



NEWS RELEASE

Sequoia National Forest and the Giant Sequoia National Monument

1839 S. Newcomb Street, Porterville, CA 93257

Date: December 1, 2009

Op-Ed – *Monumental Outlook Over the Horizon*

By Tina Terrell, Forest Supervisor

Contacts: Mary Chislock, Public Affairs Officer

Phone: 559-784-1500

A Spirit of Volunteerism: The New Giant Sequoia National Monument Association

2009 was a Banner Year! We are at a historic junction with the formation of the first Giant Sequoia National Monument Association (Monument Association), a new legacy for decades to come. It is the simple but compelling idea that the creation of a non-profit can be a rite of passage for many to engage in civic life by volunteering, protecting this nation's natural resources, and impacting future generations.

The basic premise is that people who love the Monument will continue to care for it's future. The Monument Association's overarching goal is to increase the public's enjoyment, and help market one of the world's most impressive treasures in the Sierra Nevada. This is a great idea to harness the spirit of volunteerism that already exists and make it a permanent part of the American culture here in California's Central Valley.

Initially this group formed through the Monument's collaborative planning efforts for the Giant Sequoia National Monument Management Plan. They began as the Sequoia Monument Recreation Council (SMRC). However, as groups move through the development phase their involvement expanded and incorporated as the new nonprofit organization--the Giant Sequoia National Monument Association.

On October 29, 2009, the Association held their first public meeting in Visalia, California, to introduce themselves, their mission and begin a public dialogue about their intentions. From this meeting and an earlier meeting with the Sequoia National Forest, they identified five projects and activities as a starting point that balance both resource protection and visitor experiences:

- Create a Monument handout about 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.

Future projects will be identified in 2010.

I would like to express my gratitude to the newly created Giant Sequoia National Monument Association, all of whom want to give back to the place that have given all of us so much. This organization will make a lasting difference for the Giant Sequoia National Monument for today's visitors and future generations. Please take the next step in civic life by volunteering, donating and planning to get involved and help this organization evolve, mature, and increase its capacity. We welcome your enthusiasm and engagement!

###

Sequoia National Forest and the Giant Sequoia National Monument