

SIERRA SENTINEL WINTER 2014

Dear Friends,

The season's first snowfall reminds us we are fast approaching the end of another year. At the 3,400 foot elevation, the white dusting on the ground this morning followed 5 inches of rain in 24 hours, truly needed and welcome precipitation. While it doesn't end four years of drought, it is, as they say, a darned good start. For the most part good news, these winter storms are unfortunately also likely to wreak havoc on the soils of our beloved Rubicon Canyon, stripped bare by the King Fire. Still, the rest of our forest will benefit from the rain, as fuel moisture levels are increased.

The **King Fire restoration** is just one of many issues CSNC has been addressing this year. In addition to joining restoration discussions with the Forest Service and other stakeholders, we are donating half the profits from our annual auction to the Eldorado National Forest toward reforestation of the burned areas.

Memorandum of Understanding - In September CSNC and the Eldorado National Forest executed an MOU that unites our two organizations in areas of mutual interest, primarily restoration.

Restoration Projects - CSNC was fortunate to recruit two Sierra Nevada Americorps Partnership (SNAP) members to monitor and restore areas damaged by illegal vehicle use on the Eldorado.

Matt Brush graduated last spring from Humboldt State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in environmental science, with a focus in ecological restoration and a minor in watershed management. His education and surveying experience made him an ideal candidate for CSNC's restoration project, and provides Matt the opportunity to begin to fulfill his desire to work on watershed restoration in the Sierra.

Justin "Chuck" Lewis, a native of North Carolina, moved to California four years ago after earning a BFA in Filmmaking. His passion for wilderness led him from cinematography to Desolation Wilderness this past summer, where he served as the Student Conservation Association interpretive intern for the Eldorado National Forest. After his service, Chuck will return to the University of North Carolina Asheville to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Sciences and hopes to find a career in Wilderness management and advocacy.

Matt's and Chuck's educations, experiences and personalities complement each other and make them a great restoration team. They are also developing a **volunteer program** for CSNC, to help with some of the larger restoration projects. These projects offer a wide array of volunteer opportunities: raking and moving pine needles, piling brush, "vertical mulching," planting seedlings or transporting plants. If you can help, please call or email us.

Ongoing Meadows protection - The Eldorado National Forest is in the process of analyzing reroutes and/or repairs to 42 roads that are impacting meadows and other sensitive resources. A federal judge ordered the analysis when CSNC challenged the Eldorado's Travel Management Plan. CSNC is following these analyses closely and offering route-specific comments, urging the Forest to provide maximum protection for sensitive meadow plants and animals. The latest and perhaps most controversial project is the Clover Valley 4-wheel trail through a large alpine meadow. The route is "cherry-stemmed" through the Mokelumne Wilderness and is proposed critical habitat for the endangered Yosemite toad and Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog.

Eldorado County News – The Board of Supervisors has hired consultants to revise the Biological Resources Policies for the Eldorado County General Plan. We are monitoring the process closely, especially as it applies to Oak Woodlands. We thank retiring County Supervisor Ron Briggs for his enlightened efforts to ensure policies that protect these valuable resources.

Environmental Education – Once again, CSNC brought our traveling “Meadow Model” to the Earth Day event in Placerville This was a hands-on (and often muddy!) interactive model, designed to show children and their parents the importance and the fragility of meadows and the many species of wildlife that depend on forest meadows. Kids and parents alike enjoyed the hand-on experience.

Annual meeting and fall fundraiser – The King Fire forced postponement of our annual meeting, as we had Board members who were evacuated and others assisting with evacuations. We will reschedule the meeting after the holidays. Those who attended CSNC’s annual Auction and potluck had a great time, entertained by Alan and Barbara Lubanes’ lively blue grass music. Thanks to all who attended and special thanks to those who donated auction items and refreshments. CSNC is donating half the profits from the event to the Eldorado National Forest for King Fire restoration projects.



Donate! December is also the time of year we ask you to invest once more in the little group that does so much with so little! CSNC relies on our members for most of our modest annual funding. We hope you will invest in the future of the Sierra, in healthy streams and wildlife habitat and in our quality of life by joining us, renewing your membership or making a year-end donation. We are also looking for Board members and volunteers. Tell your like-minded friends about us, or give them a guest membership!

The Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation’s Board of Directors would like to take this opportunity to thank you for supporting our work during our twenty-eighth year of protecting the Sierra Nevada. We hope you have enjoyed reading about our activities over the past year and we wish you a happy and healthy holiday season.

Warmly,



Karen Schambach, President



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