



# The Donner Project: A Vision for the Future

Over the last 100 years, road and rail travelers to Truckee have marveled at the giant monument to hardy pioneers that stands on the side of Old Highway 40. The oversized bronze statue welcomes visitors to Donner Memorial State Park, and invites thought on the challenges and perils faced by those seeking a new life in the west. After standing strong for so long, the harsh Sierra winters have taken their toll on the imposing artwork, eroding the stone pillar which supports the statue.

The Sierra State Parks Foundation (SSPF), partnering with Native Sons Of The Golden West and California State Parks, has launched an ambitious capital fundraising campaign.

**The Donner Project** will restore the Pioneer Monument, create seating and landscaping for reflection, and build an outdoor amphitheater pavilion for public, educational and arts events. When the project is complete, visitors and schoolchildren can enjoy the new outdoor spaces and will marvel at the statue for another 100 years. ***We are well on our way!***

We are approaching the halfway mark of our \$1.8 million campaign goal, but we need your help in spreading the word to finish this important project. Both SSPF and Native Sons have met their donation goals for 2019, and California State Parks has earmarked \$600,000 in its budget for the restoration of the monument and subsequent ongoing maintenance. Contributions from enthusiastic donors have shown that people all over the state recognize the significance of the monument and of Donner Memorial State Park.

In early 2020, engineering and architectural plans will be finalized for the monument restoration. In June, a ribbon-cutting ceremony will signify the beginning the restoration, honoring those who have donated and marking a milestone of the campaign.

The goal of **The Donner Project** capital fundraising campaign is completion by June 2021. YOU, our generous supporters, can make that happen. Consider your legacy donation today!

Lolly Kupec  
 President, SSPF Board of Directors  
 Chair, The Donner Project Committee

*Standing in front of the Donner Visitor Center Donor Wall, members of The Donner Project Committee – (L to R) Rob Weston, SSPF Vice President; Native Sons representatives Dave Allen and Scott Goddard; Sierra District Maintenance Chief Tim Reynolds; and, SSPF Executive Director, Heidi Doyle – proudly show off fund raising accomplishments so far. Indeed, we are well on our way to success!*





Partners with  
Lake Tahoe - Donner  
California State Parks

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# A Message from the Executive Director

John Muir, Poet Laureate of the High Sierra, wrote of nature’s healing and calming benefits 100 years before cell phones and selfies became a part of our outdoor experiences. He valued our parklands and worked tirelessly to make open spaces accessible to all Americans. In Muir’s words,

*“Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life.”*



The Sierra State Parks Foundation (SSPF) is dedicated to making our parks accessible and welcoming to all by creating opportunities for high quality recreation and education. We funded the State Park interpreters at Lake Tahoe who bring programming to our visitors and share the wonders of Lake Tahoe to students around the globe through remote, cutting-edge interactive programs. SSPF staff provided almost 30,000 tours of historic Vikingsholm and the Hellman-Ehrman Mansions in 2019, with 10% of those free for school children, and over 200,000 visitors were welcomed to our parks at SSPF operated or supported Visitor Centers. We work tirelessly with our State Park partners to creatively find solutions for funding gaps for historic building preservation, visitor needs and outreach to underserved communities. We are proud of sponsoring the Junior Lifeguard program at Kings Beach State Recreation Area and providing participant scholarships. Through these efforts, and many more, our Lake Tahoe and Donner region State Parks will continue to be places of inspiration and education for generations to come.



It is my hope that in 2020 our collective vision will be to support our natural areas, society’s “fountains of life.” Help us introduce new communities to our parks and provide experiences that connect people to these special places. With your suggestions, contributions and dedication to this idea, we can realize our vision for the future.



