

CA_KONOCTI_ABOUT_V3.pdf submitted by Alan Fletcher and Dallas Cook / C4H

About C4H

Summary

Citizens For Healing (C4H) first got together as a few individuals in October, 2020 - meeting publicly in Kelseyville Pioneer Park.

Anticipating that renaming would be through a county-wide, ballot, we launched a series of round-the-county informational meetings from Kelseyville and as far as Clear Lake. Our March, 2022 kick-off meeting was widely reported in the press.

We were then informed that BGN was responsible for name changes, so we switched to preparing a proposal, which took almost a year. During this time we continued to hold both public and working meetings, and filed with the BGN in October 2023. This coincided with a supervisor primary election for the district 5 (including Kelseyville), at which renaming was an election issue.

We spoke about these efforts at public meetings such as the KVUSD "Land acknowledgement" proposal (packed by our opponents) and at the BoS when the County Visioning Forum made its report. We recommended that the BoS form a Limited Purpose, Limited Time committee to address the issue.

In July 2024 the BoS approved an advisory ballot, Measure-U. We regarded this as totally ill-advised, and opposed it. We recommended that the ballot solicit alternative new names. We prepared proposals for the ballot measure, but did not campaign on the issue. We continued to hold informational meetings in Lakeport and Kelseyville. In Dec 2024 the BoS decided to recommend the name change.

We have always been open to considering a different replacement name, but opponents have been adamant that it will be "Kelseyville for ever".

All our plans and submitted documents - including drafts - were posted on our Web site. Our main mailing list has always been open to anyone.

Citizens for Healing Association C4HA

Citizens For Healing is now organized as an Association (C4HA),

See <http://admin.citizensforhealing.org> for details and contact information of C4HA.

"Citizens for Healing" (C4H) continues to operate as a loose organization of "Supporters", but has no specific legal standing.

Our main activity at present is working to change the name of Kelseyville to Konocti. This is classified as "issue advocacy".

The Lake County Board of Supervisors put an advisory "Measure U" on the ballot for the November 2024 election. We organized primarily to comply with election law. We prepared for the election, but did not campaign on Measure U ("express advocacy").

We continue to advocate for the change.

The Web Site citizensforhealing.org is maintained by Alan Fletcher info@citizensforhealing.org, who is responsible for the overall content. He also operates the mailing lists described on our [Contact](#) page. Particular sections may be signed by individuals, who are responsible for that content.

In order to comply with other regulations, we are not accepting or soliciting donations of any kind.

Citizens for Healing was originally NOT An Organization.

C4H recently formed a formal organization, so this section is historical.

We are a collection of individuals who are working to heal the community of Lake County that we live and work in.

We have no President, Secretary, Treasurer or Members.

Various individuals may take on particular tasks, and each speaks from their own heart.

Citizens for Healing History 2020-2025

By Alan Fletcher 5/1/2025

The beautiful and thriving town of Kelseyville, sitting at the base of Mt. Konocti, is currently named after a brutal man.

Andy Kelsey — with his brothers and his partner Charles Stone — enslaved, starved, abused, raped, tortured and murdered the Pomo living under their control. In 1849, the Pomo held a tribal court and decided to execute Kelsey and Stone.

In revenge for their deaths, brothers Ben and Sam Kelsey and their posse stormed Napa and Sonoma Counties indiscriminately killing Pomo. They were followed in 1850 by the cavalry, with orders to "exterminate, if possible, the tribe", which they almost did, at Bloody Island. The Pomo have not forgotten the Kelseys or the repercussions which continue to affect them.

The commemoration in the town name of these brutal men is offensive to all the local tribes and to many residents throughout the County.

The offensiveness of the name has been discussed in the press since at least 1985, and in 2006 Clayton Duncan of Robinson Rancheria succeeded in his campaign "I am not your mascot" to change the schools team name. He also started to campaign for a change in the town name: almost equal numbers of Lake County residents signed online petitions for and against a name change.

In 2020 a Kelseyville resident decided to reactivate the idea. Citizens For Healing therefore formed as an intentionally NON-organized group. C4H started to investigate the possibility of a name change.

