



SIERRA
STATE
PARKS
FOUNDATION

SIERRA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION THE SIERRA SPIRIT

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FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

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Why our Parks Matter

Last week, a local educator called our office to make her annual spring fieldtrip arrangements for 90 third graders to tour the Hellman-Ehrman Mansion and Vikingsholm. As she was sharing the delight her students have when they visit the parks, I asked her why our local State Parks are important to her students and what they take away from their visit. Without a pause, she stated that for many of these students this field trip will be their first State Park experience and the connections they make with our natural and cultural heritage are lessons that can last a lifetime.

"I had one student last year," she continued, "who had never been to Emerald Bay. Because of that trip, she brought her immigrant parents back that summer to explain what she had learned about water clarity, the trees and the magic of Vikingsholm. In September, she expressed to me her joy about sharing this experience with her family and told me that she now wants to work there when she grows up!"

Our parks matter because the next generation matters.

This is why SSPF has been working hard all winter long to gain the political support needed to have a budget line item inserted in the State budget for the new Donner Visitor Center. It is also why I am grateful to our donors who have enabled us to underwrite the salary of a Museum Coordinator position for the Donner Visitor Center. In addition, we have supported the formation of a Docent Program and have contracted out to develop a new Teacher's Guide for the fall school field trip season.

I have accepted an appointment on the State Parks Transformation Team Advisory Committee. The Transformation Team is tasked to ready State Parks for our next generation of users with a fiscally sustainable model. This is a big task. This two-year process is the perfect opportunity to share your ideas about improving our State Parks and how to keep parks a relevant fabric of our lives.

We know State Parks are special places for students and teachers. We know that each visitor to our Tahoe-Truckee area parks contributes \$45 to our local economy daily. We know that we can enjoy a healthy lifestyle recreating at our parks. What we do not know are your thoughts and ideas about our State Parks. I urge each of our members and supporters to become involved by contributing their insights to this team, either on the Transformation Team website (www.parks.ca.gov) or to myself.

Parks matter to the 1,162 students we served last year. They matter to supporters like you. Help us make them matter to all Californians for generations to come.

Yours in parks,
Heidi Doyle, Executive Director

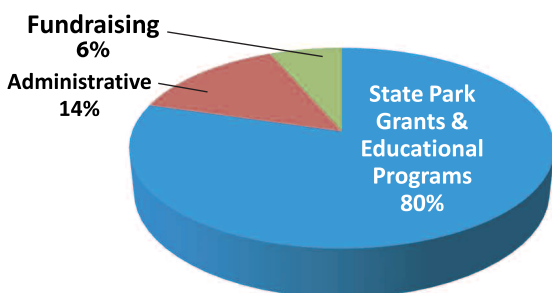


TOUR SEASON MAY 23-SEPT 30, 2015

SSPF is pleased to announce that it will continue to operate the guided tours of the historical mansions at Sugar Pine Point and Emerald Bay State Parks for another 5 years ensuring these treasures remain open and maintained. Tours of both the Hellman-Ehrman Estate and Vikingsholm will begin on May 23 and are conducted daily through September 30. Please visit our website at www.SierraStateParks.org for tour schedules. If you are interested in special group tours, call our office at 530/583-9911. In keeping with our mission, SSPF offers tours free of charge to all school groups.

FREE LOCALS DAY! - In recognition of all our supporters and community partners, SSPF will be offering free tours and park admission to Sugar Pine Point State Park on "Free Locals Day" May 31st. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity!

Your Dollars At Work In 2014



CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

We are ready for a very busy summer, and we are looking for volunteers to help us make it the best season ever. If you are interested in helping out at the front desk of our visitor centers, assisting at special events such as Living History Day, or explaining the fascinating history of the Sierra State Parks as a docent, please contact Kelly Leage at volunteer@sierrasstateparks.org. Enrich and enjoy your summer as a volunteer at the Sierra State Parks. Contact Kelly today!

A CHAT WITH BILL LINDEMANN - The Story of the New Donner Visitor Center



Bill Lindemann is the award winning California State Parks Interpretive Specialist for the Sierra District. Since 1996, Bill has been instrumental in the concept, research, design, planning, construction and coordination of all of the above for the new Donner Visitor Center at Donner Memorial State Park, now scheduled for opening on June 6th. This is Bill's account (in a nutshell) of how the new visitor center began as an idea and became a reality:

In 1996, the 1960's Emigrant Trail Museum was identified as one of the Sierra District State Parks buildings needing upgrades to accommodate the burgeoning numbers of visitors, address ADA requirements, update the displays, and become more energy efficient. Bill's planning team requested and were approved for \$250,000 for these changes. After many months of carefully assessing the multitude of logistical factors involved in remodeling the old museum, they realized it would be more practical and cost effective to build a new visitor center that could best meet the standards required for State Park building codes and increased visitor accommodation.

