

**Sequoia National Forest**  
**and**  
*Giant Sequoia National Monument*



**2009-2010**  
**Accomplishment Report**

Another year is here, and it is time to share the Sequoia's highlights of 2009-2010; an extremely successful year with major accomplishments completed.

After 3 years, the Sequoia released the much anticipated Draft Giant Sequoia National Monument Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Management Plan in August, 2010. These documents were developed with much input from the public and the specialists from the Forest who participated as interdisciplinary team members. There were many starts and stops along the way. Perseverance and persistence prevailed toward the development of the draft environmental impact statement and management plan.

The Forest also completed the Piute Fire Restoration Environmental Impact Statement which identified how the Forest was going to restore the Piute Mountains after the 2008 Piute Fire. This fire burned over 37,000 acres and cost \$24 million dollars to manage. There is still more work to be done in the Piute Mountains, as the Forest is just beginning the Piute Travel Management project (to designate a system of routes for off-highway vehicle use in the Piute Mountains).

I thank each and everyone one of you for what you do to make the Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument work. The Sequoia continues to take a journey; a journey that each and every one of us must take together where other people join us; people who volunteer and partner with the Forest and help us identify what opportunities are available for us to seize and nurture. We have achieved so much and continue to do so much with the limited resources on the Forest.

Our priority continues to provide those of you who love the national forests with the opportunity to participate in their long-term care. We provide many opportunities to play a role you want—as citizen stewards of this national treasure. Thank you!

*/s/ Tina Terrell*  
*Forest Supervisor*



## *The future is in partnerships!*

The Sequoia works with a wide range of partners including public agencies, chambers of commerce, recreation organizations, historical societies, environmental groups, Native American tribes, accomplishing an estimated worth over \$1,330,000.

These partnerships complement our capabilities in recreation, fire fighting, law enforcement, communications, facility and trail maintenance, community activities, interpretation, education and a host of other activities.

The forest places great emphasis on our role managing partnerships to help the agency become more relevant for collaborative work. We appreciate all the wonderful efforts from our volunteers across the forest.

The Sequoia National Forest received the support of over 1,100 volunteers accumulating approximately 64,000 hours of service to help accomplish the Forest Service mission of *Caring for the Land and Serving People*. These projects included wildlife habitat and watershed improvement projects, environmental education, recreation facilities enhancement, programs for children and

youth, and trails maintenance. The MyForest Summit provided a hands-on opportunity for middle school youth to participate in stewardship projects, outdoor recreation activities, and learn about outdoor careers. The newly-formed Giant Sequoia National Monument Association organized and trained volunteer docents for the Trail of 100 Giants. Rio Limpio and multiple river clean-up days along the Kern River engaged the community in improving the conditions along the Tule and Kern Rivers. The Backcountry Horsemen of California, the High Sierra Trail Crew, and the Stewards of the Sequoia are just a few of the groups that help maintain trails and provide visitor information to the public.



### **Annual MyForest**

#### **Summit**

One hundred thirty students from various schools and organizations throughout the Central San Joaquin Valley participated in the third annual MyForest Summit. The event was held at the Clemmie Gill School of Science and Conservation (SCICON) on Friday, September 24 and Saturday, September 25. It was held in concert with National Public Lands Day, September 25. Students learned about their public lands, participated in stewardship projects, and experienced a variety of exciting, outdoor activities provided by local organizations and agencies. Projects included gardening,

trail improvement, campground maintenance, and habitat improvement.

This collaborative effort was the second overnight event orchestrated by the Sequoia Youth Summit, a partnership between multiple agencies and private organizations committed to connecting children, youth and their families to their public lands. This year's event was made possible through a More Kids in the Woods Grant from the Forest Service.

Donations were made from local organizations, businesses and volunteers passionately committed to youth and public lands. Plan to attend or support a child next year. Visit:

[www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia).



### **Buck Rock Foundation**

On September 5, the Buck Rock Foundation hosted the annual Labor Day Weekend Celebration and Open House in the Giant Sequoia National Monument, Sequoia National Forest.

Local Wuksachi /Wutchumni elder Eddie Tupishna Sartuche began with a traditional Native American *Blessing of the Rock*. The annual barbecue featured booths with local history, wildlife, children's activities, lookout

memorabilia, and a variety of local vendors. Smokey Bear appeared throughout the day while fire personnel were available to explain daily operations of this historic fire lookout.

Buck Rock is located in the Big Meadows area of the Giant Sequoia National Monument at 8,500 feet. This lookout is a popular destination, perched 300 feet above the ground on a granite dome. Visitors have grand views of the High Sierra where eagles, falcons and other magnificent birds of prey are often spotted soaring the skies around the lookout.

After many years of being closed, Buck Rock reopened in 2000. This annual celebration marks that event.

For more information contact the Buck Rock Foundation, (559) 336-9319, or [www.buckrock.org](http://www.buckrock.org).



### **High Sierra Volunteer Trail Crew**

Have you ever thought about volunteering? The Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument are partnering with a local

organization to bring a large number of volunteers to work on trails throughout the forest. Many trails throughout the forest are in need of work. Years of brush and weeds have hidden some areas of the trails making it hard to find.

The High Sierra Volunteer Trail Crew (HSVTC), a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization located in Clovis, has worked for the Forest Service for over 15 years. The HSVTC is now positioned to partner with various public land managers involved in the stewardship of the central Sierra Nevada. The crews work on projects pertaining to trail maintenance, environmental reclamation (marijuana garden cleanup), facility or forest maintenance and youth education. The partnership will focus on more areas in the southern part of the forest and monument.

In January the forest prioritized 12 trails that need maintenance located in wilderness areas or in the backcountry near recreation areas. Now the task is to recruit volunteers willing and able work this year.

Volunteering is the backbone of this organization's partnering efforts to manage your national forest. Volunteers help accomplish the mission by educating and promoting the citizen steward in each of us. Some volunteers want to preserve their recreation opportunities and spend time outdoors, others love being outside and feel a sense of responsibility toward the land, some are retired and looking to continue using their experience and skills, and some are seeking health benefits through exercise and physical activity.

Wherever you are in life, consider volunteering on the national forest we have many opportunities for you. Trail maintenance is just one area to get down and dirty. Other opportunities include providing interpretative programs or trash pick up along rivers and streams.

Margaret Mead and Rhoda Metraux in *Aspects of the Present* once said we live in a society that has always depended on volunteers of different kinds. Some can give money, others give time, and a great many will freely give their special skills, full or part-time.

Over 7,000 hours of labor were contributed for these projects. HSVTC provides supervision for the volunteers, which facilitates work accomplishment, as the Forest Service does not need to perform that role; however a substantial amount of coordination was needed with forest engineering staff for the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) bridge project, to ensure the work was done to standard.

The PCT bridge project, located on a designated wild and scenic river in the South Sierra Wilderness, included: replacement of bridge decking and railing, and improving the approach to the bridge. The Kanawyer Trail project ( Monarch & Golden Trout Wildernesses) projects included removing large downed trees that were blocking the trails, repairing the trail tread (including drainage), and removing brush from the trail corridors. This trail work occurred during the summer prior to the Sheep Fire.

The Forest was concerned about the effects of the Sheep Fire on this trail since the fire burned some of the trail that was refurbished and groomed. After the Sheep Fire was contained, a BAER (Burned Area Emergency

Rehabilitation) Team completed more work on the trail.

The Quaking Aspen project involved windfall removal, brushing, and minor tread work on the trails intersecting at Quaking Aspen Campground.

In September and October the marijuana grow site cleanup was funded from the Washington Office. This project dealt with a reclamation cleanup on national forest system lands. Crews were also engaged in hazardous materials cleanup at the marijuana grow sites.

In 2009, these additional funds were a congressional allocation to the Pacific Southwest Region. Most of the project work occurred within wilderness, HSVTC needed to employ primitive skills as the minimum tool. The crews working on the forest received cross-cut saw training to enable the work to be completed. For details visit: [www.trailcrew.org](http://www.trailcrew.org).



## **Big Meadow Partnership**

*Volunteers wanted in year-round outdoor forest playground located in the northern section of the Giant Sequoia National Monument!* This is an advertisement the Big Meadows Association is currently seeking members, volunteers, donations, corporate sponsors, and partnerships.

