

SIERRA NEVADA ALLIANCE

SIERRA NEWS

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SIERRA NEVADA ALLIANCE

CALENDAR

~ * ~

Sierra Nevada Alliance 19th Annual Conference

September 21 -23, 2012
Embassy Suites Lake Tahoe
Hotel & Ski Resort
South Lake Tahoe, CA

~ * ~

Bioneers Conference

October 19 - 21, 2012
San Rafael, CA

~ * ~

South Yuba River Citizens League 11th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival

January 11 -13, 2013
Nevada City, CA

~ * ~

Sierra Nevada Alliance 8th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival On Tour

March 8, 2013
MontBleu Resort Casino Spa
South Lake Tahoe, CA

~ * ~

For more information on these and other upcoming Alliance events, visit www.sierranevadaalliance.org or call 530.542.4546

Getting Things Done in the Sierra: Three More Years of AmeriCorps

Great news! In early June of 2012 the Sierra Nevada Alliance received a federal agreement to continue and expand our beloved Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership (SNAP) program for the next three years, 2013-15. The Sierra Nevada Alliance sees this decision as a vote of confidence in the Alliance's ability to deliver high quality, AmeriCorps program services in the Sierra Nevada by CalVolunteers, the state agency charged with distributing federal funds in California on behalf of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

When SNAP submitted the application in October 2011 for the 2013-15 funding cycle, CalVolunteers also received 26 other applications but chose only 19 to be funded. Not only were we funded for three more years – but we are able to offer 33 AmeriCorps positions, an increase from 27 positions in years past.

“We are so happy that we can offer AmeriCorps opportunities for three more years in the Sierra,” said Mike Thornton, new SNAP Program Director. “This is an amazing program that gets on-the-

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EmPower El Dorado Saves Energy While Saving Money

The Sierra Nevada Alliance recently launched EmPower El Dorado, its newest on-the ground project of the Sustainable Sierra Communities Program. The innovative initiative strives to protect both the environment and the residents of the Sierra by combining energy efficiency and water conservation retrofits with measures to protect health and indoor air quality in residential homes.

One of EmPower El Dorado's primary goals is to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) released as a result of local energy consumption. By putting South Lake Tahoe residents in touch with services that offer weatherization, efficient light bulbs, free and discounted EnergyStar appliances and much more, EmPower El Dorado will encourage people to reduce their overall energy usage.

With up to 70% of the Sierra snowpack threatened by climate change this century, reducing global greenhouse gas emissions is critical to preserving the Sierra Nevada environment. Climate change will not only challenge a large percentage of California's municipal and agricultural water supply, but also

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AmeriCorps Members Julie Fair and Alyse Weyman have a good time planting native rush in place of invasive Blackberry at SNAP Spring Training.

Photo courtesy of Allison Peeler.

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SIERRA NEVADA ALLIANCE

Keeping light in the range.

Executive Director's Letter

“Every summer sees camping parties on trail and road, on horseback or on foot, in little cars, big cars and buses. They crowd the public campgrounds or seek more sequestered spots. Improved roads and improved vehicles bring them from near and far to enjoy the unrivaled facilities for outdoor life that these mountains offer.”

- Francis P. Farquhar, *History of the Sierra Nevada*, pg. 242

The excerpt above describes the scene outside my window, here at our Alliance office in South Lake Tahoe. As the staff and I fight climate change, marshal AmeriCorps members to restore Sierra waters, and mobilize partnerships to create sustainable communities, a freeway of little and big cars still roars by with people seeking the unrivaled outdoor life. If I open my window when I'm speaking on the land line, those of you on the other end complain about “bad cell reception,” when really it is just little and big cars roaring by on the same old roads.

So in this letter, I invite you to pay us a visit at 2489 Lake Tahoe Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe. Don't just roar by if you are in town. The newsletter shares our latest efforts to protect the region. But to appreciate what this work truly looks, smells, and feels like – you should swing by the office.

