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 2021

$35 Friend $50 Sponsor $5 Other

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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

WINTER 2021

Slink Fire
By Judy Warren Wickwire

Historic Vaquero Camp was threatened by the Slink Fire in August. The FS crew wrapped all the buildings in a fire retardant foil wrap. We are grateful to the FS for protecting these important historical buildings. Dedication to this and moving the allotment permitted sheep from the area was labor intensive. All the building were saved at Vaquero Camp and the Little Antelope Pack Station buildings and stock in Coleville survived the fire.

The Slink Fire was managed by the Humbolt-Toiyabe National Forest in coordination with the BLM Bishop Field Office. The lightning strike burned 27,000 acres and started August 29 in the Slinkard Valley near Coleville.

Fire crews, heavy equipment and helicopters were stationed at the Heenan Lake parking area, while crews worked the fire lines in Bagley and Silver King Valleys. The fire extended south towards Coyote Valley Creek and into the Carson Iceberg Wilderness area.

At one point the fire jumped the East Fork Carson River and was thought to endanger the Wolf Creek Meadows area. The fire crew prevented that from happening.

The fire contributed to dense smoke and poor air quality in the area and into the Carson Valley and Antelope Valley.

466 fire members fought the blaze. Highway 89 was closed and residents of Coleville and Walker were evacuated for one day. The Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center crew near Bridgeport was also on alert. They served as fire camp support and with logistical needs.

Friends of Hope Valley Honors Local Environmentalists

A bench was installed to honor John and Patty Brissenden, for their passionate environmental leadership throughout the Sierra Nevada and ceaseless contributions in preserving Hope Valley. The bench is located on old Luther road, just past the disable fishing piers.
Alpine Watershed Group’s Hope Valley Bank Stabilization Project
By Mo Loden, Watershed Program Manager

Alpine Watershed Group (AWG) officially wrapped up the long-awaited Hope Valley bank stabilization project this past October. This project is a small piece in the bigger puzzle of reconnecting the West Fork Carson River with its adjacent floodplain. AWG with project engineers, Waterways Consulting, Inc., and construction crew, Hanford Applied Restoration and Conservation, completed bank stabilization at two reaches aimed at repairing approximately 450 feet of river bank in Hope Valley.

The project area is located downstream of the Highway 88 bridge that crosses over the West Fork Carson River. The project area consists of two meanders—Project Site 1 is the first meander downstream of the Highway 88 bridge, and Project Site 2 is approximately half a river mile further downstream at the log crib/2015 American Rivers restoration site. Both project areas are located on California Department of Fish and Wildlife land—in other words, public lands that we, the people, own.

The project was a highly collaborative effort with a technical advisory committee that included representatives from the community and various agencies. The restoration approach decided upon was a light-touch, low-impact, and low-risk design.

At Project Site 1 restoration techniques mimic an abandoned oxbow feature. A bench was created behind the failing bank and filled with live sod blocks, willow stakes, and live willow shrubs. Most live willow shrubs and some live willow stakes were installed at seasonally-low groundwater level which is a key to willow success. The design plans for a more stable and capable streambank behind the current failing bank.

At Project Site 2, updates were needed to divert stream energy from scouring behind the 2015 American Rivers project, a log crib structure. A basic approach of installing slash (conifer cuttings) at the ends of this reach will add stability. Minimal excavation at the downstream end of the reach occurred to smooth out the bend and accommodate the introduction of new vegetative material. Sod was salvaged from the meadow toe during excavation and placed near the waterline below the slack to further assist with bank stabilization. Willow fascines were installed near the waterline below the sod and slash. The fascines provide protection for the newly placed sod, and new willows may sprout from the fascines. Live willow stakes were strategically placed along the waterline and also installed within the entire log crib structure at approximately a 5-foot on center placement.

AWG will conduct post-construction monitoring over the next four years to assess if any adaptive management is necessary. You can stay apprised of the project via AWG’s project webpage: https://www.alpinewatershedgroup.org/hope-valley.

Construction of the trail and signs required two seasons. It was during this time that volunteers observed the remnants of a wooden fence running east/west and north of the lake. Considerable debris had accumulated over the years, covering large portions, with extensive damage as a result of fallen trees.

So, five years ago, ATA volunteered to perform reconstruction. The project began with the clearing of debris and removal of the down trees that lay across the fence line. Over the course of three seasons, the materials were used to rebuild this piece of area history. It is estimated APA replaced 75% of the railings and hardware.

Once refurbishment was completed, it was felt the existing and replacement wood was extremely dry and brittle. ATA, in collaboration with Friends of Hope Valley (FOHV), volunteered to preserve the fence further with an application of exterior oil based stain. BLM provided an initial eleven gallons in the fall of this year. Turns out, ATA and FOHV volunteers used the entire amount in a three hour session. Only fifty percent of the wood was covered. In the interim, the project retained a half stained and half dry/brittle fence. After several unsuccessful attempts to contact BLM and request more stain, FOHV came to the rescue and provided a very generous grant to purchase the additionally required materials. So, in October of this year, volunteers gathered once again and were able to complete a project that had taken five years from start to finish.

Thus, with extensive effort from the ATA, FOHV and BLM organizations, the Curtz Lake Environmental Study Area has been developed into a region rich in recreational, educational and historical interest that can be enjoyed by families, groups and individuals. This area is a unique offering of the diverse section of the Eastern Sierra known as Alpine County.

Graffiti Shocked Locals
Graffiti and tagging are very popular in the urban cities of most countries. “Graffiti” refers to writings or drawings on any surface within the public’s view, whereas “tagging,” a simple form of graffiti, refers to the writing of the artist’s name, signature or logo on walls or other publicly viewed surfaces.

Graffiti can be viewed as a form of artistic expression and in some cities it is even sanctioned at times and supported as public art. But usually it is considered vandalism—an illegal, punishable offense. In a mountain environment such as Alpine County graffiti is never viewed in a positive light, particularly when applied to natural surfaces such as rocks. The natural wonders of an area such as ours are to be appreciated as it, not marred by human-made art.

Graffiti, tagging, as well as litter have become an growing problem in the Sierra Nevada, especially during this past summer. The beautiful granite rocks of Hope Valley, Carson Pass and Ebbetts Pass have become popular sites for strangely motivated visitors to express themselves through graffiti art. The walls of the bridges on the Carson River are common targets as well—if you haven’t noticed, they are covered with graffiti.

The increased number of visitors to our area apparently includes folks who seem to need to be destructive in order to enjoy their day. Undaunted, a dedicated group of local citizens have been working hard to remove the graffiti and tagging, which is not an easy process, demanding lots of time and more than a little elbow grease. The recommended Forest Service product used in removal provides a clue: it’s called Elephant Snot. You can use your imagination to visualize what a messy, labor-intensive job graffiti removal really is.

As for litter, the increased amount of litter along certain local highways and in dispersed camping areas has shocked the citizens of Alpine County. More than a few locals have been out picking up litter all summer long. As is popular to say: You do what you have to do. Whether it is dealing with litter or graffiti, the goal is to maintain the natural beauty of Alpine County for everyone to enjoy.

Now is the Time to Renew Your Membership For 2021
Members share a deep affection for the unspoiled beauty of the Sierra’s eastern slope of Alpine County. 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.