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### **Sierra News Volume 2, Issue 4 November 1998**

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**John Thorne**, Thorne's Tree Service

**Sierra Nevada Alliance** is committed to a future that is shaped by the physical and spiritual values of the Sierra, the integrity of its landscape, its human and cultural resources and its communities. Through community-based efforts we can weave the tapestry that celebrates the splendor, values our quality of life, and protects the long-term health of the Range of Light.

*Sierra News* is made possible by a generous grant from the **David & Lucile Packard Foundation**.

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### The Calendar Column

- PCL and the Alliance are co-sponsoring the "Protect Your Community" CEQA workshop on Jan. 9th in Sutter Creek at the Schoolhouse at 110 Broad St.

For more information call Jennifer Palyash at PCL (916) 444-8726 ext. 86.

- The California Futures Network is convening a statewide Smart Growth Summit on Jan. 28th, 1999, in Sacramento to unveil its principles and policy objectives to newly elected and returning policymakers and the public. Call (510) 238-9762 for details.

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## YOU MUST HAVE ESP

*by Cristi Bozora*

In managing the Alliance's program to preserve open space in the Sierra foothills, I've talked to a lot of ranchers, the owners of most of the natural land left in the area.

One of the things I always bring up is the potential usefulness of conservation easements, as I wrote about in the February 1998 issue of Sierra News, and this usually leads to a discussion of land trusts and other organizations able to hold easements.

Last December during a meeting in Jackson, I mentioned that one way to approach the issue would be for the ranching community to start its own land trust, as the Colorado Cattlemen's Association did in 1995.

The next week I got an e-mail from Bill Frost, County Director for El Dorado County Cooperative Extension and Natural Resources Advisor in the Central Sierra, with a subject line that read, "You must have ESP." At the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) annual meeting the day before, Bill had been walking past the room in which its Public Lands Committee was meeting and overheard the phrase "land trust." The committee was discussing the possibility of CCA creating a land trust! My suggestion, coming immediately before the annual meeting, was obviously not the impetus for the committee's discussion; but it did validate one of the goals of the Alliance's program: to encourage the ranching community, and the large agricultural landowners in particular, to think about land and its long-term preservation.

The new land trust, officially formed as a §501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation this Fall, is called the California Rangeland Trust (CRT).

So while I don't in fact have ESP, the coincidental nature of these events does suggest that the time is right for all the stakeholders to start planning the future of the Sierra's last remaining open spaces.

As Dan Macon, the first Executive Director of the CRT, said, "California's rangelands provide a wide range of important values, from livestock forage and economic productivity to wildlife habitat and open space." And it's these latter two, among other resource values, that have attracted the interest of environmental organizations across the West to working with agricultural landowners.

One group working very effectively with ranchers is Forest Service Employees for

Environmental Ethics (FSEEE), based in Eugene, Oregon. We hope to help introduce FSEEE's new "Nature Safe" market-based cooperative effort to California this winter. The organization worked for two years to develop its labeling program before launching it in October with Jim Winder, one of the most environmentally progressive ranchers in New Mexico.

Under the program, ranchers must meet requirements in the key areas of natural resources, management practices, and community and economic sustainability to be certified to use the "Nature Safe" logo on their products.

Market research conducted by FSEEE showed that niche marketing is appreciated by many consumers and gives them, in the view of Jim Winder, "the opportunity to vote for the type of land management practices that they would like to see and to support farmers and ranchers who are helping to heal the land."

The Alliance's open space preservation program is committed to providing landowners with information on issues that can help them maintain their operations and their land base, including estate planning and taxes; government incentive programs; private conservation tools; and economic issues, such as niche marketing, and we look forward to working closely with the CRT and FSEEE to do it.

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## NEW RANGE LAND TRUST

*by Cristi Bozora*

When Dan Macon announced the formation of the California Rangeland Trust (CRT) at the Alliance's fifth annual conference this past July, the crowd, led by Michael Jackson of Quincy, burst into applause.

If the CRT contributes what it has the potential to contribute to the preservation of open space rangeland, the organization may turn out to be one of the most effective land trusts in California. And a lot of CRT's initial promise lies in the hands of its first Executive Director, Dan Macon.

