

the green sheet

All Things Green in the Eastern Sierra

Saturday, October 11, 2014

FREE

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PHOTO: DAVID MUENCH

The breathtaking Alabama Hills are one step closer to a National Scenic Area designation. See p. 7.

SINNAMON SAVED

ESLT preserves historic Ranch for posterity

By Evans

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT) announced its preservation of Sinnamon Meadows through a conservation easement on September 9. The meadows sit at the base of Dunderberg Peak south of Bridgeport off of Virginia Lakes Road, with several Aspen Groves currently displaying fall colors.

Sinnamon Meadows is “a stunning expanse of historic

ranchland in northern Mono County,” according to ESLT. “The 1,240-acre property’s working lands, extensive wetlands, natural springs, and vital animal habitat are now protected forever with an agricultural conservation easement held by ESLT.”

As part of the conservation efforts, ESLT held a Sage Grouse Work Day at the iconic property on October 8. The

land is habitat to the Grouse, which is currently being considered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as a threatened species.

Aaron Johnson, Lands Director at ESLT, said the primary goal of the Work Day was “to make the fences around the property more visible, mainly for the Sage Grouse but also for other wildlife.” Johnson and a small team of

volunteers tagged roughly three miles of fencing and planned to take down a mile or so of old fencing, that isn’t currently being used.

“It’s a pretty large property in terms of the scale of private property we have here in Mono County so we’re pretty happy to have it under a conservation easement,” Johnson said. The property was previously a sheep ranch, but due to disease concerns in the Sierra Nevada Big Horn Sheep population, the property is now being used for cattle. The only downside to this, Johnson said, is that cattle require more fencing. “All kinds of wildlife utilize the area so we want to make it as safe as we can, working within the boundaries of the private landowner and his business,” he said.

ESLT worked with several agencies including the California Wildlife Conservation Board, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, and National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to fund the conservation easement. The Eastern Sierra Audubon Society helped fund the volunteer Work Day through a grant it received from the California Audubon society for Sage Grouse initiatives in Inyo and

CRAZY LIKE A “FOX BLOCK”

By Evans

Phil Higerd isn’t new to building his own houses in the Eastern Sierra. Since moving to Crowley Lake in 1980, Higerd has built two family homes in Crowley and one in Mammoth. He is currently building his fourth, located on the outer edge of The Trails Neighborhood, across the street from the Trails’ End Park.

This is the first consciously “green” house Higerd has built, implementing a variety of energy-efficient technology.

“I want a house that I can grow old but not cold in,” Higerd said. “Something that will be sustainable for the next 30 or so years so we don’t have to move to the desert.”

In his new house, Higerd is using Insulated Concrete Forms (ICFs), or brand name Fox Blocks. “They’re basically Styrofoam Legos,” Higerd said. “You just stack them up and fill them with concrete.”

Randy Daniels, the U.S. Southwest Regional Manager for Fox Blocks, said the ICFs are actually made of expanded polystyrene (EPS), “a close cousin of Styrofoam,” and



PHOTO: EVANS

Steve Dickinson at ESLT’s Sage Grouse workday at Sinnamon Meadows.

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see FOX BLOCKS page 3

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SAFE HAVEN FOR POLLINATORS

Eastern Sierra Land Trust creates Eastside Pollinator Garden Project

By Marguerite Burkam/
Kay Ogden

Listen to the sound of summer sliding into fall – the world around us is abuzz with a sweet melody. The industrious Golden-belted Bumble Bee, the meandering Monarch butterfly, and the blushing Rufous Hummingbird are on the move, extracting the last bit of summer's nourishing nectar from blooms across the Eastside. Together, their chorus is the beating pulse of the Eastern Sierra.

These pollinators are responsible for the splendor and productivity of our magnificent landscape. They shape the Eastern Sierra's identity by supporting both our beautiful native flora and our enduring agricultural heritage. So many of our region's treasures—from wildflowers to working farms—rely on local pollinators in order to live and thrive. As it hops from flower to flower, that little buzzing bee in your backyard is helping to sustain the future of the Eastern Sierra we love.

