

ALPINE COUNTY



COUNTY INFORMATION

Size: 743 sq. miles

Population: 1,208 (2000 U.S. Census)

Sub-Region: Eastern Sierra

Official Website: <http://www.alpinecountyca.gov/departments>

CONSERVATION STORY

Friends of Hope Valley Help Restore Markleeville Floodplain

On May 16th, 2005 the United States Forest Service guard station in Markleeville, California flooded. While some residents of the small town might have been surprised, it was nothing new for Markleeville creek.

Built on the floodplain of Markleeville Creek, the guard station has historically flooded on numerous occasions. To combat this, an attempt was made in the 1930's to protect the property from flooding when two floodwalls were built to confine the stream. However, these floodwalls had an adverse effect, and instead led to periodic dramatic increases in stream flow and overflow.

Since then the creek has continued to flood. In 1997, flood waters eroded a downstream bank supporting Markleeville's primary sewer and damaged the water supply-line for the Markleeville campground. More recent 2005 flooding resulted in damage to USFS property and threatened an above-ground storage tank.

An official assessment of the flood's causes and effects was carried out by the US Forest Service, as well as the Alpine Watershed Group (AWG). The AWG is a non-profit coalition organization that aims to bring together government officials, small business owners, landowners, ranchers, recreation interests, and volunteer residents to manage the health of the watershed.

The volunteer residents in this case were a local citizen conservation organization called The Friends of Hope Valley (FOHV). The FOHV is a community group dedicated to giving a voice to Alpine County citizens concerned with issues such as global warming, endangered species, and development.



In 2005, FOHV provided key analysis of environmental issues that were central to the future of their watershed's health by sitting on the Technical Advisory Committee of the restoration project and submitted comments on how they best thought the project should proceed.

The final assessment ultimately called for the guard station to be re-located, the original stream bed ecosystems to be restored, and declared that the floodwalls built in the 1930's were not only obsolete, but were now exacerbating the effects of floods.

Many positive outcomes have resulted from FOHV's efforts.



Firstly, restoration efforts have benefited both water supply and watershed health, improving water quality and the vegetative uptake of the floodplain and filtration by the sediments of the riverbank.

Secondly, the US Forest Service station's relocation to Turtle Rock County Park, funded by the California Department of Water Resources through the Urban Stream Restoration Program, is scheduled to take place in 2009. It will be several years before the old location is cleaned up.

Lastly, a number of activities have been created to include the local community in the preservation of

Markleeville Creek. The Alpine Watershed Group holds a yearly “Markleeville Creek Day,” featuring relatively easy restoration activities where attendees are invited to help with the annual macro-invertebrate count, set up the event, to learn about river ecosystems and how they interact with riparian and wetland areas, or to simply bring their children to play in the creek.

Chris Katopothis, a coordinator for the Alpine County Watershed Group said “We really encourage residents to get involved and volunteer with us. Families end up really enjoying coming out and doing volunteer water-quality monitoring. Its easy and everyone learns about the watershed.”

The FOHV website notes that their group is “dedicated to the preservation of Hope Valley’s wild and pristine beauty.”

The FOHV frequently comments on Environmental Impact Reports, which is a key stage in any development project in California. They also hold yearly events as well, including a yearly Bluegrass Concert, where they hope to raise more money for restoration and other efforts. In 2007, the FOHV gave AWG an unrestricted \$2,300 grant to continue watershed restoration projects that encourage the community, stakeholders, and agencies to work together.



The contact information for both the Alpine Watershed Group and The Friends of Hope Valley are included in this section of the *Sierra Nevada Grassroots Directory*.

ORGANIZATIONS

Alpine Watershed Group

Contact Name: Chris Katopothis

Address: P.O. Box 296, Markleeville, CA 96120

Phone: 530-694-2327

Email: watershed@alpinecountyca.com

Website URL: www.alpinecountyca.gov/other_organizations/alpine_watershed_group

County of Activity: Alpine

Issue Focus: botanical, water supply, watershed quality, wildlife and habitat

Group Type: volunteer, staffed, city officials, county officials, private interests

Public Events: Alpine Creek Day; Monitor Training events; Monthly Group meetings
Volunteer Opportunities: Water Quality Monitoring; Stream and upslope restorations; event organization
Accepts Donations: yes

Description: The Alpine Watershed Group works to preserve and enhance the natural system functions of Alpine County's watersheds for future generations. The group works by inspiring participation to collaborate, educate, and proactively implement projects that benefit and steward the County's watersheds.

Friends of Hope Valley

Contact Name: Debbie Waldear
Address: PO Box 431, Markleeville, CA 9610
Phone: (530) 694-1701
Email: dwaldear@gbis.com
Website URL: www.hopevalleyca.com

County of Activity: Alpine
Issue Focus: all
Group Type: volunteer

Public Events: Hope Valley Work Day, the Tour of the California Alps ("The Death Ride"), the Back Forty at Sorenson's, Alpine Creek Days
Volunteer Opportunities: restoration, cleanup events, and opportunities to speak out about environmental issues in eastern Alpine County
Accepts Donations: yes

Description: The Friends of Hope Valley is a non-profit organization whose members share a deep affection for the unspoiled beauty of the Sierra's eastern slope of Alpine County. Formed in 1985 in response to a proposal to run power transmission lines through Hope Valley, the Friends have been successful in their ongoing protection efforts including preserving over 25,000 acres of open space in Hope Valley and eastern Alpine County.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND AGENCIES

Alpine County Board of Supervisors

Address: 99 Water Street P.O. Box 158, Markleeville, CA 96120
Phone: 530-694-2281
Fax: 530-694-2491

Website: http://www.alpinecountyca.gov/departments/board_of_supervisors

Senate Representative – 1st District:

Counties Represented: Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc, Mono, Plumas and Sierra, as well as portions of Nevada, Placer and Sacramento Counties.

Website: <http://republican.sen.ca.gov/web/1/>

Assembly Representative – 4th District

Counties Represented: Placer, El Dorado, Alpine

Website: <http://republican.assembly.ca.gov/members/a4/index.aspx>