Dan's agricultural background and experience with California's livestock industry, as well as his tenure as Executive Director of the nonprofit California Farm Water Coalition, position him, in the eyes of the agricultural community, to head up the trust. But Dan also views his position as a chance to bridge gaps between it and the environmental community.

"CRT provides an outstanding opportunity for the ranching community and the environmental community to begin working on common ground," says Dan. "I think my ability to

communicate effectively with both groups will ultimately benefit CRT's goal to conserve ranching as part of the working landscape in California."

A major goal of CRT's is to help agricultural landowners recognize economic return from non-commodity values associated with their land, values such as open space, wetlands habitat, and recreational opportunities. This is a different focus from the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT), the only other land trust in the country with a Board of Directors made up solely of landowners, which focuses almost exclusively on acquiring conservation easements.

"CRT will be broader in scope than CCALT," says Dan. "We want to find ways to help ranchers deal with other land use issues, like riparian management and endangered species issues." To do this, CRT is assembling a database of qualified scientists who can work with ranchers to improve resource management and, along with it, profitability, as well as an advisory committee made up of other stakeholders.

"If we can provide an incentive for ranchers to stay in business," maintains Dan, "we will also ensure that California retains an important environmental value - its nearly 20 million acres of privately owned rangelands."

Will Dan and the CRT be successful? A lot will depend on the level of acceptance within the agricultural community, already proven to be higher than at any time in the past. And creating common ground with the environmental community has never been more important to the ranching industry, with its deteriorating economy and need for allies. The Alliance has high hopes that the new organization and its director will achieve their preservation goals, which are also the goals of many in the environmental community: to keep open spaces open.

UC Davis Extension is offering a one-day course on "Using Local Planning Processes to Promote Sustainable Development" Fri., Dec. 4th. Call (530) 757-8878 for more information.

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## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER**

Watersheds, watersheds, watersheds - an early brainstorm for the Alliance has provided the basis for a full-time program, as we learn that everything relates to the watershed! From our regional meetings with our member groups to the latest planning effort by the Forest Service, watersheds take a front-and-center role.

Although John Wesley Powell admonished the west to govern by watersheds, the early west was formed with the government structures brought by the eastern immigrants, and, thus, we have boundaries for states, counties, federal agencies and more that manage or damage watersheds without a formal ability to plan and work collaboratively.

The Alliance is on a mission to help turn that sad status around. We promote the creation and importance of local watershed councils that involve all stakeholders, and we work with agencies to assure that stakeholder-based watershed restoration projects are first in line for funding. We work with landowners to point out the benefits of participating in a collaborative process, and we work with our member groups to support their efforts to create and build local watershed councils. And now we have taken on a truly herculean task - convincing the Forest Service to climb down from their ivory tower and join all of us in equal partnerships with all stakeholders in the watershed - and they can do this by making commitments to do so in their new Sierra Nevada Framework for Conservation and Collaboration.

Can we do it? Well, not alone. And so we have reached out to the stakeholders in the Framework planning to join together to help the Forest Service develop a new-to-them collaborative process. Thanks to you who help us to promote sunshining federal agency actions!

Onward?

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## **SNA WEBSITE UPDATE**

The Sierra Nevada Alliance's website is becoming the envy of many environmental groups.

First of all, it is updated almost weekly. Secondly, from the Alliance's website, you can:

- find out what Sierra Nevada grassroots groups are doing;
- keep up-to-date on Alliance projects, including statewide projects such as CALFED and the California Futures Network;
- link to research sources like Thomas, SNEP, the Sierra Nevada Science Review, and PCL's upcoming new research library;
- view gorgeous Sierra landscape photos in UC Berkeley's electronic library;

AND - in partnership with Amazon.com - we now have our own bookstore! It works by linking books from Amazon's huge site to ours. For every book we sell, whether it's linked directly to our site or you use ours to search Amazon's, we get a percentage of the sale price! So it's an easy way for you to do something you were going to do anyway (buy books) and donate to an environmental group at the same time. If you have any suggestions of books to add, let us know!