But pollinator populations across the country are in decline, and, though remote and wild, the Eastern Sierra is no exception. Impacted by pathogens, parasites, pesticides, and the loss of open space, hummingbirds, bees and butterflies are disappearing from our



PHOTO: COURTESY ESLT

ESLT's AmeriCorps Members and Education Coordinators Ali Amberg and Sara Kokkelenberg are bringing pollinators to the Eastern Sierra with the Eastside Pollinator Garden Project.

landscape. With one-third of our food supply and at least 80 percent of the world's flowering plants dependent on these pollinators, their disappearance can be felt everywhere: from our backyards to our dinner plates.

This summer, Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT) took action on behalf of hummingbirds, bees and butterflies across our region. Our two AmeriCorps Members and Education Coordinators, Ali Amberg and Sara Kokkelenberg, teamed up with a group of passionate local advisors to create the Eastside Pollinator Garden Project: committed to transforming gardens and working lands into safe havens for pollinators. With the Eastside Pollinator Garden Project, ESLT is certifying local gardens as pollinator-friendly habitats throughout Inyo and Mono counties and educating our communities about the enormous role that pollinators play in sustaining our region's rural identity.

After researching pollinator programs around the country and learning what the pollinators of the Eastern Sierra need most, Ali and Sara developed a set of certification criteria for locals to follow to make their gardens pollinator-friendly. They took our project on the road, traveling to Independence, across Westgard Pass to Deep Springs College, and north through Mono County.

Along the way, Ali and Sara made presentations in partnership with regional groups like Metabolic Studio, California Native Plant Society, Eastern Sierra Audubon Society, the Rotary Club of Bishop Sunrise, and the Master Gardeners of Inyo and Mono Counties. They visited gardens throughout the Eastern Sierra, and taught us about what we all need to do to keep our local bees, hummingbirds and butterflies thriving.

Soon, Eastside Pollinator Garden Project plaques started popping up on fence posts and garden gates: the buzz was growing. Only five months after launching the Project, ESLT has certi-



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fied 27 individual gardens and 7 community spaces, from Mammoth Lakes to Independence. And we're only just getting started.

By certifying gardens as friendly to bees, hummingbirds and butterflies, and connecting participants to resources and workshops, our goal is to create a corridor of functional and beautiful pollinator-friendly spaces that stretch clear through the entire Eastern Sierra region. Such success would bring blooms to our backyards, food to our tables, and a healthier, more diverse landscape that will be treasured by generations to come.

As the growing season wanes, the Project is winding down for the year – but look for us next spring. When the first flowers open and the bees reappear, we'll be launching our efforts anew to keep our pollinators healthy, and busy at their work to keep the Eastern Sierra thriving. To learn more about ESLT and the Eastside Pollinator Garden Project—and about how you can help support our work and certify your yard or garden—visit www.eslt.org or call our office at (760) 873-4554.

Eastern Sierra Land Trust is committed to permanently safeguarding this special place we call home. ESLT's mission is to preserve a healthy balance of land uses that can be sustained forever, ensuring a strong local economy and healthy environment for generations to come. By working with our communities to create pollinator habitat and encourage land stewardship, ESLT hopes to keep the Eastside blooming, year after year.

Support for this project is provided by Metabolic Studio.



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FOX BLOCKS

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polypropylene plastic. Fox Blocks are manufactured by Airlite Plastics based in Omaha, Nebraska.

According to Daniels, Airlite produces 1.5 billion units of plastic food containers, sporting goods, as well as agricultural and medical supplies. "A small percentage of that doesn't meet code, so we regrind it and turn it into Fox Blocks," Daniels said. The EPS is used for the outer panels, while recycled polypropylene plastic is used as cross-ties to hold the panels together and act as studs to "screw the exterior finishes to," Daniels said.

Airlite began producing Fox Blocks in 2007 and has expanded manufacturing from four sites to eighteen. Daniels said the business has grown 30 to 40 percent over the last seven years and is "driven by sustainability experts, architects, engineers and builders because of its high performance characteristics and ability to reduce energy loads."

Daniels said that the "little bit of waste that comes off of a project site is utterly minimal" and is one hundred percent recyclable. "If it does end up in a landfill it has no toxicity and no chemicals," Daniels said.

