



PO Box 431
Markleeville, CA 96120

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 2020

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FRIENDS OF HOPE VALLEY, PO BOX 431, MARKLEEVILLE, CA 96120



FRIENDS OF HOPE VALLEY NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2020

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

.....

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Respect and Admiration for Patty and John Have No Boundaries

Alpine County's Sierra jewels, Hope and Bagley Valleys, would probably have been developed, if Patty and John Brissenden had not bought Sorenson's Resort in the early 1980s. They arrived in Alpine County with lots of political and conservation experience, having worked in Santa Cruz and Sacramento for years on environmental issues.

At the time Sorensen's Resort was a run-down resort that had been neglected for years. With Patty and John's hard work and dedication, Sorensen's has become a world class destination resort: quaint cabins and a quality restaurant in a beautiful and peaceful setting. Recently Sorensen's Resort has been sold, and Patty and John are moving on to their next adventure.

After their arrival it became apparent to them that local ranchers could no longer make a living in the Valleys. Patty and John wanted to preserve the land, founded Friends of Hope Valley and, in time, 'walked the halls of congress' acquiring federal dollars used to purchase Hope and Bagley Valleys, preventing any future development. They also worked with California Fish and Wildlife, encouraging it to purchase other land in the area, including the water rights to Red Lake and the creation of fishing piers for people with disabilities.

As an Alpine County supervisor from 1989 to 1993, John initiated numerous environmental/conservation actions. While serving as a member of Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, he focused on the Carson River Watershed, preserving, enhancing and restoring its water resources. John is a governor's appointment public member to the governing board of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, a state agency created with the understanding that the environmental, economic and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada and its communities are closely linked. John was also on California Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission (OHMVR). The OHMVR has responsibility for the review and approval of general plans and the expanded recreation areas grant funds applications.

Patty and their dear friend Laurel Ames worked together to create the Sierra Nevada Alliance, a network of 40 member affiliates and partners protecting and restoring Sierra lands, water, and wildlife communities. Patty also sat on the Sierra Fund board for many years. Covering all of the Sierra, the Fund's goal is to restore ecosystem resiliency.

Many events at Sorensen's Resort raise funds for the non-profit organizations the Brissendens believe in and support; the Friends of Hope Valley and various community groups share in its largesse.



Tahoe Man Convicted of Destroying Sensitive Native American Washo Site



A Tahoe man was sentenced to one year in prison as well as restitution of \$113,000 for destroying and desecrating sensitive spiritual sites of the Native American Washo people on public lands in Alpine and El Dorado Counties. Prosecutors had recommended 24 months of jail time.

The man admitted to digging and stealing items for over 10 years. He stole tens of thousands of artifacts, such as arrowheads, and destroyed sites with large trenches, measuring about 20 feet long, four feet deep and 40 inches wide.

“He went in and pretty much dug up everything, “ said Darrel Cruz, Director of the Washo Historic Preservation Office. “He has taken away those places that are important to our cultural identity.” Although much of the damage is irreversible, Cruz said he is glad authorities pursued and prosecuted the case.

Rock climbers contacted the Alpine County Sheriff’s Department on September 4, 2012 to report extensive digging and damage at the site. Ultimately, the Alpine County Game Warden was the one to catch him in the act and arrest him. The case has been pending in court since 2012. The sentence was given in February of this year.

US Forest Service archaeologist Rachel Crews, who inspected the site, said it was considered “unusually valuable” based on its potential to yield important information about Native American life in the area before settlers arrived and forced them off the land. “When someone steals pieces of the puzzle, it gets harder and harder to put together a clear picture of the past,” she said. “No amount of money can restore the lost information, the opportunities for scientific discovery, or the ancestral family history of tribal people at this site.” The man admitted to collecting thousands of artifacts thought to be 8,000 to 10,000 years old.



Now is the time to Renew your Membership for 2020

Members share a deep affection for the unspoiled beauty of the Sierra’s eastern slope of Alpine country. Formed in 1985 in response to a proposal to run power transmission line through Hope Valley, the Friends has been successful in its on going protection efforts, including preserving over 25,000 acres of open space in Hope Valley and the eastern Alpine County.



Aggradation is the Answer

“Aggradation” may sound scary; it brings to one’s mind all sorts of images.

But in hydrology, aggradation simply means the filling in of a river bed with sediment. The river in this case is the West Carson in Faith Valley, just above Hope Valley. Beaver dams in Faith Valley raise the river’s water table, which is good for the meadow and its willows, and enhances the habitat of several special birds. The beaver dams also produce wetlands for waterfowl. Unfortunately, the big dams that were once at the top and bottom of the valley were breached a few years ago. The portion of the river between the dams has subsequently cut down into its bed, producing significant cuts in banks, diminished habitat for trout, and a lowering of the meadow’s water table.