By the way, if you would like to receive info from SNA via email, please send an initial email saying so to:

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## **SNA BOARD BRIEFS**

- SNA welcomes Bill Center to the Board of Directors. Bill has been involved in commercial rafting for 25 years, first as a guide and then as operator of ARTA, a commercial rafting outfitter. He and his wife Robin have owned and operated Camp Lotus on the South Fork of the American River since 1978. In addition, Bill served as El Dorado County Supervisor from 1991-1995.

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## **COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS**

(excerpted from the University of Michigan's Collaborative Resource Partnerships Group <http://www.umich.edu/~crpgroup>)

Collaborative Resource Partnerships must have a primary focus on natural resource management issues. Although economic issues or sustainable development may be closely related, they cannot be the principal goal of the group.

The group must include diverse stakeholders who represent different perspectives on the natural resource issue(s) at hand. They must be groups of "unlikes"- people who do not have the same values, opinions or perspectives regarding the issues.

Citizens, whether as individuals or as part of an advocacy group, must play an active role as advisors or decision-makers. Partnerships among various resource management agencies that invite the public to a meeting once or twice a year to solicit feedback do not count. An advisory committee that meets regularly and plays more than a superficial role in the decision-making process does.

Whatever the role of the group (decision-making or advisory), its involvement in the management process should be active throughout the assessment, planning, implementation and monitoring stages.

The group should be connected to a geographic community. And unless it functions as an

active problem-solving group, a coalition is not a partnership.

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## THE FOREST SERVICE AND COLLABORATION

*by Laurel W. Ames*

### An Unfulfilled Promise

Today we have the opportunity to move the Forest Service out of decision-making in back rooms to an open and public way of managing our public lands. Can we do it?

Encouraging the Forest Service to commit to a truly collaborative process is one of those challenges that inevitably raises the question - is this a productive way for the Alliance to spend its time and energy? Can the Forest Service operate in a collaborative mode? Can we help them move into a truly collaborative process, or are we tilting at Forest Service to live up to the collaborative billing for the Framework and to tirelessly promote the collaborative process.

A collaborative Forest Service, one that understands the importance to the public of an ecosystem-based forest management plan, will understand how to honor the future and more fully protect the values of the natural resources of the Sierra Nevada.

For more information on comments received at the various public workshops or to check out the draft design plan, version 1.3 (formerly the "Term Paper"), see the Region 5 website at <http://www.r5.fs.fed.us/sncf>.

The design plan contains information on the Forest Service's intentions and commitments regarding the environmental impact statement, parallel efforts such as the grazing initiative, and brainstorming on other themes or ideas, including: collaboration, cooperation, adaptive management, monitoring, quality control, funding, and reinvestment.

Please review this document and send the Forest Service any comments you may have!

The Forest Service is setting up another round of public meetings throughout the Sierra as part of the scoping process.

Watch you local media or check the website for details on timing and location for the meetings nearest you!

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## **PROTECTING PETROGLYPHS ON DONNER SUMMIT**

In yet another example of the collaborative process, the Alliance, SNA member group Friends of Sierra Rock Art (FSRA) and the Forest Service are working together on an interpretive sign and educational brochure project for an important petroglyph site on Donner Summit.

"The rock art on this site is as old as the Pyramids," says Bill Drake, co-founder of FSRA.

FSRA is a non-profit organization that works with Native Americans, land managing agencies and the public to help protect rock art sites in the Sierra Nevada. FSRA also conducts public education and outreach efforts to try to help people appreciate rock art and the cultures that made it.

The petroglyph site at Donner Summit has been attributed to members of the Martis Complex of Indians, thought to be ancestors of the Washoe tribe.

According to Bill, these people were prolific petroglyph makers, creating dozens of sites on the North and Middle Forks of the American River and throughout Placer, Nevada, El Dorado and Sierra Counties.

Thanks to fiscal sponsorship by the Alliance, FSRA was able to secure Forest Service funding for the educational sign and brochure project.

For more info on FSRA or this project, contact: Sonny Green, President -- Friends of Sierra Rock Art, PO Box 1409, Nevada City, CA 95959

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## **SNA SEED \$\$ BRINGING RICH REWARDS**

The Alliance recently had the pleasure of handing out another round of \$1,000 grants to grassroots conservation groups and individuals working to protect and restore the Sierra Nevada. The funding is part of the Alliance's Sierra Futures Fund program.