The Arntz Family has been sending a few folks by each summer to check out our dogs, meet our interns, notice our mismatched furniture and well-worn carpet. And there have been times when I've thought, “Heaven forbid a supporter stops by and sees our scrappy office.” But the Arntz Family has continued to increase their awesome support each year after the grand five-minute tour. I now realize that our frugal office demonstrates more than its apparent wear and tear; it illustrates our Sierra priorities. We spend our donor dollars on talented, low-paid staff rather than elaborate office supplies. We cram into small spaces and make them work – because we'd rather use our budget funds for travel to provide support for our Member Groups throughout the 400-mile region.

Our office also demonstrates that our passion as Sierra Nevada Alliance staff, board, groups and members is such that we can dedicate five days a week to saving the range and only two days to reveling in that “outdoor life that these mountains offer.” Because at the end of the day, we're dedicated to doing the best we can to see future generations play among the peaks, woodlands and waters like we do (and maybe human-powered transportation will bring them in the future rather than those loud little and big cars??)

So come on by! We're proud to share what we do, and how we do it!

Sincerely,

Joan Clayburgh
Executive Director

PERIODIC NEWSLETTER OF THE
SIERRA NEVADA ALLIANCE

P.O. Box 7989,
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96158
T (530) 542-4546 F (530) 542-4570
email: info@sierranevadaalliance.org
www.sierranevadaalliance.org

STAFF

Executive Director
Joan Clayburgh

Associate Director
Kay Ogden

Regional Climate Change
Program Director
Craig Breon

Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership
Program Director
Mike Thornton

Outreach & Development
Program Associate
Lynn Baumgartner

Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership
Regional Coordinator
Allison Peeler

Regional Climate Change
Program Associate & Wyss Fellow
Gavin Feiger

Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership Members &
Sustainable Sierra Communities
Program Assistants
Kelly Miller & Tony Passantino

VISTA Member & Sustainable Sierra Communities
Program Assistant
Evan Muchmore

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The Sierra Nevada Alliance Proudly Welcomes Three Awesome New Board Members

Pamela Flick



Pamela Flick has more than 15 years' experience working for environmental conservation organizations. She currently serves as the California Program Coordinator for Defenders of Wildlife in Sacramento, working on such issues as mesocarnivore and bird conservation, federal lands management, renewable energy development, and state legislation.

Prior to joining Defenders in 2005, Pam worked to preserve California's public lands and rivers as Communications Coordinator and Administrative Director for the California Wild Heritage Campaign and Administrative Director for the Sierra Nevada Forest Protection Campaign.

Pam graduated summa cum laude from California State University, Sacramento, with a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and a minor in Biological Sciences. In her free time, she enjoys live music, gardening, raising bantam chickens, photography, birding, games, leading all-ladies backpacking trips, and spending time in the great outdoors.

David Hansen



David Hansen cut his teeth with Robert Redford building the award-winning eco-friendly Spa at Sundance Resort in Utah in 2001. There, David and his "green" team were given creative license to build a spa reflecting Redford's lifelong stewardship practices and merge nature into his overall sustainable design.

David graduated from the American Business College in San Diego in 1991, and held a series of engineering positions at several Embassy Suites Resorts before being discovered by Redford in 2001.

David currently serves as the Director of Engineering at Embassy Suites Lake Tahoe Hotel & Ski Resort, where he has put his extensive experience in eco-friendly engineering and design practices to good use. Embassy Suites' \$200,000 investment paid for itself in seven months, not only reducing energy waste, but also saving Embassy \$1.4 million to date. David is married and enjoys skiing, hiking, climbing Mt. Whitney annually, fishing, and riding his Harley Davidson motorcycle.

Geoff McQuilkin



Geoff McQuilkin became a Mono Lake Committee member in fifth grade, and his enthusiasm for Mono Lake has never waned.

He has worked for the nonprofit Mono Lake Committee for twenty years, including the past decade as Executive Director, which has given him the chance to be involved with all aspects of the citizen group's protection, restoration, education, and science programs.