The solution was discovered in a study by Waterway Consulting, which was backed by input from many government bodies, agencies, and environmental organizations, including the Friends of Hope Valley. The study, led and organized by Julie Fair of American Rivers, was to build many, small, ‘fake’ beaver dams (called Beaver Dam Analogs or BDAs) and to rebuild the large dams at the ends of the river’s reach. The BDAs are of the “wicker weaver” type. Posts will be pounded into the river bed, and willows were weaved through the lengths of the posts protruding above water. The dams then creates water flow sounds that attract beavers, who then build their own dams on the BDAs. At the bottom of this reach there is access to the river so that little environmental disruption will be caused rebuilding a large dam using a form of a BDA. With aggradation, the meadow and its riparian environment will be preserved.



Lands Pass: Bureaucratic Stonewalling

The Lands Pass is a required fee to visit public lands managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Recently, the Lands Pass requirement was officially established in Hope Valley on CDFW lands.

Friends of Hope Valley (FOHV) has been working with the Alpine Board of Supervisors in requesting that Hope Valley be exempt from the Lands Pass Program. We feel that Hope Valley is not the appropriate area to be charging people to visit. The rich heritage and beauty of Hope Valley is a place to share, not a place to charge a fee to visit.

We have met several times with the Executive Director of the Fish and Game Commission and the Wildlife Chief of CDFW to voice our concerns, which are numerous: no defined bounds; no cellular coverage to purchase a pass; roads and trails lead to National Forest Lands; not to mention, countless hours of volunteer work. The lands are essentially maintained by FOHV and Sorensen’s Resort.

No decision has been made by CDFW; we remain optimistic and diligent in our efforts. We are pleased that the CDFW staff have committed to meet with us in Hope Valley. Just looking at maps doesn’t really due justice to understanding our concerns.

FOHV has hosted and participated in annual Hope Valley work days on CDFW land for the last 21 years, involving an average of 30 volunteers each year. Projects have included: Significant fence repair to prevent OHV use in the meadow areas; Old barb wire removal in some areas; extensive cutting and clearing of branches to keep the path to Hope Valley fishing piers open. Since 1998, work days have also included the planting of about 500 willows each year to help stabilize denuded river banks.

Board Members Become the Keepers of the Fences

Friends of Hope Valley (FOHV) board members and other volunteers always work to maintain the fences and gates along the Highway 88 corridor. But this year was particularly challenging-heavy snows knocked down many fences and also kept many campgrounds closed late into the camping season. This combination lead to many campers driving on to fragile meadows and into other closed areas to find their camping spot. Of necessity, repairing and putting up fences and gates became what seemed to be a nearly full-time job. Two FOHV board members, Kelly Keith and Peter Lathrop took up the challenge, passing by the affected areas frequently and always carrying fencing tools and extra fencing wire in their vehicles in order to respond to problems promptly.



Peter and Kelly monitoring stream flow.

Kelly and Peter are now known as our “keepers of the fences.” Kelly is currently Friends of Hope Valley board secretary and the master of our Facebook page (and someone who takes considerable pride in noting the increasing number of “Likes” at each board meeting!) Peter Lathrop is our treasurer, as well as a leading authority on John Fremont, and is a knowledgeable naturalist currently studying beaver behavior in Hope Valley. Their passion to preserve the pristine areas of Hope Valley seems boundless and is very much appreciated.

FOHV Welcomes our Newest Board Member Jim McLain

Jim and his wife, Anne, are retired and have resided in Alpine County for nine years. They lived in Tahoe City for seven years in the 1980’s and have visited/ vacationed in Tahoe and the Eastern Sierra region for decades. They have family in Reno, Carson City and Minden/Gardnerville.

Jim’s work history includes administrative and “hands on” positions for: the Michigan State Hospital system; the State of California Regional Center system; the University of Nevada School of Medicine; the Veterans Affairs Center in Palo Alto, California; the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine; the State of California; the Mendocino County Department of Public Health; and the Santa Rosa California Junior College Foundation. He has an undergraduate degree in History and a graduate degree in Public Administration/Health Care Management.

Jim is active in County volunteer endeavors. He is a volunteer with the Alpine Trails Association and, prior to his Board election, was a frequent volunteer with the Friends of Hope Valley. He is also a Commissioner with the Alpine County South Tahoe PUD Contract Commission, a Board Member with the Woodfords Mutual Water Company, and participates in various community-based activities scheduled throughout the year.