The grants, made to eligible SNA member groups, are used as "seed" money for natural resource protection, education and community-building

work.

"The Alliance has given us the financial boost we needed to get our Watershed Restoration Symposium off the ground," said Kathleen Eagan, Executive Director of the **Truckee River Habitat Restoration Group**, one of the Alliance's newest members. With the Futures Fund grant, the TRHRG was able to include an educational symposium at its wildly successful Truckee River Day, held in October. The symposium drew a standing-room-only crowd of some 150 people.

"Now we have to put your money where our mouths are," quipped Jim Hurley, Chair of the **Sierra Nevada Goup of the Sierra Club**, upon accepting the grant for his organization. The Sierra Club group was funded for its innovative project to carry out fuels reduction and wetland meadow restoration in the Yuba watershed as part of Nevada County's new multi-stakeholder Fire Safe Council.

**People for Healthy Forests** will use its newest Futures Fund grant to publish the first newsletter of its newly-formed National Forest Herbicide Information Center.

Other winners include Auburn-based **Protect American River Canyons**, which has created a docent program for the North and Middle Forks of the American River, and the **Institute for Ecological Health** in Davis, which plans to bring its traveling workshop series on foothill and valley growth issues to Sierra communities.

**EPIC**, a long-time El Dorado County land use group, received a grant for its work in education and community outreach, and **Range Watch**, a public lands grazing watchdog organization in Posey, plans to produce a video titled, "Watershed Impacts From Commercial Livestock Grazing," using equipment purchased thanks to a matching grant from a previous Futures Fund award.

SNA's Futures Fund program is funded through a generous grant from The James Irvine Foundation. Watch for the application for the next round coming to your mailbox in early January.

The Futures Fund program is open to all SNA member groups.

- American Land Conservancy
- Angeles Chapter, Sierra Club
- Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS
- California Mule Deer Association
- California Native Plant Society
- CA State Park Rangers

- CA Wilderness Coalition
- Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation
- Central Sierra Watershed Coalition
- Clavey River Preservation
- Common Sense
- Dry Creek Citizens Coalition
- Eastern Sierra Audubon Society
- EPIC
- Foothill Conservancy
- Friends of Donner Summit
- Friends of Hope Valley
- Friends of the Inyo
- Friends of the River
- Friends of Sierra Rock Art
- High Sierra Hikers Assoc.
- Institute for Ecological Health
- League to Save Lake Tahoe
- League to Save Sierra Lakes
- MERG
- Mono County Mining Committee
- Mono Lake Committee
- Mother Lode Chapter, Sierra Club
- Mountain Alliance
- Mountain Lion Foundation
- People for Healthy Forests
- Planning & Conservation League
- PESTER
- PARC
- Range of Light Group
- Range Watch
- Rural Quality Coalition
- Sierra Nevada Group, Sierra Club
- SYRCL
- Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club
- Truckee Donner Land Trust
- Truckee River Habitat Restoration Group
- Tulare County Audubon Society
- Tule River Conservancy
- Tuolumne County Land Trust
- Yosemite Area Audubon
- Yosemite Guardian
- Yosemite Restoration Trust

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## **NORTH TAHOE REGIONAL MEETING**

In perhaps the most lively meeting yet, 22 representatives of non-profit environmental and other organizations came together in No. Lake Tahoe in October to discuss issues affecting the Tahoe Basin and surrounding areas.

Rousing presentations by Kathleen Eagan, Sarah Trebilcock, and Joanne Roubique of the Truckee River Habitat Restoration Group, Marshall Lewis of the Truckee Rotary's Legacy Project, Kirsten Cannon and Dave Roberts of the League to Save Lake Tahoe, Jaime Ziegler of Sierra Nevada Forest Protection Campaign, John Cobourn of Friends of Donner Summit, Dennis Ghiglieri of the Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter, and Laurel Ames and Cristi Bozora of the Alliance focused on relationships with agencies, public involvement and the need for more cross-jurisdictional planning in the Tahoe Basin and elsewhere.

Meeting participants also voiced their support for these outreach meetings, emphasizing the benefits of getting together to share information, learn about each other's projects and support each other's efforts.