Yours in parks,  
Heidi Doyle,  
Executive Director

# *Celebrate our 2019 Accomplishments with Us!*



*SSPF provided grooming services for the Olympic Nordic trails with free snowshoeing and cross country skiing for hundreds of visitors.*



*The garden in front of the Hellman-Ehrman Mansion was completely restored and replanted.*



*We celebrated the 90th anniversary of Vikingsholm and kicked off the Vikingsholm Forever Endowment Campaign.*



*SSPF-sponsored art contest for local schools helped get the word out about living with our Tahoe bears.*



*SSPF's professional interpreters lead 30,000 historic house tours at Pine Lodge and Vikingsholm.*



*We implemented a new Point-Of-Sale system at the park gift stores.*



*Our dynamic SS PF summer staff enabled us to meet our mission of supporting our state parks.*



*We brought people together at our many fundraising events to support our State Parks. A staggering 58 events connected our parks with the community proving PARKS MATTER!*

# Junior Lifeguard Program Comes to Tahoe!

The California State Parks Lifeguard program began in 1950 at Huntington State Beach in Southern California. As this branch of public safety continued to grow and impact the community, recruitment of future lifeguards in the form of summer youth programs became very popular. Not only did young individuals spend their free time positively affecting the aquatic community, they also made new friends and learned the skills needed to save a life.



Through the support of the Sierra State Parks Foundation, California State Parks started its first Junior Lifeguard program at Lake Tahoe this past summer at Kings Beach State Recreation Area. The program educates young individuals ages 8-15 about aquatic safety and high-quality outdoor recreation. The North Lake Tahoe Junior Lifeguard program ran three, two-week sessions, Monday through Friday from 9-3 pm. The average attendance per session was 10 children. Each morning the youth arrived on the beach prepared to spend the day participating in physical training, first aid exercises, and simulated aquatic lifesaving skills.

In addition to learning how to save a drowning victim, they conducted daily beach clean-ups and enjoyed visits from emergency medical service agencies such as the North Tahoe Fire Department. The participants worked alongside and were instructed by State Parks Seasonal

Lifeguards assigned to Kings Beach State Recreation Area.

Some exciting things the Junior Lifeguards experienced were simulated rescues from the new lifeguard tower and a visit from a State Park Ranger K9 handler with his furry partner in crime. In the first session, the wind made for some decent surf days and the kids gladly put on wetsuits to play in the waves.

The Sierra State Park Foundation proudly sponsored 11 Junior Lifeguards and paid for their session fees. All students reside in the Truckee/Tahoe area and attend local schools. Since this was the first year of the Junior Lifeguard program at Lake Tahoe, the SSSF scholarships were key to recruiting participants and filling sessions.

You can sponsor a child for the 2020 season! Imagine the excitement a local girl or boy will feel upon learning of your generous sponsorship. Visit [sierrastateparks.org](http://sierrastateparks.org) to learn more.



**LOVE THAT GREEN!** Take advantage of our eco-friendly green membership plan! Our Green Program allows donors 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](http://SierraStateParks.org) for more information on the Green Membership Plan and *Go Green today!*

# Give to the Vikingsholm Endowment Campaign

Iconic Vikingsholm, nestled on the shore of one of the most beautiful bodies of water in the world, turned 90 this year. Surrounded by the towering granite cliffs of Emerald Bay, Vikingsholm was celebrated and honored along with Dr. Helen Smith, who has been instrumental in the interpretation and upkeep of Vikingsholm for over five decades. To commemorate the 90th anniversary, SSPF established the Vikingsholm Forever Endowment.

Since the 1929 summer home was acquired by California State Parks in 1954, operations and maintenance have been a challenge. Sierra State Parks Foundation has stepped up to help keep this historic house museum open. As a rare State Park partner allowed to provide tours of a

park site, we proudly believe that daily upkeep to the standards that befit this National and State Landmark is essential. The Vikingsholm Forever Endowment will ensure dedicated funds are always available.

Consider becoming a Founding Member of the Endowment to secure Vikingsholm's future! We are seeking 90 donors to honor 90 years. All \$1000-plus donors will be recognized on a plaque at the Visitor Center and will be invited to a grand celebration when the \$2 million endowment fund goal is reached. \$5000-plus donors may host a private party for eight in the Vikingsholm courtyard. To take advantage of this prestigious opportunity contact Executive Director Heidi Doyle.



## Our Volunteers Made it Happen in 2019

DENISE TRAN, Events & Volunteer Coordinator

I'm thrilled to report the total volunteer hours for 2019 are 1,450 -- up from 1,070 in 2018. Without our corps of volunteers, SSPF could not produce events from Truckee to Tahoe. Thanks to this dependable team, we were able to connect additional people to our marvelous parks and raise critical funds for interpretation and restoration.

