

# ENFIA Interpreter

**November 4, 2022** Vol. 10

## **A Message from the President**

ENFIA remains strong after the major fires on the forest and the pandemic, a testament to your participation and support for the last 3 years. “We will get by, We will survive.” Jerry Garcia

ENFIA formed in 1987 and we were honored by the presence of one of the founders at the recent appreciation luncheon, Mary Knowles. We also had Frank Tortorich attend, who helped with the construction of the CPIS in 1992 and the opening in 1993. Grateful to have them remain involved as we continue to build on their legacy and vision.

The Board will be welcoming 2 new members in 2023, Ken Nieland and Stan Trevana, who will be replacing myself and Karen Heine. Looking forward to their experience and knowledge.

ENFIA is in good financial standing due to a good sales year led by Keli Gwyn and her team, a Grant from the El Dorado County Covid Impact Funds and a California Alpine Club Foundation grant that helped update our solar equipment at Carson Pass.

Your ‘working’ Board has been very busy the last few years and ENFIA is well positioned to expand our educational and interpretive services in 2023 to include more activity along Hwy 50 and 88. It is not always easy work on a non-profit board but it is very fulfilling and enriching.

I very much look forward to being able to continue to participate in the field activity, as we inform and delight people with the natural world.

It has been my privilege to serve on the Board and thank you for your trust and support.

“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything in the Universe.” John Muir

Sincerely,

Larry Moore

## **Thank You, Watering Heroes!**

By Tressa Gibbard

Program Manager

Sugar Pine Foundation



Watering baby seedlings through the hot summer months is enormously beneficial for their survival. We are seeing up to 50% greater survival on watered sites, which is terrific! We are SUPER grateful to all of our fantastic volunteers that have joined our watering events this summer on North and South Shores.

Rather than attending our events, some of our most dedicated Water Warriors have been quietly organizing their own watering parties and caring for trees that they planted. When we heard their delightful reports, we knew that we had to share their stories to recognize and thank them - and to (hopefully!) inspire others to follow their lead!



One of our last plantings of the 2022 spring planting season took place in the Caldor Fire burn scar on the Thunder Mountain trail off Highway 88 west of Kirkwood. Among other volunteers, members of the Central Sierra Hikers club helped us plant western white pine seedlings in June at this rugged site. Although we planted up a rather steep trail, members of the hiking club were up to the challenge of revisiting this site to water. The group devised an ingenious method of using fellow Central Sierra Hiker Nick Stone's llamas to help out!

As Bruce Odelberg explained, “At 8 pounds per gallon, water gets real heavy carrying it uphill (and the Thunder Mountain Trail is very much uphill). Our procedure was to get water from the pond at the top of the Carson Spur, fill the containers for the llama packs, transport the water via llama uphill, then transfer the water to 1 and 2 gallon water bottles, followed by the actual watering of our ‘babies.’ The llamas did three treks uphill. Without the llamas, this would have



been much much more work, and many less seedlings would have gotten watered before we pooped out.”

Mugsy, Skeeter and Bart aided the Central Sierra Hikers on two outings to water the western whites at Thunder Mountain in July.

So far, survival appears to be excellent. Odelberg said, “I was pleasantly surprised to only find two seedlings that didn't make it.” He added, “The real draw for the Central Sierra Hiking group is taking care of



the babies we planted; it is very rewarding.”

We are so grateful for this group's resourcefulness and dedication to their well-loved and cared for babies! Mugsy, Skeeter and Bart are heroes, too - we might just have to hire these adorable and enormously helpful beasts of burden!

Adorable and helpful are also very good words to describe the

Hannemann family of Meyers/South Lake Tahoe. Fabian, Kristianne, their young daughters Leila and Sofia, and Fabian's mother (who was visiting from Germany!) helped us plant seedlings in the Caldor Fire bulldozer line behind Mule Deer Circle this past April. With the help of 80 volunteers, we actually planted 750 trees in a few short hours - on Earth Day, no less!

