A few minutes of solitude in majestic nature is bliss and is food for the soul. Lucky are the ones who can have it for they have indeed enriched their souls. People too busy to take time out for these moments to connect with their souls through nature have definitely suffered unknowingly. So take heed and take time out each day to connect with nature for that is food for the soul.

-SOHAIL MAHMOOD
After a long and record-breaking winter that saw our snow levels at 220% above average, our parks are brimming with life. The aspen trees are alive with movement, the sweet call of "cheeseburger" from the Mountain Chickadee fills the forest, and the work of preparing our parks for the 24 million visitors who come annually to the Lake Tahoe-Truckee region is in full swing. So what is the Sierra State Parks Foundation (SSPF) doing to put out the welcome mat?

Whether you are fortunate enough to be a regular visitor to our parks or can only squeeze in a short visit now and then, our goal is to create opportunities to maximize your experience enabling you to connect with nature. We are proud to be the fiscal sponsors for two State Parks interpretive positions at Lake Tahoe enabling a full complement of campfire programs, junior ranger activities, and guided hikes. SSPF is also the fiscal sponsor of two seasonal maintenance positions enabling skilled labor projects to be completed at Vikingsholm (Emerald Bay State Park) and the gardens around Pine Lodge (the Hellman-Ehrman-Estate at Sugar Pine Point State Park) this season. In addition, SSPF has hired a team of knowledgeable and enthusiastic guides for the tours at Vikingsholm castle and Pine Lodge mansion, and visitor center staff, thus ensuring sure these facilities remain open. Look for our new Park App in August which will be filled with useful information to plan your trip either before or after you arrive. We have a full, colorful palette of summer events planned to raise funds and create memories. Look in this newsletter for a list of some of the fun experiences we have to offer.

As the saying goes, "There are two seasons in the Sierra: winter and construction!" For SSPF, construction means moving on the many restoration and conservation projects we have lined up for completion this summer. Some of these include structural repairs to the foyer and courtyard door at Vikingsholm; installation of 14 SSPF-funded interpretive panels along the Rubicon Trail at DL Bliss State Park and on Fannette Island in Emerald Bay State Park; garden restoration work that includes invasive plant removal, plantings and barrier installations; the replacement of the damaged marine launch at the South boathouse at Sugar Pine Point; and, the development of a site plan for the restoration of the Pioneer Monument and construction of a visitor pavilion at Donner Memorial State Park. Thanks to our members, donors and patrons, SSPF is able to commit over $600,000 to our local Lake Tahoe - Donner State Parks in 2017. THANK YOU!

There are many opportunities for you to help us preserve our parks: become a member, donate, volunteer, or join our Board of Directors! Our parks will continue to be challenged financially in the decades ahead. A strong SSPF ensures that we can continue to partner with State Parks to keep facilities open, provide meaningful programming, and that our cultural landmarks will remain standing. Heidi Doyle, SSPF E.D. See you at the parks!
Summer 2017 Events Calendar

May 27 - September 30 • Daily • 10:30am-3:30pm
Historic House Museums Open for Tours
Explore the magic of Lake Tahoe's early days and take a tour of historic Hellman-Ehrman Estate at Sugar Pine Point State Park and Vikingsholm Castle at Emerald Bay State Park. Knowledgeable guides offer a fun glimpse into these West Shore landmarks. Adults $10, students 7-17 yrs or valid college ID $8, children 6 yrs and under free.

June 3 • Saturday • 6pm-9pm
A Night at the Museum: Magic in the Mountains • Donner Memorial State Park
The 3rd annual fundraiser will be a magic-filled night featuring renowned magicians Tom Allen and Magical Mary. A gourmet feast from farm and stream by Mountain Magic Catering paired with fine wines from Uncorked. Silent auction followed by our signature “Not-So-Silent-Auction” with Auctioneer Ed Miller. A private cocktail hour inside the museum with hors d’oeuvres and wine starts the evening. Benefitting The Donner Project. $150.