Many non-profit organizations and associations are formed to complement the mission of the U.S. Forest Service in *Caring for the land and serving people*. Many associations match federal dollars, build capacity and resources through partnerships, foundation grants, fund raising and donations. The association's goal is to create opportunities for people and communities to participate in public lands management. This association instills forest stewardship values through educational and recreational programs for sequoia visitors and local communities.

The Big Meadows folks also coordinate education, outreach and advocacy for

the interests of users with the Hume Lake Ranger District.

***What is the Big Meadows Association's Vision?***

The vision was crafted incrementally by participants. The sole mission is to support, promote, and improve the areas used by visitors for year-round outdoor activities such as snowplay, backcountry experiences, hiking, fishing, camping, biking, four-wheeling, and motorcycle riding.

***Where is Big Meadows?***

The Big Meadows area is located in the Giant Sequoia National Monument, near the Generals Highway between Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

***Winter Volunteer Opportunities:*** From the Big Meadows parking lot, which is a plowed visitor area with restrooms, there are over 68 miles of groomed and ungroomed snowmobile trails to explore, and 30 miles of ungroomed x-country ski trails which access unlimited backcountry ski areas. They also maintain winter emergency and comfort facilities including the trailhead telephone, Horse Camp restroom, and warming hut.

The warming hut is located across from Horse Camp, and maintained by the association in partnership with Montecito Lake Resort and the Hume Lake Ranger District. The warming hut serves as an emergency shelter for stranded or injured snowplay visitors, as a kiosk for goodwill and visitor information, and as a respite from the cold.

***Summer Opportunities:*** In proximity to Big Meadows Road there are three campgrounds, four trailheads that access wilderness areas, four-wheel drive roads, motorcycle and mountain bike trails, fishing, wildlife viewing, hunting, a pack station, hiking opportunities, and the Buck Rock Fire Lookout.

Volunteer, get out and get going! I look forward to your participation and support for the Big Meadows Association. For information visit: [www.bigmeadowsassociation.com](http://www.bigmeadowsassociation.com).



**Partnership  
Agreement Signed with the  
Stewards of the Sequoia**

Last September 2010, the Sequoia signed a challenge-cost share agreement with Stewards of the Sequoia to help maintain trails on the Forest. Since 2004, Stewards of the Sequoia have been a partner and operate under an agreement, called a Memorandum of Understanding, to maintain hiking and biking trails throughout the forest. They have adopted nine multiple use trails on the southern part of the forest on the Kern River Ranger District and work diligently to keep trails open and in good condition for everyone.

Non-profit volunteer organizations such as Stewards of the Sequoias are great partners and the backbone of many forest operations. They provide enthusiasm and hard physical labor, operate on a slim budget, recruit volunteers with passion who want to make a difference, and offer opportunities for you to get outdoors! They also embrace our forest service safety principles that “safety starts with

a vision and ends with a mindset,” with all projects. Each volunteer project begins with a training session for all participants on sustainable trail management practices.

From multi-year efforts volunteers see large improvements in trail conditions, find new places to explore, and form new bonds and friendships. Over the years, volunteers from Stewards of the Sequoia have showcased the positive aspects of natural resource management by donating over 8,000 hours performing: maintenance on 1,400 miles of trails averaging 200 miles per year of brushing and other maintenance; planting over 500 trees to speed reforestation in the McNally Fire area; installing or maintaining almost 1,400 water bars to reduce erosion and promote forest health; and clearing 700 downed trees to keep hikers on the trail to reduce trail braiding.

The Stewards of the Sequoia volunteers have provided over \$300,000 in community and environmental benefits to the Forest Service through their volunteer program. Under the new challenge cost-share agreement the forest will be able to utilize personnel from the Stewards to complete much

needed trail work and utilize funds from the Off Highway Vehicle Commission. The forest has competed for over the last couple of years. This new partnership will enable the Forest to accomplish more trail maintenance and improvements on the ground.



### **Sequoia National Forest Works with Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks on Natural Resource Assessment**

Last October, the Sequoia sent giant sequoia inventory data and funding to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SKNP) for their upcoming natural resource assessment under a new partnership between both agencies.

By collaboratively sharing the Forest's giant sequoia inventory data, SKNP will be able to create a unique database of information for both agencies for most giant sequoia groves located in the southern Sierras.

The forest's giant sequoia grove data will be combined with the SKNP to: (1) identify the natural resources and ecosystems of giant sequoia groves to determine their nature and status; (2) allow the agencies to monitor ecosystems under their dynamic nature and condition; (3) provide reference points for comparisons with other altered environments; and (4) integrate natural resource inventory and monitoring information into both agency planning, management, and decision making efforts.

In 2014, the natural resource assessment will be completed by the University of California at Berkeley.

This was a great opportunity the Sequoia seized to ensure our data is linked and coordinated with other agencies.





*10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*  
**GIANT SEQUOIA NATIONAL  
MONUMENT April 15, 2000**



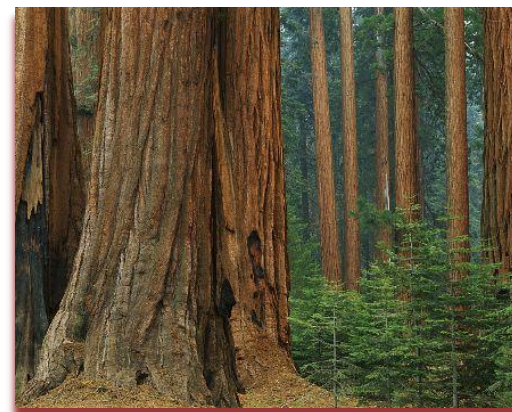
The Giant Sequoia National Monument was designated by President William Jefferson Clinton in April 2000. The Monument now encompasses 353,000 acres.

The Giant Sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) is the world's largest tree. It occurs naturally only in a narrow 60-mile band of mixed conifer forest generally between 5,000-8,000 ft. elevations on the west slope of the

Sierra Nevada. There are 65-75 groves of sequoias in the Sierra, depending upon how the groves are defined.

There are 33 sequoia groves in the Giant Sequoia National Monument. Featured on the Sequoia's webpage are 6 giant sequoia groves to explore which will provide you a rich, exciting and varied experience for your visit. Three groves are featured in the northern portion of the Monument on the Hume Lake Ranger District, nearby Dunlap, California, and three groves are featured on the southern portion of the Monument on the Western Divide Ranger District just east of Springville, California.

Amazingly, giant sequoia is one of the largest organisms on earth and grows from a seed less than half an inch long! When fully grown, the sequoia pushes its craggy tree top more than 250 feet into the sky. A few rare specimens have grown taller than 300 feet. But it is the sequoia's huge girth that sets it apart from all other trees. Sequoias are commonly more than 20 feet in diameter and at least one has grown to 35 feet across. Six people would have to lay head-to-toe to match this distance.



Sequoia's: Giants of the Sierra Nevada  
The Sequoia National Forest manages 33 groves of giant sequoia.



**Northern Section:**

In the late 1800s, privately owned logging operations took place in **Converse Basin**. By 1908, they had thoroughly logged the area. Visitors can see remnants of this logging operation today and learn how entire groves were cut down before it was realized that cutting these magnificent trees bore no major financial gain. One of the famous giants, the General Noble tree, was cut, and sections were reassembled at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Today, visitors can view the remaining

20-foot “Chicago Stump” in Converse Basin. The trail to the stump is universally accessible.

**The Boole Tree** is the last of the huge giant sequoias that had grown until the 1890’s in Converse Basin. It is the largest tree on National Forest System land and is recognized as one of the largest trees in the world.

**Indian Basin Grove** is one of the few groves with a campground in it.

**Princess Campground** has three campground loops - Shining Cloud, Yellow Moon, and Morning Star. It has the greatest number of huge, old Sequoia tree stumps and young Sequoia trees along with a pleasant variety of conifers. Shade is good throughout the campground; privacy between camp sites is fair to good. Princess Campground lies in the middle of Indian Basin Grove beside Indian Basin Meadow and Creek. Campfire talks and guided hikes occur most weekends from Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day Weekend.



### **Southern Section:**

The **Trail of a Hundred Giants** across from Redwood Meadow Campground on the Western Divide Highway

provides interpretation about life among the giant sequoias. This self-guided trail is about one-half mile long and is fully accessible. In April, 2000, President Bill Clinton signed the Presidential Proclamation at this site establishing the Giant Sequoia National Monument.