Geoff was present for the historic State Water Board proceedings leading to the order mandating protection and stream restoration of Mono Lake, and he continues the Committee's work to insure Los Angeles has a sustainable long-term water supply.

Geoff can be found wherever Mono Lake advocacy is needed — from the lake's salty shores to Los Angeles to Sacramento. A graduate of Harvard in the History of Science, Geoff lives at Mono Lake with his wife and two daughters.



Against a backdrop of high mountain snow, beautiful white Prickly Poppies in the majestic Eastern Sierra.

Sierra Water Workgroup Summit Exceeds Expectations

Nearly a hundred people attended the first Sierra Water Workgroup Summit in North Tahoe on July 17th and 18th, exceeding all



Jim Branham, Sierra Nevada Conservancy Executive Officer, speaks to Summit attendees on challenges and opportunities.

expectations and leading to calls for it to become an annual event. The Sierra Nevada Alliance, working with Liz Mansfield, took the lead in organizing the Summit, continuing a close relationship with the Sierra Water Workgroup, a forum for the twelve Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMPs) in the Sierra and their stakeholders.

The Alliance played a principal role in establishing the Sierra Water Workgroup a couple of years ago in order to assist regional efforts to protect and enhance water quality, water

supply, and watershed health, to develop coordinated regional policy positions, and to facilitate reinvestment in our watersheds and water resources.

Diverse participants from throughout the Sierra Nevada and beyond gathered at the Summit to discuss current challenges and opportunities for Sierra water management. Attendees included 22 people from nonprofits, 19 from state and federal agencies, 11 from water agencies, 11 from consulting companies, and 10

IRWMP leaders, in addition to 5 tribal representatives, 5 attorneys, 4 academics, 2 county government employees, various foundation officers, concerned citizens, state agency representatives, and Alliance staff and interns.

While the Summit participants were an impressive group, integrated water management means more than just broad stakeholder engagement. It means a comprehensive approach to improving water quality and water supply reliability while addressing issues such as flooding and watershed restoration in an ever-changing landscape.

This approach represents the core of what the Alliance is all about: bringing together diverse people and organizations to share successful models and to develop regional resource management plans. Successful events such as the Summit also give the Sierra a stronger voice as a region in terms of state water policy. The Sierra Water Workgroup regularly works with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to inform state plans and policies. The Alliance and many of the IRWMPs have representatives on the design, technical, and advisory groups contributing to the State Water Plan Update. In the current round of IRWMP funding, DWR recommended funding all eight of the Sierra IRWMP applicants.

With attendees already calling this an annual conference, the Alliance looks forward to planning our next cooperative venture with the Sierra Water Workgroup. In the meantime, we continue to work with individual IRWMPs on a range of issues, from compiling greenhouse gas inventories to organizing outreach efforts in disadvantaged communities.

I want to support the Sierra Nevada Alliance!

Your support truly makes a difference... Help the Sierra Nevada Alliance be an effective voice for keeping Sierra lands, water, wildlife and communities rural, wild and wonderful for future generations to enjoy!

I Want to Join the Evergreen Club!

Please bill my Debit/Visa/MasterCard/American Express: \$ _____ monthly, ending _____

I Want to make a one-time gift using my credit card.

Please bill my Debit/Visa/MasterCard/American Express: \$ _____

Card # _____ Exp. _____

Signature: _____

Enclosed is my check payable to the Sierra Nevada Alliance.

Please send me electronic Action Alerts and the Alliance Sierra Weekly!

For secure online giving visit: www.sierranevadaalliance.org/supportus

The Sierra Nevada Alliance is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



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Yosemite	\$1,000
Lake Tahoe	\$500
Mono Lake	\$250
Half Dome	\$100
Family	\$50
Sustaining	\$35
Evergreen Club! A monthly giving club	

New Alliance Staff Members

Craig Breon, Regional Climate Change Program Director



Craig provides experienced leadership to train and support grassroots efforts to shape smart growth and develop model sustainable regional resource plans. A practicing attorney, he taught courses in environmental law and was Executive Director of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. He received his B.A. from Williams College in Massachusetts and a J.D. from the U.C. Davis School of Law. Originally from Portola Valley, Craig has spent time in the Sierra since his childhood.

