



# Friends of Hope Valley Newsletter

Winter, 2007

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

## Board of Directors

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## Winter Recreation Plan

Jim Donald

This plan, which Friends of Hope Valley reported on in previous newsletters, has reached an encouraging yet crucial nexus in its development. Remember that this Plan is an attempt to reduce user conflicts between snowmobile and non-motorized users by delineating areas of use, addressing parking issues, overnight camping, and enforcement as well as creating the infrastructure improvements necessary to support the growing demand for winter recreation in Alpine County. In August of 2007 the Carson Ranger District of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest released its environmental assessment and District Ranger Gary Schiff released a Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact.

Schiff, in his decision, wrote that, "I am convinced that the comprehensive result of this decision would significantly enhance the recreational experience while still protecting wildlife habitat and archeological resources. The District will review the implementation of this decision on an annual basis."

FOHV welcomes this quick and rational decision. We are concerned, however, by the annual review clause, which would allow the CRD to modify or even rescind this plan (Schiff has moved up to a position with the Forest Service in Washington, DC). We hope the new District Ranger supports this plan with the same urgency.

The crucial point now is financing and the approval of other agencies. Funds for route improvement, campgrounds,

parking, restrooms and other items have yet to be identified. Given that USFS funding has been reduced to a trickle by the current administration, we strongly encourage all agencies, organizations and participants to pursue grant funding for the plan that would result in the earliest possible implementation.

*For more information call:*

*Marnie Bonesteel,  
Alpine WRP Manager  
775 - 884 - 8140*

## **Important Last Minute Update**

After this newsletter went to deadline, FOHV learned that there are 3 appeals to the Winter Recreation Plan. The USFS cannot divulge the names of the appellants until legal staff at the regional office in Ogden, Utah, determines if their contentions have merit. The Plan cannot be implemented until these determinations are made, and any appeals with merit are heard. It is now more important than ever that we let the Forest Service know that we support this Plan. Please call and express your support.



## Pleasant Valley Trail

John Barr

Pleasant Valley is a beautiful meadow in southern Alpine County, located just south of Markleeville. Pleasant Valley Trail courses along the perimeter of this meadow. This trail has enjoyed a long history of use beginning with the Washoe Indians. It was first used as a trade route between the Washoe and the Yosemite Miwok. During the silver rush in Nevada, the trail served as a way to Nevada cities from Raymond and Silver Cities. With the creation of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) in 1945, many individuals have hiked Pleasant Valley Trail to access the PCT. Throughout their history the trail and Pleasant Valley Road have functioned as a route into the Mokelumne Wilderness. The Department of Fish and Game used the trail and road for approximately twenty years to establish and maintain a fish hatchery used to stock nearby lakes and rivers, including Pleasant Valley Creek. 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.

Portions of the road and trail are on land owned by ranchers who allowed the public use of the trail for many years. In August of 1999 the owner placed a gate across Pleasant Valley Road, one mile from the trailhead. He was frustrated with the amount of trash people were leaving on his property and concerned that some users were abusing the meadow.

The Friends of Hope Valley has long been interested in reopening public access to Pleasant Valley Trail. The Friends has attempted to engage the owner in a discussion as to how to open the trail to the public while ensuring that his property is fully protected, but so far those efforts have been unsuccessful.

Nevertheless, the Friends believes that there is a strong legal argument that the trail is subject to a public right of way and has retained a law firm to provide it with legal counsel in support of the effort to open the trail to public access.

The owner has shown good stewardship toward the land with his grazing practices, and we look forward to working with him to resolve this issue in a way that protects both his interests and the public's right to wilderness access.



Pleasant Valley and Raymond Peak

### Alex deGrassi Benefit Concert

Debbi Waldear

Alex deGrassi, an internationally known guitarist and recording artist, is recognized as one of today's greatest technical wizards of the guitar. Alex will be at Sorensen's Resort in Hope Valley this coming March for a workshop and a little skiing. On March 13<sup>th</sup> Alex will play a benefit concert hosted by Sorensen's Resort for the Friends of Hope Valley, Sierra Nevada Alliance, and the Sierra Fund. Save the date! The concert's location and time will be forthcoming.

*To familiarize our members with Hope Valley and the surrounding area we are adding an article each issue about a great hike, a cross-country ski/snowshoe jaunt, or interesting destination. We hope you enjoy this article, the first of many to come.*

## Ski Jaunts from the Red Corral

Debbi Waldear

Three miles west of Pickett's Junction (the junction of Hwy 88 and Hwy 89) there is a spot on the road locals call "Red Corral". At Red Corral there are, indeed, a beautiful old deep red corral and a holding pen that were used by the ranchers when rounding up their cows. In the early 1990's the Friends and several other groups were instrumental in getting Congress to appropriate millions of dollars to purchase lands in Hope Valley. These lands belonging to ranchers were under threat of development as ranching became less lucrative. Since that time, this area and adjacent land have become National Forest, and the corral is no longer used. Because fences and gates still remain, many people don't realize that this is now public land and are reluctant to venture into this area. Red Corral is a great starting point for ski tours into this portion of Hope Valley.

The newly developed Alpine Winter Recreation Project proposes to improve Red Corral to provide a one-acre off highway parking area and a year-round non-motorized trailhead. Once the Forest Service receives the funds to develop the area, there will be parking, toilet facilities and an information kiosk at this site. Presently it is just a pull off on the highway; parking is available on either side of the road.

Once you have climbed over Red Corral via the old steps, your adventure begins. First ski down the road to the creek; this is Red Lake Creek, a popular fishing spot. At the creek you can either go left and follow Red Lake Creek or cross the creek and follow the road towards Blue Lake Road.

Turning left (south) at Red Lake Creek, ski downstream into a large open meadow. Watch for coyotes, red tail hawks and golden eagles hunting

for small critters in the meadow. After enjoying the meadow continue along the creek to other meadows further on. The little ups and downs on sides of the meadows are great places to practice turning or to just enjoy the free rides downhill. Eventually when the creek becomes narrow and turns east, it's time to turn back, or you will end up on Blue Lakes Road with all the snowmobilers. On the return be adventurous; it's wide-open country, so pick a different route back. Try hugging the west side of the valley climbing over knolls between the meadows

If you choose to cross Red Lake Creek, you can usually find a place to ski across or take your skis off and hop across on the rocks. Follow the road (the beginning of this road is the opening in the trees) through the forest to a higher meadow. The road climbs a bit above the valley floor, eventually ending up on Blue Lakes Road.

In about three miles the road runs into a narrow snowmobile trail, which is a good place to turn around. The turn around point is just before Blue Lakes Road, so you will miss mingling with snowmobiles. This route is out-and-back on the same trail. On the return the views are very different. Looking west you will see beautiful Red Mountain and Steven's Peak looming over Hope Valley.

Have an adventure this winter. Take time to enjoy the winter environment and experience Hope Valley under a blanket of snow. Follow Edward Abbey's recommendation: "So get out there...ramble yonder and explore the forest... breath deep of that yet sweet and lucid air, sit quietly for awhile and contemplate the precious stillness, that lovely mysterious and awesome space."



Hope Valley and Red Mountain