**The Belknap Grove** is a complex formed from multiple groves. Belknap campground lies within this grove. Beautiful trails through old-growth sequoias meander along Bear Creek and the Tule River. This grove is fairly easy to get to by driving paved roads in your car. You can visit this grove year round, but there may be snow and ice on the roads in winter so check in advance and bring your tire chains.

**The Freeman Grove** is the easternmost grove of giant sequoias and contains the President George H.W. Bush Tree. In 1992, President Bush signed a Presidential Proclamation here providing management direction for all national forest giant sequoia groves.

**Past History:** For centuries, the sequoia was known only by the Native Americans, and was not seen by European descendants until the mid-

1800. Since then these ancient giants have known a history of logging and renewal, of common use and veneration, and of human conquering and legal patronage. Wide-spread logging before the turn-of-the-century inspired the public to clamor for this protection. Three national forests, three national parks, and various state holdings have met that demand.

**Present Day:** The Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument manage 33 giant sequoia groves for their protection, restoration, and preservation. Following massive mapping efforts, grove boundary signs and designations were placed around the groves’ perimeters. The 33 giant sequoia groves in the monument are: Alder Creek, Abbot Creek, Agnew, Bearskin, Belknap Complex (Belknap, Wheel, McIntyre), Black Mountain, Burro Creek, Big Stump, Cherry Gap, Converse Basin, Cunningham, Deer Creek, Deer Meadow, Dillionwood, Evans Complex (Evans, Lockwood, Kennedy), Freeman Creek, Grant, Long Meadow, Indian Basin, Landslide, Maggie Mountain, Middle Tule, Monarch, Mountain Home, Packsaddle (Packsaddle, Powderhorn), Peyrone,

Red Hill, Redwood Mountain, Silver Creek, South Peyrone, Starvation Complex, Upper Tule, and Wishon.



### **Employee Dedication Ceremony for 10-year anniversary of the Giant Sequoia National Monument**

On Wednesday, July 28, 2010, Sequoia employees had a celebration ceremony for the 10-year anniversary of the establishment of the Giant Sequoia National Monument. Hard to believe, but it has been 10-years since that historic event. On this day, the Forest did a number of things to commemorate this important day.

First, the Forest purchased new banners that showcased the remarkable giant sequoia trees. Each district received a banner, including the Supervisor's Office. The Forest also donated a banner to hang in the Springville Chamber of Commerce office since they are a partner in helping to promote the Giant Sequoia National Monument (under a memorandum of understanding). Stop by one of the offices to see these unique banners.

Second, the Forest held an awards ceremony to thank those employees who worked so hard in developing the Travel Management Environmental Impact Statement. This document, signed by the Forest Supervisor last December 2009, designates routes on the Greenhorn, Breckenridge, Piute, and Lake Isabella areas where motorized use can occur. For the Piute, the only designation is the removal of cross-country travel, as this area will be analyzed in the upcoming Piute Travel Management Environmental Impact Statement planning process.

Finally, the Forest showed its appreciation to all employees for all their hard work over the years in helping to showcase and market the monument by obtaining t-shirts and pins for all employees. The work we do together (employees and partners/volunteers) will go a long way in helping to promote, sustain, protect, market, and improve areas of the Giant Sequoia National Monument for the public to use. We thank all who participated in this great day!



### **Giant Sequoia National Monument Association**

The newly created Giant Sequoia National Monument Association's (GSNMA) goal is to increase public enjoyment, and market one of the world's most impressive treasures in the Sierra Nevada. On October 29, 2009, the Association held their first public meeting in Visalia to define their mission and begin a public dialogue. From this meeting, and an earlier meeting with the Sequoia National Forest, they identified five projects and activities as starting points that balance both resource protection and visitor experiences.

- Create a Monument handout about land ethics,
- Create a speaker's bureau about the monument and the Monument Association,
- Create a brochure for the Monument Association,
- Take a larger role to plan MyForest Summit 2010, with a goal to lead this annual event, and
- Provide guided tours at the popular Trail of 100 Giants Interpretive Trail.

This year the Giant Sequoia National Monument Association planned and implemented a program for volunteer docents to lead interpretive tours along the Trail of 100 Giants, a popular attraction in the monument. The volunteer docents donated 275 hours to the project, not including the coordinator's time for planning, coordination, or weekly tour refinement. International visitors are common along with visitors from all over the United States.

Planning work began in June 2010, and tours began July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend through Labor Day weekend. Tours were given on weekends and holidays, twice a day, totaling 24 days.

During the weekend thousands visited (12,000-15,400), including over 2,400 on July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend, and smaller numbers in succeeding weekends (500-700). Fewer visitors (1,000-1,500) interacted with the docents or went on tours (500-700).

The docent coordinator developed a script for the trail with monthly customized revisions. This service increased the level of visitor contacts and enhanced their experiences. After word of the tours spread (advertisements, flyers and websites), visitation increased with many repeat visitors becoming docents.

The GSNMA also developed a new trail map, new signage along the trail with carsonite posts, trail flyers, a trail head map dispenser, a trail docent guide, and a self-guided trail map with tour information. Overall, the association trained 23 people to participate in the docent trail program.

Become a member, visit:  
[www.gsnma.org](http://www.gsnma.org).



## **Backcountry Horsemen**

The Back Country Horsemen (BCHC), a service organization was formed in Tulare County in 1986. There are several organizations that are active in the Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument. They split their service between on-the-ground projects, and educational outreach efforts focused on the next generation. With a passion and love for the backcountry, they continue the tradition of packing stock (horses and mules) into the backcountry and teaching safe and ethical use of our public lands.

The members teach a stewardship message highlighting the *Leave No Trace* wilderness ethics by donating time, equipment, and animal stock. Members present *Gentle Use* packing workshops to Boys and Girl Scouts, 4-H groups, schools and community groups. They also conduct horse and mule packing, and camping demonstrations at Butterfield School Days, *MyForest* Summit, and many other civic events. At Frontier High School in Bakersfield, they teach a

back country animal packing curriculum to Future Farmers of America students.

Members also pack-in supplies for backcountry experiences for *At Risk* youth, and provide *Leave No Trace* education for Pyles Boys Camp Leadership Training, along with training for Boys Scout Horsemanship Merit Badges. They assist the Southern California Sportsman Association and the Safari Club with youth programs including the Porterville Fair *Hug-a-Tree* program on Farm Day.

Wilderness Riders is another educational outreach program for trained back country stock users. These activities all drive home a simple message; protect our wildlands through *Gentle Use* skills.

Many units travel into the six wildernesses in the Sequoia to maintain several historic forest service guard stations which once housed early fire patrol rangers. In the Golden Trout and Dome Land Wildernesses they maintain Trout, Grey Meadow and Manter cabins. They also provide visitor information during the summer;

maintain the administrative and public grass pastures around the cabins, work on trails, and pack out trash. At the public pastures of Big Meadow and Paloma Meadow on the Kern Plateau, they remove the fence for winter recreation when the snowpack arrives, and replace it yearly for the summer recreation season.

This organization also provides support for wilderness restoration projects. Last year, they packed in supplies on horses and mules to the Fungston Meadow restoration project to remove velvet grass, an invasive species that threatens high elevation native grasses. They made 8 round trips through the Golden Trout Wilderness delivering approximately 3,500 pounds of supplies, and then, turned around and packed out trash and personal items for volunteers.

One unit throughout the summer teamed up with Los Angeles kids and cleared the Old Hockett Trail of travel hazards and trash. Another unit worked in the Dome Land Wilderness to restore and maintain trails to Manter Meadow.

Since the Manter Fire (2000), many trails throughout the fire area are plagued with falling dead trees. Last season four different work parties maintained 12-15 miles of trails, removed 86 fallen trees, and cut down overgrown whitethorn along trails. Members also installed and maintained facilities at wilderness trailheads that include visitor information stations, horse hitching posts, corrals and restrooms.

*Our thanks, and our cowboy hats are off to these dedicated mounted volunteers!* They deliver many services that help access and protect the “wildness” of our national forests.



### **Isabella Lake Fishing Derby Special Use Permit**

Isabella Lake is one of the largest fresh water lakes in southern California, located less than three hours from Los Angeles. Annually the Kern River Ranger District coordinates the fishing derby, one of the largest amateur trout fishing derby's in the country which offers over \$200,000 in cash prizes.

In 2010, the event was no less daunting with trailers bordering the lake shoreline. Over 5,000 registered for the event which nearly doubles the population of the Kern River Valley.