Mike Thornton, SNAP Program Director



Mike Thornton has years of experience in community organizing, social services, program administration, and radio journalism. He worked extensively in the Sierra Nevada as Mining Project Community Organizer for The Sierra Fund – helping shape policy to address nearly 50,000 abandoned mines. Most recently, he was a Community Organizer working in Eastern Oregon for Oregon Rural Action.

Gavin Feiger, Regional Climate Change Program Associate and Wyss Fellow



Gavin's fellowship is supported by the Wyss Foundation's Wyss Fellows program to develop conservation leaders. Gavin works for smart policies to protect Sierra lands, water, wildlife and rural communities. Originally from Montana, he obtained his Master of Environmental Science and Management from the Bren School at UC Santa Barbara, and his BS in Geology from the University of Washington. When not working, Gavin spends much of his time enjoying all the Sierra has to offer.

Kelly Miller, AmeriCorps Member, Sustainable Sierra Communities Program Assistant



Kelly is serving her second year in this position. She'll continue supporting a resilient Sierra through on-the-ground projects, innovative programs, publications, workshops and events such as the Truckee River Friendly Landscaping Program. Kelly received a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture in 2007 from Clemson University in South Carolina. She moved to the Sierra in 2009, and enjoys exploring Sierra hot springs, parks and flora.

Tony Passantino, AmeriCorps Member, Sustainable Sierra Communities Program Associate



Tony grew up in Sebastopol, California, and graduated from UCLA in 2011 with a major in Geography and an emphasis in Environmental Studies. He maintained the campus garden and outside the classroom was active in environmental advocacy. He traveled to Mongolia, Siberia and Hong Kong as a program participant for Tahoe-Baikal Institute. He works with Kelly Millier on the Truckee River Friendly Landscaping Program and other outreach efforts.

Evan Muchmore, AmeriCorps/VISTA Member, Sustainable Sierra Communities Program Associate



Evan is focusing on the EmPower El Dorado project, helping the Alliance's efforts to further VISTA's anti-poverty mission by promoting energy efficiency, water conservation and healthy homes initiatives. He received a B.A. from Yale University in the History of Art and a Master's degree at Indiana University in Central Eurasian Studies, and has traveled extensively in Mongolia, Central Asia, and Russia.

EmPower El Dorado continued from page 1

increase Sierra wildfires, habitat and species loss, and stress on our local water supply.

A second goal of EmPower El Dorado is to combine the energy and water retrofits with measures that protect residents' health, raising awareness and mitigating the effects of unhealthy indoor environments. Starting in South Lake Tahoe, the project will address the large number (approximately 80%) of houses constructed before 1978, prior to California's Title 24 energy efficiency standards and federal prohibitions on lead-based paints. Coordinating with programs such as the city's HUD-funded Lead Safe program, EmPower El Dorado will educate residents about lead, radon and mold hazards in their homes.

The program will address radon, a radioactive gas that is the second leading cause of lung cancer in Americans, leading to 21,000 deaths country-wide annually. It is present in extremely high levels in South Tahoe due to natural geographic features. Only 17% of local residents know about their exposure to radon; it is estimated significantly more people are exposed but are unaware.

The Alliance is working with the AmeriCorps/VISTA program

to sponsor a full-time VISTA member on staff. VISTA's main focus is poverty alleviation, allowing the Alliance to focus on the low-income population of South Lake Tahoe first. Assisting disadvantaged people who need help the most, EmPower El Dorado is keeping environmental justice at the forefront of its mission.