The Hannemanns have been revisiting the sprawling site and watering



different sections throughout the summer. Fabian said, “It's great to see how the trees in the Mule Deer bulldozer line are doing well and growing fast! Many are already twice the size of those we planted in our yard last fall actually, but those don't get full sun. We've been getting out every couple of weeks to water, the kids love it and it's nice to see vegetation come back.”

We are so very glad that this once denuded area will be home to some new sugar and Jeffrey pines thanks to our efforts and the Hannemann's extra loving tender care. Thank you Fabian,

Kristianne and girls for all your great work!

Last but not least, another troop of neighbors has been steadfastly watering a little grove of sugar pines planted in the Spring of 2020. During the COVID pandemic, we held seedling giveaways in lieu of plantings. Another Myers resident, Lauri Kemper, picked up a few bags and planted 20 sugar pines in the woods near her house. A team of about seven friends and neighbors has been watering the trees ever since!

Ten trees are still alive, which is an excellent survival rate-especially after two extra hot dry summers in 2020 and 2021. As Kemper says of the trees, "They are well loved!" The numbers certainly agree, and so do we! Look at one of Lauri's seedlings: it is super happy!



We absolutely love the community effort that is going into keeping our seedlings alive! Thanks to all of these water warriors for sharing their success stories with us-and we hope

that you might be inspired to follow in their footsteps and go give some seedlings a drink, too!

## **A Day in the Life of a Fire Information Officer**

By Stephanie Bishop, PIO

Ever wonder what it was like for the Fire Information Officer to give out accurate fire information during a radically changing fire like the Caldor Fire? The primary duty of a Fire Information Officer, also known as a PIO or Public Information Officer, is to disseminate accurate and timely information about an incident to those who need it. Of course, there are many others that want to know what's going on, but those who need it are the public who are or will be affected by the incident.

An incident PIO is the first source of information that the public hears the vital, and possibly life saving information from. To accurately do this an information officer needs to ensure the information they are disseminating is accurate and covers the basic principles of who, what, when, where, why and how. And not only accurate, it needs to be timely. If the PIO is not ahead of the news, the public may well latch onto anything that may seem plausible.

At the start of an incident, an information center is created. This can be as simple as the back of a truck bed with a cellphone and a laptop or a



fully furnished office with computers, printers, telephones etc. This information center is the location where the information officer and their assistants work to create accurate information and then deliver it in a multitude of ways.

Gathering information about the situation begins before you arrive at the incident. This may be by talking with those already working the fire, looking at live camera feeds of the incident or from Agency representatives whose land is affected, such as a Forest, National Park, or Bureau of Land Management. And that information gathering is an ongoing task. PIO's work closely with other leadership on the fire, as well as local law enforcement, transportation divisions, and other cooperating agencies.

The lead PIO attends briefings and meetings throughout the day to ensure we are kept apprised of the current and developing situation, to inform others of what is occurring, to assist in formulating action plans, and then to take that knowledge back to the information center. From here, an information strategy can be made, implemented and adjusted as needed. Information officers are the calming voice during a chaotic time whether on the phone, at a community information board or a public meeting.



A Fire Information Officer being interviewed by a TV Reporter

And how is the information spread? One option is through television and radio by giving live interviews from the scene. Nowadays, social media is quick and effective, but not everyone has connectivity to the internet. Developing a good relationship with the media can help information officers get important information circulated about the progress of the fire, evacuations, road closures, area closures, where evacuation shelters are and eventually when it is safe to return.

In addition to this, PIO's like to make face to face contact with the public through community Fire information boards in places where people are likely to congregate. Or, we might host a public meeting in a large area such as a school gymnasium or a park. And then there are the information phone lines and responding by email to information requests.

During a fire, your neighbor or social media friends may have an opinion of what is going on around you. But the PIO is the one with the most accurate and up to date information for you to

make decisions for the health, safety and welfare for you and your family.

## Wind in the Willows

By Lester Lubetkin

We often associate Fall and Fall colors with Quaking Aspens, but willows are also a wonderful source of Fall colors, from bright yellow to brilliant red and maroon. Did you know there are at least 14 species of willows that can be found in the Eldorado National Forest, ranging from multi-trunked trees over 30 feet tall to very low groundcovers that hug meadow surfaces. And willows are in the same botanical family as aspens and cottonwoods - the Salicaceae family.

