



ENFIA Interpreter

May 4, 2023 Vol. 12

A Message from the President

By Stan Trevena

At the beginning of April my wife and I drove up to Carson Pass to see the snow and the station. We saw the snow, lots of snow, but not the station itself. At the time, the top of the station was buried under about three feet of snow. There was a surge of warm weather this past week that melted some snow from the top edge of the station roof. Cold weather has returned this week and the forecast is for another foot of snow by the end of the week. With the record snowfall this year it's difficult to estimate when we will be able to open the station. We are hoping for early June.

There's one thing that's almost guaranteed for Carson Pass this year. The wildflower bloom should be spectacular and record breaking. Over the past three years, with the pandemic and the fires, we've had



much lower numbers of visitors to all the forest. That will almost certainly change this season. The station was closed in 2020 and in the past two years fires have limited access to both the Carson Pass station and the Ranger Stations where we have retail. We've lost both revenue and docents over these past three years.

We do have something to celebrate. We have survived! The past president, Larry Moore, secured two Covid relief grants that carried ENFIA through these past few years and have positioned us well for the coming season. So many businesses were sadly forced to close their doors

permanently during these difficult times. We are still here.

We do have a need for additional docents. We are starting to recruit docents for the Highway 50 corridor and several new pilot projects that will extend our reach in that area (more on those in the next newsletter). This year is a great year to get a friend or family member to sign up as a docent. One of my sons signed up last year, and we often work together at the station.

ENFIA's biggest assets are in fact our docents. Nothing can happen without our docents. Docents staff the station, they work tirelessly behind the scenes making sure the business of ENFIA is taken care of, and our docents are the face of ENFIA to our many visitors. With all the restrictions of the past three years now lifted, people are eager to go out and have adventures outdoors.



April 2023

If the record low altitude and coastal blooms are any indication, we will be welcoming many visitors to the Eldorado National Forest this year. I want to thank you all in advance for your time volunteering and for welcoming these visitors to the forest

to have safe and rewarding adventures this season.

A Favorite Flower to Enjoy This Summer

By Lester Lubetkin

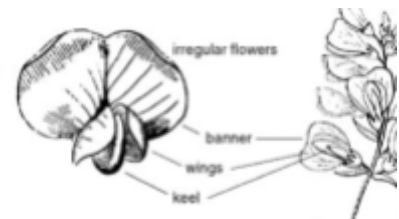
One of my favorite sightings in Spring and early Summer is the Harlequin lupine (*Lupinus stiversii*), if for no other reason that I know I am



right. This striking flower can't be mistaken for anything else!! The flowers have the distinctive lupine shape (more about

Photo by Damen Tighe that later) but what really catches your eye is the brilliant yellow offset by the deep rose-pink parts. And it isn't just one flower, but rather a cluster of flowers along a central stalk.

Lupine flowers are typical of the Pea family (Fabaceae), having five petals, but very different from your typical



symmetrical flower. There is a banner

(actually two fused petals), serving as the invitation to any interested pollinating insects, two wings which serve as guides directing the pollinator in, and a keel, which is the landing pad that opens up when an insect lands there, allowing the insect in to the more private part of the flower. With the Harlequin lupine, the banner is bright yellow, the wings are the inviting rich pink-purple and the keel is a more nondescript white, hidden beneath the wings.

These unique flowers tend to favor pollination by various bee species, including bumble bees, although it is also visited by some butterflies, moths and hummingbirds. It takes a fairly heavy insect to depress the keel and allow the insect to enter into the core of the flower to reach the pollen and nectar.



The leaves of a lupine (and there are many different lupine species found in

Photo by Keir Morse

the Eldorado Forest and Sierra Nevada foothills) are also very distinctive. Each leaf consists of a radiating series of narrow leaflets, forming a “palmate” pattern.

The Harlequin lupine’s flowering extends from April through July, varying by elevation and season - for sure this year they will be quite late in flowering. And while Carson Pass is

so noted for its fantastic wildflower displays, don’t expect to find the Harlequin lupine there. Instead, look in more dry, sandy locations and at elevations ranging commonly below 5,000 feet. In fact, one of the places I commonly see Harlequin lupines is right along the Silver Fork Road (right in the rocky ditch!) south of China Flat Campground. Another place to look for these plants is along Ice House Rd, north of Highway 50 near Peavine Ridge.



