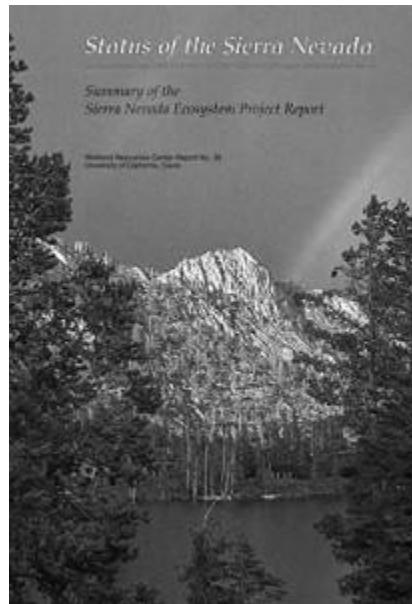


**March 2000**

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### **A SNEP for You!**



We still have a few sets of the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project Report (all 10 pounds and four volumes of it) available to Alliance members for the price of the postage. The report includes the Summary, Volume I, Volume II, and the Addendum. If you would like your very own copy, please send \$5.00 to the Alliance (mention it is for SNEP) and we will box it up and send it off! Happy reading....

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### **A Website to Meet YOUR Needs**

*Cristi Bozora*

In January the Alliance's completely revamped website, with cutting-edge, original technology, hit the Internet!

If you've had a chance to look at it, you've noticed that it's not the same old Alliance website.

Thanks to our web designer, Mark Russell of Amador Web Works, we now have a completely redesigned website that not only takes advantage of existing technology, but introduces new technology of its own.

Mark and his partners, Ross King and Todd Fishbaugher, are developing a commercial Internet application currently called "SiteBlocks."

This new kind of software allows anyone - even people without the slightest knowledge of web-based applications (like me!) - to manage his or her own website.

SiteBlocks allows sophisticated, data-driven websites in which the page content resides in databases rather than on static web pages. These databases are managed through a web-based editor, which allows all content - even graphics - to be entered directly through the web browser.

In the Alliance's site, for example, there are more than 30 different databases, including those for links, news, alerts, newsletters, calendar, bookstore, member groups, and board members.

In addition to allowing the site's content to be managed easily by Alliance staff, SiteBlocks includes a search function, which was absent from the Alliance's earlier site.

People viewing the site can filter the content by Interest Areas and Sphere of Influence, or they can use keyword searches on the entire site or just specific sections.

SiteBlocks also contains a Contextual Ad Server, which allows specific banner advertising to be

presented for specific Sphere of Influence or Interest Area selections, making the advertising tailored to the visitor.

Mark explained this new program to us in the beginning as something perfect for an alliance: as you'll hear more about in the next few months, this program also allows each of our members groups to create, post, and "own" its own data on the Alliance's site. No more calling and asking for something to be posted; you'll be able to do it yourself!

Why did Mark, Ross and Todd do this for the Alliance? We were their guinea pigs! We gave them the opportunity to test out the technology and concepts in a real world situation.

"We are very excited to be able to provide a very worthy cause with a website that aids them in achieving their mission," Mark said. "And they also helped us; the Alliance staff is an intelligent, enthusiastic group that is very responsive and easy to work with, and has given us invaluable feedback as beta testers."

Speaking of feedback, feedback is very important to the development of any new product. Please let us know what you think of the new site, still located at: <http://www.sierranevadaalliance.org>.

And we'll be setting up regional meetings focused on this new technology, so please let us know if you're interested in having us visit you!

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### **Executive Director's Letter**

*Laurel Ames*

In the midst of all the rain and politics this February, the Alliance is in the midst of change -- two women who have had a great impact on the Alliance are moving on -- I speak for the Board and myself when I say they will be sorely missed!

