

NEVADA COUNTY



COUNTY INFORMATION

Size: 2,524 km² (974 mi²)

Population: 98, 784 (U.S. Census Bureau - 2006)

Location: Northern Sierra

Official Website: www.mynevadacounty.com

CONSERVATION STORY

Friends of Deer Creek Raise Methyl-mercury Awareness

The California Gold Rush of the mid-1800's had a huge impact on California's culture, economy, and population growth. The Gold Rush did not only affect the men and women who rushed to make their fortunes in the Golden State; it also made a lasting impact on the natural ecosystems of the Sierra Nevada. The environmental effects of mining practices were so destructive that they are still visible in many places along the Sierra today.

Located in Nevada County, Deer Creek is a tributary of the Yuba River stretching over 37 miles long. At Deer Creek, the negative environmental impact that gold miners' destructive techniques left is visible even today: "Deer Creek has been threatened since the days of the Gold Rush. Prospectors turned over every section of the river, diverted its waters, logged its forests, and filled it with gravel and toxic mercury in their quest for riches. This legacy is still with us," states citizen conservation group, the Friends of Deer

Creek (FODC), on their website.

Many toxins were deposited into Deer Creek in the mid-1800s. In 1999, a U.S.

Geological Survey study showed methylmercury or methylmercury in significant amounts in Sierra watersheds, including Deer Creek. ¹ When ingested through fish consumption, The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has linked the compound to cardiovascular disease, specifically heart attacks, as well as birth defects in children.

²“Methylmercury gets into the different steps of the aquatic food chain,” explains hydrologist for FODC

and Solomon Henson. “And as it moves up the food chain, as each larger predator consumes the smaller organism with methylmercury, the compound becomes concentrated.”



When the USGS came out with this report, the FODC wanted more information. They decided to study and document the heavy metals in the sediments, water, and biota of Deer Creek, and to see how these toxins were affected by peak storm flows. In 2005, the FODC received funding from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and during stormy, midnight gales, adventurous volunteers ventured out onto Deer Creek to take water samples during peak storm flows.

Once the FODC’s findings had established that methylmercury existed in the sediments and water, they began to investigate further, and in 2006, they received funding from the Bureau of Land Management to document the impact of methylmercury on the Deer Creek biota. FODC scientists conducted methylmercury studies on macro-invertebrate and fish in the Deer Creek watershed and are currently studying levels in algae. With these studies, they found that methylmercury was found in “virtually all levels” of the aquatic food chain in Deer Creek, “from phytoplankton, to macro-invertebrate, to fish,” said FODC’s Executive Director Joanne Hild.

In 2006, the FODC also received grants from the CalEPA called “Brown-fields Grants.” This money funded studies of areas particularly contaminated with mercury and other heavy metals. The findings of the Brown-fields Grant are still being determined by the FODC.

Heavy metal cleanup, land use and resource extraction methods continue to be an issue in

the Sierra Nevada, particularly Nevada County. Groups like Friends of Deer Creek provide the scientific data that helps communities make informed choices and that reminds people of why the ecological character of their local creek is so important.



FODC is working with the Maidu Tribe to write a restoration plan which will identify significant cultural and historical information of the region and prioritize restoration projects in the watershed. Local middle and high schools will benefit from working on projects involving both.

Through it all, volunteers have played a large role in their “creek-days”, macro-invertebrate counts, restoration projects, trail building and other community events. “We encourage all types of people to come to volunteer and get involved with us,” says Henson, “this creek unites our communities, both past and present.”

If you’d like to get involved with Friends of Deer Creek, visit their website at www.friendsofdeercreek.org.

CITATIONS

- 1 <http://ca.water.usgs.gov/archive/reports/ofr00367/>
- 2 <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/tp46.html>

ORGANIZATIONS

Friends of Spenceville

Contact: Richard Thomas, President
Address: 10066 Robinson King Rd., Nevada City, CA
Phone: (530) 265-2666
Email: randtthomas@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.spenceville.org

Counties of Activity: Nevada, Yuba
Issue Focus: all

Description: The Friends of Spenceville was formed to educate the public about the Spenceville Wildlife and Recreation Area about the need to preserve Spenceville as a wildlife and recreation area.

The Spenceville Wildlife Area, an 11,813 acre wildlife preserve, managed by the California State Department of Fish and Game, is a treasure that should be celebrated and protected for present and future generations.