Map showing the distribution of Harlequin lupine within the Sierra Nevada (blue dots), from Calflora.org

Harlequin lupines are native annuals

- the plant is fairly small (4 to 16 inches tall), usually lacking a woody stem. This plant is endemic to California, meaning that it is only found in California. And they primarily occur only in the Sierra Nevada foothills, stretching from Plumas County in the north to Kern County in the south - placing the Eldorado Forest right in the heart of Harlequin lupine’s range. Keep an eye out as you are driving around the Eldorado Forest this Summer and hopefully you will get to enjoy this distinctive and very beautiful flower.

Meet the Georgetown Ranger District Team

By Keli Gwyn

I eagerly anticipate my visits to Georgetown—the drive along curvy roads to get there aside. The Divide, as locals call the area, is a hidden gem. It's home to the Rock Creek Trails system, a popular destination for Off Highway Vehicles and mountain bikers. With over 110 miles



of system trails and elevation gains of up to 3,000 feet, there are challenges to satisfy adventurers at all skill levels. The Dru Barner Equestrian Park offers 47 equestrian-friendly campsites and several trails through varied terrain just waiting to be explored. Stumpy Meadows is enjoyed by picnickers, campers, boaters, and anglers. Those seeking an off-the-grid experience head to Hell Hole Reservoir, which is only accessible on foot or by boat. The Georgetown area is known for its foraging, with mycologists eagerly combing the area in search of the many varieties of mushrooms found there.

Although the area is beautiful and has much to offer, what I like best is spending time with the wonderful people who staff the Georgetown Ranger Station. They never fail to put a smile on my face. I had the opportunity to talk with six of them during my visit this past April. Allow me to introduce them: District Ranger Joseph Garrotto; Recreation Manager Kayla Nimmo; Recreation staff Mike Wydysh, Leslye Cabodi, and Pete Robinson; and Timber Sales Administrator Jim Ingram. Between them, these hardworking, knowledgeable individuals have served at Georgetown Ranger District for an impressive 97 years! Ranger Garrotto and Mike are the newbies, with two years apiece. Kayla has one year on them. Pete has spent 20 years at Georgetown, but Jim and Leslye and have each been there 35 years.

When I asked why they chose to work in Georgetown, I heard a wide range of reasons. Ranger Garrotto,



originally from Missouri, spent time in Georgetown while serving on a detail, liked the area, and wanted to return. Kayla Nimmo and Mike Wydysh came from Florida, where they met while working for the Dry

Tortugas National Park in the Florida Keys. They chose to come to Georgetown because of the job opportunities and its location. Avid explorers, they like that roughly 80% of the different eco-systems are just a few hours drive. Leslye Cabodi spent 20 years working on Amador Ranger District, followed her husband to Georgetown, and hasn't looked back. Pete, who spent 35 years in Alaska, wanted a place with sun. Jim, who was raised on the Divide, chose to work in the place he's long called home.

It's evident they share a love of the Georgetown area, but I wondered if there was anything specific. The answers were similar. They like the rural atmosphere, the untouched area, and exploring new places. Jim said what he likes best is that "the forest is my office". Mike and Kayla did name a favorite spot, that being Hell Hole, where they can get away from it all, visit the site of Indian petroglyphs, and perhaps find some mushrooms to add to their meals.



A love of the forest runs deep among the Georgetown staff, but I was curious what they like to do when

they're not busy caring for it during their working hours. It came as no surprise that these energetic folks have a variety of interests. Ranger Garrotto likes mountain biking, kayaking, sailing, photography, and traveling, his upcoming destination being Scotland. Kayla and Mike enjoy exploring new places, hiking, foraging, scuba diving, and gold panning. Pete is into butterflies and beetles—the bigger, the better. Leslye can be found golfing and boating, her wave runner being a source of many memorable outings. Jim, as you might expect, spends much of his free time outdoors, his favorite activities being backpacking, fishing, and jeeping on the Rubicon Trail.

For those who haven't experienced Georgetown and the Divide, I encourage you to make a trip out that way. There's more to the area than I realized, and the people are friendly, especially those at the Ranger Station. If you work up an appetite while exploring, I suggest checking out the local spot in downtown Georgetown that the Forest Service staff recommend—Shandey's—where you'll find several tasty options. I'd love to hear about the discoveries you make on your trek to Georgetown.

Historic Highway 88

By Frank Tortorich

Highway 88 is one of California's most scenic highways. It has over 35 miles above 7000 feet elevation. In comparison Highway 50 has about six

miles, with Interstate 80 having only about four miles above 7000 feet.

Today's highway 88 has a rich history that dates back over 10,000 years when it was an active Indian trade route.

When gold was discovered, it became one of the most traveled roads across the Sierra.

After the discovery of gold in Amador Volcano became a major gold rush destination. At its peak it may have had between 20,000 to 40,000 residences. It was up for consideration to be the county seat for Amador County. It even made the long list, the very long list, as a possible location for the Capital of California.

