

# ENFIA Interpreter

November 1, 2021 Vol. 6

## A Message from the President

Resilience,

ENFIA remains resilient after the last 2 years of COVID and then the historic fire season of 2021, with the Tamarack and Caldor Fires threatening us on all sides. We are extremely grateful for the efforts of the USFS and CalFire in controlling the outbreaks and limiting the damage.

The Carson Pass Information Station remains intact and the areas of the Carson Pass Management Area as well. Other areas have been heavily impacted and will not be the same when we visit them again. But visit them again we shall and we will be able to observe the process of Succession, as the forest heals and regenerates itself as it has for thousands of years. Nature plays a long game.



ENFIA remains financially intact due to the efforts of our Carson Pass manager, Karen Heine, our docents, our members, and the efforts of our Retail Manager, Keli Gwyn.

We look forward to the challenges that await us, the forest, and those seeking to recreate on the Eldorado National Forest in the coming year.

We will Survive.

Thank you all for your help and support. Please tell others who may be interested in becoming members. We

hope to offer more opportunities in the Hwy 50/Crystal Basin area next year.

Larry Moore, ENFIA President

## News from Carson Pass Information Station

By Karen Heine

What a crazy year, COVID and FIRES and SMOKE oh my! Unfortunately, the Carson Pass Station was closed for more than half of the season. When we opened on Memorial Day weekend, our sales were better than ever before, with record numbers of visitors passing through our porch. We were not allowed to open the building until mid-June, so to start the season we moved the merchandise outside every day, and offered friendly welcomes and advice from the porch of our little station. We managed to still offer several Interpretative Walks in mid-June which were well-attended, but limited to ten participants. We struggled with smoke and evacuation orders from the Tamarack Fire from July 22 through July 28<sup>th</sup>. Our amazing volunteer docents were supportive and could not wait to return to the station.

We were well staffed through the first two weeks of August and even conducted a couple of Interpretive Walks in those weeks. We had new docents who helped the Forest Service

with cleaning bathrooms, stocking TP, and more, when they were short-staffed. Then, again, we got the warning in August that the Caldor Fire was putting up so much smoke that it was not healthy to be outside at the station. Shortly after that, the evacuation order closed the station, the trail and much of the Eldorado National Forest. We never had the chance to open. Thanks to many willing volunteer docents, we did get the Station officially closed and braced for what we hope will be a good winter.



The Silver Lake cabin endured similar trials along with several different water issues and a gas leak. It, too, has been closed up for the winter. We are excited to return in the spring to a cabin with a new range and improved running water. We also have an additional kayak that has been donated and some other improvements.



The Carson Pass Coordinator Karen Heine will offer a detailed report of these activities and take questions at the Annual Meeting to be held on November 13 at 10 on Zoom. The link will be posted on the ENFIA website and on our Facebook page. We invite the general membership of ENFIA to attend. We are also hoping to fill some vacant docent positions at Carson Pass since we have lost several folks in this unique year. Highway 50 will also be looking for volunteer docents to staff a new opportunity at Crystal Basin and the Cleveland Kiosk. Join us on November 13 to find out more about the opportunities to volunteer in the Eldorado National Forest.

The Eldorado National Forest Interpretive Association (ENFIA), the organization that coordinates volunteers and helps with enhancements in the forest, also has two possible board vacancies. They are always eager to have new people become a part of this valuable organization which provides so much to the public to aid in the enjoyment of the forest. Anyone interested in serving on the ENFIA board, who has been an ENFIA member for a year, should contact Larry Moore, the board president (at [moore680@att.net](mailto:moore680@att.net)) or Karen Heine, the Board Secretary (at [kheine006@gmail.com](mailto:kheine006@gmail.com)) by Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> to be placed on the ballot. The By-Laws will also be updated and voted on at this Nov. 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Door prizes will be awarded to some lucky members who are present (on

Zoom) at the meeting! We hope to see you there!