Higerd confirmed, "A whole lot less scrap was produced [using Fox Blocks] than from wood framing." Although he was "disappointed that no place local would take the scraps for recycling."

He first heard of Fox Blocks while on a hunting trip with his friend, Pappy Harris, in New Mexico. Harris has built over 100 structures using Fox Blocks "at about the same climate as we have in the Eastern Sierra," Higerd said. Harris lives near Angel Fire and Taos Ski Resorts in Northern New Mexico. Harris told Higerd, a house built with Fox Blocks "you can heat with a light bulb," Higerd said. "He was exaggerating somewhat because we can't buy light bulbs like that anymore."

Higerd started building the house on August 6, a year and a half after purchasing the small lot. "We went from paint lines in the dirt to waiting for trusses in less than a month," said Higerd. It took four days to stack the Fox Blocks and one day to fill them with concrete. He now has been waiting for the trusses to be built so they can close it in before winter. "It will be a flurry of activity in October," Higerd said.

A plumber by trade and owner of Higerd's Plumbing in Mammoth, Higerd jokes that the only way to land a plumbing job these days is to build a house for himself. When he started Higerd's Plumbing in 1988 there were only two other plumbing contractors in Mammoth. "Now, there's 23 plumbing contractors in the phone book," he said. "I've mentored all my alumni too well for my own good."

Higerd built his first house in 1986 with the help of local contractors and good friends Tom Long, Mike Phillips



Phil Higerd (left) and Pappy Harris (right) pose atop the Fox Block walls at Higerd's new house in the Trails.

PHOTOS: RYAN HARRIS

and Steve Johnson. This is the "first real green one," Higerd said, although in the early '80s he used a solar panel to heat all the water for his mobile home in Crowley. "Now I'm going to put five times that so we can heat most of the house," he said.

Higerd is using a solar thermal heating, which will heat hot water and then transfer it to the concrete floor. He is also installing photovoltaic panels to capture solar energy and transfer it into electricity. Higerd still isn't sure how many panels he will be able to fit on the roof, but he will put as many as he can.

It's hard to quantify the achieved utility savings from the photovoltaic panels and thermal solar heating, Higerd said. "It really remains to be seen, but I expect them to be very low. From reports from other people who have built with ICFs, they have had extremely low bills and they haven't even done the extreme insulation I'm doing."

He said the Fox Blocks are providing "instant airtight R-40 insulated walls." "Mammoth requires R-21, so I have almost double." (The R-value is used within the construction industry to measure thermal resistance based on a

complex formula.)

Higerd is using Spray Foam Insulation, an additional insulation measure, to seal the roof. He learned of the Spray Foam Insulation while attending an International Builder's Show to research ICFs. "The concept was build it right and ventilate it tight," Higerd said.

Higerd will also have an un-vented attic and electric or unvented appli-

ances wherever possible in order to retain heat.

"There are minimum penetrations to the building envelope [the interface between the exterior and interior of the building]," he said.

The only problem with that: "When you build a house so tight like this, you have to find a way to get fresh air in," he said.

For that, Higerd is using a Heat Recovery Ventilator (HRV),

which is an air-to-air heat exchanger. "It pulls the stale air out of the house but it transfers the heat to the incoming air so you don't just take your warm air and blow it out, contributing to global warming," he said. "It transfers the heat to the incoming air so you retain 90 percent of the heat."

Higerd said he expects the house to stay warm for up to four days without sunlight or any other heat source,

although it will take just as long to heat the house back up. "It's not like you can come in and turn on the heat and have it warm in 15 minutes," he said. "If it's cold, it's going to take a while for it to get up to temperature. But once it is warm, it's going to stay warm for a long time."

Higerd is installing a gas stove as backup for stormy days, he said. Plus, he purchased this specific lot with the "lowest elevation, least snow and most sun in Mammoth," he said. "It's the lot most conducive to a ground floor living space."

The ground floor (1,500 square feet) will be ADA accessible, with no steps and wide doorways. The finished attic is "for the kids and grandkids to visit and a possible future caretaker suite," he said. "It's extra space that we are not going to be using, not going to be heating most of the time. The solar should take care of the bottom floor completely."