June 15 • Thursday • 9am-5pm
Archives Tour: Statewide Museum Collections
Our tour travels to Statewide Museum Collections Center, Sacramento, with a stop at the Folsom Power House for lunch and private tour. We will explore California State Parks Archives highlighting the 1960 Winter Olympics, Emerald Bay, the native Washoe, and the Donner Party. Picnic lunch and transportation included $40 ($35 SSPF members).

June 28 • Wednesday • 2pm-4pm
Tea Party Fashion Show • Sugar Pine Point State Park
Take a trip back in time to the glamour and grit of the 1930’s with an afternoon of tea and fashion overlooking beautiful Lake Tahoe at historic Pine Lodge. Cherie Oliver is back with her stunning collection of authentic period fashions of the era. Tea and hors d’oeuvres will be served. $40 Adults ($35 SSPF members), $20 children 12 & under.

July 14 & 15 • Friday & Saturday • 5pm-7:30pm
Music in the Castle, Vikingsholm • Emerald Bay State Park
Musicians John Metras, Noreen Valdes and Dr. David Nelson join pianist Paul DaSilva playing the 1929 custom 6-legged Steinway piano for a special concert inside Vikingsholm Castle. The eclectic program will feature Baroque to Latin to Broadway music themes. Wine and hors d’oeuvres reception follows for a memorable evening. Meet at DL Bliss State Park for the drive down to Emerald Bay. $100 ($90 SSPF members).

July 19, Wednesday • August 10, Thursday • 5pm-7:30pm
Conversations with History: Living at Vikingsholm
Take a drive down into Emerald Bay and experience a “behind the scenes” tour of Vikingsholm Castle followed by wine and hors d’oeuvres in the courtyard. Helen Smith will lead an informal conversation about her experiences spending 14 summers at Vikingsholm as a guest of owner Lora Knight. Every guest receives a signed copy of Smith’s book “Vikingsholm”. $65 ($60 SSPF members).

Win Dinner in the Mansion • Your personal date
You pick the date this season when you win an elegant five course dinner for you and seven of your friends inside the Hellman-Ehrman Mansion (Pine Lodge). Wine included. Only 200 tickets will be sold @ $50. Available on line or by phone. Winner drawn on July 29.

July 28 • Friday • 6pm-9pm
Birthday, Burgers & Beer • Sugar Pine Point
Celebrate Isaias W. Hellman’s 175th birthday on the lawn of the mansion he built with live Blue Grass music, beers provided by Sierra Nevada, an all-you-can-eat burger bar, and of course cake. This evening overlooking Lake Tahoe will be the celebration of the summer! $50 ($40 SSPF members) includes a special gift.

August 17 • Thursday • 5pm-7:30pm
An Evening of Wine & Wisdom with the Ghost of Mark Twain • Sugar Pine Point State Park
A custom tour of Hellman-Ehrman Mansion followed by a guest appearance of McAvoy Layne as the ghost of Mark Twain. Enjoy delicious hors d’oeuvres while sipping wine on the porch of the mansion overlooking Lake Tahoe. $50 ($40 SSPF members).

August 20 • Sunday • 5pm-8pm
Vikingsholm BBQ • Emerald Bay State Park
Drive down to Vikingsholm to enjoy an evening picnic-style BBQ and a flashback into the days of Emerald Bay Resort, featuring Rosie Smith. $80 ($70 SSPF members).

August 27 • Sunday • 11am-4pm
Donner Hoedown • Donner Memorial State Park
Join SSPF and California State Parks for a good, old-fashioned hoedown! With live music, food vendors and a beer garden, this free family-friendly event is the perfect way to say goodbye to summer. Costumed docents and State Parks interpreters will provide educational, hands-on activities for the whole family. Learn about our decorated past in the Truckee-Donner area. Square dancers and a dress-up photo booth will get everyone in the “pioneer” mood.

October 7 • Saturday • 4pm-6pm
Tahoe Gal “Liars’ Cruise”, Tahoe City
The 4th annual event is a signature fundraiser to support Sierra State Parks Foundation. Enjoy an evening of tall tales, endless bubbly, and unique cuisine while cruising the fabulously West Shore down to Sugar Pine Point State Park and back! Guests will meet at the Tahoe Gal dock behind Safeway in Tahoe City. $75 ($70 SSPF members).