The fishing derby campers and anglers had plenty of room for overnight accommodations at sequoia campgrounds around the lake. With the purchase of the Southern Sierra Nevada Pass, overnight camping was allowed at Auxiliary Dam, Old Isabella Road and the South Fork Recreation Area.

Free camping areas were extended to visitors at Stine Cove, Hanning Flat, Engineer Point, and Kissack Cove. Visitors were allowed to set up recreation vehicles in developed campsites prior to the weekend event; however they needed to occupy the site. District employees were at hand to meet all visitor needs.



### **Service First Ribbon Cutting Unveils Electronic Touch Screen Kiosk**

On September 13, 2010, a Service First ribbon cutting was held with the Sequoia National Forest and Bureau of

Land Management (BLM) for the new electronic kiosk outside the Bakersfield BLM office located just off the intersection of Highways 65 and 99.

This government initiative for better customer service provided a groundbreaking opportunity for the public to plan their trip to our nation's great outdoors in the southern Sierra Nevada by the use of a 24 hour a day, 7-day a week electronic kiosk.. This interactive kiosk demonstrates how inter-agency cooperation leads to better service for everyone. The kiosk can be accessed anytime day or night!



### **Upper Kern River Action Plan**

Summers on the Kern River provide an incredible experience which touch

many people and create lasting family memories! Our national forests provide opportunities to get away from the distractions we face each day and get back to basics like just enjoying the beautiful sounds of nature along the *Wild and Scenic* Kern River.

Each year visitors travel to this area seeking a renewal of spirit and mind. One of the most popular segments of the Kern River is the 20-mile stretch north of Kernville located within an hour's drive of Bakersfield. This segment provides easy and convenient year round river access from State Mountain 99 and flows from the Johnsondale Bridge south to Isabella Reservoir.

Within the canyon corridor, there are six developed campgrounds, 10 dispersed (largely undeveloped) camping areas and three picnic areas. Currently, the Kern River Ranger District manages dispersed camping and picnic sites, while developed campgrounds are managed by a concessionaire. Historically, the Forest Service has followed a policy of allowing "open or dispersed camping" outside of developed campgrounds. These areas provide limited or no

services. In 1987, this policy continued with the designation of the Kern River into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, so long as the river's water quality and ecosystem remained protected.



Over time impacts from this open camping policy have resulted in resource degradation, sanitation issues, and loss of habitat. Overcrowding, congested parking, and visitor conflicts further demonstrate the need for improved management of these areas. More specific actions are necessary in order to be consistent with currently accepted riparian conservation practices being used throughout the Sierra Nevada range. Basically, more specific actions need to be implemented to ensure public health

and safety and to meet the intent of the "Wild and Scenic Rivers Act," by protecting the Outstandingly Remarkable Values for which the river was designated.

We have prepared the Upper Kern River Action Plan to address the above issues and public concerns gathered from meetings, field trips, comments and other feedback. This plan will be part of a three-fold strategy over the next five years to preserve and enhance the Upper Kern River corridor.

This year we will review the 25-foot setback for camping and fire use from the river's edge. We will review the open camping, use of fire, and wood collection policies along the river corridor. Long term plans may include developing "dispersed" sites into campgrounds, changing periods of use, changing distribution of use, and/or limiting use. Other measures will include monitoring, resource planning, and updating the Kern River Comprehensive Management Plan through an environmental analysis. With these actions we hope to improve the quality of the recreation experience and the long-term protection for this Wild and Scenic river corridor.

I invite you to join me in this challenging endeavor. Let's continue the dialogue for preserving and enhancing the values of this outstandingly remarkable and beautiful river!



*Giant Sequoia  
National Monument Land &  
Resource Management  
Collaborative Planning Efforts!*

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**Thank you** for all of your candid comments and suggestions over the past 2+ years as you have stayed engaged in the Giant Sequoia National Monument (Monument) planning process! We released the draft environmental impact statement and draft monument management plan in August.

The Giant Sequoia National Monument (Monument), home to 33 giant sequoia groves, is a publicly owned treasure in California's southern Sierra Nevada. The Monument's diverse geologic formations, ecosystems and human history hold unique opportunities for public education, scientific study, and

recreation. In April 2000, President Clinton proclaimed 327,769 acres of the Sequoia National Forest as the Giant Sequoia National Monument.

Starting in January 2008, a two-year collaborative scoping process began for development of a new Monument Plan. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), and draft monument plan was published for a 90-day public review period. The Forest Service also convened a Science Review Panel, led by Dr. Carl Skinner, Pacific Southwest Research Station. This panel developed a Science Review Report which was released with the DEIS and draft management plan.

A series of seven (7) public meetings were held throughout the state of California during the 90-day comment period. When the Final EIS and management plan have been completed to reflect public comments, Randy Moore, Regional Forester, will sign the Record of Decision (ROD) in summer 2011.

The Monument planning strategy has been focused on a 5-pronged *collaborative effort*, to communicate and engage the public in the development of the new Monument Management Plan. The five parts are:

- A multi-party **collaboration** effort using a third-party mediator to bring together local communities of interest, in cooperation with the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution
- Piloting **state-of-the-art communication software** for online e-planning to connect our publics nationwide using social networking opportunities
- **Integration of two decision support systems** that will drive collaborative forest planning alternatives for the Monument
- **Connecting environmental and socio economic planning** using Headwaters Economics software to develop demographic and socioeconomic trends which impact local land use patterns
- **Coordinating a Science Review Panel** headed by a science administrator, and six scientists to review how the U.S. Forest Service is integrating current science in the DEIS and subsequent management plan for the Monument

This 5-pronged collaborative approach means sharing power, engaging in ongoing conversation with stakeholders and the general public, and being open.

Representatives of stakeholder groups and the general public had the opportunity to be a part of defining objectives, crafting alternatives, guiding the analysis of alternatives, and ensuring that our efforts are transparent and easy to understand.



### **Princess Campground Restoration Phase III**

Princess Campground sits within the Indian Basin Giant Sequoia grove (5,900 feet), in the northern section of the Giant Sequoia National Monument on the Hume Lake Ranger District. Here visitors have remarkable opportunities to walk and camp among young giant sequoias, lush meadows, and shallow creeks along the Indian Basin Interpretive Trail. Historic remnants left in this grove tell a rich story of the western frontier and the 1900-era logging operations. Starting in 2003, the Sequoia applied for and was awarded a 1.5 million dollar U.S. Forest Service Capital Investment Project grant to rehabilitate and begin deferred maintenance on the 90 sites located along three loops. Improvements include:

- **Indian Basin Interpretive Trail** constructed and paved to meet accessibility standards;
- **Camping spurs** much larger to accommodate RVs, new picnic tables and campfire rings that meet accessibility standards;
- **New Paving** for roads, camping spurs, 2 host site trailer pads, pathways to 8 toilet buildings, and 16 water hydrants to allow access for individuals with disabilities;
- **Replacements of 4 gates, 5,315 feet of waterline** including drains, 2,300 feet of pump and control lines, replacement of the generator house, installation and replacement of 21 valves with valve boxes, and installation of 2 leach fields;
- **Installation** of a new RV water tower washout station and potable water fill, 2 new RV pedestals, a pump out septic tank for the host site, and 1 government generator building;
- **Toilet improvements** and 2 additional toilet buildings built in the areas of the accessible campsites.

The Hume Lake Ranger District will have a celebratory re-opening in 2011.



### Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day

International Migratory Bird Day was celebrated on the Hume Lake District, Saturday, May 9, 2009, at the Powder Can Picnic Area in the Giant Sequoia National Monument. This year's theme, *Celebrate Birds in Culture*, explored the role birds have played in cultures throughout the Americas. Birds have been important in life since ancient times. They are found in cave art, weavings, pottery, stories, music, and religious ceremonies. Today, people are making additional contributions to bird conservation reflecting a personal conservation ethic.

This migratory bird event increases public awareness for bird conservation. Birds are economically important and a priceless part of America's natural heritage, and a critical indicator of environmental health. The Giant Sequoia National Monument provides over 353,000 acres of forest, meadow and other habitat for migrating, nesting, and wintering birds. Volunteers participated in a chilly early morning

hike and bird count. Mark your calendar for 2011.



### Tulare & Kern Counties Resource Advisory Committee

On January 15, 2011, the Kern and Tulare Counties Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) began accepting the second round of applications for projects that would enhance forest ecosystems or restore and improve land health and water quality on the Sequoia National Forest and other near-by lands in Tulare and Kern counties.