Friends of Spenceville was originally founded to combat the threat of a major dam that would flood the Spenceville area. Currently the group is fighting a proposal to build 5,100 homes adjacent to the Spenceville area. Along with other significant impacts due to the remote location of the Yuba Highlands development, the project will generate greatly increased traffic in the area. The primary access to the development is proposed to go south through Spenceville on Smartville, Waldo, and Long Ravine Roads. linking the development with Lincoln, Roseville and Sacramento.

Forest Issues Group

Contact: Don Rivenes, Acting Executive Director

Address: PO Box 1334, Nevada City CA 95959

Phone: (530) 478-0117

Email: rivenes@sbcglobal.net

Website: www.forestissuesgroup.org

Counties of Activity: Nevada, Placer, Yuba

Issue Focus: Forestry

Volunteer Opportunities: (contact Forest Issues Group)

Accepts Donations: Yes

Description: The Forest Issues Group (FIG) is an organization made up of citizens committed to a healthy Tahoe National Forest. FIG provides community education and public review of U.S. Forest Service management of the Tahoe National Forest.

FIG focuses its on-the-ground activities on the public lands of the Tahoe National Forest. However, we are also concerned with the U.S. Forest Service management planning on National Forests, and the other Sierra Forests, and how this management and private timber sales impact the Tahoe National Forest.

Local Food Coalition

Contact Person: Rita de Quercus

Address: PO Box 2543, Nevada City, CA 95959

Phone: 530-265-8748

Email: rita@localfoodcoalition.org

Website: www.localfoodcoalition.org

County: Nevada

Issues Focus: Agriculture, local food systems, support for local farmers and ranchers

Volunteer Opportunities: Yes

Accepts Donations: No. LFC is a network, not an organization and does not accept financial donations

Public Events: LFC sponsors the annual Come Home to Eat event. Provides educational outreach at events hosted by other organizations.

Description

LFC: "working together to support local farmers, preserve local farms and farmland, and ensure a local food supply in the western Nevada County area". This is network of organizations, farmers, and citizens concerned about local agriculture.

Nevada County Grown

Contact Person: Rita de Quercus

Address: PO Box 2543, Nevada City, CA 95959

Phone: 530-265-8748

Email: info@nevadacountygrown.org

Website: www.nevadacountygrown.org

County of Activity: Nevada

Issues Focus: Agriculture, local food systems, support for local farmers and ranchers.

Volunteer Opportunities: Yes

Accepts Donations: Yes. Nevada County Grown welcomes memberships and donations--see website

Public Events: Nevada County Grown is just getting started. Educational outreach at events hosted by other organizations.

Description: NCG: "neighbors supporting neighbors". The purpose of this organization is to coordinate unified marketing efforts on behalf of local farmers and ranchers.

Nevada County Land Trust

Contact Name: Marty Coleman-Hunt, Executive Director

Address: 175 Joerschke Dr Ste R, Grass Valley CA 95945

Phone: 530-272-5994

Email: marty@nevadacountylandtrust.org

Website: www.nevadacountylandtrust.org

County of Activity: Nevada County

Issue Focus: Land conservation, building trails, educational and recreational programs for members and the public.

Group Type:

Volunteers Opportunities: Yes, we have a varied group of volunteers such as trail builders, trek leaders, event workers, office workers, etc.

Accepts Donations: Yes, the Land trust has an active membership of approximately 650 and also accepts non-member donations and endowments.

Public Events: Annual fundraising concert, Small Farms Progress Day, Come Home to Eat, Indigenous People's Day, Summer Kids' Camp (nature studies and Native American studies)

Description: Nevada County Land Trust is a non-profit, membership-supported group promoting voluntary conservation of our natural, historical and agricultural resources through protection and enhancement of natural areas, farms and ranches, trails and parks to provide a lasting community heritage. The Land Trust exists to create a balance between nature and the needs of the people who make a life and a livelihood here. This is our home. Our mission is to enrich the deep community connection with our land – today, tomorrow, and forever.

Sierra Business Council

Contact Name: Nikki Streegan, Communications Director

Address: PO Box 2428, Truckee, CA 96160

Phone: 530-582-4800

Email: info@sbcouncil.org.