The entire house will be 2,600 square feet.

"I'm as far away from the ski lift as I could get and still be in Mammoth," Higerd said. "I wouldn't have minded moving to a lower elevation, but [leaving] Mammoth was a non-negotiable with Kathy." (Higerd and his wife Kathy moved to Mammoth 14 years ago, after living in Crowley Lake for 20 years.)

The cost of building is "more expensive than standard framing, but I think it's going to compare very well to high performance framing," Higerd said. The house is also ahead of the California Energy Requirements, and Higerd said it will meet the requirements that are coming. "HRV and higher level of insulation is going to be a requirement. It will be really hard to achieve that performance level with regular framing and it's really easy with this."

Higerd has yet to fully explore the tax breaks associated with green building, but knows they exist. "I'm going to do it anyways, whether there are tax breaks or not," he said. "I just haven't had time to explore those things. I'm trying to get it closed in before it snows."

The house should be completed sometime in February. Higerd's previous houses have taken seven to nine months to complete, and he expects this one to take the same. However, "I try not to set any deadlines to create more stress," he said. "A primary goal in our family is to not take the fun out of it."

Higerd said he has an average of five people a day who stop and ask questions about the Fox Blocks. He said he is interested in facilitating or consulting on more Fox Blocks building projects in Mammoth, and possibly even becoming a certified dealer.

"Whatever it takes to get the word out there," he said.

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-Phil Higerd

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CALIFORNIA SEARCHING FOR THE “HOLY GRAIL” OF ENERGY STORAGE

By Rick Phelps

Four years ago I wrote about the cliché of energy storage being the Holy Grail of renewable energy—and managed to work in a Jimmy Buffett reference, too.

Energy storage still is the Holy Grail, but California and Jerry Brown are doing something about it; not much, but at least there is some action.

A year ago, the California Public Utilities Commission mandated that the three investor-owned utilities add 1.3 gigawatts of energy storage by 2020. That sounds like a lot of energy until you look at the numbers. In 2013, according to the California Energy Commission’s Energy Almanac, California-produced renewable energy accounted for 39,236 gigawatt hours of the 199,783 gigawatt hours produced in the state.

Therefore the 1.3 gigawatt energy storage mandate, called “huge” by some pundits, amounts to one-third of one percent of renewable energy produced (.000033133). This is a token commitment and “mandates” may not be the best way to spur technological innovation, but this step highlights the importance of energy

storage and is a good baby step.

More progress is needed, because without storage, system flexibility is lost and progress stalls. Storage also relates to the Manhattan Project, but that comes later.

But what is energy storage? Storage includes batteries large and small, compressed air, pumped water systems, fly wheels and a host of other ideas both new and old. All generally work, but the limiting criteria is cost and scale. The cost question is whether it costs less to store a kilowatt than it does to generate it. The scale issue relates to the application, but generally refers to the amount of energy needed to be stored.

For example, large lead-acid batteries might work fine for a home with a 4 kilowatt load, but not so well for a utility-sized wind project with a capacity of 25 megawatts.

To put the energy storage issue in perspective, think about its impact on remote communities in the Eastern Sierra. Electricity could be stored locally and additional distribution lines—at a cost of millions—would be unnecessary.

Private sector companies, the U. S. Department of Energy (DOE), and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) are making progress on energy storage cost and scale, but there are not yet any major breakthroughs, and the need for more storage in renewable energy continues to grow.

The quest for this Holy Grail is critical for at least three compelling reasons.

First, two major forms of renewable energy—wind and solar—are intermittent and not necessarily generated at the same time there is electricity demand. Often the actual capacities of wind and solar projects is less than 50 percent of stated capacity and the capacity needs to be backed up from conventional sources such as natural gas or coal.

If the energy generated could be stored economically for later use, the renewable projects would be more economically viable, as they could always “sell” their capacity and might be able to reduce their invested capital with a more efficient operation ... and the land use footprint for wind



HSEF Executive Director, Rick Phelps

and solar might be lessened.