Cristi Bozora, after 2 1/2 years with the Alliance, got engaged, bought a house and decided to try lawyering full-time here at South Lake Tahoe. As our first Program Coordinator and first Associate Executive Director, Cristi brought enormous talents and strengths to the Alliance. We are hopeful we will be able to convince her to find some time for some consulting for the Alliance in the future.

And Kerri Timmer, staunch Alliance supporter and consultant of many talents, will be turning her attentions to some specific habitat conservation and open space planning projects in Nevada and Sierra counties. Kerri helped launch Sierra News, designing, editing and producing 12 newsletters over the past three and a half years, prepared our initial fundraising plan, managed a

series of regional meetings up and down the Sierra for our member groups, helped further the Alliance's interests in watershed management through her work with the Yuba Watershed Council, and wrote and produced our famous Watershed Council Toolkit, which has been requested from as far away as Lake Superior! There has never been anyone in my experience as organized and competent a consultant as Kerri.

You can be assured that the Alliance is looking far and wide around the West to replace these two exceptional women. And we look forward to the new points of view, new approaches and new ideas that come with change!

Onward

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### **Futures Fund Keeps Getting Better**

The Futures Fund has long been one of the Sierra Nevada Alliance's most popular programs.

Since 1997, when the Fund was first funded by The James Irvine Foundation, the Alliance has distributed \$32,000 to grassroots groups throughout the Sierra for new collaborative educational, outreach, and on-the-ground projects.

The most recent round saw the fiercest competition yet, with 19 applications vying for \$7,000.

The number of Alliance member groups has exploded in the past year, and this round of the Futures Fund showed it. The review committee, made up of Alliance Board members, member group representatives, and supporters, had some very difficult decisions to make in selecting the projects to fund.

The summaries of all the applying projects are provided on the website to illustrate the great depth and diversity of environmental protection efforts taking place across the Sierra.

The projects chosen for funding were determined to best meet the criteria of the Futures Fund, but the committee acknowledged that all the applications described good projects being undertaken by good groups.

"We are thrilled to be recipients of a Futures Fund grant because the validation by an objective organization helps us stay on course," said Nancy Wagner of the Sierra Buttes/Lakes Basin Coalition, working to protect the Sierra Buttes from uncontrolled development. "Thanks for the infusion of financial courage."

Other grant recipients are the Bear Preservation League, based in Homewood, for its "Bear Country" poster; Friends of the Tule River for its educational exhibit, "Where has all the water gone?"; Auburn-based Protect American River Canyons (PARC) for its campaign to gather community input on design plans and management strategies for the American River Confluence Parkway; Foothill Conservancy in Amador County, which will develop a coherent survey of open space initiatives that have worked in other rural counties; Middle Yuba River Area Citizens League (MYRACL) for its educational pamphlet about the problems of using dams to control water in the Yuba River watershed; Forest Issues Group for capacity-building; and Tule Oaks Land Trust for a film and photos highlighting the group's ranchland protection efforts.

The Alliance is working to increase the funds available through the Futures Fund program. So much good work is being done throughout the Sierra, we'd like to support all of it!

Another Round of the Alliance's Futures Fund will begin in July 2000. Contact the Alliance office at 530-542-4546 for more information.

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### **Help Celebrate Rivers 2000**

Many river cleanups in California and elsewhere throughout the country will be moving to June to help celebrate Rivers 2000, a project of the River Management Society (RMS) designed to foster a greater understanding of and appreciation for the values of our flowing waters and enhanced public and personal stewardship of our rivers and watersheds.

Like the basics of education, Rivers 2000 focuses on the 3 Rs:

Recognition - of the water and related land resources themselves, and of the people and institutions who work together to ensure their value to us for the future;

Recreate - let's get out and enjoy the vast opportunities that our rivers and streams provide, while we renew our personal interest in them; and

Revitalize - the natural, human and economic resources associated with our rivers, and our commitment to proper stewardship of these important resources.

For more information on how you or your organization can get involved in the Rivers 2000 program, please call Jim Eicher at the BLM office in Folsom, 530-985-4474. You can also get more information through the website: <http://www.rivers2000.org>.