So, let's use Volcano and our starting point.

Following along highway 88 east from Volcano were a series of trading posts and hotels along what was known in the early days as the Amador Carson Valley Wagon Road. The Amador Carson valley Wagon Road was constructed between 1859 and 1864. In 1862 residents of Amador County approved bonds for \$25,000 requiring it to be a 16 feet wide road allowing wagons to pass each other going in opposite directions.

After leaving Volcano the first stop was Foster's Hotel at the junction of Shake Ridge road and Fiddletown road called Lockwood junction. (named for Henry Smith Lockwood)

Next was Ballard's Hotel at Antelope Springs now called Dewdrop. Then came Charlie Sedham's, now Cook's Station. This was followed by Smith's Hotel, formerly Foster's Trading post and now Ham's Station. After Smiths we come to Prospect Rock where Osborn's Station was located. Less than a mile beyond Osborn's was Patterson's Hotel at Mud Spring.

The road continued past Avery's Lumber yard which is now United States Forest Service Lumberyard Fire Station and then to Lower Corral Flat where a Hotel was owned by James Goldsworthy. Two miles farther brought us to Upper Corral Flat where Gilbert's Hotel stood. This would be at the junction of present day Highway and Mormon Emigrant Trail. A few miles farther we come to Washington Porter's Hotel at Tragedy Spring. Three miles more and we drop down into Plasse's Resort and then on to Wade's Lake House where Kay's Resort stood. Now the boat launching area for Eldorado Irrigation District (EID) From here we must travel over the treacherous Carson spur and settle into Kirkwood Inn.

Why the need for all these way stations? When the Comstock Lode hit in 1859 there was a need to get men and supplies over the Sierra from Sacramento to Virginia City. This great Silver Strike created a need for a commercial wagon road to handle all the traffic.

Prior to that, however, was the building of the Volcano Ditch, Amador County Canal, Pine Grove -

Antelope Springs Turnpike, Volcano-Sutter Creek Turnpike, not to mention all the mining that was going on that required their own dirt roads later to be abandoned.

Let's take a look at some of these locations a bit closer

Hams Station may have first been settled by Clairborne Foster in 1852 called Foster Old Trading post. Later called Smith's Station and eventually bought by the Ham's brothers and has been known as that since about 1881 if not several years before..

Kirkwood Inn:

Zach Kirkwood may have settled in the meadow as early as 1858 running Cattle and getting out of the Valley heat.

In 1864 Zach established the Inn on the newly constructed Amador-Carson Valley Wagon road. It was at this Inn about 1904 when a guest of Kirkwood heard of a woman who was looking for her daughter whom she buried in a meadow in 1850. So began the legend and confusion over the Maiden's grave.



Caples Lake:

Was a summer home to James and Mary Jane Caples from the mid 1850's for the next 30 years?

Cooks Station:

It was first called Hipkin's station and then Wiley's station. In 1905 it was called Cooks station. It is named for Lewis H. Cook, who also operated the St. George Hotel in Volcano

Antelope Springs: Dewdrop. 4300 feet. In 1864 when the Amador Carson Valley Wagon road was built and the Antelope-Pine grove turnpike was built a toll station was located at Antelope and Pine Grove. Cost .50 per person and .10 for each animal.



In 1932 the Jackson Lions Club led champagne to build a snow park at Antelope springs. Name was later changed to Dewdrop for a nearby restaurant by the name, Dewdrop Inn. They cleared trees 100 feet wide and 1200 feet long for a double slide or wooden toboggan run.

They established a 16X40 foot clubhouse, refreshment stand and off highway parking and turning area. By mid December of that year two feet of snow fell and the grand opening was

planned for January 1 but most of the snow melted by then and the event had to be delayed. A few days later over 4 feet of snow fell but it closed the highway and again the opening had to be delayed until January 29. By the first week in February a two-lane road was cleared, and 150 autos arrived to enjoy the snow. It is not clear how long it operated but in the early 1940's Merv Amick opened Peddler Hill ski resort at 7000 feet.

Foster Meadows:

Clairborne and Margaret Foster migrated from Illinois in 1852 the same year that the Volcano road was built. Settled at what is now Hams station and later moved to what is now called Lockwood junction. Foster was involved with numerous endeavors. Foster Meadow road is named for him.

Meiss (pronounced Mice) Meadow:

Settled by Louis Meiss in 1858. Louis ran cattle in Sacramento County off Meiss road between Dillard Road and Ione-Michigan Bar road out of Ione. Many of the early day ranches had high country pasture for their cattle during the summer. Most drove their cattle right up highway 88 each spring and back down the highway in the fall. This continued until the mid 1970's.



