



Friends of Hope Valley Newsletter

Fall, 2008

Volume 23, Issue 2

For the preservation
of the scenic,
recreational, and
historic use of Hope
Valley and Alpine
County's eastern
Sierra slope.

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Vertical Bundles in Hope Valley

Debbi Waldear

On August 23rd Friends of Hope Valley partnered with the Alpine Watershed Group to work on a restoration project along the Carson River. The work was done in lower Hope Valley where the riverbanks are unstable causing severe erosion. To help the river function properly we stabilized the banks using a bioengineering technique called vertical bundling. Early in the morning energetic volunteers collected and removed the leaves from over a hundred 7 to 10 foot long willow branches. The volunteers were then taught how to make the bundles and place them.

Bioengineering practices for bank erosion control include fascines, brush layering, dormant pole planting, brush mattresses, and vertical bundles, which are to be used when heavy waters and unstable soil will not allow establishment of natural

vegetation. Our project was to create vertical bundles and strategically place them to assist in reestablishing willows in the area.

The bundles were placed in eroded sections of the bank at an angle so that some part of the bundle will always be in the water even as the seasonal waters fluctuate. This method results in willows sprouting along the sides of the bank, as well as on the top. The key to vertical bundle installation is to ensure that 8-12 inches of the bundles are always in the water. Cutting the trenches from the top of the bank was a challenge since in many places the bank was over three feet high. The trench had to be dug well down into the water and that cooled many of the volunteers off in a hurry. Once the digging was complete we installed the bundles starting at the water and up the trench. They were then secured with dirt and crosshatching.

At noon, wet, dirty, and tired the group retreated back to the meadow for a great



Picture by Judy Wickwire

Vertical Bundles cont.

lunch made by Hope Valley Resort.

The annual FOHV workday on Memorial Weekend was also a productive day. Teams were sent out to plant willows along the river, rebuild fences, dismantle illegal campsites, clean up legal campsites, and pick up dispersed campsites.

After fifteen years of planting willows along the Carson River, our success is evident. Many willows are well rooted, reducing erosion of its banks. The fence building teams have witnessed how their previous work is enhancing appearance of the valley. Much of the old barbed wire littering the roadside has been picked up and disposed. Volunteers have been installing salvaged posts in areas where fences are needed to keep off road vehicles out of the meadows.

After a morning of physically demanding work in a spectacular setting, the group lunched together while dangling their feet in the West Fork of the Carson River. We encourage all members and guests, families and singles, to join us next year and be part of this restoration.

Multi-Use Trails Proposal

Jim Donald

Alpine County has taken the lead, in partnership with a number of local agencies, groups and individuals, on a 'trail system' proposal for the Markleeville area. This concept comes from an element of the county's current General Plan. A multi-use trail that parallels Hot Springs Road would connect Markleeville with Grover Hot Springs, possibly including a trail that would go from the Hot Springs to Turtle Rock County Park. This system could include the addition of a bike lane on Hot Springs Road. Multi-use, at this point, means hiking and biking, but could include horses; this, of course, is subject to change during the planning process.

Friends of Hope Valley supports this concept, aimed at separating pedestrian and vehicle use while encouraging community and environmental health, as long as these trails are for non-motorized use.

County residents will have been surveyed by early October. Then an ad hoc focus group will be formed to work out the details of a preliminary plan, based on community preferences, grant funding, and land conflicts and the best method to implement the plan. The plan then would likely be modified by resident input during scoping meetings. At this time, though, all is conjectural.

For more information contact Judy Molnar at Alpine County Public Works, 530 694-1069.

Please read this update carefully. We need your membership in order to have a strong voice in this matter and other divisive environmental issues concerning the eastern slope of Alpine County. These are financially difficult times, but please do not forget us. Renew your membership in whatever amount you can.

Pleasant Valley Trail: Its Saga Continues

John Barr

Readers of this newsletter are vaguely familiar with the background of the Friends of Hope Valley's attempts to reopen Pleasant Valley Trail to the public, a trail we believe was closed illegally by a rancher whose property a portion of the trail crosses. Below is a brief summary of the events leading to the present.