During our first year (2020-2021) we held monthly organizational meetings in Kelseyville's Pioneer park, at which we were advised by a Tribal Cultural Director, and by two Tribal Historical Preservation Officers (THIPOs -- who each held the position for multiple tribes.)

As an example of our early involvement with Natives, [KOED](#) reported on the 2021 Bloody Island Healing Ceremony and on C4H's hopes to change the name.

C4H's minutes for March 2021 indicate that both Ron Montez and Robert Geary were present when the name "Konocti" was proposed. We eventually adopted the name "Konocti" as a gesture to acknowledge the wrongs done to the original inhabitants of Lake County. THIPO Robert Geary discusses the name Konocti in a January 2021 KPZ interview: [KPZ Robert Geary](#).

We created a web page (initially [c4h.club](#)) and an open mailing list, c4h@groups.io. We encouraged opponents to join the list, as long as they engaged us respectfully.

In September 2021 one of the advisory Tribal Officers Ron Montez Sr reported: "I have contacted each tribe in Lake County for their approval to change the name of the town Kelseyville to the name of Konocti and the 7 tribes are unanimously in favor of the name change to Konocti."

At that stage we were informed by the Registrar of Voters that a name change would require a county-wide ballot. It was only at this stage that we adopted the proposed name "Konocti". We prepared a public information campaign, and held a series of public meetings around the lake. The initial meeting was featured on the front page of the Press Democrat and of the Lakeport Record Bee. Prominent opponents were interviewed in those articles.

The Kelseyville Business Association immediately held an advisory poll of its members, many of whom

abstained, and the results were "close". The KBA immediately formed a "Save The Name" subcommittee with the sole purpose of opposing a name change.

Many of our round-the-county meetings were attended by opponents to the change. We solicited suggestions for other names, but were told adamantly that it would be "Kelseyville for Ever".

Two of our meetings were held in Tribal Halls — Habematolel and Elem — at which many Natives spoke in support of the change. Several speakers said this was the first time they'd been "invited to the table". "It's still an open wound that's not been healed. We are a hurting people. We've wanted to change the name way before [anyone non-Native] thought of it,"

In November 2022 — following a tip-off by a local, retired attorney — the Registrar of Voters informed us that the US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) has jurisdiction over the names of "unincorporated populated places", and that they will, on a case-by-case basis, change a name which is "offensive ... to a racial group".

We announced the change of venue from County Ballot to BGN Application on our web page in January 2023. This was not a "back door secret effort" to bypass local opinion, as some have suggested. ([Letter by Peter Windrem](#)) This was not done in secret: we posted our drafts for discussion as early as March 2023: [Wayback Machine](#)

Since the new name-change effort would now be done in writing, we spent almost a year preparing our application to the BGN, which we submitted in October 2023.

This coincided with the supervisor's primary election for District 5 (Kelseyville), in which renaming was a major issue - including the knowledge that it was BGN matter.

In June 2024 the Lake County Visioning Forum delivered its final report to the Board of Supervisors. The report identified the history of the county and the name of Kelseyville as factors, but - regarding the issue as outside of their brief - made no recommendations. Supervisor Green proposed establishing a Limited Time, Limited Purpose Committee to review the name change, but that received no support.

In July 2024 the BoS decided to hold an advisory ballot measure : "Shall the Board of Supervisors recommend approval of the proposal to change the name of the town of Kelseyville to Konocti". C4H believes the measure was deeply flawed in concept, timing, demographics and in detail. We prepared ballot arguments, but yielded that right to Mr Flaman McCloud, chairman of the Big Valley Ranchera. We decided to remain as an "issue advocacy" organization, and thus did not campaign on Measure U. The results were about 30% For and 70% Against. The demographics are highly skewed to Whites: fewer than 3% of voters are Native American. On December 10, 2024 the BoS decided 3-2 to recommend the change, and submitted a letter to the BGN.