In 2002, a General Plan addressed the new theme of Sierra Crossings, possible site locations and construction for a new visitor center and museum. Bill wrote the interpretive component of this plan. After many meetings with noted historical associations and State Park experts, the plan was publicly vetted and approved by the Parks Commission in 2003. After much heated debate about the location of the new visitor center, its current site at the entrance to Donner Memorial State Park was agreed upon. Federal funds of \$3.2 million dollars from the Highway Administration under the Transportation Enhancement Act were granted for this project. Matching funds were provided by various California Bond Acts. In May of 2011, construction of the new visitor center finally began.

The theme that unifies all the exhibits at the visitor center is based upon the concept that crossing barriers changes peo-

ple's lives. The barrier of the Sierra Nevada mountain range and the history of its crossing involve the stories of regional Native Americans, the Donner Party, the Chinese construction of the railroad through Donner Pass, and the succession of roads including the Dutch Flat Donner Lake Wagon Road, the Lincoln Highway, US 40, and Interstate 80. Bill wrote the text for the exhibits that tells all of these stories.

“SSPF has played a significant role...”

Bill notes that the Sierra State Parks Foundation has worked in close collaboration with project planners to deliver funding support for the new visitor center. Efforts include funding the Museum Coordinator position, helping to develop a volunteer docent team and contracting for the development of teacher guidelines for the exhibits which will facilitate and improve the experience of the school groups who visit the museum. Of special note is SSPF's contribution towards the purchase and restoration of a 1929 Model A Ford which is a major feature in the exhibits.

Bill hopes the Foundation will continue to fund the materials and accessories the project still requires. These include: The development of a new film on the Donner Party. Enhanced displays with Intelli-Touch interactive immersive exhibits to further inspire children; supplementing the

exhibits with valuable and interesting artifacts that are not part of the Sierra theme; and presenting the stories of the logging, lumber making, ice making, charcoal and iron smelting industries that the Washoe and Chinese were also involved with.



1929 Model A Ford

After experiencing the wonders of the the new Donner Visitor Center, Bill hopes that visitors will come away with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the historical events commemorated in the exhibits. He hopes that people will become more aware of what special places our parklands are, and be inspired to join the important effort of good park stewardship.



WELCOME "ABOARD"

The Sierra State Parks Foundation proudly welcomes the addition of Rob Weston as a new member of our Board of Directors. Rob is recently retired as long time owner of West Shore Sports. He has worked tirelessly to support the Tahoe business community and the Sierra State Parks of the Tahoe region. He brings a wealth of business and community service experience that will strengthen our support and advocacy of the California Sierra State Parks. We are very excited that he has joined our team!

Thank you, Rob!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Sierra State Park Foundation would like to sincerely thank our recent supporters, from December 2014 to April 2015, whose generosity and consideration are making it possible for us to achieve the goals of our mission. We value our relationships with you, and look forward to another season working together!

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 Gallery Keoki
 Tahoe Donner Association
 Native Sons of the Golden West
 West Shore Sports

SAVE THESE DATES

Here is a very short list of our upcoming events to note in your calendars

Friday, June 5- Donner Visitor Center Preview Gala. 7:00 pm

Saturday, June 6 - Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening of the New
 Donner Memorial State Park Visitor Center, 11am

Saturday, June 20 - A Bear Affair at Sugar Pine Point State Park, 11am

Saturday, July 11 - Music in the Castle at Vikingsholm, 5pm

Saturday, July 25 - Living History Day 50th Birthday Bash at
 Sugar Pine Point, 11am

For a complete list of our fabulous summer events and to purchase tickets
 (when necessary) visit our website at sierrastateparks.org.

DON'T MISS THESE EXCITING EVENTS!



Etched Donner Visitors Center
 Souvenir Wine Glass



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*...educate, interpret,
restore & preserve*

SierraStateParks.org

Phone: 530/583-9911

We Believe!

We, at the Sierra State Parks Foundation, believe that Lake Tahoe and Truckee area California State Parks are unique treasures worthy of our support.

SSPF provides critical financial support for restoration and maintenance projects, creative programming, and a dedicated volunteer staff.

Because of our work, these valuable cultural and natural resources will continue to be places of inspiration and education for generations to come.

Donate Today!

at www.sierrastateparks.org

**SUPPORT YOUR SIERRA STATE PARKS
& GET INVOLVED TODAY!**

Volunteer, donate, or visit the Sierra State Parks.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF OUR
WONDERFUL SPONSORS FOR THEIR GENEROSITY
AND SUPPORT OF THE SIERRA STATE PARKS