The Friends has been struggling with the unlawful closure to the public of Pleasant Valley Trail, a trail in a central Alpine County valley with its trailhead southwest of Markleeville, since 1999 when a well-respected rancher, Fredrick Dressler, placed a gate across the county road leading to Pleasant Valley. Portions of its road and trail cross Dressler family property. He was frustrated with individuals abusing his valley's meadow and trail.

Throughout its history the trail has functioned as an access point into the Mokelumne Wilderness, and since 1945, to the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). There is long history of public trail use - a trail that was a Washoe trading route. Historians believe that John Fremont may have used a portion of this trail to cross the Sierra; during the Nevada Silver Rush, the trail served as a route to Nevada cities. The Department of Fish and Game used the trail for approximately twenty years to establish and maintain a fish hatchery and to stock nearby Pleasant Valley Creek. There has also been a many-decades-long history of recreational use of the trail. The trail was featured in a 1963 Sunset Magazine as a trail the public could use to access Raymond Lake and fish for golden trout. This is reflected on numerous recreational trail maps of the region. The history of extended and continuous public use is more than sufficient, we believe, to show an implied public dedication of the trail for public use under longstanding California law. Our greatest concern is the impact the closure has had on PCT hikers seeking assistance.

Shortly after the trail's closure the Friends met with members of the Dressler family and discussed options to keep the trail open, alternatives they rejected. They had not responded to our letters ... until this year.

Pleasant Valley Trail cont.

During the 2007 Sierra Nevada Alliance's Annual Conference, I spoke with Rachel Hooper, of the environmental law firm Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger, who referred us to her partner, Matthew Zinn. Matt has worked with us to develop a legal strategy to see that the trail is reopened to public use. In an effort to avoid the expense and conflict of litigation, we have made numerous efforts to resolve our concerns through discussions with the Dressler family. We have had several meetings with members of the family, most recently on November 4, 2008. While we have been concerned that the Dresslers were not taking us seriously, the recent meeting showed some hope of real progress toward a negotiated solution.

Though we will continue to work toward an agreement with the Dressler family, a lawsuit may yet become necessary to ensure that the trail is reopened to public use. We are ready and willing to take this step if need be.

Our journey continues.

To familiarize our members with the eastern slope of Alpine County, we are including an article in our newsletter about a great hike, a cross-country ski, or snowshoe jaunt. We hope you enjoy these articles about this beautiful area.