All summer long, May, July, September • 5pm-7pm
Donner Conversations with History

For more information, tickets & tour times call 530-583-9911, or visit SierraStateParks.org
Isaias W. Hellman was a self-made financier who made his vast fortune in the banking business during a period frequently referred to as the “Gilded Age”. He was born in Bavaria in 1842, immigrated to the United States in 1859 and settled in Los Angeles. There, he established himself in the merchandising business. Through hard work and determination to realize his goals, Isaias Hellman expanded his investments and eventually became one of California’s most powerful and successful financiers. He became the president of Wells Fargo Nevada National Bank, Chairman of the Board of Union Trust Company of San Francisco, director of the United States National Bank of Los Angeles, and president of Farmers and Merchants National Bank of Los Angeles, just to name a few.

By the turn of the century many of San Francisco’s wealthy elite had discovered the West Shore of Lake Tahoe as an ideal location to build their summer retreats. Isaias began purchasing property at Sugar Pine Point in 1897 and eventually acquired 1,016 acres there which included two miles of lake frontage. By 1902 the Hellman-Ehrman Mansion, known as Pine Lodge, was built. It was enjoyed as the Hellman family’s summer home from 1903 to 1965 when it was sold to the State of California by Mr. Hellman’s granddaughter.

Thanks to the careful stewardship of California Sierra State Park staff and the continued support of the Sierra State Parks Foundation, the Hellman-Ehrman Estate stands today as a testament to the splendor of the era in which it was built.

As a special tribute to Isaias Hellman on his 175th birthday, the Sierra State Parks Foundation will be hosting “Birthday, Burgers & Beer”, a special event to be held on the lawn of Pine Lodge, July 28th at 6pm. You won’t want to miss the burger bar, beer provided by Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, and the musical talents of the Hellman Family who headline at the famous Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival held in San Francisco in October. The evening will conclude with birthday cake and a toast to Isaias!

Join us for this evening of celebration on the stately grounds of the Hellman-Ehrman Estate. Tickets are available at SierraStateParks.org, or call 530-583-9911.

Meet the Staff ...

BRIAN HERLIHY, SSPF’S BUSINESS MANAGER EXTRAORDINAIRE!

Brian joined SSPF’s staff as Business Manager in February of 2016. Originally from San Jose, Brian moved to the Tahoe area eleven years ago. He has brought many valuable non-profit skills to SSPF’s table and as a result our office operations are running smoothly and efficiently as we head into the 2017 season. Brian says, “I feel lucky to be able to live here at beautiful Lake Tahoe and be part of an organization that is so dedicated to preserving our local State Parks for future generations.”
Sierra State Parks Foundation Project Update

Vikingsholm Foyer

On your next visit to Vikingsholm, take a look at the floor of the foyer. You will shrug your shoulders and think, “It looks no different than the last time I was here.” This is the reaction we hope you have as the Foundation continues to restore this 1929 landmark.

The Foyer Project at Vikingsholm Castle was initiated because the threshold of the entryway had critically deteriorated. The malfunctioning threshold allowed water into the foyer which in turn led to water damage of the supporting joists beneath the foyer floor. The repair required the removal of the historic stone floor. The floor was photographed and each stone was numbered to ensure it would be reset in its original position. The rotten joists underneath were then removed and replaced with additional supports. The new and improved threshold was then put in place and the stone floor was re-laid. California State Parks Restoration Specialist Mike Byram says, “This critical work would not have been possible without the support of the Sierra State Parks Foundation who generously provided the funds for a project assistant position and material costs. It has been quite a pleasure to work with Ben Sartorius on the foyer project. He has the aptitude, desire and skill for the demands of restoration work. We are very grateful to the Sierra State Parks Foundation for helping to make this project so successful.”

Please consider a donation to SSPF dedicated Vikingsholm Restoration Fund. Some of our next projects include stabilization of the turret, replacement of curtains in the Chieftains Room, garden restoration, creation of a Natural Disaster Plan, and monitoring of harmful sunlight.

New floor supports  New threshold structure  Courtyard entrance cover enabled work throughout the winter

Your membership and contributions to the Sierra State Parks Foundation are what make restoration projects like this possible. Please consider a donation to SSPF’s dedicated Vikingsholm Restoration Fund!