Second, if renewable energy is more efficient due to effective storage, there will be less need to ensure that conventional generation capacity is available as backup. Fewer conventional power plants will need to be built and transmission capacity might be reduced if large electricity imports were not necessary to meet the demands of a high-renewable region—if renewable production were not producing at capacity.

see STORAGE, page 6

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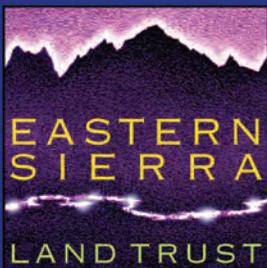
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STORAGE

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Third, energy storage can be used to make the grid more efficient and optimize transmission and distribution capacity. This gets complicated, but the easiest way to explain it is that if the inputs into the grid are predictable, it's a lot easier and economic to manage. In that way, the grid and storage becomes a lot like our own financial budget—when we know what's coming in, it's a lot easier to manage what goes out.

If energy storage is truly the Holy Grail, where are the speeches demanding that we triple our capacity by 2020 or that the United States will become the energy storage technology center for the world? You don't hear those speeches, because energy storage is pretty dull stuff and certainly neither sexy nor photogenic, but if we were to solve the problem, storage would indeed be the Holy Grail ... which brings us back to the Manhattan Project.

To the baby boom generation the Manhattan Project is well known, but to those lucky enough to be younger, it's a little more obscure and even ancient history.

The Manhattan Project had its start in 1939 when Albert Einstein wrote to President Roosevelt warning him that the Germans were likely developing a nuclear weapon with great destructive power, and the United States should counter the German effort with its own initiative. President Roosevelt accepted this challenge and committed the government to this endeavor and by 1942 the Manhattan Project was well underway.

The Project culminated with the successful test of the first nuclear weapon in July 1945, and, following the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, the end of World War II. Over 125,000 scientists and staff at least 30 sites around the country fathered this technology, spending \$22 billion in today's dollars. Solutions were found to problems thought not solvable.

Consequently, The Manhattan Project is symbolic of what can be accomplished with an all-out effort and many, including Bill Gates, have called for a "Manhattan Project" in renewable energy, regardless of the cost or risk. This seems a worthy idea, but wouldn't it make more sense to first solve the vexing challenge of energy storage? Otherwise, what are we going to do with all that renewable energy?

Rick Phelps is Executive Director of the High Sierra Energy Foundation. The views expressed in this column are those of the author and not necessarily those of his employer.

SINNAMON

continued from page 1

Mono County.

Pete Pumphrey, the president of the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society, volunteered to tag fences with ESLT. He emphasized the Audubon Society's efforts to protect the bird and also "create a viewing ethic that is protective of the birds," he said.

Johnson also talked about the importance of educating the public about viewing the Sage Grouse. "Since there has been growing interest in the Sage Grouse a lot of people want to see one. And in some places, like in Long Valley, they are being a little over-loved by people who are wandering to where they do their mating displays," Johnson said. The ESLT, Audubon Society and LADWP hope to organize special field trips during lekking season in order to minimize impact on bird populations. Lek is when male sage grouse display their feathers for the females and create sounds that can be heard up to 2 miles away.

Dan Hottle from USFWS also met the volunteer group at Sinnamon Meadows. Hottle is the Public Affairs Officer for Nevada branch of USFWS, the greater federal agency that is responsible for deciding if the Sage Grouse will be listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

Hottle called the Sinnamon Meadows conservation a "success story in our area of what needs to be done and what is being done" to protect the Sage Grouse. "It's a microcosm of exactly what's happening across 11 states. What Sinnamon Meadows is for the bigger picture [is an example] of agencies working together."

He praised the preservation of the Grouse and its habitat on the property and said this particular easement is a great example of "staving off encroaching land development" and "preserving culture—the western way of life of wide open spaces."

Hottle said the USFWS is still analyzing data in their decision whether or not to list the bird as threatened. "The decision process is right around the corner but we have no idea," he said. "If there is any place that Sage Grouse habitat is going to be successful its in this area, in Mono and Douglas County." The USFWS will make its decision in April 2015.