The River Management Society (RMS) is a national non-profit professional society dedicated to

the protection and management of North America's river resources.

Members include federal, state and local agency employees, educators, researchers, consultants, and citizens from the private sector.

For more information on RMS, call: 406-549-0514.

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### **I Before E, Except After C: Sierra vs. Sierras**

Everyone has a pet peeve about something - that phrase or saying that just grates on your nerves every time you hear it. For the Alliance, that pet peeve revolves around people's use of the word Sierras to refer to our spectacular Range of Light.

According to Alliance Board member Scott Kruse, the Spanish word sierra means "mountain range" - a singular thing - often modified with the addition of another word or words, such as sierra blanca, "white mountain range," or una sierra nevada, "a snowy mountain range."

Scott tells us that in the Spanish narratives of exploration, una sierra nevada is frequently found written without capital letters, referring simply to a snow-covered range of mountains. It was in this way that our own Sierra Nevada was first designated. Early in the 19th century, it was sometimes called the California Range by North American explorers; but gradually the Spanish phrase prevailed, and after a while it became a specific name and took its place on the maps.

The Sierra Nevada is a single, distinct unit, both geographically and topographically, and is well described by una sierra nevada. Strictly speaking, therefore, we should never pluralize the name - such as Sierras, or Sierra Nevadas, or even High Sierras - when referring to our favorite haunt.

Again, according to Scott, "these [plural] forms of the name are so frequently found in the very best works of literature and science that it would perhaps be pedantic to deny their admissibility. It becomes, therefore, a matter of preference, and for our part , we would rather keep in mind the unity of our great range by calling it simply, The Sierra or The Sierra Nevada."

**Land Trusts Get it Together**  
*Laurel Ames, Executive Director*



(l-r) Paul Hardy of the Feather River Land Trust, Keith McKinley of the N. California Regional Land Trust and Phil Nemir of the Lassen Land & Trails Trust mark their organizations' areas of interest on a map of the Sierra.

A beautiful spring-like February day in the Gold Country of the Sierra foothills provided the setting for an Alliance-sponsored meeting of land trusts who work in the Sierra.

The American River Conservancy kindly hosted the gathering at its nature center in Coloma.

Representatives from 12 local land trusts, one statewide organization and three national groups, plus Alliance Board member Bill Center and I, met to explore the idea of working together under a regional umbrella organization or council.

Bill Center described a need for "some sort of organization that knits together our passion for our landscapes."

Dan Macon of the California Rangeland Trust echoed Bill's call, pointing out that such an organization would provide "the space to take on issues in a collaborative manner."

The group worked, ate, laughed and charged through a very full agenda to arrive at the conclusion that we would meet again!

Now that might not sound like much progress; but if you look at the meeting notes, you'll see that we spent a good deal of time talking about the need for such an organization, possible constituents, potential benefits for each of our organizations, short-term priorities, longer-term needs, and even possible strategies for future funding.

And, perhaps most importantly, we all agreed that there was indeed a need to pull a group together, and that we could "harness our passions for our landscapes" to create meaningful suggestions for how to organize.

The overall desire for a unified voice looped through the discussions, as we reviewed structures of similar umbrella groups from around the country to see what might work best for us.

Together we learned about operating structures for land trust groups in Massachusetts, Georgia, Wisconsin and the Bay Area.

The groups ranged in structure from those that meet only once or twice a year to those that have fulltime staff and fully-funded management and operations programs.

Jim Gaither, Sierra Program Manager of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), described existing and potential future funding sources for land and easement acquisition. The possibilities ranged from local, state and federal dollars, to the park bond (Prop. 12) on this March's state ballot, to the potential for a state conservancy.

Dave Sutton of the Trust for Public Land (TPL) encouraged us to work together for "the Sierra's share of the funding pie."

