



Friends of Hope Valley Newsletter

Spring, 2012
Volume 27, Issue 1

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

Board of Directors

Debbi Waldear
President

John Barr
Jim Donald
Gay Havens
Greg Hayes

Upper Truckee River: Wild and Scenic ?

Gay Havens

California Trout and Trout Unlimited are leading a grass roots effort to get a congressional wild and scenic designation to ensure the long-term protection for the 7.3 miles of the Upper Truckee River, from its headwaters in Meiss Meadow, just north of Carson Pass, to Christmas Valley, where the river flattens out on the north side of Luther Pass. The protection would be for a total of 32 miles of streams, including the Upper Truckee River and its tributaries from Meiss, Round Dardenelles, Showers, and Four Lakes. This is the upper watershed of the largest tributary to Lake Tahoe. It is also a home for the Lahontan cutthroat trout.

The US Forest Service has studied this watershed and recommended it for wild

and scenic status which can only be obtained by an act of Congress. Wild and scenic status protects free flowing rivers with outstanding values, including scenic, recreational, historical, cultural, fish/wildlife and geologic values, for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. The area is already in a roadless area, so that would not change. Camping and mountain biking would still be allowed. The designation would ensure permanent protection of the river's specific outstanding values and ensure a level of protection greater than that given to regular Forest Service land.

Friends of Hope Valley believes that the wild and scenic designation is definitely appropriate for this segment of the Upper Truckee River. You can help by writing a letter in favor of the designation to Senator Dianne Feinstein, One Post Street, Suite 2450, San Francisco, CA 94104; Senator Barbara Boxer, 501 I Street, Suite 7-600, Sacramento, CA 95814; and Senator Harry Reid, 600 East William Street, #302, Carson City, NV 95814 as well as to your local Representative.



Marijuana Grows

Jim Donald

The Alpine County Sheriff's Office (ACSO), over the past two summers, has interrupted several large marijuana grows on the east side of the Sierra and in one case apprehended a suspect whose case is before the courts right now. Undersheriff Rob Levy reported that upwards of 20 to 30 thousand plants were uprooted in 3 separate grows.

ACSO is vague about the location of the first two grows. The most recent grow was identified as being a little over a mile up Fredericksburg Canyon on the southwest side of the Carson Valley and consisted of several thousand plants and evidence that many had been harvested prior.

Sheriff John Crawford and his staff, including a detective, created a power-point presentation that was shown to County departments and local groups. The equipment and chemicals necessary to conduct a grow included industrial strength herbicides and fertilizers, thousands of feet of plastic irrigation pipe, campsites, garbage piles, stream diversions, and open pit latrines. Alteration of existing vegetation was evident as were weapons such as pellet guns, .22 rifles, and a 9mm pistol.

This type of activity definitely has negative environmental impacts. Chemical pollution, erosion and destruction of vegetation with resulting water quality issues are of concern to all.

The fact that growers have weapons and may be connected to cartels is also disturbing. Stumbling on a grow while out hiking could be dangerous.

ACSO has recommendations for those of us who recreate on or live near public land. Because grows need a lot of equipment, they typically situate their operation about one mile, but no further than two miles from a good access road, and they need a summer-long supply of water. It's recommended that you stay on developed trails (that can be tough for bushwhackers and cross country trekkers) if possible. Look for clues at trailheads: pipe and irrigation fittings and other dropped items that just don't "belong". Watch for people who look way out of place in the backcountry and give them a wide berth. Report suspicious activity or findings to law enforcement.

It's estimated that the cash value of California's marijuana crop is worth \$12 to \$14 billion per year. In the last election 60% of Alpine County residents voted in favor of Prop 19, which would have allowed legal

regulated distribution of marijuana and, more importantly, would have generated revenue for the state through taxes. That, done statewide, would neutralize the influence of cartels, and the number of illegal grows would definitely diminish.

Mark Your Calendar

June 10 – Summer Work Day
June 10 - Benefit Concert
June 18-19 - Carson River Tour
September 15 – Fall Work Day

Plan Now For Fall Work Day

On September 15th, Friends of Hope Valley will partner with the Alpine Watershed Group for the annual Markleeville Creek Day event. Projects will include: invasive weed removal, stream bank stabilization, and the Great Sierra River Clean-up. Children can help their parents with these projects or spend the day with a youth group learning about water quality and protection, stenciling storm drains, and doing a small restoration project of their own.

Participants will meet at the Markleeville Library Park at 10:00 a.m. to sign up for a project. Groups will depart for project sites by 10:15 a.m. We will have projects in Hope Valley, and along Markleeville Creek and the Carson River. It is important to arrive promptly in order to join one of the work teams.

Carson River Watershed "Get on the Bus" Tour 2012

Headwaters to Terminus: The Carson River Coalition and Carson Water Subconservancy District invite you to join us for an informative 2-day bus tour of the watershed, sharing 2011 programs, projects, and studies accomplished throughout the watershed. Hear about noxious weed management, aquatic invasive species, river restoration, flood plain protection, and recreation.

June 18 & 19, 2012 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

For more information and to register, go to www.cwsd.org. Questions? Call 775 – 887 – 7450.

Work, Music, and Celebration Day

Join Friends of Hope Valley for its first Work Day of the season on June 10th. Projects will include planting willows along the West Fork of the Carson River and fence mending in the meadows of Hope Valley. Maintaining the old fences in Hope Valley has long been one of our goals, not only for the rustic scenic value, but also to keep vehicles from driving into the meadows.

Meet in Hope Valley, at Pickett's Junction, the junction of Hwy 88 and Hwy 89... 9:00am sharp. Bring gloves, clippers and be ready to have fun in the Carson River.

Following the work there will be a short general membership meeting at noon. The meeting will be in the meadow just south of the fishing piers for the disabled in Hope Valley. After the meeting you can drive down to Sorensen's Resort for the benefit concert and a BBQ lunch starting at 1:00 P.M.

The Back Forty Bluegrass band returns for the Friends of Hope Valley benefit concert. Ten Dollar Pony Band will also play its lively blend of music, including folk, pop, blues, and country rock. This event will take place at Sorensen's Resort located on Highway 88 in Hope Valley, near Pickett's Junction. Tickets are \$10 a person. During the concert Sorensen's will make available their delicious BBQ at an additional cost.

Volunteer Stewards Needed for Hope Valley Meadow Restoration

We are looking for volunteers interested in water quality monitoring, stream flow monitoring and data entry, and photographic monitoring. Training will be provided.

The West Fork of the Carson River starts as a small mountain stream flowing out of the Lost Lakes along the Sierra crest near Carson Pass and meanders down the Eastern slope of the Sierra into Hope Valley Meadow.

As a result of various historical uses and ongoing recreational impacts, the stream channel in large portions of Hope Valley Meadow is incised and down-cutting. Riparian canopy is present only intermittently. This results in areas of unstable banks and instream habitat that lacks complexity and provides limited cover for native wildlife.

The overall goal of the Hope Valley Meadow 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.

In early June training will begin for all volunteers to learn about the various monitoring processes that will be used.

If you would like to learn more about the project visit <http://www.americanrivers.org/our-work/water-supply/storage-flows/hopevalley.html> or if you are interested in volunteering in the field, please contact the Friends of Hope Valley at: Info@hopevalleyca.com.



The Killing Agency

“Since 2007, more than 120 coyotes killed in Alpine County.”

<http://www.sacbee.com/2012/04/28/4450678/the-killing-agency-wildlife-services.html>