Alliance staff has assembled diverse local stakeholders to guide project development and implementation. Community partners include local energy and water utilities, Liberty Utilities and South Tahoe Public Utility District; local health provider Barton Health; the City of South Lake Tahoe's Lead Safe Program; Radon at Tahoe; El Dorado County Department of Health and Human Services, the Family Resource Center and the Boys and Girls Club.

EmPower El Dorado staff has recently begun conducting outreach and scheduling consultations with eligible community members to begin implementing the project. As the project grows, we hope to use the lessons learned to export the program to other counties in the Sierra that could also benefit from energy efficiency, water conservation, and healthy homes initiatives.

Welcome New Alliance Member Groups!

Slow Food Lake Tahoe



Contact: Polly Triplat
Email: info@slowfoodlaketahoe.org
Phone: 530.412.0774
Website: www.slowfoodlaketahoe.org

This Lake Tahoe-based nonprofit group focuses on reconnecting people to the enjoyment of local, seasonal, and sustainable food; educating the community about their vital role as participants in our food system.

Sierra Institute for Community and Environment



Contact: Jonathan Kusel
Email: info@sierrainstatute.us
Phone: 530.284.1022
Website: www.sierrainstitute.us

The Sierra Institute for Community and Environment promotes healthy and sustainable forests and watersheds by investing in the well-being of rural communities and strengthening their participation in natural resource decisions and programs. For nearly twenty years Sierra Institute has developed innovative, place-based programs by engaging rural stakeholders through applied research, pilot studies, and collaborative problem solving.

Community for Respectful Firearms Use



Contact: Bob Kelso
Email: crfu4crq@gmail.com
Phone: 209.795.1538

CRFU was formed in response to the dramatic increase of shooting at Candy Rock Quarry off Highway 4. CRFU is not opposed to guns or responsible shooting, but Candy Rock is not an appropriate site for this activity. The group is opposed to gunshot or impulse noise that pollutes surrounding neighborhoods.

Sierra Club Kern Kaweah Chapter



Contact: Georgette Theotig
Email: chair@kernkaweah.sierraclub.org
Phone: 661.822.4371
Website: www.kernkaweah.sierraclub.org

The Sierra Club Kern Kaweah Chapter strives to explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth. They practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; educating and enlisting humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment.

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AmeriCorps: continued from page 1

ground watershed improvements done, trains the next generation of conservation leaders, and makes a difference in communities throughout the region.”

During this 2012 service year (Jan. 23-Nov. 30, 2012) twenty-seven SNAP Members are restoring over 1,120 acres, educating over 10,000 Sierra residents, and recruiting over 2,000 volunteers for local conservation efforts. The SNAP program's website address is: www.savingthesierra.org and “saving the sierra” is exactly what SNAP does. Current SNAP Member Julie Fair, serving at American Rivers in Nevada City, offers a perfect example of the real world improvements SNAP is accomplishing.

In her most recent blog post, Jule writes, “Since the beginning of my service, I have become involved with meadow restoration projects, the creation of a recreational and stewardship-oriented water trail, dam removal and relicensing processes, water rights transfers for improvement of instream flow in rivers and a municipal water conservation program.” And all within the Sierra.

Julie continues, “I would like to share with you a ‘SNAP-shot’ of my service by recapping the accomplishments of the last three days. In the last three days, an American Rivers co-worker and I traveled to 3 different field sites . . . We worked to coordinate the restoration of at least 10,000 feet of stream channel in Sierra meadows and coordinated with individuals from 12 different organizations. We also took water quality samples at 9 sites, and installed 2 new gauges for monitoring stream flow . . . Not every

three days are this jam-packed, but I am happy to be able to say that I spend each day working to improve the watersheds of the Sierra.”

So raise your imaginary glass and toast to three more years of efforts in the Sierra by volunteers like Julie Fair.

“Keep in mind, each year AmeriCorps has to battle for continued federal funding,” said Joan Clayburgh, Alliance Executive Director. We have a three-year award – but let's continue to inform our congressional leaders of our community service needs and the amazing return on investment National AmeriCorps is!!!”