Some of the willow species that present a beautiful Fall color display include the Pacific willow (*Salix lasiandra*) and Arroyo willow (*S. lasiolepis*), both of which typically form multi-stemmed trees and have leaves that turn golden yellow this time of year. In particular, the Arroyo willow is one of the most abundant willows in the foothills, often found below the snow-line, and so may be a good target willow to be looking for. The Lemmon's willow (*S. Lemmonii*) is a shrub-forming willow, up to 13 feet tall whose leaves turn yellow as the cool weather sets in. The Lemmon's willow is found along streams, wet meadows and other montane riparian settings, extending up into the subalpine and alpine

environment.



Willow thicket with leaves turning yellow in the Fall. Photo by L. Lubetkin

And then there are the prostrate, alpine willows, that make the high elevation meadows look like Alaskan tundra in the Fall with their deep red to maroon colors. One thing I like to do is to view the leaves of the Alpine willow (*S. petrophila*) backlit with the low, late-season sun-angle. The thin, nearly translucent leaves appear to glow, along with the other low-growing plants such as Dwarf Bilberry (*Vaccinium cespitosum*).



Deep red Fall foliage of Alpine willow . Photo by L. Lubetkin

And since the various willow species are deciduous, should you miss the Fall color display, these wonderful plants will still “brighten your day” with the variety of colors in their bare twigs and branches. Particularly with many of the species, the first and second-year growth twigs may be bright yellow to deep red in color,

standing out against the duller colors of other vegetation.

One difference about Fall colors in the Sierra Nevada compared to New England is that in the East, the brilliant display occurs in a short, vibrant burst, whereas here in the mountain west, the Fall show extends over a longer period, starting during late summer in the highest elevations and moving downslope as the cooler weather arrives, often extending into December.

Willows are important food and cover for many kinds of birds, as well as beavers and deer. Willows are also host for many butterflies, and provide cooling places for aquatic wildlife like trout. Interestingly, willows host as many as 450 kinds of “foliage-eating” insects, which is why birds are so attracted to willow patches and thickets. Warblers and willows are especially attached (Redbud, 2014).

And willows have played an important role in meeting the needs of indigenous people. Willow stems and bark have been used for millennia for basketry and cordage. And the bark of willow contains the chemical salicin (the source of the name for the genus), the original ingredient in aspirin. The bark was used as a fever remedy and as a pain reliever. And, because the leaves and twigs contain natural insect repellents, indigenous people used willow for food storage baskets.

This is a great time of year to enjoy our native willows. But be sure to

explore them throughout the year as they hold many amazing wonders!

Redbud Chapter, CNPS, 2014, Trees and Shrubs of Nevada and Placer Counties, California; 529 p.

## **Member/Docent Appreciation Luncheon**

By Keli Gwyn

October 29, 2022 dawned crisp and clear with a feel of fall in the air, perfect for our end-of-season celebration. Visitors arrived to find six round tables draped with black tablecloths. Centerpieces of colorful felt leaves or pumpkins beneath bowls of candy completed the simple decorations. A spread of tasty sandwiches from the Placerville Food Co-op and a bushel basket of apples filled one end of the long side tables. Bags of chips and platters of snacks left over from Carson Pass filled the other. A cooler held icy cold waters and sodas. Thanks to Larry Moore for coordinating the sandwich order, Lynne Moore for artfully arranging the food, and Karen Heine for bringing the cold drinks, chips, and snacks over the mountain.