The RAC has nearly \$400,000 to spend on projects made available to Tulare and Kern Counties through the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2009. This committee works closely with the Forest Service to recommend projects that will benefit forest health, fish, wildlife, soils, watersheds and other resources; maintain roads, trails, and other infrastructure; and control noxious weeds. Projects can be implemented by Forest Service personnel through partnership

agreements, or by open-bid contracting with individuals and/or corporations.

During round one of public project submittals there were ten projects submitted in 2010, and five projects were funded-- three in Tulare County, two in Kern County totaling \$104,529. RAC administrative costs were also submitted as a project, and funded for \$17,225.

Two upcoming workshops will be held: February 17, at the Supervisors Office in Porterville (also available by teleconference from the Kernville office), and March 17, at the County of Kern Administrative Office in Bakersfield.

All meetings are open to the public. For information contact Priscilla Summers at: [psummers@fs.fed.us](mailto:psummers@fs.fed.us), or call (559) 539-2607.



### ***Collaboration Efforts Piute Mountain Travel Management***

The Sequoia National Forest invited the public to participate in a collaborative process to assist in developing a travel management plan for the Piute Mountains. Five meetings were scheduled starting October, 2010, through the final meeting on January 7, at the Odd Fellows Hall in Kernville.

This planning process for the Piute Mountains was put on hold after the Piute fire burned through the area in July, 2008. To allow this area to recover, the Forest Supervisor decided to remove the Piute Mountains area from the Sequoia National Forest travel management planning process.

In January the process began by inviting the public to participate in a series of collaborative meetings to develop a mutually acceptable proposal for the Piute Mountains transportation system. This informal effort assisted the Sequoia on another step toward the formal environmental review process for the Piute Mountains Travel Management Plan.

As a result, an excellent collaborative working group provided invaluable input into this process. Plan to stay involved as we begin the next stage in the development of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement.



### ***OHV Grants 2010-2011 Grant Cycle***

Four projects submitted to the California State Off-Highway Motor Vehicle (OHV) Recreation Division Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program were funded during the 2010-2011 grant cycle; totaling \$1,013,000.

A forest-wide Health and Safety project that included the development of new OHV user guides was funded for \$41,000. An OHV related restoration

project located on the Kern River Ranger District was funded for \$300,000. A law enforcement proposal totaling \$134,000, and a ground operations (for repair and maintenance of OHV related facilities) proposal totaling \$538,000 were also funded.



### **Upper Kern River Action Plan & Collaborative Efforts**



On September 26, 2009, a public meeting and field trip was held on issues affecting the Upper Kern River. The meeting was well attended and generated a wide variety of solutions to help resolve deteriorating conditions within the river corridor due to an open camping policy and public overuse of the area. Public response included

strong support for new actions to assure the long term protection and enhancement of the Kern River watershed.

**FY2009-2010:** Forest managers developed an Upper Kern River Action Plan to address the resource impacts and current policies to systematically regain management control over the river corridor. Specific actions are needed to be consistent with accepted riparian conservation practices being used throughout the Sierra Nevada range. The river corridor needs management to ensure public health and safety meets the intent of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1964.

The Sequoia developed a 3-phase action plan; intermediate, short-term, and long-term. Continued public support and further public involvement will assure a quality user experience in the Upper Kern River corridor and protect and enhance the values designating it as a Wild and Scenic Rivers system.



### **Marijuana 2010 Marijuana Cleanup (Operation TRIDENT)**

Over the past 5-7 years the Sequoia National Forest has been one of the most heavily used forests for illegal marijuana garden activity. In 2010, this trend continued. This year's operation entailed more than just finding, capturing, and eradicating the marijuana gardens. It concentrated efforts to clean-up the gardens removing the trash, garbage, tents, sleeping bags, and hose-pipe.

Operation TRIDENT (which stands for TRI-county operation, plus DENT in cultivation and marijuana activities), was broken into three phases over the summer. Phase 1 was the education and prevention phase at schools, community events and initial investigations. Phase 2 was a three-week operation that included eradication, investigation, road interdiction, and some reclamation. Phase 3 included after action reviews, additional operations and reclamation cleanup of 2010 sites (including sites eradicated in 2008-2009).

Overall, our law enforcement officers, fire and resource personnel eradicated 663,896 plants (313,948 plants on the Sequoia National Forest), and seized 5,873 lbs of processed (dried marijuana) plants. There were 126 arrests (66 on the Sequoia), 79 were federally charged and 8 State charged. A total 38 convictions were completed as of November 2010.

There were 118 raided sites (103 were reclaimed), with many of these sites on private land adjacent or within the Sequoia. Out of these sites the Forest was able to reclaim approximately 100% using contractors, volunteers, and fire crews. Operation TRIDENT covered 80% of the Sequoia National Forest and 90% of the Sierra National Forest in Tulare, Fresno, and Madera Counties.

During Phase 2 and 3, 394 acres of public land were cleaned up. The forests cleaned up 100 grow sites with approximately 84,590 lbs of debris removed (42 tons). This included 451,975 feet of irrigation tubing (93.3 miles of drip line); 10,866 lbs. of unused fertilizer removed (5.4 tons); and 3,836 ounces of pesticide (240 lbs). The cleanup removed 124 large 5-

gallon propane tanks, 382 small 1-quart size propane tanks, and 24 automotive car batteries. This required 253 helicopter loads to sling debris to landing zones.

Operation TRIDENT was a success as there were no major accidents or injuries. Success included removing a large amount of debris and chemicals from our beautiful and vital forest watersheds.



### **Archeology**

In 2010, the Sequoia National Forest hosted two archaeological site stewardship workshops. These programs are sponsored by the California Archaeological Site Stewards Program (CASSP) and provide a venue to train volunteers in serving as site stewards to protect our cultural and historical resources.

CASSP is a program of the Society for California Archaeology (SCA). The forest has 5 archaeologists, however they cannot get to all the critical areas on the forest to identify and monitor archaeological and historical sites.

To become a CASSP volunteer, you must attend a two-day training workshop. Volunteers are assigned sites on public lands and report on their conditions so early detections can have early corrections.

The first workshop was held September 4-5, 2010. Over thirteen volunteers were trained on federal regulations pertaining to archaeology and identification of prehistoric and historic features. Presentations highlighted the history and prehistory of the Springville region, and policies on tribal consultation and coordination.

The second workshop was held November 6-7, 2010. The volunteers completed an all-day classroom workshop and field trip. Over fourteen volunteers were trained.

Our cultural resources are a look at the past. By law we protect our cultural, prehistorical, and historical resources for current and future generations. These resources showcase who we are as a people, and how we came to be as a society.



## **Sherman Pass Road Repairs**

A reconstruction contract for Sherman Pass Road began on July 7, 2010. Sherman Pass Road is located on the Kern River Ranger District and provides a scenic drive through the Sierras.

The contracted work restored free flowing drainage of the area by unplugging, cleaning, and reconditioning ditches and relief culverts, resurfacing, sealing and repairing sections of the road.

Pavement recycling and reconstruction occurred from August – September, with some single lane closures and traffic delays.

The project also installed a new vault toilet at the Vista visitor site, providing a restroom for travelers as they enjoy the road’s spectacular views.

As the road climbs 4000 feet it winds between the northern boundary of the Dome Land Wilderness and the southern edge of the South Sierra Wilderness. Aside from offering

drivers the chance to view scenic pine forests and mountain streams, the road provides visitor access to Troy Meadows, Fish Creek, and Kennedy Meadows campgrounds.



## **Hume Lake Dam Replacement Valve**

This year the Sequoia replaced a valve on the dam that holds water in Hume Lake, located in the Giant Sequoia National Monument. The existing valve has been leaking for the past 20 years and the repair work is needed to stop the valve from leaking to protect the historic Hume Lake Dam.

On Monday October 4th, water was released from Hume Lake leaving a minimal pool near the front of the dam. Once the water levels dropped, work began to replace the valve before winter weather arrived.

This project was accomplished through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.



## **Deer Creek Road Repairs**

Forest officials will repair and improve the Deer Creek Mill Road (FS23S04) and spur road (FS23S04A) located on the Western Divide Ranger District in Giant Sequoia National Monument, Sequoia National Forest.

The purpose of this project is to provide safe access for forest visitors and reduce sediment delivery and its impact to water resources. The project will maintain and improve public access by repairing damage, adding aggregate surfacing, cleaning culverts, reconditioning the roadways, and “storm proofing” the road drains to minimize future damage.

