



Sierra Spirit

Newsletter • Summer 2018

Experience a One-of-a-Kind Memorable Event!

Host an elegant and memorable dinner party for eight of your friends inside the Hellman-Ehrman Mansion featuring a custom-designed gourmet menu with paired wines. \$5,000 minimum donation. Funds support restoration projects of this magnificent historic landmark. Call for reservations 530-583-9911.



The Donner Project: 100 Years in the Making

Resilience. Strength. Survival. Family. Powerful words used to describe those who made the difficult trek across the western plains and mountains to reach California during the 1840s. These words can also be used to describe us, as a people, today.

The Pioneer Monument was erected to honor early pioneer families who struggled across the continent and they continue to inspire us today. Constructed near the site of the cabins that gave shelter to the Donner Party emigrants, work on the monument began in 1901. On June 6, 1918 in a ceremony that included Donner Party survivors, the Native Sons of the Golden West donated the completed monument and 11 surrounding acres to the State of California. Since then, the monument has stood in testament to the thousands of families and individuals who risked all for a better life, and honors the pioneer spirit of those who came before us and those who are still seeking.

More than 9.5 million vehicles travel through the Sierra mountain pass, known as Donner Summit, each year. While the majority zip by, not realizing the rich history of the area, over 200,000 vehicles make the time to stop. Donner Memorial State Park, an unofficial gateway to California, features an inviting new Visitor Center where one can learn about the challenges of crossing the "Sierra Divide". What is also found is a 100-year-old monument approaching the tipping point of irreversible deterioration and a surrounding landscape begging for a new design to accommodate group visits. Great potential exists to add spaces encouraging families to talk, friends to explore, and groups to interact with this distinctive past.

The Donner Project will restore the Pioneer Monument, create surrounding reflective seating and landscaped areas, and construct a 100-seat outdoor amphitheater to host public educational, arts and celebratory events.

Raising the \$1.7 million for this project is doable. Partnering with the Native Sons of the Golden West and the State of California, the Sierra State Parks Foundation is taking the leadership to coordinate and manage this task. Our goal is to begin the monument restoration in 2020 and the construction of the Education Pavilion in 2021.

Resilience. Strength. Survival. Family. In memory of our own past and in honor of those who follow. Please consider supporting this worthy investment in our future.



*Partners with
Lake Tahoe - Donner
California State Parks*

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A Message from the Executive Director ...

Measuring the Value of Nature

The light on the lake at sunrise. The melodic sounds of birds around sunset. A hummingbird busy over a flower. Our forest standing silent guard over the landscape. These everyday sights of nature bring us joy, wonder and comfort.

But can we quantify the benefits nature gives us – not just aesthetic, but tangible? In a world with so much poverty and hunger, how can we justify paying so much attention to conservation and our parklands?

The answer is simple: Human well-being depends on the benefits that nature provides for free. Humans depend on ecosystems such as our forests and watersheds for clean water, storm protection and flood control. We depend on nature to provide a balance in a fast-paced world of instant everything. We depend on our historic sites to give us a sense of connectivity.

In 2017, the Sierra State Parks Foundation provided over \$504,000 of program services and support to the seven Lake Tahoe and Donner Lake California State Parks we serve. We do this to keep our parks open, maintained and filled with experiences to make each visit special and meaningful, and to assure these valuable experiences remain reachable to all.

You can help maintain our natural and historic legacy by donating. Visit our website at SierraStateParks.org, or call me at 530-583-9911.

My message to you is simple: Enjoy our amazing parklands and find your joy in nature!

Yours in parks, Heidi Doyle, Executive Director



From the Board of Directors

As members of the Board of Directors of the Sierra State Parks Foundation we believe that the Lake Tahoe and Donner Area California State Parks are unique treasures worthy of our support. We fund projects and educational programs that connect people with our rich natural resources and cultural heritage. Because of this work and advocacy our parks will continue to be places of education and inspiration for generations to come.

Meet the SSFP Board of Directors. From left to right: Barton Trethaway, Treasurer; Norma Santiago; Barbara Hawn; Lolly Kupec, President; Rosalee Smith, Secretary; Rob Weston, Vice President; Paul Verke, Susan Grove; and Greg Palmer.



