



NEWS RELEASE

Sequoia National Forest and the Giant Sequoia National Monument

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Op-Ed – *Monumental Outlook Over the Horizon*

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Give the Gift of the Outdoors - Big Meadows Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers wanted in year-round outdoor forest playground located in the northern section of the Giant Sequoia National Monument! This is an advertisement for a new group, the Big Meadows Association, that 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 the people.” Many associations match federal dollars, build capacity and resources through partnerships, foundation grants, fund raising events, and donations to create opportunities for people and communities to participate in public lands management. Additionally, these associations instill forest stewardship values through educational and recreational programs for Sequoia National Forest visitors and local communities.

Pam Canby, president of this new volunteer organization believes working year-round in Big Meadows is a privilege that entails a special responsibility. Canby coordinates education and outreach for the Big Meadows Association and also acts as an advocate 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 Big Meadows vision will soon be incorporated in a Memorandum of Understanding, an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service to highlight both the agency’s and association’s volunteer ideas and efforts. The association’s 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.

It is clear that the Big Meadows Association cares passionately about the area and its special assets. Their vision statement raises the profile of the Big Meadows Area during all seasons. It declares the value of outreach to both youth and adults, so they may experience the joys of the outdoors and set priorities for generations to come.

Where is Big Meadows?

The Big Meadows area is located in the Giant Sequoia National Monument, just off of the Generals Highway between Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. In the Giant Sequoia National Monument, snowmobiles are allowed on designated routes. A free map of the Hume Lake Winter Recreation area is available to visitors at ranger district offices. Camping (and snow-camping) is allowed outside of developed campgrounds.

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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. These trails are also used for x-country skiing. Also there are over 30 miles of ungroomed x-country ski trails and access to unlimited backcountry ski areas. The Big Meadows Association maintains winter emergency and comfort facilities including the trailhead telephone, Horse Camp restroom, and the warming hut.

The Big Meadows warming hut is located across from Horse Camp, and maintained by the association in partnership with Montecito-Sequoia Lodge and the Hume Lake Ranger District. The warming hut serves three purposes: an emergency shelter for stranded or injured snowplay visitors; a kiosk for goodwill and visitor information; and a respite from the cold.

You can volunteer to help:

- Build, maintain, and stock a warming hut weekly during the winter (2.5-miles to Big Meadows warming hut),
- Provide donations for restocking of goodies (water, coffee, tea, cocoa, oatmeal, soup etc.),
- Provide labor for trail maintenance, visitor information and safety patrol,
- Set winter track for both cross-country skiing and snowmobiles along miles of trails, or
- Contribute to the purchase of a new warming hut.

Summer Opportunities: In proximity to Big Meadows Road there are three (3) campgrounds, four (4) trailheads that access wilderness areas, four-wheel drive trails, 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 our new partnership with the Big Meadows Association. For more information contact Pam Canby at: bigmeadowsassn@yahoo.com, or visit their website at: www.bigmeadowsassociation.com.

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