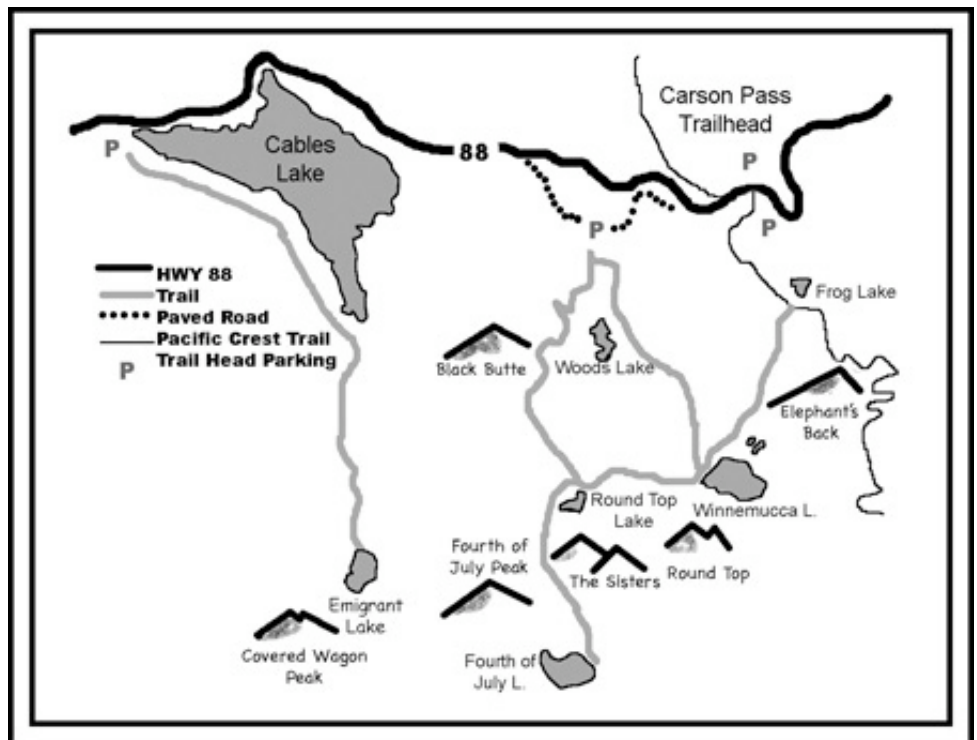
Ski to Winnemucca Lake

Jim Donald

I am drawn to this place and come here for spiritual rejuvenation and solitude. The mountains become my cathedral and the wilderness my church. And oh, did I mention fun? Yes, fun. In this place of spectacular beauty and magnificent mountains, it is possible, no, even likely, you will have a perfect day. I suspect, judging by the number of users who are often never seen, others feel the way I do. The hymns are silent and no one is standing on a rock sermonizing. This place speaks for itself.

The trail to Winnemucca Lake is the best backcountry ski in Alpine County, and perhaps one of the best in the Sierra. Begin at Carson Pass South trailhead. It is important that you place your snow-park permit on the dash. California Department of Parks and Recreation's Sno-Park Permits are available locally at the Alpine Chamber of Commerce.

The trail is suitable for beginners who feel comfortable on their skis as well as advanced skiers who can choose more challenging routes and slopes. The first 200 feet of the trail traverse a steeply treed slope, with a slight down and up. This portion of the trail's difficulty depends on snow depth and who makes the trail first. I've seen people look at this section and announce that they're going somewhere else. Persevere. It gets easier, and if you're on snowshoes, you'll have no problem. The trail continues, trending south, climbing



Ski to Winnemucca Lake cont.

slightly through a mixed conifer forest and descends into a drainage thickly forested with mountain hemlock.

The trail then begins to climb southwest, and you find yourself in a mixed forest of Lodgepole, Western White Pine, Mountain Hemlock and Whitebark Pine. It is interesting to note the difference in the bark of young and older trees. The bark of older conifers acquires an orange or red tinge and is often furrowed or plated. Lodgepole Pines maintain their fine textured bark with only a hint of orange. The bark of an old Mountain Hemlock is deep reddish brown. Further up slope, climbing out of the drainage, are fine examples of five needled Western White Pine with spreading crowns and cinnamon bark that is divided into large square plates. According to the Forest Service the largest Western White Pine in the U.S. is growing just a few miles from here.

As the trail jogs south, unseen beneath our feet, lays a Mokelumne Wilderness boundary sign. You will continue climbing, then level off, and finally descend slightly to an open area. Now, up a switchback and contour south for a long gentle route onto a divide north of Winnemucca Lake. On this gently ascending traverse, swish between isolated clumps of Whitebark Pine. This pine is a major food source for Clark's Nutcrackers, who cache the seeds from the cones in thousands of different sites, actually remembering where they put them. Seeds that are not eaten may sprout and form new trees. This symbiotic process is the usual way in which these trees reseed. In the Alpine County Sierra, the Whitebark Pine is *the* high altitude tree, generally growing only above 8500' and up to the tree line. Here they become dense, isolated, waist-high thickets in response to severe conditions.

Ahead is a magnificent view of Round Top, with serrated ridges extending east and the Sisters to the west. Further west is the Carson spur, showcasing Thunder Mountain and Thimble Peak along its northwest-southeast axis. Volcanic eruptions beginning 20 million years ago deposited much of the darker, reddish rock, mostly andesite, between here and Sonora Pass to the south. Contrast this rock with the occasional granitic rock you've been skiing over. North through Meiss (pronounced mice) Pass is Mt. Tallac on the southwest shore of Lake Tahoe. Nearby Red Lake Peak and the Freel Peak are part of the Carson Range that forms the eastern divide of the Tahoe Basin. A short climb to the crest reveals numerous peaks and ranges stretching around to the east and southeast, including Hawkins Peak, Markleeville Peak, Silver and Highland Peaks as well

as Mt. Patterson in the Sweetwater Range and Mt Grant on the southwest shore of Walker Lake. Back to the west, on a clear day, the Coast Range is visible.

