

Community Update

Fall 2018

Water for Citizens of Weed, California (WCWC) was formed in 2016 by members of the Weed community, including three former mayors, in response to the acute threat we face to our City's main supply of water—the pure spring water we have depended on for more than 100 years. WCWC is working to protect and secure this water and to oppose the attempt of Roseburg Forest Products, through legal sleight of hand, to take this water away from our community so they can profit from it as a commodity to be bought and sold. WCWC is committed to strengthening our community's capacity to provide affordable and safe water, sewer and fire services to all of its people.

The Community of Weed is facing an ongoing struggle to regain the right to our community's water. The fight is not over and we continue to need the support and involvement of our friends and neighbors in Weed, as well as other allies, to succeed.

On-Going Legal Battles: Early in 2017, WCWC initiated a complaint to our local water master district and State water agencies asking them to investigate the situation. We provided documentation that the City of Weed has a strong claim to the Beaghan Springs water in question and asked the Weed City Council to support our complaint--the council unanimously agreed to do so. Roseburg reacted by immediately suing our WCWC group, nine individuals associated with our group and the City of Weed. The City of Weed then countersued Roseburg, making a legal claim of its own on the water.

WCWC soon realized that we were the victims of a "SLAPP" suit (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) meant to intimidate us into silence. We fought back with the help of a legal team that specializes in protecting First Amendment rights. In December we went to court and the judge ruled that WCWC and the nine individuals should not

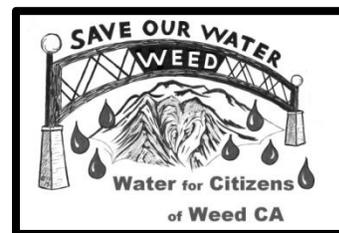
have been named in the lawsuit. However, in May of 2018, Roseburg appealed the court's decision to dismiss WCWC from the case, thus the case will move to a higher appeals court.

Meanwhile, the cases between the City and Roseburg continue since the court has not yet made a decision about the larger issue of who rightfully controls the Beaghan Springs water, and final legal resolution is still many months, if not years, away.¹

Our Campaign Continues: Moving forward it is very important that the people of Weed stay engaged in this issue. **The community needs to let the City Council members know they want the City to stand strong and uphold the citizens' rights to the Beaghan Springs water.**

We will keep you updated on the appeals process for the SLAPP suit. We will continue to monitor the court battle between the City and Roseburg. We will continue research and advocacy on the issue of Weed's legal, historical and ethical rights to the spring water upon which our town has always depended and support the City's case however we can. In addition, we must keep the pressure up on Roseburg and continue to call attention to its unethical and greedy behavior.

We are committed to these issues and we continue to need your help! Beyond the ethical issue this is a financial issue—**because the City has to pay fees to Roseburg and start looking for alternative water sources, everyone's water bill has already increased.** If we lose our water all together we can expect these costs to increase much further!



¹ In a separate case, a group called Weed Area Water Alliance sued the City of Weed and Roseburg alleging the Water Lease Agreement between the two entities violates the California Environmental Quality Act and fair business practice laws. WCWC is not involved in this case.

WCWC on a National Stage! On September 5, 2018, WCWC was invited to present our SLAPP story at the "Protect the Protest" event in San Francisco aboard the Greenpeace ship, "Arctic Sunrise". WCWC leaders Bob Hall, Jim Taylor, and Ray Strack attended. The event was organized by a coalition of 20 civil liberties and environmental groups to kick off a new effort to protect of journalists, citizens, nonprofits, and community organizations against lawsuits aimed at stifling free speech rights. A discussion panel included leaders from Mother Jones (Monika Bauerlein), Electronic Frontier Foundation (David Greene), Greenpeace USA (Annie Leonard), Rainforest Action Network (Christopher J. Herrera), and WikiMedia (Jacob Rogers) discussing the many ways government agencies and private corporations are attempting to stifle free speech. Free speech, freedom of assembly, and peaceful dissent are fundamental pillars of democracy that must be protected.

The event also included testimonials from people personally affected by SLAPP suits: Jim Taylor and Bob Hall told our story about Roseburg's SLAPP suit against WCWC.

Bob Hall reflected, "It was amazing to be sitting next to people who are so prominent on the international stage and realize they are real people, just like us, standing up to attempted intimidation by corporate bullies."

"It was sobering to realize how vulnerable our first amendment rights are," stated Jim Taylor, "and how we must stand up at every opportunity to protect them."



WCWC members and our attorneys at the Court House in Yreka.

Coming Soon!

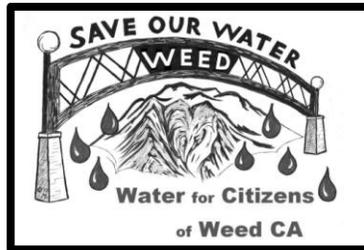
Protect the Protest Forum in Weed!

WCWC is organizing a public forum about First Amendment Rights and the importance of protecting this Constitutional Guarantee.

Watch for details coming soon!

WCWC thanks We Advocate Thorough Environmental Review (cawater.net) for covering the cost of postage for this mailing.

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Read about Weed water issues and "SLAPP" suits in this newsletter!

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