Summer 2018 Events Calendar

ENJOY & SUPPORT YOUR SIERRA STATE PARKS

May 26 - 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 a valid college ID \$8; children 6 yrs and under free.



May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15 • Saturdays • 5pm - 6:30pm
Sierra Speaker Series • Donner Memorial State Park Visitor Center

A free evening in the Visitor Center with special speakers. Door opens 5pm, program begins 5:30pm. Complimentary refreshments. Wine available for purchase. For more information visit SSPF website, or call 530-582-7892.

June 9 • Saturday • 11am - 4pm

Centennial Celebration • Donner Memorial State Park

Re-dedication celebration of the 100-year-old Pioneer Monument at 11am, followed by family activities Noon - 4pm. This is a free event. Parking fees apply.



June 9 • Saturday • 5:30pm - 9pm

Centennial Fundraising Gala

Donner Memorial State Park Visitor Center

Join us for a night under the stars to celebrate the 100 year anniversary of the Pioneer Monument and to kick off **The Donner Project** fundraising campaign. The evening features an elegant four-course meal specially paired with regional wines, live music, specialty drinks, and auction. Visit the SSPF website for full details, to purchase tickets, and learn more about The Donner Project. \$125 per person. Limited seating. Reservations required.



July 7 - 8 • Saturday - Sunday • 8am - Noon
Annual Pancake Breakfast
Meeks Bay Fire Station, Hwy 89

Celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Meeks Bay Pancake Breakfast with an all-you-can-eat hearty breakfast while supporting your State Parks Foundation and Meeks Bay Fire District. Raffle prizes, fire engines, and information booths on defensible space and our California State Parks. \$10 adults; \$6 children.

July 14 • 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 in concert inside Vikingsholm Castle. The program, *Bach, Bossa Nova, and Beatles*, will delight all, creating a memorable evening. Wine reception follows. \$100 (\$90 SSPF members).

July 19, Thursday • August 15, Wednesday • 5pm - 7:30pm
Conversations with History: Living at Vikingsholm
Emerald Bay State Park

Drive your own car into Emerald Bay and experience a "behind the scenes" tour of Vikingsholm, followed by a wine reception in the courtyard. Dr. Helen Smith will lead an informal conversation about her experiences spending 14 summers as a guest of owner Lora Knight. Every guest receives a signed copy of Smith's book "Vikingsholm." \$65 (\$60 SSPF members). Reservations required.



July 27 • Friday • 6pm - 9pm

BIG BLUEgrass Concert at Sugar Pine Point State Park

Jam to bluegrass overlooking the Big Blue at Sugar Pine Point State Park. Featured bands include: One Grass/Two Grass, Lost Whiskey Engine, and Blithedale Canyon. Food vendors on site; beer and wine available for purchase (no outside food or drink please). Bring low back chairs, flashlight and warm clothing. \$20 pre-sale / \$25 day of event. Parking \$10. Doors open at 5 pm.

July 28 • Saturday • Begins 11am

Tales & Trails Festival • Sugar Pine Point State Park

A free day at the park sponsored by the Sierra State Parks Foundation. Children's activities, nature walks, music, special tours of the Hellman-Ehrman Estate, vendors and special guests. Parking fees apply. Visit our website for a full list of the day's activities.

July 28 • Saturday • 4:30pm - 6:30pm

Fashion Show • Sugar Pine Point State Park

Take a trip back in time with an evening featuring the Fashions of Florence Hellman Ehrman (1930-1964) at the historic Pine Lodge. Cherie Oliver returns with her stunning collection of authentic period fashions. \$10 suggested donation. Wine available.



August 26 • Sunday • 5pm - 8pm • BBQ
Emerald Bay State Park

Drive your own car down into Emerald Bay to enjoy a gourmet catered BBQ by Big Blue Q in front of the Visitor Center overlooking Emerald Bay. The program will feature a flashback into the days of Emerald Bay Resort as shared by Rosie Smith, who worked there as a teenager! Beer, wine and soft drinks included. \$80 (\$70 SSPF members). Reservations required.

October 6 • Saturday • 4pm - 6pm

Tahoe Gal "Liars' Cruise" • Tahoe City

The 5th 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 fabulous West Shore down to Sugar Pine Point State Park and back! Guests will meet at the Tahoe Gal pier, behind Safeway in Tahoe City. \$75 (\$70 SSPF members). Limited seating. Reservations required.

