

Will the Real Margaritaville Please Stand Up!

If you follow the Lake Berryessa News you will have seen several stories you will not find on any other news outlet anywhere - not even in Napa County. As I continue to point out, without **The Lake Berryessa News**, there would be no Lake Berryessa news.

With the withdrawal of Sun Outdoors from its plan to revitalize Steele Canyon Recreation Area, Spanish Flat Recreation Area, and Monticello Shores Recreation Area, Napa County reverted to the second Steele Canyon bidder in the last bid process, Camp Margaritaville Resorts. The real name of the bidder is not "Margaritaville". It is Camp Margaritaville Resorts which focuses on family camping and lodging, especially RV camping. Camp Margaritaville Resorts is a separate company from Margaritaville Resorts itself.

Unexpected opposition to the Camp Margaritaville Resort proposal arose at the Napa County Supervisors' meeting on November 7. There were no supporters of the Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program at this meeting because the item was on the consent agenda, and no one expected it to be removed for public comment. Even the county staff involved were not aware until just before the meeting that someone (still unknown) had removed the item from the consent agenda.

But, a bit surprisingly, several individuals were already organized to oppose the original bid proposal. Their opposition was based on misinformation and false assumptions bordering on scare tactics - focusing on the name Margaritaville, using it as a pejorative. But neither Camp Margarita Resorts, nor Margarita Resorts itself, is anything like what the project opponents tried to smear it as. It is not a wild party, heavy drinking, wet t-shirt kind of place like Cabo Wabo in Cabo San Lucas.

Another curiosity with the timing of the opponents' critiques is that attacks like this have not occurred against the recent proposals for the Sun Outdoors bid for Steele Canyon and Spanish Flat, the Pleasure Cove/Suntex bid for Berryessa Point, nor the Collective Retreats bid for Monticello Shores. Those bids were similar to the Camp Margaritaville bid. The opponents seem to have been reacting to the simple word "Margaritaville".

Having watched the meeting video more than once, I can affirm that Mr. Lederer, Ms. Sears, and the Camp Margaritaville representative Mr. Wilkens, did excellent jobs in answering all questions in detail, refuting every negative comment before they were made.

I recorded a closing statement at the meeting by Supervisor Pedroza completely contradicting the negative misinformation being spread by the naysayers. Supervisor Pedroza has consistently supported the Lake Berryessa community since he was first elected. I am hopeful that new Supervisor Cottrell will also be similarly supportive. Please watch it if you care about Lake Berryessa.

Supervisor Pedroza's statement is on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbbDDbWzMdE>

The full Supervisors' Meeting (50 minutes) is on YouTube at:

<https://youtu.be/hWRUTrofFZs?si=RUuNfZlZQjZoeZiw>

The opponents are criticizing a two year old plan - even though that original plan is essentially moot. They are beating a dead horse with a stick. The actual plan is being redone now based on new financial and construction realities. At this time Camp Margaritaville Resort is assembling its consultants to do the initial feasibility work to develop an improved plan for the resort. As before it will be consistent with the Managing Partner Agreement (<https://www.lakeberryessanews.com/resources/References-PDFs/2020-Managing-Partner-Agreement.pdf>) and the 2006 ROD which the BOR has renamed the VSP ROD (Victors Services

Plan - Record of Decision) (<https://www.lakeberryessanews.com/resources/References-PDFs/2006-Record-of-Decision.pdf>)

The proposed master developer and concessionaire will be lake Berryessa Partners LLC whose Manager is Tim Wilkens. Mr. Wilkens is a long time Napa County resident who has been to Lake Berryessa many time during the last 30 years. He has local resort development experience in Napa County as well as experience in other areas of California and overseas. I spoke with Mr. Wilkens personally, and believe the Camp Berryessa Resort process will lead to a family recreation-oriented, environmentally friendly resort that Napa County can add to its list of major recreation attractions. As Mr. Wilkens points out, "All elements of our resort will be ADA compliant as well as meeting the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standard for construction which is the world's most widely used green building rating system."

Some people raised the issue of the Napa County General Plan and its applicability to the Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program (Renaissance Lake Berryessa). Legally the General Plan has no jurisdiction over Lake Berryessa development since federal government owns the land on which the target resort redevelopment is occurring. But since the county signed a Managing Partner Agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation to take over management of the resorts at the lake and is now in charge of the future redevelopment of those resorts, the Napa General Plan should, and will, inform the planning for the new resorts. My conclusion is that the general plan does not conflict with nor contradict the Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program. It actually supports the resort planning goals.

My report on "Lake Berryessa and the Napa General Plan" is available at the following link:

<https://www.lakeberryessanews.com/resources/Special-Reports/Lake-Berryessa-and-the-Napa-General-Plan.pdf>

Opponents of Lake Berryessa revitalization misuse the term "nature-based recreation". The Napa County General Plan defines Nature-Based Recreation as recreation which takes place in and around, and is significantly focused on, the natural environment, including but not limited to walking, hiking, equestrian and mountain bicycle riding, camping in tents, recreational vehicles, and rustic cabins, wildlife viewing, fishing, hunting, picnicking, swimming in lakes and rivers, and paddling.

The Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program includes nature-based recreation as a key goal in any resort redevelopment. All the bids received over the years, including recent ones from Sun Outdoors, Suntex Marinas (Pleasure Cove Marina), Camp Margaritaville Resorts, and Collective Retreats include strong commitments to environmental management and nature-based recreation. Lake Berryessa has always been a perfect destination for nature-based recreation and has been known as such for many years.

My report, "Nature-Based Recreation at Lake Berryessa" is available at:

<https://www.lakeberryessanews.com/resources/Special-Reports/Nature-Based-Recreation-at-Lake-Berryessa.pdf>

Here's modest proposal (with apologies to Jonathan Swift). If people wish to participate in a discussion of the future of Lake Berryessa and its political and natural history, they need to read. One of my favorite sayings is, "I can explain it to you, but I can't understand it for you." Many people ask me about the history of the process that led to the present situation at Lake Berryessa. When I explain what happened most become incredulous and can't believe the government could have done something so stupid. "How could they have gotten away with that?" they exclaim. A good question!

When I start to explain they stop me and say, "Can you give me the 5-minute version?" The answer is no!

If you care, you must read. If you wish to participate in discussions on Facebook or Nextdoor, you must read. If you wish to make informed public statements at a Napa supervisors meeting, you must read!

Sorry.

You should read these books. This is not an advertisement; it is a recommendation. I make very little royalty on book sales. I wrote them to educate the public and to guarantee no one forgets the facts of what happened out here. If you read these books, you will become an expert on most Lake Berryessa issues.

Policy and Politics Betray the People: The Lake Berryessa Saga: 1958 - 2020

https://www.amazon.com/Policy-Politics-Betray-People-Berryessa-ebook/dp/B08MFSQDBR/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=peter+kilkus&qid=1604774826&sr=8-1

Lake Berryessa Technical Manual: The Science, Engineering, History, and Humor of a Major Unnatural Resource

https://www.amazon.com/Lake-Berryessa-Technical-Manual-Engineering-ebook/dp/B0C21DZ9M9/ref=sr_1_3?