Get Involved:

- Contact your local, state, and national representatives and share all the great work being done in the Sierra because of AmeriCorps. <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>
- Take Action on Save Service Days and Events. <http://www.saveservice.org/>
- Host a SNAP Member at your Sierra organization to restore watersheds and educate residents.
- Meet the SNAP Member serving in your community by visiting one of our Host Sites. <http://www.servingthesierra.org/2012-snap-host-sites.html>
- Stay connected with all that the SNAP program is doing by visiting: www.servingthesierra.org

Member Group Spotlight: Ebbett's Pass Forest Watch

By: Susan Robinson and Addie Jacobson, EPFW Board Members

Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch



Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch (EPFW) is a grassroots, volunteer-based non-profit. We support responsible logging and thinning projects that preserve biodiversity and protect our crucial Sierra watersheds that supply over 60% of California's water.

EPFW came together in 2000 out of intense community alarm over Sierra Pacific Industries' (SPI) plan to clearcut 980 acres in two plots,

one adjacent to Calaveras Big Trees State Park and another along Highway 4, a state and federally-designated scenic highway. It soon became clear that these areas were just the tip of the iceberg.

California's largest private landowner, SPI owns 1.9 million acres from Yosemite to Oregon. The organization is implementing a corporate business plan to clearcut up to two-thirds of their diverse forestlands and replace them with tree plantations. Since 2000, SPI has clearcut hundreds of thousands of acres in the Sierra.

Photo Courtesy of EPFW.



Sierra Pacific Industries clearcut adjacent to Winton Road in Calaveras County.

Since 2000, EPFW has been unwilling to stand by and accept the destructive impacts from SPI's massive industrial clearcutting. We continue to:

- File comments on timber harvest plans and regulations
- Testify before California state agencies

- Serve as a primary information source on clearcutting for the public and government officials, through presentations, written materials, slide shows, films, ground tours and aerial flights over Sierra forestland

We are very active in a growing environmental coalition advocating for responsible forestry rule reform. Responsible logging creates

reliable jobs and maintains the unique landscapes and recreation opportunities that annually draw millions of tourists, and tourist dollars, to rural communities. It also creates

and preserves diverse forests that protect water quantity and quality, wildlife and plant habitat, and sequestered carbon. Maintaining resilient forests, responsible logging is essential, particularly with a climate that is changing rapidly.

We invite you and your organization to join the effort to assure a healthy future for the Sierra.

Please visit us at www.forestwatchers.org or contact us at 209-795-8260 or epfw@goldrush for more information about how to stop clearcutting California. Add your group to the growing coalition calling for an end to clearcutting NOW.

(For a close look at the clearcutting, check Google Earth satellite views of forested areas. For instance, look at the area around Dorrington, California to see how much clearcutting has occurred around the Giant Sequoias in Calaveras Big Trees State Park.)



Hot dry clearcut with remaining trees dying by Blue Creek, Calaveras County.

Photo Courtesy of EPFW.

New Member Groups: continued from page 6

Mariposa County Resource Conservation District



Contact: Glenn Franklin

Email: mcrd@sti.net

Phone: 209.966.3531

Website: www.mcrd.net

Mariposa County Resource Conservation District encourages and facilitates cooperative solutions to local resources conservation issues and problems. They provide technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, to meet the needs of the local land-users. They work together with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to provide assistance to their local community.

Small World



Contact: John Friedrich

Email: smallworldaction@gmail.com

Phone: 530.600.0234

Website: www.smallworld.cloudaccess.net

Small World's goal is to create a global community of parents and families committed to ensuring a peaceful, livable, just planet for all children on earth. The forces of violence, ignorance, greed and indifference can be overcome by the united power of love and concern in action for our children, creating a world where every child lives without fear of war and violence in societies that provide the necessities of life for all children, everywhere.

Sierra Nevada Alliance
2489 Lake Tahoe Blvd #21
P.O. Box 7989
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96158
T (530) 542 - 4546
F (530) 542 - 4570
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