Reservations required for most events. Space is limited. SSPF Members get discounts! Join today!

For more information, tickets & tour times call 530-583-9911, or visit SierraStateParks.org

...educate, interpret, restore & preserve.

2018 Funding Priorities ...

Donner Memorial State Park: The Donner Project

Goal \$1.7 M

Restoration of the Pioneer Monument, site improvement landscaping, and construction of an outdoor community educational pavilion.

Sugar Pine Point State Park: Hellman-Ehrman Mansion Restoration Projects

Goal \$100,000

Repairs to the damaged exterior and interior plaster, repairs to the exterior woodwork, and implementation of the Historic Landscape Plan.

Park Enhancement Fund

Goal \$50,000

This broad-designated fund will be used for immediate and impactful needs in the seven California State Parks we serve.

Emerald Bay State Park: Vikingsholm Restoration Projects

Goal \$40,000

Outside wood rehabilitation, repair to damaged pointing around the turret, landscaping improvement in the courtyard and lakeside beds, and ongoing maintenance of the 79-year-old structure.

Sugar Pine Point State Park: Olympic Heritage Snow Trails

Goal \$10,000

Maintenance and upkeep of the SSPF-owned snow grooming equipment and management of the winter snow trail grooming program.

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!*

FREE! COMING SOON TO YOUR PHONE – LAKE TAHOE-DONNER STATE PARK APP!



Thank you to the Queen of Hearts Fund (Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation) and our donors for supporting this project.

Acknowledgements...

The Sierra State Parks Foundation acknowledges the many contributing individuals, businesses and organizations that enable us to achieve our goals.

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donors who contribute at our
stores and events!

Memories of Vikingsholm... by Helen Henry Smith

Helen Henry Smith spent the first 14 years of her life as a guest of Lora Josephine Knight, the visionary who commissioned Vikingsholm in Emerald Bay. Considered one of the best examples of Scandinavian architecture in the United States, Helen had the pleasure of spending summers at Vikingsholm and is now the premier historian of this landmark. SSPF asked Helen to share some of her memories of growing up in the "castle".

- *Once a summer the Vikingsholm household, upon awaking, would find two or three Washoe Indian women squatting in the flagstone courtyard. Mrs. Knight would greet them warmly as she came out after breakfast. Guests and staff would join the group, food would be provided to the Indian visitors, and trading would commence. The Washoe women primarily brought pine nuts and baskets, and Mrs. Knight offered food and money. Upon completion of the trades, the women would say their goodbyes and leave, returning the following summer at an unknown date. This was a valued summer Vikingsholm tradition.*
- *Helping myself to See's Candy from the five-pound box that was always on the Chieftain's table.*
- *Mrs. Knight's appreciation and knowledge of nature was quite extensive and she enjoyed sharing it with her guests. I loved the fact that Vikingsholm was designed around the existing large trees. Very few trees were destroyed at the time of building. The grounds and sod roof were seeded with native wildflowers each year, and bouquets of these flowers adorned the home. Mrs. Knight often invited guests to accompany her on favorite walks. A walk to the base of the falls was frequently a chosen destination.*
- *On occasion, Mrs. Knight planned meals at the large barbecue and picnic area on the northwest side of the bay (destroyed by the 1955 slide). The trail to this area provided opportunities for spectacular viewing of wildflowers, pine and cedar trees, as well as Emerald Bay. Memorable evenings were spent when the chauffeurs brought the limousines into the courtyard, and Mrs. Knight and her guests would get in and be driven up to Highway 89. Everyone would then get out and take a leisurely stroll back down to Vikingsholm. Walks with Mrs. Knight provided me a true appreciation of nature's beauty, never to be forgotten.*
- *As a teenager I would sit on the dock in the lagoon by the boat house after dinner contemplating my future. Never in my wildest dreams, would I have thought had I would spend over 45 summers at Vikingsholm in later years.*

Vikingsholm is now a State and National Historic Landmark and the main cultural feature of Emerald Bay State Park. SSPF manages the summer tour operations and oversees the on-going maintenance and restoration of this magnificent landmark. For more information about our 2018 Vikingsholm restoration projects, go to "Projects" on our webpage.

