



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 2018

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



FRIENDS OF HOPE VALLEY

NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2019

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

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Debbi Waldear
President

Jim Donald

Greg Hayes

Peter Lathrop

Kelly Keith

.....

Fish and Wildlife Establish Lands Pass Fee for Hope Valley Recreation

The Lands Pass is a required fee to visit public lands managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Lands Pass fees were established in 1988 due to complaints from hunters and anglers who were required to buy licenses. However, the difference between the hunters, anglers, and most of the other people visiting the area is that the latter take only memories from the land. They come to simply enjoy the beauty of Hope Valley - to hike, to cross-country ski, to paint or to photograph. While the revenue generated by the fee goes to CDFW's efforts to maintain and improve these areas for wildlife, it is Friends of Hope Valley's (FOHV) view that those who take only memories should not be charged for the experience.

Recently, the Lands Pass requirement was officially established in Hope Valley on various CDFW lands. But few people will even be aware the fee is required. The boundaries of the CDFW lands in the valley are very hard if not impossible to identify, surrounded as they are by Forest Service land and undeveloped private land. There is no gateway or entrance to the CDFW lands, there are few parking areas, and what signs there are really don't distinguish the CDFW land boundaries.

FOHV was instrumental in the passage of California Proposition 70 in 1980s, which provided funds for the purchase of the Pickett's Junction area of Hope Valley as well as river-bottom land along Blue Lakes Road. In addition, CDFW purchased 2,500 additional acres in Hope Valley, including the development-threatened Willow Creek area. The FOHV vision was to have an open space so that everyone could enjoy Hope Valley, one of the last remaining undeveloped meadows in the Sierra.

A good example of the positive use of open space are the disabled fishing piers and the area surrounding them. They are the result of years of volunteer effort. At this time, Sorensen's' Resort's staff maintains the restrooms, parking area and trash containers. FOHV has lead restoration projects and willow planting along the banks for the last thirty years. FOHV repairs and paints signs, trims the trees, sweep the platforms and performs general trash cleanup. In FOHV's view, these efforts occur so that the public can freely enjoy the area.

FOHV is working with the Alpine Board of Supervisors in requesting that Hope Valley be exempt from the Lands Pass Program in Hope Valley. We feel that Hope Valley is just not the appropriate area to be charging people to visit. In addition, Hope Valley is sacred land to the local Washoe people - will we also charge the "people of the land" to visit? The rich heritage of Hope Valley is a place to share, not a place to charge a fee to visit.

Against Opposition, Forest Service Installs Repeater on Job's Peak

By Debbi Waldear

Job's Peak is located in the northern corner of Alpine County. It's a prominent peak visible from Lake Tahoe and Douglas County, Nevada. At 10,638 feet it offers hikers and backcountry skiers views of the Lake. Unfortunately, this once pristine peak is now spoiled with a sizable radio repeater (the project also includes a shelter for the repeater, antennae and solar panels.)

Despite opposition to the project from many environmental groups, swell as local citizens and the Alpine County Board of Supervisors, the Forest Service moved forward this last spring and installed a repeater on top of Job's Peak. The Friends of Hope Valley (FOHV) feels that too

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many peaks in the area are now defaced with such towers - and, typically, one repeater invites the opportunity to add other. We certainly don't want Job's Peak to become another Hawkins Peak disaster!

In FOHV's view, there are lower and less conspicuous peaks that could have been use. The Forest Service, however, felt a tower on Job's Peak would provide the most reliable radio communications for employees, including firefighters, law enforcement, and other field-going staff. We do understand and support the need for communication with field staff, but, in our view, there was no need to negatively impact the scenic and unspoiled values of Job's Peak.

Carson River's East Fork Hot Springs is Being Loved to Death

As reported for the last few years: The hot springs area along the East Fork of the Carson River is being "loved to death." For years it's been overused and abused by several user groups: rafters, hikers, and (most of all) people in off-road vehicles (OHV).

The East Carson River Strategy to alleviate the problems of overuse and abuse was completed in 2007 by the Forest Service (FS), but, to date, the problems at the hot springs have not been addressed. Access roads leading across the river should be barricaded, user-created roads closed, and the hot springs's natural environment restored. One obvious initial issue: There are no signs in the area; friendly educational signs would be a good place to start. Four years ago, Friends of Hope Valley (FOHV) volunteered to pay for signs, but the Forest Service has been reluctant to put them up in the area. We are hopeful this unwillingness to move forward on signage can be addressed and that signs will finally be put in place by next spring in order to educate the public both to the necessary rules for using the area and the reasons for these regulations.