In Feb 2025 the BoS considered sending a report to CACGN and BGN outlining the difficulties they had encountered in the process, but decided not to do so. In addition they instructed County staff to spend no more time on the name change. At that meeting the chairman of "Save Kelseyville" stated that they would not suggest any alternative new name.

C4H has continued to hold informational meetings on the renaming issue, including a "2nd annual Earthday Picnic" in Kelseyville.

A Brief History of Citizens for Healing by Dallas Cook

Note: this is a detailed history up until the time we submitted our application to the BGN.

Citizens for Healing (C4H) is a local group of Lake County residents who came together to change the name of the town of Kelseyville to Konocti.

Although not formally organized, the group of individuals has worked effectively together toward their common cause. They were self directed, they identified their own skills, they determined how they could use them to help, and proceeded forward, always staying in communication with each other.

C4H first met on Indigenous Peoples Day, October 12, 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic. Their meetings were held in Pioneer Park in Kelseyville for the first several months. They began to Zoom their meetings early on. When the weather became too extreme, indoor venues were secured for in-person meetings, so as many people as possible could be included.

The last time efforts were made to change the town's name to Konocti was about ten years ago. But for various reasons the process was not completed. So, from the start C4H wanted to be clear that Konocti would be the appropriate new name - acceptable to all the communities around the lake, especially the tribal nations in Lake County.

Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) from three different tribes Zoomed the early meetings. They explained that each tribe had distinctly different languages. Konocti is the name of the mountain in the language of the East Lake Tribe of Elem, the oldest existing tribe in the area. After a year, with many lively and informative discussions at the monthly meetings, Elders from all seven tribes approved the use of the name Konocti.

Outreach and publicity would be vital to the success of C4H's goals:

1. To educate people about the "real" history of Lake County in the late 1800s and reveal the true character of Andrew Kelsey, the man after whom the town is currently named
2. To inform people of the intent to change the name of Kelseyville and explain the process
3. To get input and support from the community

C4H scheduled and hosted community meetings at various locations around the county - in parks, tribal meeting halls, churches, and at other venues. Articles sent to the local media notified the public of the time and location for each month's meeting.

Finding available and affordable meeting space was difficult. Two local tribes provided space to C4H at no cost (the Habematolel in Upper Lake in August 2022, and the East Lake Tribe of Elem in Clearlake Oaks in October 2022.)

In March of 2022, Austin Murphy, a writer from the Press Democrat of Santa Rosa published a full feature story about the Citizens for Healing and their intentions to change the name of Kelseyville. Murphy's story included opposing views of the name change. Ariel Carmona, the editor of Lake County Record Bee, responded to the piece. C4H's own articles and press releases kept the community abreast of their upcoming meetings and scheduled events.

On April 24th, 2022, Citizens for Healing hosted a kick-off party at the Big Valley Hall in Finley. Publicized as a start to the political campaign to change the name of the town, there were scheduled speakers, a potluck, live music, and dancing. About fifty people signed the guest log and wrote comments, and many more were in attendance. The majority of the guests attending were supportive, with a few opposing the name change. Other curious folks were there just to learn about the history, and to find out why the name should be changed.

Several long-time residents of Kelseyville attended the June 2022 C4H meeting held in Kelseyville. The same people attended the meeting in Lakeport in July of 2022. This group of residents opposed the name change and said they wanted to see tribal members from the community at the meetings. They wanted to hear their stories and know the Tribes' position on the name change.

On August 14, 2022, they did indeed hear the tribes' stories. Elders and members from four different tribes attended the meeting held in the Tribal Hall of the Habematolel. They stood up, one by one, and spoke from their hearts, sharing stories they'd heard from their grandparents and great-grandparents. They talked about the difficulties growing up in Lake County. They spoke about the inter-generational trauma they still endure that is associated with the horrific history of Andrew Kelsey. Ron Montez, THPO for Big Valley, said "it wasn't really that long ago, it's still fresh in people's minds." And he felt that changing the name of the town would be a "gift to all the tribes." Only one person opposing the change got up to speak that day - he addressed the importance of education regarding our local history.