Deer Creek Mill road will be suitable for passenger vehicles, and will be open to highway legal vehicles only. An Environmental Assessment report describing the alternatives and the environmental consequences for the project is now available and can be found on the Sequoia National Forest website:  
[www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia/projects](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia/projects).



## Forest Service Funds Watershed Projects in the Tule River and Kern River Valley



In 2010, the Sequoia National Forest received over \$1.7 million dollars in funding that went directly to our cooperators to reduce fuel build-up on private or tribal lands. The funds were transferred from the Forest Service to two different partners, the Tule River Reservation and the Kern River Valley Fire Safe Council as grants.

The grant was awarded under the Wyden Amendment, Public Law 105-277, section 323, as amended by public Law 109-54, and permanently authorized by public Law 111-11,

section 3001 for the purpose of providing funding to conduct hazardous fuels treatment on non-federal lands that are adjacent to National Forest lands where hazardous fuels work is being conducted or where other works is being conducted that increases the threat to adjacent lands. The authorization allows for the work on federal and non-federal lands to complement each other and provides flexibility for the Forest Service to use grant funding where it will provide the greatest benefit from the combined cooperative effort.

The Alta Sierra and Wofford Heights Fuels Reduction Project will complement the Sequoia National Forest Ice Timber Sale and Fuels Reduction Project. The Tule River Reservation Project will benefit tribal lands that are nearby Sequoia National Forest to reduce the fuel loads in the watershed.

Kern River Valley Fire Safe Council and the Sequoia signed the final documentation for a cooperative agreement to conduct hazardous fuels treatment on 200 acres of private and Kern County lands in Alta Sierra and Wofford Heights in May 2010. The

Domestic Cooperative Agreement 10-DG-11051345-060 authorizes \$300,000 grant funding from the USDA Forest Service to complete three types of fuels treatment: (1) Road brushing to develop roadside fuel breaks; (2) Maintenance of existing fuel breaks adjacent to communities; and (3) A slash cleanup project from a recent timber harvest. The project work will be completed over a three year period. The grant proposal was developed in collaboration with Kern County Fire Department. The department's fuel reduction crews will complete the project work.

The Kern River Valley Fire Safe Council is a non-profit organization established to provide awareness through education and information exchange, and to facilitate interagency coordination, fire protection and fire safety projects within the Kern River Valley. In addition to this cooperative agreement the Kern River Valley Fire Safe Council secures grant funding through the California Fire Safe Council clearinghouse to conduct hazardous fuel reduction projects throughout the Kern River Valley.

Kern County Fire Department fuel reduction crews worked on the Bodfish III Fuel Reduction Project and the Burma Interagency Extension Fuelbreak Project (this project was instrumental in slowing the progress of the Bull Fire in 2010). The cooperative agreement with the Forest Service and Kern River Fire Safe Council adds considerable leverage to our hazardous fuels treatment programs. The collaboration and cooperation between the fire council and the fire agencies is clearly evident in the quality of protection and continuity to our fuels treatment projects.



### **Protecting the Ponderosa Community**

The Forest Service is working to reduce fuels using activities such as the thinning of small trees and brush, piling, and prescribed burning for the Ponderosa Project around the community of Ponderosa, located on the Western Divide Ranger District, Giant Sequoia National Monument.

A variety of techniques have been utilized to reduce these fuels, including the use of stewardship contracting. Chainsaws, hand tools, and mechanical

equipment are being used where appropriate and the fuel may be chipped or burned in piles during the burning season. Some vegetation can be removed and sold under a personal use firewood cutting permit.

Prescribed burning will occur on approximately 1,100 acres around the community of Ponderosa to dispose of the fuel piles on the ground. When completed, the brush piles may not be entirely consumed in the fire and remnants are being left to protect the soil from erosion, promote growth of new vegetation and wildlife benefits.

The results will look similar to past fuel treatments in the Camp Nelson Urban Interface Project. Smoke from the burn operations will be visible around Ponderosa.

Forest personnel will be working closely with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to manage smoke production and minimize any local impacts. When the prescribed burning begins this fall, residents should keep windows closed in their cabins. Homeowner may call the Springville Office to check on the status of burning if concerned about

smoke in the area. Protecting communities is high priority work in the Monument. The reduction of fuels in areas around communities, residences, and forest service administrative sites are a priority to reduce the risk of large wildland fires.

Our collaborative efforts, both by private landowners working to maintain their required clearances, and the Forest Service will ensure the Monuments landscape will be less susceptible to wildfire. The private property hundred-foot clearance on private lands is also important to reduce the risk of fire. Please use caution and watch for workers and trucks while traveling through this area.



### **Fox Plantation Thinning**



A forest health project was conducted on the Hume Lake Ranger District, outside of the Giant Sequoia National Monument. The goal was to develop old forest characteristics by reducing the inter-tree competition to reduce the risk of tree loss to insect, disease and stand-replacing wildfires.

This project was identified in tree plantations that were established from 1972 to 1974 which were planted with Jeffrey pine. Over 247 acres was completed using a masticator in 2010.



### **McKenzie Ranch Thinning**

On September 24, 2010, Sequoia National Forest Supervisor, Tina Terrell chose to implement Alternative B of the Revised McKenzie Ranch Fuels Reduction Project Final Environmental Assessment. This project allows fuels reduction in and around several plantations along McKenzie Ridge and a portion of the Dry Creek drainage called the Ranch area of the Hume Lake Ranger District of Sequoia National Forest/Giant Sequoia National Monument. All of the plantations are outside of giant sequoia groves.

This action uses both mechanical treatment and prescribed burning to reduce fuel and vegetation densities. In both the McKenzie and Ranch areas, mechanical treatments would use an excavator with a masticating attachment to grind up standing brush and small trees (under 10 inches in diameter) and leave the larger conifers and oaks.

No trees would be commercially logged or removed from the sites. Portions of the McKenzie area, both mechanically treated and untreated, would be prescribed burned to begin restoring the natural fire cycle. Stands in the Ranch area are younger than those in the McKenzie area, and are more susceptible to damage from prescribed burning. Only mastication is proposed for the Ranch timber stands at this time.



### **Belknap Campground Re-opens**

Belknap Campground located in the Western Divide Ranger District, Giant Sequoia National Monument has re-opened to campers after maintenance

and repairs were completed over the winter season.

The Sequoia National Forest contracted to replace the water system, add concrete skirting around the existing toilet and build a retaining wall to make it fully accessible. The old water system was replaced with a new one to meet State water meter requirements.

Additional contract work included the Trail of 100 Giants parking lot. Concrete skirting was built around the existing restroom facility, and new water faucets were installed to make them fully accessible.

These two projects were funded through recreation site improvement dollars (\$124,800), made possible by user fees. This funding comes from a percentage of dollars that are returned to the Forest from fees collected by the concessionaire, at campgrounds or day use areas on the Sequoia National Forest.



### **Interpretive Planning**

The public plays a vital role in helping to shape the future of the Sequoia's

interpretive operations by identifying an interest and passion for unique and special places. In 2008, the Sequoia completed a comprehensive Interpretive Plan which defines the forest program for the next few years. It includes goals, objectives, themes, topics, and important storylines for twelve recreation settings, provides an action plan, media recommendations, design guidelines for interpretive efforts, and tools to help forest interpreters.

Throughout 2007, employee polls were developed and workshops for the development of this Interpretive Plan. Together, forest staff, partners, and media specialists worked toward a goal to promote the Sequoia's resource values through specially planned visitor experiences and excellence in interpretation.

Good visitor planning is customized to meet an individual forest's needs and situations. This plan establishes a foundation to base our decisions for years, and provides guidance to forest staff. It also helps identify the programs' audiences, and what mix of media and personal services to use. The interpretive plan is not a recipe;

rather it is a guide to effective, goal-driven planning. While it considers past interpretive programs, it is primarily a forward-looking document that concentrates on actions needed to create or sustain a vigorous and effective interpretive program.

The Sequoia's Interpretive Plan has four components: 1) the Interpretive Strategy; 2) Forest Program and Recommendations; 3) Recreation Settings: Inventory, Products, and Services; and 4) an ongoing compilation of information, reports, bibliographies, plans, and inventories. This plan defines realistic strategies and actions that work toward interpretive goals that connect with new audiences, provide compelling media and personal services reflecting diverse points of view, and work with strong partners with mutual goals to guide interest, appreciation, and support for the forest.