Over the small divide and at two miles is Winnemucca Lake, frozen and snow-covered, lying in splendor beneath Round Top. It's a good place for lunch. From here there are many choices to continue your adventure depending on your ability, snow conditions and weather. Tracks of other skiers will point the way to the most popular spots but feel free to explore in any direction that looks inviting. Or, just retrace the route back to the trailhead. The return from here is mostly downhill and a pleasant run on skis. How many times have you heard this before?

Points of information for your safety:

The steeper slopes, especially northwest through easterly aspects, are avalanche prone. If you plan to be on these slopes carry beacons, ski in a group, know the snow, and check conditions prior at www.sierraavalanchecenter.org.

Check the weather the morning of your trip. It's available online at the NOAA's Reno site. Click on the backcountry link in the forecast section.

Leave no trace. Pack out everything you bring in and be considerate of other wilderness users.

Enjoy a section of high country that is so different from everyday experiences, you may find yourself smiling.

FOHV Review

Suzanne Barr

Friends of Hope Valley, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was formed in 1985 to challenge Sacramento Municipal Utility District's effort to create a major power transmission corridor up the center of Hope Valley. Though its membership was modest, the organization managed to divert the construction of the power line through this virgin valley to a corridor already used by utilities. FOHV has had the leading role in preserving over 25,000 acres of open space in Hope Valley and eastern Alpine County. Today FOHV is addressing a variety of issues and projects to preserve and protect the scenic beauty, recreational and historic values of Hope Valley and other pristine places of the eastern slope of Alpine County.

FOHV Review cont.

Your organization works hard for you.

- Fights to modify logging sales and save old growth forest
- Monitors fuel reduction for the health of the forest
- Monitors right of way trail issues
- Educates landowners on conservation easement possibilities
- Works with Senator Boxer on proposed wilderness additions
- Partners with the Forest Service on the East Fork of the Carson's "wild and scenic" designation
- Serves as watchdog for Hwy 88's Scenic Highway designation
- Serves as the main spokesman for non-motorized designated areas & trails in the Winter Recreation Use Plan for Alpine Country
- Places boulders and logs to obstruct illegal and dispersed camping
- Performs river rehabilitation projects
- Works with Alpine Watershed Group to monitor the health of the county's rivers
- Installs gates and fence posts to discourage illegal

off road vehicle use.

- Works with snowmobile organizations to designate winter trail use
- Fights for non-motorized trails in Hope Valley and Bagley Valley
- Opposes new signs along the highways 88 & 89
- Voices opposition to developments, such as a gravel pit in Hope Valley and development at the Markleeville airport

Your all volunteer Board of Directors and committee members need your membership for two important reasons: The FOHV is more successful with a larger membership. The bigger the membership the louder its voice; there is strength in numbers. Although FOHV volunteers do not receive reimbursement for expenses incurred on behalf of the organization, FOHV does have expenses related to legal council for controversial environmental issues, supplies for its workdays, and administrative supplies.

We hope you will join us.

The Friends of Hope Valley's Strategic Plan

The FOHV Board of Directors will complete a 3 year Strategic Plan (2009-2012) by the end of March 2009. Our membership's input will assist us in determining where the organization wants to be in 3 years and how we will get there.

The FOHV's goals must be grounded in our stakeholders needs. The organization must become more understandable and visible to our membership and other stakeholders.

Please answer the question below and return your answer with your yearly dues. Your input will be invaluable as we grapple with this project.

What are your unmet needs as one who enjoys the scenic beauty, recreational and historic values of Hope Valley and other pristine places of the eastern slope of Alpine County?

With your response consider FOHV's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and how the changing external environment is affecting FOHV's future.

The Friends of Hope Valley want to thank you for your past support. We hope that you will continue your membership in this non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of historic, recreational, and scenic values of Hope Valley and Sierra Nevada's eastern slope in Alpine County. With your help we can continue to address the sensitive environmental concerns of the eastern Sierra.



Friends of Hope Valley 2009

_____ \$35 Friend _____ \$50 Sponsor _____ \$\$ other

Name (Print clearly) _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

E-mail _____

The FOHV email list is used only for the purpose of alerting our members and friends about time sensitive issues.

Friends of Hope Valley is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Please return this form and your tax deductible check to:

Friends of Hope Valley, PO Box 431, Markleeville, CA 96120