The Route:

Starts at Highway 99 end at Nevada state line and turns into NV 88 that ends at Highway 395. Total distance about 125 miles.

1848:

Opened in 1848 from west to east by the Mormons following ancient Indian trade trails dating back at least 10,000 years.

This segment of the California highway system is one of the older roads in the state.

1852:

Johnson Cutoff was opened (highway 50). Volcano road was opened.

1855:

The California legislature appropriated \$5000 to survey the existing wagon route over the Sierra to determine the best routes for commercial wagon roads and possible routes for the transcontinental railroad.

1856: Big tree road opened, and Snowshoe Thompson started his

20-year winter mail deliveries mostly following highway 50 to Genoa, Utah. At times came over Carson Pass and other times went via the Big Tree Road to Murphys.

1962:

First designated and used in 1862 as the Amador Carson Valley Wagon Road. Prior to that it was the Emigrant Road, The Carson River route,

The Carson road, (also called the Volcano road 1852) was designated as a toll road and was 16 feet wide with a maximum grade of 18% from Antelope spring to Caples Lake.

1895:

The Bureau of Highways was created by the state legislature. Their first report was that "*The conditions of the highways in California today are the result of generation of neglect and apathy.*"

1897:

The Legislature dissolved the Bureau of Highways and established the "*Department of Highways.*"

1909:

LRN (Legislature Route Number) 34 is the first name given to this route and is the predecessor of highway 88.

The LRN number system had no pattern and as roads came into being they were given a number in sequence. This led to mass confusion

for map makers and travelers seeking to find their way.

1911:

In 1911 it was designated as the "*Alpine Highway*" from highway 49 to highway 89 in Hope Valley. It was also referred to as "*Kit Carson Pass Highway.*" It held that name for the next 45 years.

1915: It was officially listed as LRN 34.1950's. A better highway numbering system was developed with all even numbered highways running east / west and odd numbered highways running north / south.

1956: President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal-Aid Highway act of 1956 creating the US Interstate Highway System. This is when LRN 34 became California State Route 88.

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Revised: 7-8-14, Revised: 3-12-10, Revised 10-30-22.

An Enduring Love

By Keli Gwyn

“I love Carson Pass!” ENFIA members who serve as docents at Carson Pass Information Station hear that phrase from visitors several times a day. It’s no surprise that I heard the same sentiment over and over during the get-acquainted calls I made to docents after assuming my new role as Scheduler. Long-time docent Scott Yesitis not only expressed his love for the Carson Pass area. He went on to say that a secluded fishing spot on the back side of Silver Lake is his “favorite place on earth.” He even named his son Carson.



Scott served his first Season back in 2000 at “the spry young age of 42”, having been recruited by then Station Manager Sid Perryman. At the time Scott, the youngest docent, was spending summers at Plasse’s Resort with his family and dreaming of the

day he would retire and be able to work at the Station every weekend.

Although Scott served many seasons, he and his wife moved to Idaho in 2021 when their youngest child, Carson, headed north to attend Boise State. The bitterly cold winters were a bit of a surprise though. Scott and his wife had another surprise. A year after the move, he learned that he had a brain tumor.

Scott underwent surgery in Seattle last year. His surgical team removed a tumor the size of an apple! Since it wasn’t possible for the surgeons to get clear margins, Scott underwent two months of radiation. All of that would have been more than enough to deal with, but Scott also experienced a stroke during surgery.

Following the double whammy of brain surgery and a stroke, Scott faces a long recovery. He’s undergoing physical therapy. Although he’s made good progress and received encouraging MRI results just last month, he still has balance issues and carries a cane. He lost most of the sight in his right eye and experiences double vision. Prism glasses help, but



Those of you who had the privilege of serving docent shifts with Scott and would like to reach out to him can email me at keligwyn@comcast.net, and I will give you his contact information. I know he'd like to hear from you.

only a little.

Although some people might have given way to discouragement, Scott hasn't. Undaunted by his experience, he's maintained his positive outlook on life. He even made a trip to the Pass the summer of 2022 and, cane in hand, hiked out to his special spot on Silver Lake. The rough granite he had to navigate led to a fall, but he got right back up—as is his way—and relived some special memories.

If you look at the plaque at the Station that serves as a tribute to docents who have made a significant contribution, you will see Scott's name. Since Scott and his wife are talking about a possible return to the area in the next few years, he's asked to remain on the docent list. We could very well see him back at the Pass he loves, ready to share that love with visitors.