To start the festivities, we engaged in a fun trivia game under the direction of our MC-of-the-Day, Carl Gwyn, who planned the day’s agenda. Questions focused on our involvement in the forest. We learned, by show of hands, that many of our members have hiked portions of the PCT, several of them as many as 100 miles or more! A delightful musical



offering provided by Ken and Nancy Nieland followed. They played their ukuleles while members joined in the singing of *The Great Pacific Crest*, a clever creation with words written by Ken to the tune of *California, Here I Come!*



Those gathered, an impressive 35 of us, enjoyed lunch and lively conversation. We were delighted to have founding member Mary Knowles join us for the day, along with some of our USFS partners: Patty Kushner from Crystal Basin and Mike Wydysh and Kayla Nimmo from Georgetown. They joined ENFIA as members this past season, and we're happy to have them.

Costumes were optional in keeping with the season, and some members came dressed up for the occasion. The most elaborate was the cat costume worn by Lynne.

Carl and I met Mike and Kayla when we delivered Georgetown's merchandise at the start of the season and were instantly impressed. They came to this area from Florida, where they served the park service in the Florida Keys and brought a wealth of knowledge and experience. One of



their interests is mycology (the study of fungi), mushroom foraging in particular, something the Georgetown area is famous for. Upon learning this, Carl got the great idea of inviting them to speak at our luncheon, which they did. They delivered an educational and entertaining talk on mushroom hunting that kept their eager audience engaged, so much so that they fielded many questions from those fascinated by a subject Mike and Kayla know so much about. They even brought samples of mushrooms and special dishes prepared using them that members enjoyed at the end of the day's festivities.

The event included a brief business meeting, in which Board members and committee chairs gave an overview of our 2021/2022 year. A common theme ran through all the reports: ENFIA is doing very well! We're on a solid financial footing, sales at Carson Pass were brisk, and sales at the USFS locations have been picking up speed as visitors learn that all ENF retail locations are back in operation, four of them year 'round. A number of projects were completed during the past year, including the





installation of a new solar system at Carson Pass Station, under the direction of Stan Travena, and numerous improvements at the Silver Lake cabin used by CP docents, overseen by Carson Pass Facilities Lead Phil Hartwig. Current Board member Bruce Odelberg announced the election results: Stan and Ken were both affirmed and will assume their new roles on the Board in January 2023.



An Appreciation Luncheon isn't complete without thank-yous, and there were many. Board members and committee chairs took turns recognizing our members, who make ENFIA the great organization it is.

Special recognition was given to some who went above and beyond. They received attractive certificates created by Bruce along with laser-etched magnets created by a vendor just for the event that included the ENFIA logo and read: "The Forest Called—and I Answered". Every attendee was invited to choose a sticker from a selection that included some new designs that are being added to inventory at our locations over the coming months.

At the end of the event, members enjoyed the mushroom treats while spending more time getting to know one another better. Many remarked about what a great time they'd had,



which was evidenced by the abundant smiles. Plans are already underway for our next Member/Docent Appreciation Luncheon, and we hope many of you will add it to your calendar when you receive the notices next year so that we can celebrate together.

# Preserving the Past: Tells Peak B-17 Crash Site Signage Project

By Carl Gwyn

On November 2, 1941, a B-17 bomber took off from Reno, Nevada on a maintenance flight to Mather Air Force Base. During the flight, the bomber encountered mechanical problems, which prompted the pilot, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Leo M.G. Walker, to order his crew to don their parachutes. While attempting to turn the plane back to Reno, mechanical failure and weather conditions caused the plane to enter a violent spin, and it began breaking up. Due to Walker's actions, his eight crew members parachuted to safety and survived, but he perished in the crash. For a more complete history of the event please visit:

[https://www.check-six.com/Crash\\_Sites/Sierras\\_B-17C\\_crash\\_site.htm](https://www.check-six.com/Crash_Sites/Sierras_B-17C_crash_site.htm)