...educate, interpret, restore & preserve.
Looking Back: Did you know….

The projects addressed in 1975 by the Tahoe Basin State Parks Association (before it was renamed Sierra State Parks Foundation) were:

- Joint Sponsorship with Tahoe City Women’s Club, North Tahoe Art Guild, and the North Tahoe Fine Arts Council for the Annual Ehrman Mansion Art Show
- Sponsorship of the New Shakespeare Company performances at Sugar Pine Point State Park
- Renovation and expansion of the early Tahoe marine photography series displayed at Ehrman Mansion
- Development of a nature trail for people with disabilities with special emphasis on visual impairments to be located within Sugar Pine Point State Park
- Continued efforts to re-acquire furnishings and properties formerly located in the Ehrman Mansion
- Expansion of the publication sales program
- Dedication of part of the General Creek Camp Area to the memory of a Department employee killed in a tree-falling accident during the 1974 season
- In June 1980, the purchase an authentic covered wagon for display at the Donner Memorial State Park Visitor Center. The wagon was purchased from Mr. Dick Prouty at a cost of $4,500.

These facts and many like them live inside the Sierra State Parks Foundation’s archived documents which are in the process of being organized and bound at the SSPF office. These archives are derived from primary sources such as meeting minutes, project summaries and financial statements. They are fascinating because they were written in the context of the times they represent and reveal much about the changes in values and attitudes over a period of five decades. The archives are important because they tell the authentic story of SSPF’s evolution from its 1968 formation as an Advisory Committee of concerned citizens to its current stature as a successful non-profit supporting our Sierra State Parks. The archives are additionally compelling because they provide a real sense of identity about the founding individuals who created our organization as well as those who carried on after them. These insights deepen the understanding and appreciation of the Sierra State Parks Foundation and all that it has accomplished.

How do we spend your money …#1

This is one of the interpretive panels to be installed this summer along the Rubicon Trail at DL Bliss State Park. Work was completed by Wildways Illustrated with Bill Lindemann as the lead State Park creator. These are set for June installation – a welcome addition to the trail.

LOVE THAT GREEN!

Take advantage of our eco-friendly green membership plan! Our Green Program allows people to purchase their memberships using an automated monthly payment plan. This system is convenient, efficient and affordable for anyone interested in joining the Sierra State Parks Foundation. Please visit our website at SierraStateParks.org for more information on the Green Membership Plan and Go Green today!
How do we spend your money ... #2

The Sierra State Parks Foundation recently purchased a brand new, augmented tour guide listening system for Donner Memorial State Park. In 2016 Donner staff and volunteers conducted guided historic tours for 1,957 local elementary school students and 3,793 visitors, who received a total of 5,750 hours of education from our guides. Tour guides lead their groups from the Visitor Center to the Pioneer Monument and on to the historic Donner Party Murphy cabin site. During their tours, the guides must constantly strain their voices and shout to be heard above the noise of Interstate 80. If school children and adult visitors can’t hear the guide, educational and interpretive opportunities to learn Donner’s remarkable history and natural resources are lost or not fully appreciated.

The new tour guiding system includes 30 receivers with rechargeable batteries and single side ear speakers that are non-invasive and sanitary. Each tour participant has the ability to adjust the volume of the tour guide’s voice for their personal comfort. The system also provides a transmitter and hands-free microphone for the tour guide. This tour guide enhancement system will greatly improve the tour experience for visitors and guides alike. The system is ready to go for the first tours of the season which are expected to begin on Memorial Day weekend.

State Parks News ...

An interview with the Sierra District Superintendent
Marilyn Linkem about the future of our parks.

What’s on the Sierra State Parks’ plate for 2017?
It’s been an incredible winter. The good news is Lake Tahoe is full. Unfortunately that means a lot less beach at our parks. Our visitors will have less space on the beach and will have to spread out more along the shoreline.

Can you give an update on the Transformation process and possible outcomes? Maybe tell readers what the Transformation process is.
Parks is making some changes. For the last 2.5 years we have been going through a “transformation process”. This process is identifying areas where changes can be made to reduce costs and redistribute those savings to areas that need it. The goal is to have a more efficient parks operations.