Throughout the forest you will see the *signs* of progress!



**Wayfinding** - We have begun to develop a focused sign program for the *visitor experience* at our offices. Each ranger district requires a well-planned arrival experience, with strategically-located forest signs, information boards, and kiosks. These signs follow service-wide identity and messaging standards. It should be clear to visitors that they are in the Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument.

**Entrance points** - All around Lake Isabella you will see many changes to the kiosks and entrance areas to many campgrounds, picnic sites, and lakeshore access points. Ongoing

efforts continue to expand the Sequoia's "brand."

**Interpretation** - The newly formed partnership with the Giant Sequoia National Monument Association conducts weekly docent interpretive walks at Trail of 100 Giants to provide site specific interpretation and context within the broader story of the forest. During the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend over 3,500 people visited the trail. An interpretive naturalist program with Student Conservation Association students occur at Hume Lake, Princess, Stony Creek and Big Meadows campgrounds, Buck Rock Lookout, and local resorts and organization camps.

**Website** - Using the tools of social media, the Sequoia website began a total revamp of how we use the World Wide Web to communicate with current and potential recreation visitors through website information, press releases, articles and publications. A complete redesign of the recreation experience includes many new pages to book your campground, book a rafting trip, or visit the Giant Sequoia National Monument at six outstanding giant sequoia groves. Each step in this website innovation and presentation

reflects our culture of timely, accurate and accessible information.

**Interpreting Our Cultural Heritage** – Archaeological and cultural resources are an irreplaceable part of America's heritage. Currently the untold story of the Buffalo Soldiers, a success story, is being researched, developed and shared through many venues to benefit natural and cultural resource conservation.



### Winter Snow Grooming



Recent winter storms have significantly added to the snow pack on the Sequoia National Forest making for ideal conditions to access snowmobile trails

on the Kern Plateau. The current snowpack is six feet of snow and varies in depth depending on elevation.

The Kern Plateau is located on the Kern River Ranger District within a two hour drive north from Kernville.

During the winter employees groom work on approximately 80 miles of popular over-snow routes, with plans to continue throughout the winter based on weather conditions. These winter recreation trails are primarily snow covered forest roads. Snow-cleared parking areas cannot be guaranteed on a daily basis because of changing weather conditions. Snow play, tobogganing, and sledding areas are not designated.

The groomed routes include North Meadow, Mosquito, Corral Meadow, Bonita, Corral Loop, Dark Canyon, Bald Mountain, and near Blackrock: Blackrock Mountain, Beach Road, Cannell/Osa, Osa, Little Horse, Smith, Dead Doe, Jackass, and Albanita east down to Fish Creek Campground.

Funds for grooming are paid for through the California State Parks and Recreation Off-Highway Motor

Vehicle Grants and Cooperative Agreement Programs. Program funding comes from fuel taxes which are attributable to the recreational use of vehicles off highway, off-highway vehicle registration fees and fees collected at State Vehicular Recreation Areas.

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### **Fire Management Ecological Restoration Projects**

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Responding to and managing wildland fire in today's environment requires a significant change in many aspects from the traditional approach. The present environment, which includes hotter, drier, and longer fire seasons; along with poor ecosystem health and an increasing number of homes in the interface, has resulted in the need to further emphasize new management options and business practices.



### **The Piute Fire Restoration Record of Decision**

Tina Terrell, Sequoia National Forest Supervisor released the Record of

Decision (ROD) for the Piute Fire Restoration Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), on April 16, 2010. The ROD identified Alternative B, as the selected alternative and included the modification that the trees designated for harvest would be dead and have no green needles apparent. The hazard trees designated for removal may be alive or dead.

On June 28, 2008, the Piute Fire began on the Sequoia National Forest in the vicinity of Piute Mountain on the Kern River Ranger District. Over a one-month period the fire burned 37,000-acres of Sequoia National Forest, and Bureau of Land Management public lands, plus 1,500 acres of privately owned land. The fire was contained July 25, 2008.

The Piute Fire Restoration Project is located in Kern County, California, approximately 7 air miles southeast of Lake Isabella, California.

The project area for this analysis was approximately 32,890-acre portion, (out of the total 37,000-acres) of the Piute Fire. Alternative B with modifications highlighted 347 acres of

merchantable dead conifers will be logged, 1,900 acres would be treated to remove excess fuels, and 500 acres would be planted with native tree seedlings.

The Piute Fire resulted in severe fire effects to forest resources including: soil, riparian areas, wildlife habitat and heritage resources over along large forested area. The many fire-killed trees, if left untreated over time, would have contributed to extreme high fuel loading. Over the short and long term, without fuels and watershed treatments to restore the fire area, additional erosion and high severity impacts would likely occur.



### **Piute Fire Roadside Sale**

In May 2010, the Kern River Ranger district began logging operations on the Piute Fire Roadside Hazard Sale. Logging trucks with up to five loads of sawlogs a day followed a haul route from the Piutes down Highway 65 to the Terra Bella mill.

Throughout the summer each day one-to-two loads of cull logs were also

hailed from the Piutes. Cull logs were transported in two ways, by traditional log trucks and dump trucks.



### **Bull Fire – Kern River Ranger District**

The fast-growing Bull Fire burned on the southern edge of California's Sequoia National Forest on July 26, 2010. The Bull Fire (16,448 acres) was an unwanted human caused fire detected at 1:30 p.m., on July 26, and finally contained on August 10, 2010. Burning through grass, brush, oak, and scattered pine and aided by high temperatures, the fire grew quickly on steep, hard-to-access ground. The Bull Fire destroyed eight homes and a few outbuildings as it spread across the Sequoia National Forest near Riverkern and Kernville.

Governor Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency for Kern County as a result of the Bull Fire and the Tehachapi-area's West Fire.

The fire started in a remote area at the bottom of Bull Run Creek Canyon about 1 mile west of the North Fork Kern River. Residents were threatened by high intensity fire spreading down

the Bull Run Creek drainage and then across the Kern River Canyon.

The Bull Fire was another wildfire in a long series of damaging fires that have impacted Kern River Valley area residents over several decades which could have caused more damage.

Fortunately, a proactive approach to wildfire threats had been ongoing from 2004 through 2010. The Kern River Valley Fire Safe Council (KRVFSC) received over \$1 million in grants to complete hazardous fuels reduction on private property in ten projects. One of these projects was under way, and near completion, at the time of the Bull Fire, (the Burma Road Extension Interagency Fuel Break).

The Council oversees a collaboration group made up of participants from the Council ((Kern County Fire Department, USDA Forest Service, and USDI Bureau of Land Management).

Participants cooperate in the planning, implementation and maintenance of 33 projects under the various agencies or the Council. All of these projects are defensible space shaded fuel breaks near homes or are fuel breaks along escape routes. Shrubs and tall herbaceous plants are cut and removed, and trees are limbed up to about 6 feet.

Cuttings are disposed by chipping or pile burning during winter months. The Bull Fire burned into or through shaded fuel breaks adjacent to homes on the north end of Kernville and burned entirely around the Riverkern community.

The fuel breaks significantly modified the Bull fire intensity which allowed for effective control by firefighters. The fuel break on the east side of Riverkern was not staffed by firefighters and was able to protect homes.



### **Canyon Fire – Kern River Ranger District**



On Sunday September 12, 2010, the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land

Management, and Kern County Fire Department responded to a vegetation fire in the area of Hwy 178, west of Lake Isabella.

For eight days fighting the Canyon Fire had been difficult. It had burned an estimated 3,000 acres in less than 24 hours. Plumes of smoke blanketed the hills of Highway 178 on both sides of the highway and both sides of the waterway below.

Evacuations occurred at Hobo and Sandy Flat campgrounds, Black Gulch South, the Miracle day-use area and all river raft launch sites between Keyville and Democrat roads.

Highway 178 was temporarily closed to one lane in each direction with the California Highway Patrol directing traffic. On September 20, 2010, the fire was 100% contained and 9,820 acres were burned.



### Sheep Fire

#### A 9,000-acre Success Story

In the southern Sierra Nevada, public lands are intermixed landscapes that know no boundaries. This summer the Sheep Fire proved that point as it burned across the Giant Sequoia

National Monument (USFS) and Sequoia-Kings Canyons National Park (NPS) boundaries.