After Johnson and Hottle briefed the group of volunteers on the protection of the Sage Grouse and the easement, Katrina Krause, from the NRCS Minden Office and Susan Abele from Nevada Fish and Game, explained the fence tagging process. They also provided the tags, made of vinyl house siding with reflector tape that easily clip over the top strand of barbed wire, making it more visible for the Sage Grouse and other wildlife.

"Imagine the sun rising in the morning, it's going to hit that reflector tape and light it up," Krause said. She explained "low light conditions are typically when the birds are flying in and out of these areas. You can imagine in low light that barbed wire doesn't show up very well."

Krause said there is plenty of evidence supporting the negative impact of fences on Sage Grouse population, although it's rare to actually see an injured or dead Grouse near a fence line. "They're not going to lay there very long before something is going to snatch them up and eat them," she said. "Because everybody loves Sage Grouse."

Krause and Abele also provided pink flagging tape for the smooth electric fences that "are even less visible than barbed wire," Krause said.

Abele runs the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, which provides "technical and limited financial assistance for landowners who want to do habitat enhancement or restoration," she said. The tagging at Sinnamon Meadows is part of a larger project to prevent Sage Grouse injury or death in high use areas, especially lekking grounds.

Abele said NRCS developed a mapping tool to "identify high priority areas that should be marked based on lek location, topography and other factors."

Krause is a partner biologist between NRCS and US Fish and Wildlife, covering the Sage-Grouse issue over the entire bi-state area. Her team wrote the grazing and wildlife conservation plan for the Sinnamon Meadows easement "to keep the meadows in good conditions for the Grouse," she said. "The cows left here not that long ago and you can see [the grass is] not grazed right down to the nubbins. It still looks really good."

After Krause and Abele gave instructions, the volunteers split up to walk the fence lines, clipping or tying tags, while taking in the breathtaking landscape. Steve Dickinson, from Bishop, started volunteering with ESLT after he retired. "Responsible stewardship is in short supply," he said. "This is at least a gesture towards responsible stewardship so I'm throwing in with them."

Tony Taylor, another volunteer at the Sage Grouse Work Day, has been on the ESLT Board of Directors since its inception in 2001. "This greater Sage Grouse project that the government is concerned about—this is just a great location for it," he said. The Sinnamon Meadows easement has "really become part of the organization," he said. "We've lived with it year after year and all the issues that come along with it. We've been talking about it for so long we know it just about as well as our names."

ESLT took two and a half years to put the Sinnamon Meadows easement together. Landowners Bryan Masini and Tom Carpenter approached ESLT in 2012 about setting up the conservation easement. "It's appealing to work together with local agencies and protect the Sage Grouse in order to keep it from being listed," Masini said from his home in Yerington, Nevada. "It's all gone very well." Masini also owns ranches in Elko and outside of Bridgeport at the base of the Sweetwater Mountains.

Masini said the easement "helps preserve farming for the next generation [so that] our families can continue in the agricultural business forever." Masini's great-grandfather came to Mason Valley in 1895 from Italy and his family has been in the agricultural business ever since. They started in the Sweetwater Ranch in 1950.

Carpenter and Masini bought Sinnamon Meadows three years ago, but currently lease the land to another rancher. Masini said the easement is "very compatible" with grazing, as long as future ranchers practice good grazing practices, Masini said. He called the property "pristine" and has no plans to build on the property, although the easement does allow the building of a small cabin.

The conservation easement protects Sinnamon Meadows from future development or other uses, indefinitely. "If [Masini] choses to sell the land, the easement goes with the land forever," Kay Ogden, Executive Director of ESLT, said. She called Masini "a willing landowner who really sees the future of his property," and said the entire easement is a "really a collaborative effort to protect something really special."

“

They're not going to lay there very long before something is going to snatch them up and eat them.

-Katrina Krause

”

ALABAMA HILLS MOVES CLOSER TO NSA DESIGNATION

By Vane

In mid-September, Congressman Paul Cook announced his introduction of a bill to the House of Representatives intended to create a National Scenic Area designation for the Alabama Hills.

"I'm excited," said Alabama Hills Stewardship Board member and designation subcommittee Chair Kevin Mazzu of the news.

