fall when loops like Anderson Marsh and Rodman Slough may be congested with late-season weeds. Mornings are best due to intense midday sun. Winter and spring months offer spectacular opportunities to watch migratory water fowl.

## trail route

From the boat ramp at Lakeside County Park **P**, paddle toward the lake and turn left to head west. As you leave the park behind, you will pass a small waterfront community on Corinthian Bay **1** before approaching Long Tule Point **2**, one of the largest remaining tule wetlands on Clear Lake. At risk from development, the Lake County Land Trust has identified preservation of this expanse of shoreline—from Clear Lake State Park to Lakeport—as one of its highest priorities. Vital to the ecosystem of the entire lake, expanses of tule reeds act as natural filtration for the lake and also provide protection, food, and breeding areas for many species of waterfowl and wildlife.



A view of the north shore from the put-in at Lakeside County Park;

Continue around the point toward McGaugh Slough **3**, a favorite bird-watching spot. Designated an "Important Bird Area" by Audubon California, Clear Lake hosts more than 300 species of local and migratory birds. Here, cormorant colonies roost in lakeside trees. Great Blue Heron and egrets hunt fish on the tule fringes while osprey soar overhead. Migratory flocks of white pelicans, coots, ducks, and geese winter along the shoreline, with an occasional bald eagle sighting.

Today, Clark's Grebes and Western Grebes are typically present in large numbers. In the 1950s, however, the population was nearly decimated by the pesticide DDT—fewer than 20 pairs existed. Today, both species are

protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Certainly one of the most spectacular displays is the grebe courtship dance (*pictured on cover*) in early spring. Starting with a rhythmic head bobbing, a pair of birds will then "rush" side-by-side skimming across the water's surface and ending in a synchronized dive. Later, colonies form, with the females creating floating nest platforms from tules. Newly hatched chicks climb onto their parents' backs, nesting into the wing feathers, where they are carried for weeks until old enough to fend for themselves.

Recently, grebe reproduction has been sporadic, most likely from human activity around their tule marsh nesting habitat. Paddlers should take care to stay away from tule stands where grebes show any signs of nesting.

Continue past McGaugh Slough. On a hot summer day—if the water is high enough—paddling into the slough can provide a bit of shade from cottonwood and willow trees. Western Pond Turtles can be seen sunning themselves while otter and mink rustle through the reeds.



Western Pond Turtle

After nearly a mile, you'll approach Adobe Creek **4**, one of the largest spawning runs for the Clear Lake hitch, a fish unique to Lake County. The best months to find Clear Lake hitch on Adobe Creek are March and April, from Soda Bay Road.

Soon you will pass Reeves point and the small community at Land's End, known for its heron rookeries. At waypoint **5**, you'll see a series of docks in a small cove, the Konocti Vista Resort at Big Valley Rancheria. This is a great spot to pull in and have lunch at the restaurant, take a break, or try your hand at a few slot machines.

The Big Valley Tribal members are descendants of the Xa-Ben-Na-Po Band of Pomo Indians that historically inhabited the Clear Lake area for more than 11,800 years. Each summer, the Rancheria hosts a tule boat-making workshop for tribal members, culminating in a thrilling series of tule boat races.

At this point, head west to poke around the Rumsey Slough area **6** or head back hugging the shoreline. The 4- to 5-mile return trip features a spectacular view of Mount Konocti (*pictured, cover*).

**Alternate route:** For an alternate 6-mile trip, head east from the boat ramp at Lakeside County Park, paddling one mile toward Quercus Point **7** past another huge remaining stand of tule reeds with grebe nesting areas (*left*), cormorant rookeries, and wood duck nesting boxes. Two more miles will bring you to Clear Lake State Park for lunch—or a rest—then meander back along the shoreline until you return to Lakeside County Park. See Clear Lake Water Trail Loop 5 for more details on this scenic paddle that includes Quercus Point, Clear Lake State Park, and Soda Bay.



Nesting grebes

