



Friends of Hope Valley Newsletter

Spring 2014

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

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A HIKE IN THE BLUE LAKES AREA

By Gay Havens

This hike goes from the easy to the adventurous, or anywhere in between. The trailhead is at the outlet of Upper Blue Lake. Get there by turning on the Blue Lakes Road off Hwy 88 about three miles west of its intersection with Hwy 89 in Hope Valley. Drive to the end of the 12-mile paved road and then take the dirt road to the right for less than a mile to the parking area at the outlet of Upper Blue Lake (elevation 8000 ft.) The trailhead is to your left just across the little metal bridge crossing the overflow outlet of the lake. (Note: Do *not* continue straight along the lakeshore).

The first part of this hike is an easy walk through a lovely red fir forest, which reaches open country at Granite Lake two miles away (elevation 8500 ft.) If this is your destination, you can spend time just taking in the lovely, serene view or you can climb up the rocks on the north side of the lake. The next part of the trail becomes a moderately difficult one, requiring some grippy-soled shoes for several short-but-steep scrambly places as the trail rises to a 9400-foot pass about 2.5 miles beyond Granite Lake (near the pass, see if you can find the "soccer ball" rock).

Beyond the pass you descend over spectacular, open country to meadowy Grouse Lake another three miles away (elevation 8600 ft.) This open-country trail takes you through fantastic rock formations and pretty, flowery streambeds coming from natural springs. The beautiful rock formations are a mixture of pink granite and metamorphosed volcanic rocks of different colors. The hike is sure to impress ... and you may find some "animal-like" creatures in these formations!

The adventurous hiker can choose to go off the trail to the north beyond Granite Lake, walking up any of the sandy slopes to the rocky ridge above. If you do this within the first mile of the trail past Granite Lake, you will look down on the Devil's Corral, a deep, infrequently visited canyon. If you stay on the trail to the pass you can then opt to go north up the easy-to-climb scree slope and continue along the ridge to Deadwood Peak (elevation 9652 ft.), which offers a fantastic view of the deep canyon of Summit City Creek, the headwaters of the Mokelumne River, and across the canyon, Fourth of July Lake. It is fun and possible but time-consuming to traverse up and down along the entire ridge all the way to Deadwood Peak. If you do, you will probably not want to continue down to Grouse Lake. Instead you can drop down to the trail and return to Granite Lake and, from there, back to your vehicle.

To go beyond Granite Lake you should take a good map - either the South Half Lake Tahoe Basin Recreation Map by Fine Edge or both the Markleeville and Silver Lake topographic quadrangle maps. And take lots of food, water, and layered clothing, because this is such spectacular country and you are likely to stay a lot longer than you intended!



EAST FORK STRATEGY PLAN

Shane Fryer, Alpine Watershed Group

The East Carson River Strategy was completed in 2007. The objective of this effort was to identify a plan of action for enhancing the management of lands in the East Carson River watershed. The stated concern was an increase in user-created camping sites and roads, fire rings, and trash along the East Carson River corridor. As a result of this increased use there has been a loss of streamside and upslope vegetation. The Strategy Plan includes recommendations for enhancing the quality of recreational experiences and improving the habitat of both wildlife and fisheries. To date none of the recommended projects have been implemented.

The Alpine Watershed Group in partnership with Friends of Hope Valley, Alpine County, and the Forest Service is pursuing a restoration grant from California State Parks' Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation program. If they are successful, the project will work to restore riparian habitat along the banks of the East Fork of the Carson River that have been impacted by out-of-bounds vehicle travel. All restoration sites are located on county and National Forest lands within Alpine County. The project area includes the full reach of the East Fork of the Carson River, from the Hangman's Bridge just east of Markleeville to the river's upstream confluence with Silver Creek. Rehabilitation efforts will protect the river by delineating vehicle access and restoring habitat.

When completed, restoration activities will provide many benefits. These include maintaining access and improving the sustainability of vehicle use. Rehabilitated riparian habitat reduces silt and other negative water quality impacts to this important trout fishing area. This project will greatly improve visitors' experience at these sites and further the protection of this state-designated Wild and Scenic River. More information can be found at www.alpinewatershedgroup.org.

ALPINE ASPEN FESTIVAL

The Alpine Aspen Festival is a celebration of the beauty and vital role of aspen groves in providing clean water to millions of Californians and Nevadans. The overall vision is to educate and provide outreach for local and regional citizens concerning the conservation. And to demonstrate how economic vitality and a healthy environment are interwoven in Alpine County.

The overall vision for the Festival is to educate and provide outreach for local and regional citizens concerning the conservation, beauty, and importance of Alpine County's aspen trees, its watersheds and other natural resources. The goals of the festival are to

demonstrate how economic vitality and a healthy support for the conservation and preservation of all of environment are interwoven in Alpine County, and to establish private and public technical and financial the County's natural resources.

Tours will include:

- Aspen groves of Alpine County: hikes & restoration projects
- Aspen kayak & canoe tour
- Aspen horseback trail ride & restoration project – Charity Valley Ranch
- Historic Emigrant Trail hike through aspen groves
- Heenan Lake, humbug, & history: hiking aspen groves

Workshops:

- Fly fishing coaching with Horse Feathers Fly Fishing School
- Watercolor painting with instructor Janice Powell Shedd
- Oil painting aspen landscapes with plein air artist- Dr. Allison Horst from UCSB
- Medicinal & edible plants of aspen groves & Hope Valley
- Dutch oven cooking class & feast with Eric Johnson
- Workshops will be followed by a BBQ

VALUED VOLUNTEER, JUDY WICKWIRE

Once a year the Carson Water Subconservancy (CWSD) acknowledges one special person for their exemplary service in the conservation and protect for the Carson River watershed. This year the award went to Judy Wickwire, a long-time member and volunteer extraordinaire of Friends of Hope Valley.