What are the operational challenges of parks at this time?
Staffing is always a challenge for us. It is difficult to find seasonal staff due to the State’s wage structure. They can make more money at local business. But what we have that many of the local businesses don’t is a beautiful place to work and an excellent group of people to work with.

Looking ahead, what do you see for the partnership role of SSPF and Sierra State Parks?
I see only increased cooperation between SSPF and the Sierra District. We still do not have funding needed to operate the parks to provide educational and interpretive opportunities for park visitors. Without the help of SSPF we would not have house tours at Vikingsholm and Pine Lodge. SSPF also helps to maintain these historic structures. Without this help our historic structures would deteriorate.

What are some of your favorite places to go when you are on vacation? This is a fun question...
We enjoy going to June Lake by Mono Lake. My husband enjoys fishing while I enjoy hiking in the high Sierra. We also enjoy the beautiful Northern California / Oregon coastlines.
DID YOU KNOW?

In 2016, the Sierra State Parks Foundation was able to grant $614,167 to the Lake Tahoe - Donner region State Parks!
We achieved this with 9% overhead in management costs and only 6% fundraising expenses.

Acknowledgements...

With appreciation and gratitude, the Sierra State Parks Foundation would like to acknowledge the many individuals, businesses and organizations that have contributed to our cause from November 2016 to May 2017. Your contributions have made a significant difference in enabling us to achieve our goals in support of the Sierra State Parks in the Lake Tahoe - Donner region.

Donald Albert
Pat Allen
Osvaldo Ancinas
Susan Adamson
In Memory of Baby Joy
Bryan Baecker
Lorelle Banzett
Robert Barth
Susan Boyette
Zachary Brewer
William and Farida Briner
Robert Buckholz
Patricia Carlson
Diane & Joseph Clenenin
Ken & Emile Corcoran
Warren & Gael Craft
Michael & Clarissa Donnelly
Tom & Heidi Doyle
Doyle-Greyson Family
Gordon Ehrman
James Feenstra
Elisabeth & Ken Fetherston
Diana Gee - In Honor of Virginia Cuttitta
Sue Gross
Ron & Lauren Grove
Susan & Lewis Grove
Barbara & Brian Hawn
Kathy Hess
Todd Jackson
Howard & Christina Janssen
Ron & Marcia Johns
Bob & Barbara Johnson
Garth Jolly
Christine Knight
Donna Langenderfer
Steve Lannoy
Laura Brown Fund
Nancy & Chilton Lee
Cornell & Donna Linderud
Cathy & Robert Lint
Matthew & Elizabeth Loar
Sue & Jack Marquis
Michele McDonald
Brian McCafferty
Barry McCoy
Ed Miller & Lolly Kupec
Patricia & David Miller
Lauren O’Malley
George Orenstein
Greg Palmer
Frances & Herb Pierce
Jeff & Pamela Plant
Jim Porter
Ken Powell
Katie Quan
Lee & Diana Raynor
Margie Reynolds
William & Barbara Richardson
Ken & Gayle Riley
Daniel Rossovich
Don & Suellen Rottiers
Bob & Carol Rowberg
Elizabeth Shaskey
Nancy Shills
Helen Smith
Randy Smith
Rosalee Smith & Don Songey
Ludwig Spolyar
Jim & Lydia Stang
Francis Townsend-Merino
Gordon & Janet Tsuchiya
Herbert & Judy Tweedie
Anne Villeneuve
Rob Weston & Sally Taylor
Dennis Wheeler
John & Christine Wheeler
Richard & Louise Wiesner
Chuck & Janet Zipkin

BUSINESSES/ORGANIZATIONS
Antique Classic Boat Society
Cabonas
Faction
Granlibakken
Hampton Inn & Suites
Homewood Ski Resort
Just Imagine Marketing
Kiwanis Club of North Lake Tahoe
Uncorked
West Shore Sports
Wild West Communications Group
Wolfdale’s Cuisine Unique

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS FOR THEIR GENEROSITY & SUPPORT OF SIERRA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION