



ENFIA Interpreter

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A Message from the New President

In August of 2003, my brother and his wife signed me up to go with them on a hike at Carson Pass. The hike went out to Winnemucca with stops along the way at various points of interest. We hiked up to Round Top Lake from there on our own. I was captivated by the beauty of the Carson Pass area, and the wildflower bloom that was in its peak at the time. Since that first hike, I've lost track of the number of people that I've personally introduced to the natural beauty of Carson Pass.

I retired five years ago from a career in technology and education. While pursuing my career, I also volunteered for twelve years with the Boy Scouts as a Scoutmaster while raising my four sons. I ran a foreign exchange program for high school students between the Central Valley and a

private high school in Kyoto, Japan for ten years. Pre-Pandemic, I volunteered for two years at a local science museum, and I just completed a term on the board of a local Amateur Radio Club. I've always enjoyed sharing knowledge and experiences with others.

In my visits to Carson Pass, it was always the volunteer docents who added something to my plans. They were always full of suggestions that would often divert me down another route, take me to a special point of interest, or direct me to a place where a special flower or visiting wildlife could be viewed. It was an obvious choice to take my turn as a volunteer at Carson Pass after retiring. My background in education is shared with a lot of other docents with whom I've worked with over the past two years. My background in technology is a bit of an outlier in ENFIA, but this past season it proved valuable in

finding and deploying a solar power solution for the station to meet ENFIA's continuing needs.

As my last day in the office approached, I was often asked what I had planned for my retirement. I always responded that I was going to actively volunteer my time, and that I planned to spend as much time outdoors as possible. I enthusiastically look forward to stepping up with ENFIA to work with the Eldorado National Forest in providing educational and interpretive opportunities for the visiting public and its members for the entire forest, not just Carson Pass.

I've never had the dream of slowing down in retirement, and I welcome this opportunity to be the President of ENFIA.

Stan Trevena

About our new Vice President

After a 40-year career in the zoo business, I am retired in Amador County with my wife, Nancy. We live between Sutter Creek and Pine Grove and enjoy hiking and exploring. When traveling, we would occasionally talk with retirees volunteering in park settings. The opportunity to become Carson Pass docents felt like a great fit and we have enjoyed our work

with ENFIA since 2019. A California native and proud UC Davis alum, my experience on several non-profit boards, including the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Association and Lodi Sandhill Crane Association, will be of value in working with fellow ENFIA volunteers and El Dorado National Forest staff to advance common goals. I am looking forward to our work together as we share the beauty and complexity of the National Forest with others.

Ken Nieland

Carson Pass Information Station

By Karen Heine

What a great season 2022 was at the Carson Pass Information Station. So many things were happening and so many volunteers offered their time and energy to welcome visitors to the Mokelumne Wilderness and the Carson Pass Management Area. During the 2022 Season we staffed **896 shifts** from May 21 when we cleaned and opened the station (officially staffing the station for visitors from the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend till the Sunday of Labor Day Weekend) until September 23 our closing day (but I included shifts numbers to reflect those who also helped closing the station on Oct. 15th. Each of these shifts would have been 6 to 8 hours, so if we assumed the average of 7-hour shift, then the docents at



Carson Pass volunteered 6,272 hours greeting visitors, writing permits, and selling maps and t-shirts. There were four days when we opened with just one person, generally due to unexpected illness of the other docent. Otherwise, the station was staffed with two, three, or four volunteers! The Station was open every day during the season which has not happened in two seasons! We had 58 docents who served these shifts throughout the summer. Lisa Irving-Peterson served the most, logging 20 shifts. Phil Hartvig, Edi and Mike Barrow, Ken and Nancy Neiland, Lis Lucas, Ed and Laurie Walsh, Lis Lucas, and Julia Russell volunteered well over 10 shifts this season. In the end, we had a total of 23 volunteers offer more than the required minimum 6 shifts a season. We distributed over 1500 paper maps of the CPMA and offered 4 Junior Ranger opportunities. We are looking for about ten new docents to join us for the next season, so if you know anyone who might be interested, have them contact Karen Heine (775-790-0659) or Kheine006@gmail.com.

We offered 30 Interpretative Hikes from June 11 till Sept. 26th which were led by ten different docent

volunteers. The average attendance on those hikes was 7 people. Of course, we had our usual flower hikes and tree walks, but we also had a variety of history and geology hikes, as well as some other options for our visitors like our water color hikes which have been very popular. I am already looking for docents to offer to share their expertise. Anyone who volunteers to lead 4 interpretative hikes earns the following year's ENFIA membership! I know one docent has offered to do a wool spinning demonstration since the travels along the way would have been spinning wool into yarn and using these textiles for clothing as they crossed over the Carson Pass. As an interpretative association, offering these possibilities is one of our many focuses to serve the visitors of the forest.



Station all closed up for 2022

The cabin was utilized, on average, 4 nights each week by volunteer docents, some of whom travel over 100 miles to spend the day helping visitors in the Eldorado National Forest. Thanks to Phil Hartvig, Gaylin Fleming, Deb (her sister), Bonnie West and others, the cabin has a new

coat of brown paint. The new gas range has been installed and well-used this season. The water system has been greatly improved by Dean, who even crawled under the cabin to do several needed repairs to the pipes. We plan to paint the garage early in the 2023 season and will be looking for help then. There is always a project going on with this great cabin.

With the help of Larry Moore who wrote a grant to upgrade the solar system and Stan Trevena who did the research and buying of the system, the Carson Pass Information Station now has an upgraded, modern Bluetti lithium battery and some new solar panels. So, we have improved the electric system to support the Square and will look forward to a much more reliable source of power for next season.

We received several letters of thanks for making the experience at Carson Pass so wonderful. Many people left messages on the Square thanking us for being there. And, I know many people who thanked docents in person for volunteering their time.

The 2022 season was Amazing thanks to so many wonderful volunteers!



Information Station January 2023

A Bit About the 2022 Mosquito Wildfire

by Lester Lubetkin

The Mosquito Fire started on September 6, 2022, one year and 23 days after the Caldor Fire and was declared 100% contained on October 27. During that 51 day window, the Mosquito Fire burned over 77,000 acres across the Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests, as well as private property, BLM and State lands, and destroyed 78 residences and other structures. There are some similarities with other recent wildfires that have burned on the Eldorado National Forest, but also some interesting differences (shown in the Table below).

Not surprisingly, with California's unique mediterranean climate, many of the most severe wildfires in the Sierra Nevada occur during the late summer, when hot days coincide with dry vegetation conditions. Here in the central Sierra Nevada, we don't tend to get the intense easterly winds that have driven some of the really intense fires farther north. But wildfires can create some of their own weather and high winds.

Looking at the pattern of the Mosquito Fire, in comparison with the 2021 Caldor Fire and the 2014 King Fire, we see that wildfires in our area often grow to the north and east, driven by the predominant wind patterns. But then, there is also a component of growth to the west, due to the diurnal wind patterns of

upslope daytime winds (driven by hot air moving upslope) and nighttime downslope winds (caused by the air cooling difference between the mountains and the Central Valley, so that air tends to flow westward towards the Central Valley).



The Mosquito Fire burned at a very high intensity in areas, killing nearly all of the trees and exposing the soil to damaging erosion. All photos from US Forest Service.

The 2014 King Fire was noted for its extremely rapid growth in one giant burst - growing 50,000 acres in one day! This type of extreme growth is, at least in part, due to high winds pushing the fire along.

Topography also plays a major role in the direction and speed that a wildfire moves and grows. Fires move faster up slopes as the heat from the wildfire dries out the vegetation ahead. Fires moving downslope tend to “creep”

along, unless driven by winds. The Mosquito fire started down in the deep canyon of the Middle Fork of the American River near Oxbow Reservoir. A large portion of this wildfire that scorched the Eldorado Forest progressed southward towards Volcanoeville and Quintette by moving up the steep, heavily vegetated slopes.

As the Mosquito Fire was coming under containment, a BAER Team, or Burned Area Emergency Response Team, was dispatched to survey the fire area to identify emergency actions that are necessary to protect human life and safety, property, critical cultural resources, and critical natural resources such as soil productivity, hydrologic function, and water quality. Emergency actions are intended to minimize further damage that might occur during upcoming rainstorms. The BAER Team includes hydrologists, soil scientists, geologists, road engineers, recreation specialists, biologists, botanists, archeologists, and GIS specialists, all searching the wildfire scar for needed emergency measures.



Eldorado Forest Soil Scientist Eric Nicita tests for “hydrophobic” (water-repellent) soils.

Lots of Snow in EDNF

For instance, the soil scientist tests whether the soil is hydrophobic – aka repels water, as well as checking on the amount of soil cover left, soil structure damage, and organic matter left in the soil. All of this is to identify areas that need to be protected from accelerated soil erosion.

One of the more uncommon hazards that the BAER Team found within the Mosquito Fire was the number of old mine shafts and other mine workings that are now exposed. Some of these may be near roads and trails and so are being treated to reduce the hazard, through closure or marking to warn hikers, hunters and others that may be in the area.



Tahoe Forest Geologist Rick Weaver is assessing an abandoned mine opening now exposed by the wildfire.

The BAER Team and other Forest resource specialists are continuing to monitor the Mosquito Fire scar to address problems that might arise from winter storms and to best identify how to help the burned area recover. Let's watch to see how we can participate in returning this area to a healthy forest once again.



A little trip to Bassi Falls