On July 16<sup>th</sup> the Sheep wildfire started by lightning in Kings Canyon National Park and eventually grew onto the Sequoia National Forest. The initial strike was in the cliffs south of Cedar Grove.

The long term environmental benefits are significant to this landscape, however the fire created numerous roadblocks regarding: firefighter access, smoke management, impacts to public health, and the reintroduction of fire into giant sequoia groves.

Fortunately this was a very wet and cool year, and the fire started at a high elevation giving firefighters some management choices.

The eastern and western flanks of the fire tell very different stories. The eastern flank had previous prescribed fires done by the National Park Service that reduced forest fuels that carry fire. This example of *self-limiting* fire develops a fire mosaic, or puzzle pieces to the landscape in the area.

The western flank was a different story since it had not had fires in over 100 years. Thick forest fuels and steep

terrain fed the fire which created smoky conditions for Cedar Grove (NPS), Hume Lake (USFS), areas in the Kings Canyon, and east-side communities.

Several efforts were attempted to slow or stop the fire's western spread. Strategically placed backing fires were set to treat the tremendous fuel accumulations. One of the backfires crept into the Monarch Sequoia Grove on the Hume Lake District (USFS).

Giant sequoias adapt to fire and thrive in a frequent low intensity fire cycle. Fire opens the cones, releasing the tiny seeds to the nutrient rich ash and mineral soil below which create ideal conditions for tree germination. Fire thins competing vegetation, and opens the canopy for this sun-loving species.



The Forest Service had placed vegetation

inventory and photo plots in the Monarch Grove prior to the Sheep Fire due to the Giant sequoia Inventory project that was conducted in 2009.

Now that the fire has burned through this grove, forest officials are provided an excellent opportunity to observe the fire effects, re-growth, and regeneration in this giant sequoia grove.

The Sheep Fire has given us the opportunity to re-introduce fire into a giant sequoia grove. Aerial observations of the fire effects in the grove were encouraging.

Historically, lightning caused fires in the Sierra Nevada would burn each summer with a slow rate of spread, consuming accumulated debris until rain and snow arrived in the fall. With frequent, low intensity fires the spread of new fires would be kept to a minimum.

The Sheep fire's spread was fueled by a thick forest with lots of debris that had not burned in over a hundred years. The fire spread mostly downhill, and thanks to this year's above average snowpack, the fire behavior was moderate. When it burned across the

forest floor, it cleaned up the accumulated debris without consuming the stands of trees above it.

*This was an interagency success story for both the park and forest!*



The fire reduced significant fuel reduction which promotes biodiversity and regeneration. This will prevent subsequent fires from being larger, more destructive and smokier. Most important employees were safe and the landscape is healthier.



## **Maggie Fire – Giant Sequoia National Monument**

The Maggie fire was discovered July 17, 2010, on Maggie Mountain above Springville. The fire slowly grew to 19 acres.

The area is very rugged and management efforts were done using a helicopter. The steep cliffs (300-500 foot) kept the fire slowly spreading as burning branches, limbs and pine cones rolled down hill into unburned needles and small twigs.

Allowing fire to play its natural role in the ecosystem is the main fire management goal in designated Wilderness areas.

Fire officials worked closely with the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District to monitor the direction of the fire, increases in size, fire behavior, and smoke production.



## American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, (ARRA) was signed into law by President Obama on February 17th, 2009. The Act is an extraordinary response to a crisis unlike any since the Great Depression, and includes measures to modernize our nation's infrastructure, enhance energy independence, expand educational opportunities, preserve and improve affordable health care, provide tax relief, and protect those in greatest need.

Under the language of the ARRA, the Forest Service is creating as many jobs as possible to get money flowing through local communities hard hit by unemployment. Contracts, and competitive grants and agreements with local communities, and youth corps organizations, are the method being used to get these funds into local communities that have been greatly impacted by the economic downturn. Many communities most affected by the economic downturn are located near the Sequoia National Forest. Data shows Tulare and Fresno Counties have

been hit hard with double-digit unemployment.

The Forest identified, and received approximately 1.8 million dollars in funding and contracts were awarded and implemented in 2010.

- Four Oaks Mine Reclamation
- Hume Dam (valve replacement and automated controls)
- Pinehurst work center water system renovation
- Blister rust surveys
- Repaint and repair Lower Ten Mile Bridge
- Forest wide road bridge maintenance
- Pavement repair chip/seal 5 administrative sites (Kern County)
- Pavement repair chip/seal Pinehurst work center.



## Osborn Ranch

### Interface Project

The Western Divide Ranger District are working to remove hazardous fuel accumulations from public land adjacent to private property 10 miles northeast of Springville. The Osborne Ranch Interface Project encompasses approximately 170-acres of brush east of Blue Ridge Road.

Through planning efforts for the Giant Sequoia National Monument, Sequoia National Forest officials have identified many areas along the Monument boundary as Wildland Urban Intermix (WUI) Zones. These areas contain a mix of private and public land where private homes are at greater risk from large wildland fires. The Osborne Ranch Interface Project is located in a WUI and is a priority for treatment to reduce the risk of fire.

Vegetation in the project area consists of brush, primarily chamise and ceanothus. Material is being cut with chainsaws, hand piled, and prepared for burning next winter.



## Tule River Partnership



A public meeting was held September 9, 2010, to discuss management of the Tule River Canyon.

Proposals were evaluated that included maintenance of Forest Trail 30E29 (locally referred to as the Fisherman's Trail), and improving river access by closing some trails and improving others. The purpose of the meeting was an exchange of ideas from the public.



The California golden trout is a subspecies of the rainbow trout. It is native to California and found at elevations of 10,000 feet.

WildPlaces, Community Services & Employment Training (CSET) and the

Sequoia National Forest formed the Tule River Partnership and obtained two grants from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

One grant focused on river cleanup, outreach and education, and has been led by WildPlaces. They involve many youth groups, high schools, and churches who learn about the river by helping cleanup streambanks, and paint out graffiti.

A second grant was to conduct a study of the Tule River Canyon to determine options for management, and begin an environmental review document.

The Forest Service began by gathering information from the public who visit the area. Public values were solicited regarding what aspects of the river are most important. Would visitors accept a permit system in the future to protect the river's ecosystem, and last would visitors be willing to pay a fee?

Visitor interviews were conducted throughout the summer. The most important issues identified included the need for trash cans, restroom facilities, staffing onsite, fire hazard, and improvement of trail access to popular

areas along the Tule River. Visitors expressed a strong desire to see a clean river, and safely experience a visit with family and friends.



*California National Forest watersheds provide 60% of our drinking water.*





## Forest Contact Information



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## Kern River Ranger Districts

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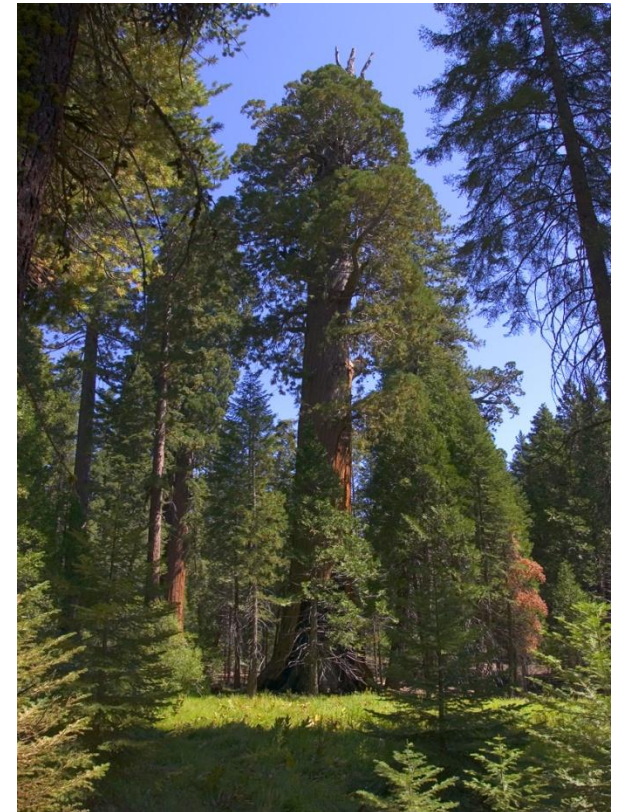
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## Sequoia National Forest Giant Sequoia National Monument



10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Giant Sequoia National Monument  
2000 - 2010