Featured Foundation Partner ...

As a concessionaire for California State Parks in Emerald Bay, **Kayak Tahoe** rents kayaks and SUPs in Emerald Bay allowing visitors an on-the-water and experience of the incredible clarity of Lake Tahoe. Not only does this provide the opportunity to glide the waters, but enables visitors access to Tahoe's Fannette Island and the Teahouse perched on top overlooking the Bay. In addition, **Kayak Tahoe** users are able to explore the underwater sunken barges that are a part of Lake Tahoe history. **Kayak Tahoe** has been a significant supporter of the Sierra State Parks Foundation enabling the purchase of interpretive panels, trail maintenance, and educational programming. **Kayak Tahoe** is also a noted donor to **The Donner Project**.



Meet the Staff ...

Denise Tran, SSPF Event and Volunteer Coordinator

Denise graduated from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Management & Protection. She moved to Tahoe from Los Angeles for a year of service as an AmeriCorps member at UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center. Falling in love with the area, she decided to stay and continue giving back to her community by joining the SSPF team. In her free time she likes to enjoy the outdoors, cook, and plan trips.

In Memory – A Life Steeped in Humor, Kindness and Creativity

Jacque Mielke: May 10, 1936 – March 2, 2018

Former Tahoe City resident Jacque Mielke passed away on March 2, 2018. Jacque will be remembered for her sense of humor, artistic talents, insatiable quest for knowledge, and generosity of spirit. For the Sierra State Parks Foundation, she will be known as the woman who helped save the Ehrman Mansion.

When the State of California purchased the Ehrman Estate in 1965 for a park, its aim was to turn the mansion into a day use area, either tearing the structure down, or altering it into a youth hostel. Instead, an advisory board to the Lake Tahoe State Parks was formed specifically for Sugar Pine Point. This gesture set a precedent for California; by 1974, almost every State Park had a citizens advisory committee. The committee's early and continuing efforts were geared toward preserving the mansion as an historic building. In the meantime, local citizens took responsibility for its care. The Lake Tahoe Art Guild, 1967-1978, and later the North Tahoe Fine Arts Council, sponsored annual art shows to raise funds for the restoration of the mansion, with Jacque Mielke at the lead. If it were not for these early groups, this historic building might not exist today. The Sierra State Parks Foundation evolved, incorporated in 1974, and continues to partner with our community and the state for the upkeep of the estate, conducting daily tours during the summer to raise funds.

SSPF honors her legacy and passion. Thank you, Jacque!

The family has requested that donations in her honor may be made to the Sierra State Parks Foundation.





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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 its work our parks will continue to 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.

Don't Miss These Special Fundraising Events ...

Highlights of the summer— it promises to be a memorable and exciting one!

- The Pioneer Monument at Donner Memorial State Park is turning 100! There will be a **Re-dedication Ceremony** followed by family activities and events free for the public. The night will end with the **Centennial Gala Fundraising Dinner** kicking off **The Donner Project Campaign**.
- Celebrate the 50th anniversary of the **Meeks Bay Fire Annual Pancake Breakfast** – a fun community collaboration with the Sierra State Parks Foundation (July 7th-8th).
- **Music in the Castle** at Vikingsholm returns with Bach, Bossa Nova and Beatles in mid-July.
- The adored and wise **Helen Smith** will join us for a private tour of Vikingsholm, a wine reception, and informal conversation about her summers **Living at Vikingsholm** mid-July and August.
- Don't miss the hot new event of the summer – **BIG BLUEgrass Concert** at Sugar Pine Point State Park at the end of July. Jam to bluegrass overlooking “big blue” with featured bands *One Grass/Two Grass, Lost Whiskey Engine, and Blithedale Canyon*.



- **Tales & Trails** follows with tons of family activities and a **1930s Fashion Show** on the steps of the 1903 Hellman-Ehrman Mansion.
- As a special treat board member Rosie Smith will share her days working at the Emerald Bay Resort at a gourmet-catered **BBQ at Vikingsholm** Visitor Center.
- We say bon voyage to summer with the annual **A Liar's Cruise** down the West Shore with tall tales, endless bubbly, and unique cuisine on the Tahoe Gal in early October.

You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give. WINSTON CHURCHILL