In the fall of 2017 FS personnel promised to apply for grant money to study and create a management plan for the area. For some unknown reason they did follow through with the application.

Last spring FOHV sent out a press release to local papers describing the issue and possible solutions, which generated positive responses from a concerned public. The FS, however, did not publicly respond to the articles the press release generated. Nevertheless, FOHV will continue to pressure the Forest Service to address this ever-increasing problem.



John Barr, Long-time Friends of Hope Valley Board Member, Steps Down

After decades of enthusiastic service to the Friends of Hope Valley, long-time Executive Board member, John Barr has decided he must step down from that role.

The need seems primarily fueled by a change in geography - from Oakland, California to Bend, Oregon, which has more than doubled the driving time to eastern Alpine County. His wife, Suzanne, the primary energy behind our newsletter for many years, has likewise passed the baton to other FOHV members. We wish both of them well in their new and beautiful home town. Their presence, friendship and endless willingness to step up to the plate to take on whatever needed to be done will be greatly missed.

Many thanks for all you have given to our community!

Now is the time to Renew your Membership for 2018

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.

Forest Service Moves to Enhance Aspen Stands

A current Forest Service proposal would initiate actions to enhance aspen stands, reduce fuels and improve meadow habitat. Of the approximately 21,500 acres of National Forest lands within the project boundary, about 1,500 acres are proposed for treatment using the specific measures described. FOHV supports this action and looks forward to the results.

More About Aspens...

Since the beginning of the 20th century, aggressive fire suppression and timber harvest activities have substantially altered forested landscapes, including the reduction of quaking aspens. There has been a 50 to 96 percent loss of aspen in the west. Prior to European settlement, the natural fire cycles and the activities of Native Americans helped to balance the abundance and distribution of tree species that occupied a specific area.

Aspen is considered a fire-induced, successional species that will dominate a site until it is replaced by less fire-enduring and more shade-tolerant species, such as conifers. Fire reduces the overstory, stimulates shoots to sprout, and kills invading conifers growing in the aspen clone. Since aspen can sprout from existing roots and these suckers grow faster than the new slow-growing conifers. As a consequence, aspen can dominate in a grove for many years after a fire. Aspen stands are not only indicators of moist soil conditions but of a healthy forest.

Aspen and meadows are key components of the biological diversity and ecological condition of the Sierra Nevada. The aspen within the Hope Valley area are being encroached upon by competing conifers. The aspen stands range from very heavy conifer encroachment with relatively few aspen stems remaining to very light conifer encroachment with smaller diameter conifers within the aspen stand.



FUN FACT

The Pando aspen clone in south-central Utah is widely considered to be the world's largest single organism, weighing an estimated 13 million pounds and covering some 106 acres (43 hectares) of the Fishlake National Forest. Also known as the Trembling Giant, Pando consists of more than 47,000 genetically identical quaking aspens, which all originate from a single underground parent clone. Collectively, they are also possibly the world's oldest living organism.

Why is Red Lake GREEN? : The normal life cycle of a lake begins with clear water that becomes progressively browner or greener due to sedimentation and algae growth due to the buildup of minerals and nutrients - a process called eutrophication. Over many, many years, the layers of dead organisms and sediment will fill up the lake, turning it into a marsh and then finally into a meadow.

On September 7, 2018 the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, posted signage at Red Lake warning people and pets to stay out of the water and not to eat fish caught in lake. This warning was prompted by results of water testing that confirmed the presence of several types of cyanobacteria (also known as blue-green algae) and high levels of microcystin toxins. Cyanotoxins measured in the Red Lake water samples were above the trigger level established for recreational waters for the protection of human and animal health.

Cyanobacteria are naturally present in waterbodies and are an integral part of most freshwater ecosystems. However, oxygen depletion due to low water years, high summer temperatures, warm water temperatures, high nutrient levels, and stagnant water cause harmful algae blooms. Since algae needs sunlight to grow and photosynthesize, the cooler fall temperatures and the shorter days are expected to decrease the amount of algae in the lake, making it safe once again - but only until the next algae bloom.