Thanks to people's strong interest in researching these ideas further, we have four subcommittees working on developing more details and answering questions as to:

1. what our goal and message might be; 2. how we might be most effective in seeking joint funding for land acquisition and protection; 3. what a Sierra interim organization might look like; and 4. how an educational program might be put together, both to educate ourselves and to educate the wider public about our groups and our goals.

With our hearts planted firmly in the Sierra, we scheduled the next meeting to coincide with the spring wildflowers in April.

With great hope and enthusiasm we intend to produce a working model that enables the Sierra land trusts to speak with a unified voice and snag more dollars for acquisition and protection.

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### **More About the Amador Web Works Team**

Mark Russell operates Amador Web Works in Pine Grove, California. The company specializes in servicing small businesses in need of data-driven and e-commerce sites. Mark also has several pro bono non-profit sites, including the Foothill Conservancy, a long-time Alliance member. Mark is active in Scouting with his two sons and enjoys hiking and backpacking in the Sierra.

Todd David Fishbaugh is principal in the Fishboll Design Group, a "foothill" California graphic design firm that specializes in corporate communications services. Representative projects include advertisements, brochures, promotional mailings, collateral materials, web design and complete corporate identity programs, including name development. Along with his

passion for design, Todd's interests include backpacking, skiing, mountain biking, canoeing and fishing.

Ross King of Pioneer, CA, is the owner of King Research, a firm specializing in market research for high tech companies and startups developing e-commerce, business-to-business and other web-based applications. Ross is active in many community organizations, and is a board member of the Amador Economic Development Corporation and president of the Foothill Citizens for a Community College. Ross' interests include gardening and skiing.

For more info on Amador Web Works, call 209-223-4554 or email:

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### **New Member Groups**

Since the last newsletter, we are happy to welcome two new Alliance members (with great acronyms, we might add...):

Protect Our Watershed (POW) Protect Our Watershed, was formed in 1990 in response to logging operations by a local irrigation district in areas surrounding two local reservoirs.

POW most commonly focuses on water quality issues and timber harvest plans affecting the Magalia area, east of Paradise in Butte County. In response to growth pressures, POW increasingly has focused on development projects affecting the Magalia watershed, and it has advocated strongly for sensible planning.

Contact: POW, Jean Crist, tel: 530-873-6383; email: P ALIGN=LEFT> Save Our Streams (SOS) Save Our Streams (SOS), was founded in 1981 to battle against the proliferation of small hydro projects planned for virgin Sierra streams as a result of the 1978 PURPA legislation.

In 1994, SOS expanded its vision to include entire watersheds, not just small streams and creeks.

The group has focused on the San Joaquin River and is currently the principal backer of two petitions filed with the State Water Board by a private citizen to 1.) restore public trust flows in the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam, and 2.) to halt the use of the lower river as a sewer for toxic agricultural drainage originating on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley.

Most recently Save Our Streams members halted the proposed expansion of a wastewater treatment plant in Oakhurst, California, that would have allowed the dumping of partially treated waste waters into the Fresno River.

Contact: SOS, Lloyd Carter, tel: 559-497-0736; email:

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### **Ranchland Study Ready to Go!**

Alicia Reban of the Nevada Land Conservancy and Reynolds Potter of TPL share ideas.

Building on our successful past collaboration, the Sierra Nevada Alliance, the California Cattlemen's Association and the California Rangeland Trust are undertaking a study that will look at the economic connection between private ranchland and public grazing allotments.

In the project, funded by the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, the Elizabeth and Stephen Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, researchers from U.C. Berkeley will interview ranchers and analyze historic records to dispel the myths and uncover the truths about what happens to private ranchland facing development pressure when the public land grazing permit is lost.

The study, scheduled to be completed in January 2001, will be widely peer-reviewed by economists and social scientists chosen by each of the three sponsoring organizations. If you have any questions about this project, please call the Alliance office.