C4H believed originally that changing the name of a town was a political action, requiring a decision by the County Board of Supervisors, or a vote by the people. So C4H volunteers put great time and effort into preparing a measure to put on the ballot. They researched the time frames of the next election cycles and determined the number of signatures they would need to gather on their petitions to qualify. Using documents and literature supporting their case, they wrote draft after draft of the initiative for the ballot, explaining and justifying the name change.

This political road C4H was traversing took an abrupt turn at a special meeting held on November 2022 at Clearlake United Methodist Church. To a sanctuary filled with interested souls, Dr. John Parker presented "The Kelsey Brothers: A California Disaster" and the Rev. Clovice Lewis gave his sermon, "What's in a Name?"

During the spontaneous discussion that ensued after the presentations, several people in attendance stood up to speak. Among them was a retired attorney whose family roots go back to the original colonization of the area. What he shared came as a big surprise to everyone there.

He told the crowd that to change the name of an "unincorporated populated place" or town, like Kelseyville, simply required a proposal to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN). He explained (and C4H verified this later) that this Board is the Federal authority on names of places, serving under the larger umbrella of the United States Geological Survey (USGS). It arbitrates decisions on the naming and renaming of places.

C4H volunteers were relieved and encouraged at once. They didn't need to write an initiative to put on the ballot, they didn't need to launch a political campaign, and they didn't need to organize fundraisers for that campaign. But they could see that the work required in proposing a name change is similar to advancing a political appeal. C4H still needed to do plenty of community outreach, to build awareness and educate people, and to inform all the interested parties. Citizens for Healing have from the beginning been focused and committed to all these tasks.

Time-Line

Note: this is a working draft, which is continually being updated.

1. Oct 2020: C4H "founded" -- see main "About" section for details of meetings
 2. Jan 2021: c4h.club and c4h@groups.io
 3. Feb 2021: Visioning Forum
 4. Mar 2021: Name Konocti proposed. THPOs present
 5. Sep 2021: Support from all seven tribes' THPOs
 6. Mar 2022: citizensforhealing.org and mailchimp mailing list.
 7. Mar 2022: C4H prepares for ballot, holds round-the-county meetings - opponents attend
 8. 2022: KBA Votes to oppose, forms 'Save The Name' subcommittee.
 9. Nov 2022: County Registrar of Voters informed C4H that BGN has jurisdiction
 10. 2023: BOS Visioning Forum holds three public round-the county meetings
 11. 2023: STNK Oppose in letter to BGN before we even filed.
 12. Oct 2023: C4H Application to BGN.
 13. Jan 2024: BGN Adds Konocti to Quarterly List, Refers to CACGN, Tribes and BOS
 14. 2024: STNK Oppose in letter to BGN and LCN article
 15. 2024: 5 of 7 Tribes Reply (Elem and Koi unknown)
 16. 2024: BOS MAC: proposal changed from Kelseyville to Big Valley
 17. May 2024: KVUSD: STNK packs meeting 'may hurt our campaign'
 18. Jun 14, 2024: BoS and BGN virtual meeting
 19. Jun 18 2024: Visioning Forum report - Kelsey/Kville a problem. BOS rejects Limited Time Limited Purpose committee
 20. July 11. 2024 - CACGN initial meeting (Tribes appeared in person - Ron M and Robert G - C4H via zoom)
 21. July 30, 2024: BOS measure-U meeting. C4H opposes. Two tribal BoS members vote FOR, so 3-2
 22. Aug 2024: with cooperation from C4h, Big Valley submits the Ballot argument For
 23. Oct 2024: BGN responds to BoS Queries with a "FAQ".
 24. Nov 2024: Measure U election - county votes 30% for, 70% against
 25. Dec 2024: BOS submitted recommendation in support (3-to-2)
 26. Jan 2025: BOS considered submitting policy recommendations to BGN and CACGN (not seconded), and decided to commit no more county staff effort on the issue.
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27. May 2025: CACGN decides (earliest)
 28. Jul 2025: BGN Decides (earliest)
 29. USPS and Census Decide