



## PLAYA and Lake County Notes and Resources

[PLAYA](#) nurtures innovative thinking in the arts and sciences through its residency and workshop programs on the edge of the Great Basin, to promote dialogue and positive change in the environment and the world. In addition to being an arts and science residency program, PLAYA hosts place-based workshops, rentals, community gatherings, school programs, and events.

[Lake County](#) is vastly rich in terms of natural history, and minimally populated. Lake County is a frontier county, meaning there are less than 6 people per square mile; in fact there are about 8,000 people living within the 8,000 square miles of the county. Ranching is the main industry in Lake County, and some families have been ranching on the same land for seven generations.

### Natural Features and History

- PLAYA is within the largest [Dark Sky Sanctuary](#) in the world.
- There have been a number of [wildfires](#) in the area, some of which have had major effects on our human and more-than-human neighbors (turn on the “Wildland Fire History” filter to see the history of wildfire in the region).
- In the Paisley Caves, there is the oldest recorded DNA evidence of humans in North America. The evidence of human habitation in these caves is from 14,000 years ago which is one of the oldest records of human habitation in the Americas.
- One can easily visit caves, petroglyphs, megafauna rubbings, and other sites which tell the long story of human and more-than-human presence on this land.
- 77% of the land in Lake County is public (either Bureau of Land Management or National Forest). PLAYA is sandwiched between BLM and the Fremont-Winema National Forest.
- PLAYA is located on the “shores” of intermittent Summer Lake. Summer Lake is a dry playa half of the year, and during the other half, it is a ~6-inch deep salt lake. In Pleistocene times, Summer Lake was connected to nearby [Lake Abert](#), and called Pleistocene Lake Chewaucan.
- Summer Lake and Lake Abert are part of the Pacific Flyway and provide habitat for thousands of migrating shore birds. [Summer Lake’s Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) managed wetland refuge also provided habitat for thousands of migratory birds.
- The Chewaucan River, which begins in the Fremont-Winema National Forest and runs through the town of Paisley Oregon, is the primary watershed feeding Lake Abert. Local stakeholders including ranchers and scientists have formed the Partnership for Lake Abert and the Chewaucan to reach consensus on water rights for humans and wildlife habitat. See their [“Shared Narratives”](#) report.
- There is visible evidence of many geologic events on this land including very young (in earth-scale) geologic events, making this a very unique landscape.
- Review the [“Research”](#) page on the PLAYA website for more information about the science monitoring PLAYA engages in (MOTUS wildlife tracking, eBird information, weather station, Dark Sky monitoring, and more).