The Alliance wishes to thank the Environmental Support Center for its help in putting on the Land Trust meeting in Coloma. ESC provided funding to hire Diane Bush as facilitator and to cover meeting and lodging expenses for attendees from as far away as the Kaweah River.

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### **River Network Watershed Assistance Grants Available**

River Network is offering its next round of short-term organizational development mini-grants. Amounts range from \$1,320 to \$4,000.

A round of larger (\$4,000- \$30,000), project grants will be awarded later this spring.

Proposals must be postmarked no later than June 15. Grant guidelines can be found on River Network's website at <http://www.rivernetwork.org>.

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### **Working Toward Healthy Watersheds**

How healthy is your stream? [excerpted from Forestland Steward, Fall 1999]

A thorough stream assessment takes training, but you can identify potential problems yourself simply by using your eyes and a little basic knowledge.

Water color. Color is one indicator of stream health. Clear water is often found during low flows while muddy waters occur during high flows and when upstream activities send sediment downstream. Tea-colored water can come from the brown tannin of decaying leaves. A colored sheen may indicate an oil spill.

Order your Watershed Council Toolkit, the Alliance's new guide to forming multi-stakeholder watershed groups. Send \$25 (includes tax and shipping) to the Alliance at PO Box 7989, S. Lake Tahoe, CA 96158, or call 530-542-4546.

Algae. Algae thrive on nutrients from commercial fertilizers, leaf waste, and manure. Light or dark green algae scattered in spots indicates a healthy stream. Matted or hairy algae mean poor stream quality. Brown algae point to sediment deposits. An algae bloom can indicate excess nutrients or pollution.

Foam. Froth on a stream can be natural or human-caused. Natural foam has an earthy or fishy smell. Soap or detergent foam will often have a perfume smell.

Riffles. Ripples occur when water runs over rocky or rough streambeds. A mix of ripples and quiet pools provides good fish habitat.

Streambed sediment. Sediment has a negative effect on salmon spawning, hiding cover, and insect abundance. Sediment can also fill pools or reduce water depth, leading to warmer water.

Streambank erosion. Bare spots on streambanks should be noted. Wooded stream-banks seldom erode, even in high floods. Significant bank erosion along a stretch of stream may indicate problems.

Fish shelter. Submerged logs and dead trees (large woody debris) provide good fish habitat and stream structure.

Stream shade. Trees overhanging the stream help keep the water cool and can provide good fish habitat.

Stream temperature. Warm water threatens salmon, trout, and steelhead. Check with your local RCD or UC Extension office to find out about water temperature in your area.

Speaking of training:

If you wanted to, you could probably attend a watershed training seminar, management conference or other educational forum just about every week of the year! Here are a couple that you might be interested in:

Watershed Assessment, by Peter Mangarella, Ph.D. Thurs, May 11, 2000, 8:30 am-5 pm, Room 802, UC-Extension Downtown at 425 Market St., 8th Floor, San Francisco. Cost is \$295. Call 510-642-4111 for info. This course examines the process of watershed assessment and its role in watershed management.

California Wilderness Conference, May 5-7, 2000, California State University, Sacramento. Citizens from across the state will gather to learn about, celebrate, and take action for California's last wild places. Call California Wilderness Coalition at 530-758-0380 or visit <http://www.calwild.org> for more info.

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### **Working Toward Healthy Watersheds - Noxious Weed Coordinating Committee**



Another factor to consider in assessing the health of your watershed is the condition of the vegetation. California watersheds and many others in the West are experiencing problems with invasive, noxious weeds.

There is an organization, called the Noxious Weed Coordinating Committee, that offers various

weed management services, including:

1) support for the formation of local Weed Management Areas; 2) identifying and publicizing funding sources for weed control projects; 3) identifying research priorities and soliciting member agencies for support; and 4) reviewing and ranking proposals for the "War on Weeds" mini-grant program.

For more information on the Committee, contact Steve Schoenig, 1220 N Street, Room A-357, Sacramento, CA 95814, or call 916-654-0768 or email