Website: www.sbcouncil.org

County: Nevada

Issue Focus: Sierra Business Council works in the program areas of economy, environment, community, and leadership.

Volunteer Opportunities: Yes

Accepts Donations: Yes

Description: Sierra Business Council is a member-based organization of over 700 individuals and businesses who are committed to our mission of pioneering innovative projects and approaches that foster community vitality, environmental quality, economic prosperity, and social fairness in the Sierra Nevada. We are the Sierra Nevada's sustainability organization and continue to demonstrate that vibrant communities, fair and prosperous economies, and healthy thriving ecosystems are not competing interests. When all three thrive, everyone wins.

Sierra Club – Motherlode Chapter (Sierra Nevada)

Contact: Charlie Chisholm, Group Chair

Address: PO Box 1042 Nevada, Nevada City, CA 95959
Phone: (530) 265-2033
Email: charles.chisholm@sbcglobal.net
Website: <http://www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/SierraNevada/>

Counties of Activity: Nevada, Yuba
Issue Focus: all

Public Events: hikes, walks, and outings for seniors, families and experienced hikers, monthly meetings

Volunteer Opportunities: Yes (contact group)

Accepts Donations: Yes

Description: Are you concerned about environmental issues in Nevada, Sierra and Yuba Counties? We have an active Sierra Club group, offering local outings for seniors, families, and experienced hikers. We hold monthly meetings featuring speakers as well as camaraderie. We publish a bimonthly newsletter to keep you informed on local issues and to give you an opportunity to express your concerns. We are involved in the community, participating in local issues that affect our environment: mining, forestry, toxins, population, land use issues, as well as such recreational activities as hiking, canoeing, picnics, a fall run through the colors, and potluck dinners.

Sierra Foothills Audubon Society

Contact: Christina Sherr, President
Address: PO Box 1937, Grass Valley CA 95945
Phone: (530) 478-5741
Email: sherrs@infostations.com
Website: www.sierrafoothillsaudubon.com

County: Nevada, Placer
Resource Focus: land use, wildlife and habitat

Public Events: Christmas Bird Count, Annual Rice Field's trip, public meeting presentations

Volunteer Opportunities: event planning, school slide-shows

Accepts Donations: yes

Description: Sierra Foothills Audubon Society's mission is to work within our community to promote appreciation of and protection for birds and their habitats.

Our education efforts include slide shows to groups (primarily senior housing developments) and bi-monthly presentations at public meetings. We give presentations to Elementary Schools and offer a program at the county Fair. We support educational activities for youth at the Placer Nature Center. We average over two public field trips

per month, including the handicapped-accessible beginning birder trips at Roseville's sculpture park, and our annual rice fields' trip to view migrating waterfowl. Special events for the year included the four Christmas Bird Counts within our Service area.

Conservation activities include joining with other environmental organizations to oppose sprawl housing projects in Placer and Nevada Counties and the Yuba Highlands 5,100 homes project that is proposed adjoining the Spenceville Wildlife Area, which is habitat to the threatened California black rail. The Forest Service's plans to apply herbicide to an area recovering from the effects of the Cottonwood fire has caused us to join with other organizations to prevent this unnecessary application of herbicides to our forests. We also provide funds to research programs for state threatened California black rails and Tri-colored blackbirds.

The Sierra Fund

Contact Person: Elizabeth "Izzy" Martin, CEO

Address: The Sierra Fund, 423 Broad Street, Nevada City, CA 95959

Phone: (530) 265-8454

Email: info@sierrafund.org

Website: www.sierrafund.org

County: Nevada

Issues Focus: air quality, botanical, forestry, global warming, land use, transportation, water supply, watershed quality, wildlife and habitat, Tribal consultation, legacy mining

Volunteer Opportunities: Yes (Sierra Day in the Capitol, Calling Back the Salmon Ceremony)

Accepts Donations: Yes

Public Events: Sierra Day in the Capitol, Tribal Convergences on Mercury, Calling Back the Salmon Ceremony, Sierra Nevada Alliance Conference

Description: The Sierra Fund was established in 2001 as the only community foundation dedicated to saving the Sierra Nevada.

The mission of The Sierra Fund is to protect and restore the Sierra Nevada. We do this by partnering with private donors and public agencies to increase and organize investment in the region's land, air, water and human resources. In the last two years we have granted or loaned nearly \$2 million to conservation efforts.