Veteran volunteer Donna L. says: *"I love volunteering with SSPF. It's always fun to meet new people and have new experiences. From Music in the Castle to The Liars Cruise on the Tahoe Gal... great people, great times! And to know that I'm helping the parks in the Tahoe area is a satisfying added bonus!"*



## Volunteer of the year

RAY O'BRIEN

Each year the Sierra State Parks Foundation honors one of our many volunteers for an outstanding contribution to the visitor experience and the betterment of our parks. The 2019 SSPF Volunteer-of-the-Year is Ray O'Brien. Under the leadership of board vice president Rob Weston, Ray operates the SSPF-leased snow groomer to lay the

cross-country ski trails at Sugar Pine Point State Park. Cruising at a top speed of 11 MPH, Ray tirelessly made sure our snow trails were groomed and ready for our visitors every Monday and Friday throughout the season.

Ray is a retired North Tahoe Fire captain and active member of Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue team. Look for Ray and his dog Jackson as he continues to groom the snow trails at the park. Thank you, Ray!

# Acknowledgements... *Sierra State Parks Foundation acknowledges the many individuals, businesses and organizations that have contributed from 10/15/18 to 10/15/19 enabling us to achieve our goals.*

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# By the numbers

(2018 impact)



## PARTNERING WITH 8 ICONIC CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

- ★ Emerald Bay State Park
- ★ Donner Memorial State Park
- ★ Sugar Pine Point State Park
- ★ Tahoe State Recreation Area
- ★ D.L. Bliss State Park
- ★ Kings Beach State Recreation Area
- ★ Washoe Meadows State Park
- ★ Burton Creek State Park

**2,417**

students were provided no cost educational experiences



**28**

seasonal employees funded to assist State Parks in meeting its mission



**954,747**

people visited Lake Tahoe-Donner state parks in 2018, compared to 486,834 in 2009



**29,774**

people took tours of Vikingsholm and the Hellman-Ehrman Estate



**160,000**

visitors came through the doors of four SSPF supported Visitor Centers



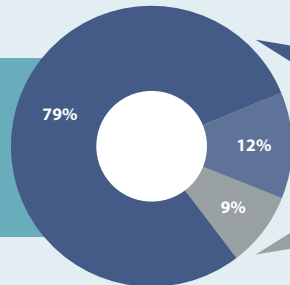
**1828**

SSPF volunteer hours were logged



### HOW WE SPEND YOUR MONEY

\*Figures from SSPF 2018 IRS reporting



CLASS

COST

PERCENTAGE

Programs

\$583,969

79%

Fundraising

\$91,046

12%

Management

\$61,802

9%

**Total**

**\$736,817**

**100%**



**\$200,000**

was invested into Vikingsholm restoration



**\$27,832**

SSPF contributed to the Emerald Bay Underwater Heritage Trail



**\$736,817**

SSPF contributed to our Lake Tahoe-Donner California State Parks



**Only 60%**

of our State Parks operational needs are covered through State Park resources

... educate, interpret, restore & preserve.



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



*The Sierra State Parks Foundation believes the Lake Tahoe and Donner California State Parks are unique treasures worthy of its support. The Foundation provides unique programming, volunteers and staff, and critical funding to these valuable cultural, historic and natural resources. Because of this work our parks will be places of education and inspiration today and for generations to come. Join your friends and neighbors and contribute to the Sierra State Parks Foundation, and in turn you will be supporting our Lake Tahoe - Donner California State Parks.*

## Discover the Olympic Trails at Sugar Pine Point State Park



Explore the trails that 1960 Olympians conquered right in your own west shore State Park! Interpretive panels share Olympic and Nordic Skiing history.

Brought to you by:

Down load trail map at  
[sierrastateparks.org](http://sierrastateparks.org)



Self-Guided Trails

Snow Phone  
530-525-7982

## Great gift ideas for every occasion at Donner Memorial State Park Visitor Center Gift Shop.



Open 7 days a week  
10am-5pm