Our thanks to the Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter, Truckee Donner Land Trust, Truckee River Habitat Restoration Group and League to Save Lake Tahoe for co-sponsoring this event.

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## **SIERRA NEWS NOTES**

The Alliance is one of many co-sponsors of Clean Water Action's "Tapping Into Watersheds" conference on December 11-12 at the Headlands Institute in Marin.

This 2-day statewide conference will bring together people who care about the health and safety of the water they drink with people who care about protecting the places where drinking water comes from.

Together they will learn more about these changes and will work to develop upstream and downstream strategies..

Call Clean Water Action at 415-362-3040 or email for more info.

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## HANDS-ON SCIENCE FOR KIDS

Think kids should be exposed to more hands-on science in the classroom? So do we, and we were thrilled when our new Board member, Scott Kruse, told us about the GLOBE program he's a member of. The information in this article is taken from an article Scott wrote for Metric Today's Nov.-Dec. issue.

Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) is a hands-on, school-based international environmental science and education program in 5,000 kindergarten through 12th grade schools in more than 70 countries. The program, growing all the time, is in 400 schools in California, and 30 in the Sierra.

Student scientists enthusiastically perform daily and yearly hands-on science tasks, led by GLOBE trainers and teachers who have been certified through a national training program. In addition to nearby projects, such as observing clouds, temperature, precipitation, trees, water, and soil, students also team with lead scientists online to research world climate, hydrology, and ecosystems.

"GLOBE is an exciting opportunity for students to gain a better appreciation for the environmental challenges facing the planet and for gaining valuable scientific data that could not otherwise have been gathered," said astronaut Sally Ride. Although there are many weather stations that collect data around the world, they give only overall patterns of temperature, precipitation, and other weather conditions. What is really needed, and what these students can help provide, is the variation of these patterns over a region to get a more detailed picture. The data students collect is combined with data from other sources and put together on a website ([www.globe.gov](http://www.globe.gov)) that is a resource for environmental scientists around the world.

But most important, students are getting a better understanding of their planet and how its ecological systems work. For more information on participating in the GLOBE program, contact Margaret G. Finarelli, Deputy Director, The GLOBE Program, 744 Jackson Pl., Washington D.C. 20503, phone (202) 395-7600.

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### The Alliance Welcomes 3 New Members

One of the Alliance's newest member groups is the **Dry Creek Citizens Coalition (DCCC)**, a group of ranchers, landowners and individuals who share a common vision for protecting and enhancing the natural and intrinsic values along Dry Creek, the only free-running stream left in Tulare County. In 1996, the County approved a permit allowing mining interests to excavate 85 acres within the creek channel, as well as hardrock mining on adjacent

hillsides. DCCC opposed this approval, and the case is currently before the Fifth District Court of Appeal. To find out more about this group, contact John Dofflemyer at PO Box 44320, Lemon Cove, CA 93244.

We have the Mammoth Lakes regional meeting to thank for introducing us to two more new member groups, **PESTER, or Preserving the Eastern Sierra Tradition of Environmental Responsibility**, and the **Mono County Mining Committee (MCMC)**.

**PESTER** started out as one individual writing letters to the editor concerning a proposed land swap that would have led to construction of a casino in Long Valley. The group continues working with local activists, thanks to the hard work of founder Elizabeth Tenney, alerting them via phone tree of issues of concern coming up for discussion in various government and committee meetings. For more information about this group, contact Elizabeth at PO Box 2428, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546 or

**The Mono County Mining Committee** is an outgrowth of PESTER. Interested individuals within PESTER were asked by the Mono County Board of Supervisors to form a county-wide task force to deal with the thorny issue of a proposed open pit, cyanide heap leach gold mine on Hot Creek. The group has continued its efforts, assembling a core group representing diverse areas of expertise, including wildlife biologists, geohydrologists, attorneys, and even the Mayor of Mammoth and a town councilman. Together they are working to oppose the Royal Gold mine, which would be twice the size of the town of Mammoth Lakes, and encourage and promote changes in local, state, and national mining policy to protect the region's economic and natural resources.

If you are interested in supporting the work of this group, please visit the SNA website and sign on to the MCMC resolution or contact Bill McNeill at PO Box 100, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546.

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