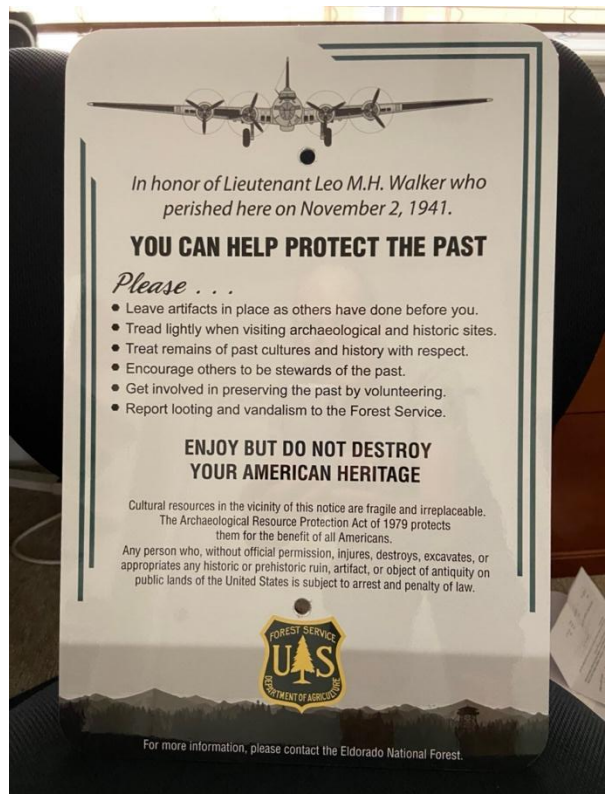
I have been aware of this story for many years and have visited the crash site several times over the past 10 years. During these visits, I was disturbed by the vandalism that has occurred. Vandals have cut large sections out of the right wing, which is the major remaining part of the wreck. Only once did I encounter signage indicating the significance of this historic site and informing visitors of the consequences of defacing it. This signage has disappeared, so ENFIA launched a project to provide permanent signs, with the purpose of helping preserve

this important heritage.



Receiving Instructions from USFS archeologist Jordan Serin

After delays due to weather and fires, a work party of ENFIA volunteers, a Forest Service archeologist, two interns from the American Conservation Experience (ACE), and an Eagle Scout candidate with his father headed into the Crystal Basin crash site to plant the signs around two of the largest remaining sections of the plane. The Eagle Scout candidate, Sean Kirkpatrick, provided





us with a complete history of the event, and ENF Archeologist Jordan Serin gave us guidelines for the work party.

The group started out along the trail through some beautiful sugar pines and arrived at the site in about an hour. Sadly, the right wing of the bomber has endured more vandalism since I last visited, with another large section and other smaller ones having been cut out of the wing.

Using only hand tools, our crew set about planting two signs at the right wing. We then headed to the next large piece, the tail section, passing by the left wingtip en route. The path



On the trail through the sugar pines. Note the squirrel barrier on the distant seed pine.

was somewhat tortuous because of the significant amount of tree fall throughout the area. After crossing a debris clogged streambed, we arrived at the tail section, where we planted the third sign in a place where it would be easily spotted by visitors as they arrived.



Digging the hole for the signpost at the right wing.

These highway-grade signs should last for many years and will instruct visitors as to the significance of the site and importance of its preservation as a memorial to Lieutenant Walker's sacrifice.

All participants felt this was a worthy endeavor. A plan has been suggested by ENFIA member Bruce Odelberg to plant additional informative signs at other pieces of the wreckage to aid in their preservation, an idea that the Board will consider.



First two posts planted. Ready to move on to the third at the tail section.

ENFIA has already been in conversation with the ENF to look into other sites on our forest where



interpretive signs could be placed to help educate and preserve our history.



Work party from left to right: Phil Hartvig, ENFIA; Jordan Serin, USFS; Mike Barrow, ENFIA; Morgan Holman, ACE; Mark Sandperl, ENFIA; Sarah Jesness, ACE; Bruce Odelberg, ENFIA; and Larry Moore, ENFIA. Not in picture: Sean Kirkpatrick, Eagle Scout candidate; his father, Albert Kirkpatrick; and Carl Gwyn, ENFIA.

## **Calling All Contributors**

I know you all did some great things this summer and fall in the Eldorado National Forest. We are always looking for more articles for the Interpreter. It comes out quarterly in February, May, August, and November. Please consider writing about your adventures and submitting it to me (Robyn Sandperl)! [rsandperl@gmail.com](mailto:rsandperl@gmail.com)