Sierra Watch (All Sierra Nevada Mountains)

Contact Name: Tom Mooers, Executive Director

Address: 408 Broad St #12 Nevada City, CA 95959

Phone: (530) 265-2849

Email: info@sierrawatch.org

Website: www.sierrawatch.org

County: Sierra Nevada Mountains

Accepts Donations: Yes

Description: Sierra Watch secures protection of valuable but threatened landscapes by shaping critical land-use decisions on specific development projects and creating strategic funding for priority conservation landscapes.

Snowlands Network

Contact Name: Ellen Lapham, president

Address: Snowlands Network, PO Box 2570, Nevada City CA 95959

Phone: 530-265-6424

Email: elapham@snowlands.org

Website URL: www.SaveOurSnowlands.org

Counties of Activity: All Sierra Nevada counties in CA and NV that have snow depth sufficient for winter recreation. In California our focus is on: Shasta, Lassen, Plumas, Sierra, Nevada, Placer, El Dorado, Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Mono, Tuolumne, Madera, and Inyo. In Nevada: Washoe and Douglas.

Issue Focus: Public lands winter land use and planning, sustainable winter recreation:

FROM LIST: land use, watershed health, air quality, global warming, wildlife, botanical

Public Events: HOST: Snowlands on Snow winter outings, The Backcountry Film Festival, winter recreation slide shows and talks, monitoring/stewardship programs
PARTICIPATE: Earth Days (Reno, North Tahoe, South Lake Tahoe, Winter Trail Days, Wild & Scenic Film Festival, public meeting presentations on land use & Forest planning issues.

Volunteer Opportunities: Yes

Accepts Donations: Yes

Description: Snowlands Network is the only non-profit advocate focused on issues of winter lands planning and recreation use – and abuse – on public lands in our beautiful Sierra Nevada range. We represent self propelled and low-impact skiers, snowshoers, hikers, birdwatchers, photographers, anglers, climbers, campers, and sledding/snow-play families. For all, we work to preserve & protect the Sierra's 10 million Forest Service acres.

Our three action programs are: advocacy and monitoring, education/outreach, and recreation enhancement. Our Snowlands On Snow outings help people learn about our fragile Sierra and gain new winter skills. Snowlands' critical 'quiet use' projects include Sonora Pass/Hoover Wilderness, Hope Valley/Highway 88, and Mount Rose to Martis Peak/Tahoe Meadows above Lake Tahoe.

South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL)

Contact: Jason Rainey

Address: 216 Main Street County: Nevada
Nevada City, CA 95959

Phone: 530.265.5961 x207

Fax: 530.265.6232

Email: jason@syrc.org

Website: www.syrc.org

Counties of Activity: Nevada, Yuba, Sierra

Issue Focus: all

Public Events: Annual Wild and Scenic Film Festival, Annual Great Yuba Clean-Up and Raft Tour, quiz nights, poetry readings, river tours, (contact group for more information)

Volunteer Opportunities: river monitoring (RiverScience program participation), river docent, help organize events, office assistance, RiverPeople program participation, (contact group for more information)

Accepts Donations: Yes

Description: SYRCL's mission is to protect, preserve and restore the entire Yuba watershed. SYRCL was formed in 1983 to combat dam threats on the South Yuba river and has a 20 year record of measurable successes including achieving Wild and Scenic status for the Yuba in 1999. We have established a positive reputation as a model collaborator and built trust amongst diverse interests while aggressively advocating in defense of the Yuba. With the help of our 4500 supporters and 500 active volunteers SYRCL has developed five unique and effective programs to defend the Yuba ecosystem and have designed programs to be models for other groups. The issues we are currently working on include restoring the last run of native Central Valley salmon and steelhead to the upper Yuba, monitoring water quality, preventing pollution, stopping dams and teaching the community how to protect their watershed.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND AGENCIES

Nevada County Board of Supervisors

Mailing Address: Eric Rood Administrative Center
950 Maidu Avenue,
Nevada City, CA 95959

Telephone: 530-265-1480

Fax: 530-265-9836

Website: www.mynevadacounty.com/boardofsupervisors

Assembly Representative – 3rd District

Counties Represented: Lassen, Plumas, Butte, Sierra Yuba, Nevada, Placer

Website: <http://republican.assembly.ca.gov/members/a3/index.aspx>

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/>