The CWSD is a unique multi-county, bi-state agency dedicated to establishing a balance between the needs of communities within the Carson River watershed and the function of the river system. The organization has representatives from the agriculture community and five counties—four Nevada counties and Alpine County.

With a passion for willow planting and loathing of stream bank erosion, Judy has made it a lifelong commitment to lead volunteer willow-planting projects on an annual basis. Over the years, her projects have resulted in the planting of thousands of willows to stabilize the stream banks of the Carson River. Judy also serves in a number of other volunteer capacities, including (but certainly not limited to!) water quality monitor, Hope Valley Stewardship program, Creek Day team leader, and Snapshot Day educator.

Judy was previously the Northern Sierra Region Governor for California Trout and is currently the Alpine

County Manager and Stream-keeper for California Trout. She also served as Vice Chair for the Alpine County Fish & Game Commission. In addition, Judy was a working member of the team that helped establish the Hope Valley Access Area near Picketts Junction (Hwy 88 & 89), which includes two popular fishing piers for the disabled.

Judy is the owner of Horse Feathers Fly Fishing School based at Sorensen's Resort. The school, which provides coaching for beginning, intermediate, and advanced students, has been in operation for 44 years. She has extended her zeal for fishing by fostering Trout in the Classroom, a school-based education program, in both Alpine and Douglas County schools.

As an avid photographer, Judy is able to capture on film the essence of the Carson watershed streams, lands and volunteer efforts. Her photos are a valuable contribution in restoration project documentation and project outreach materials. Judy, it should be noted, has taken most of the photos you will see on our website and in our newsletters.

SUMMER EVENTS 2014

BENEFIT CONCERT for FRIENDS OF HOPE VALLEY

Sunday, June 8 is the annual Back Forty Bluegrass concert and barbeque. Accompanying the Back Forty will be the Ten Dollar Pony, Larry Nair and Beth Oliverto.

Come and enjoy a relaxing afternoon of wonderful music and great food while visiting with others who have an interest in preserving Hope Valley. Hosted by Sorensen's Resort in Hope Valley, located less than a mile east of Pickett's Junction (Hwy 88 and 89 in Hope Valley). Donation of \$10.00 is requested. No-host barbeque.

MARKLEEVILLE CREEK DAY

Alpine County's 15th annual Markleeville Creek Day will take place on Saturday, August 23rd from 9am 2pm. Come and help protect Alpine County's watersheds.

There will be a variety of projects to take part in, including river restoration in Hope Valley, invasive weed pulling, aspen protection, and willow planting. An ice cream social follows after a day of hard work.

STEWARDSHIP DAYS FOR THE HOPE VALLEY MEADOW RESTORATION PROJECT CONTINUE

Volunteers are always needed as we continue to monitor water flow, water quality, record essential data, and keep a photograph record of events. This work is in preparation of the Hope Valley Meadow Project to begin summer 2015.

The overall goal of the Project is to restore the full range of ecosystem services that this highly-visible and well-known meadow has the potential to provide, including natural water storage, flood attenuation, cooling and filtering of water, aquatic and riparian habitat, and recreational values.

ALPINE ASPEN FESTIVAL

September 24 to 27 are the dates for this multi-day event (see separate article). The Festival is a celebration of the many colorful aspen groves in the county. The event's goal is to educate and provide outreach for local and regional citizens concerning the conservation, beauty, and importance of Alpine County's aspen, watersheds & natural resources. Tours and workshops will be offered throughout the week. For more information, see the separate article in this newsletter or go to: www.alpineaspenfestival.org

FRIENDS OF HOPE VALLEY WORK DAY

Saturday, June 7th. Meet at 9:00am at south side of Pickett's Junction (junction of Hwy 88 and Hwy 89).

Join the Friends of Hope Valley on its annual work party day. This is a day for all ages and abilities to participate in. Workers will meet at Pickett's Junction (corner of Hwy 88 and Hwy 89) in beautiful Hope Valley to connect with the work party of choice. Projects include watershed habitat improvement, general clean up, highway pick-up, and some fence building. "Friends" members are welcome to stay and attend the general membership meeting to be held at noon.

ALPINE COUNTY 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Alpine County has the smallest population of all California counties, but its celebration of its 150th anniversary in 2014 will be anything but small. The area that was to become Alpine County was first settled at a time when thousands of Americans were flocking westward to seek fame, fortune and a new life. Alpine County itself was officially created at the height of the American Civil War in 1864. This year there will be many events to mark this important milestone. The first events began in March and will continue throughout the year. For more information go to www.alpinecounty.com.

SORENSENS' RESORT EVENTS

Historical Emigrant Trail tours: June 23, Sept. 8, & Oct. 6. Lead by highly acclaimed historian Frank Tortorich, the tours will lead participants across parts of the historic Mormon-Emigrant Trail and the early Pony Express route along Hwy 88 in beautiful Hope Valley.

Medicinal Plant Hike: July 6

Join Dr. Kimball Chatfield, a medicinal plants expert, on an easy walk through magical Hope Valley.

For more information call Sorensen's: 800-423-994