The designation would encompass 18,610 acres of the Alabama Hills, preserving it for recreational use—including hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing, hunting, fishing, and authorized motorized vehicle use—for present and future generations.

"The Alabama Hills are a natural treasure, and I'm excited to introduce this bill to help guarantee our children and grandchildren can enjoy them the same way we do," Cook said in a statement. "The level of local input has been incredible and should serve as an example for how land use decisions are made."

The proposed legislation is the culmination of eight years of effort by the Alabama Hills Stewardship Group (AHSG) and stakeholders to achieve a National Scenic Area (NSA) designation.

AHSG gathered input from some 30 stakeholders, including the Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Friends

of the Inyo, and Inyo County Board of Supervisors. AHSG eventually settled on the NSA designation based upon their feedback.

The designation would not only allow for continued recreational use, but also improvements to existing infrastructure, including roads, campgrounds and informational kiosks, and further protection for sensitive Native American cultural sites and artifacts.

"The Lone Pine Tribe has an ancestral burial ground and culturally sensitive sites in the Alabama Hills," said Mazzu. "120 acres are currently under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service; those acres will now transfer to the Tribe."

Mazzu said that it was a sign of the Tribe's trust in the NSA that they will then "turn around and include most of that land in the designation."

"Land-use bills are typically controversial in the Owens Valley, but I think that because this was such a grassroots effort, the community has come together behind this. I think it's really a win-win for all stakeholders and user groups."

Inyo County District Five Supervisor Matt Kingsley agreed. "I am proud of the grassroots approach this legislation represents," he said. "The multiple use language in the legislation is a direct result of the Alabama Hills Stewardship



PHOTO: LAURIE HATCH

Sunrise on the Alabama Hills, and Mt. Whitney behind them.

Committee's commitment to including all local stakeholders in the process. This proactive approach is refreshing and is representative of the kind of local leadership that makes our small communities great places to live and work."

The only thing the NSA bill will preclude is commercial mining, although a historical mining area will be included in the designation for historical purposes.

This area will allow the Lone Pine Gem and Minerals Society to continue educa-

tional mining activities for visitors, such as panning for gold.

Mazzu said the bill, drafted after months of work between Paul Cook and the AHSG, is headed to the Natural Resources Committee for review and public feedback. The bill will then be reintroduced to the House and voted upon.

Mazzu said the AHSG is also working closely with Senator Dianne Feinstein to find an appropriate, complementary bill to introduce to the Senate.

"We're hoping that maybe by the end of this year or early next year those processes could be completed," he said.

Mazzu thanked the stakeholders for their part in the collaborative effort to achieve an NSA designation for the Alabama Hills, singling out the BLM. "The BLM has been amazing," he said. "They manage 30,000 acres out there, and this will be the first National Scenic Area that they'll manage. They've been incredibly great partners, working with us."

Should the designation pass, the same stakeholder group will come together to designate trails and camping areas, create educational programs, possibly even a volunteer docent program, and consider other ways to expose residents and visitors to the beauty and history of the Alabama Hills.

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Dennis Rottner - Town of Mammoth Lakes

Snowcreek VI

- Removed and replaced over 12,000 sq. ft. of lawn with drought tolerant species
- Placed rocks and gravel in areas that were difficult to irrigate
- Homeowner Association placed postcards in all units requesting water conservation
- Evergreen Landscape Managers earned Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper certification

Irrigation usage is 40% of their allowance



Jeff Anderson - Juniper Springs Lodge

Town of Mammoth Lakes

- Significantly lowered irrigation amounts to align with their water allotment
- Removed grass from Old Mammoth Road and installed sub-surface drip irrigation for flowers and shrubs
- Identified and repaired leaks on their irrigation system
- Replaced sprinkler heads on Main St. to reduce misting and over spray

Saved over 4,000,000 gallons



Evergreen Landscape Crew - Snowcreek VI

Juniper Springs Lodge

- Property Manager, Jeff Anderson, earned a Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper certification
- Reduced irrigation amounts to below their irrigation allowance
- Adjusted irrigation schedule to respond to weather conditions
- Removed 2 foot wide turf strip
- Installed 100 WaterSense labeled, water efficient showerheads

Saved over 900,000 gallons



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