## Sugar Loaf Peak; The Painting

By Lester Lubetkin

The next time you go to the Crocker Art Museum in downtown Sacramento, be sure to stop to see an amazing painting that is part of the museum's Early California art collection, The painting, titled **"Sugar Loaf Peak, El Dorado County, 1865"**, depicts this unique granite mass and the scene looking up into the South Fork of the American River. If you can't get to the Crocker Art Museum, you can see this magnificent painting at this link (although it is nothing like seeing the actual painting) [crockerart.org/collections/american-art-before-1945/artworks/sugar-loaf-peak-el-dorado-county-1865](http://crockerart.org/collections/american-art-before-1945/artworks/sugar-loaf-peak-el-dorado-county-1865),



The painting, while highly romanticized, shows a family setting up camp at the base of the upright granite spire that makes up Sugar



Loaf Peak, while off to their south, we can see up the river canyon and on to Echo Summit. Sugar Loaf is the large granite mass that you see just to the north of Kyburz as you are driving north along Highway 50. Sugar Loaf has long been a popular rock climbing destination and you often see many cars parked along the highway in Kyburz, letting you know that climbers are up in the rocks. This area has burned several times - during the Freds Fire in 2004 and then again this summer during the Caldor Fire. Certainly the vegetation has changed markedly since 1865.

In the foreground in this painting, there is even what looks to be a hawk or an owl sitting on a Ponderosa pine branch, admiring the efforts of the pioneer family. Except for the title of the painting and the inclusion of Sugar Loaf, it might be hard to recognize much of the background in the painting as the heart of the Eldorado National Forest.

The artist of this painting was the acclaimed Thomas Hill. The Crocker Art Museum tells us that Hill was born in England in 1829 but came to the US by 1844. Hill initially spent time in New England studying painting, and later came to California in 1856. The artist made his first



sketching trip into the Sierra Nevada in 1865, which apparently included a trip up the South Fork American River. He went on to complete many expansive landscape paintings of nature and the mountains within the Sierra Nevada, many of which are of scenes within Yosemite. Hill exhibited ***Sugar Loaf Peak, El Dorado County*** in San Francisco the year it was completed in 1865. It was the first major work that the Crockers purchased from a contemporary Californian artist.

This painting is immense, measuring nearly 4 feet by 5 feet. And the frame just adds to the immensity of the art piece. To properly view this painting, you need to start by standing back 15 to 20 feet from the painting to see the entire scene. But then, walk up and look at all of the details in the picture.

The one feature that really caught my attention was the waterfall that shows

through the mist along the South Fork American River. It looks to be 30 to 50 feet high and has a large rocky point in the middle of the stream, splitting the flow into two paths. I have asked around if others have seen this waterfall, and have searched along the river, trying to find it, to no avail. I have found a large cascade in about the correct location (a cascade is a rocky or bouldery river section in



which the water is often very turbulent, and where the stream gradient is often steeper than the adjacent segments). Did the waterfall erode away? Or more likely, Hill presented a vision of the view from Sugar Loaf that expressed the awe and wonder that he felt as he gazed across that natural scene. I like to think that I would have done the same.

## CALDOR

### What's in the Name?

By Frank Tortorich

Frank Tortorich is a native of Jackson, CA, and an amateur historian. He worked for the USFS Amador Ranger District of the Eldorado National Forest after his retirement from Amador County Unified School District. Tortorich used information from the Master Thesis of Dana Edward Supernowicz, *Historical Overview of the Eldorado National Forest*. California State University, Sacramento. 1983

The name Caldor has made national front-page news and on all local radio and TV stations ever since the massive and destructive fire by that name exploded.

It is heart wrenching to watch the burning of homes and thousands of acres of beautiful forestland, closing part of an interstate highway. With all this devastation and sadness, my mind goes to wondering if the area around “Caldor” has also been destroyed by fire.

Caldor was a rather bustling community in the early part of the twentieth century in the heart of the Eldorado National Forest.

With the invention of the band saw and the more common use of narrow-gauge railroad, logging companies were popping up all over the west.

In El Dorado County, the **California Door Company**, merged in 1884 with three other San Francisco based milling companies and established a newly acquired sawmill in Dogtown, which they renamed “**Caldor**.”<sup>1</sup>

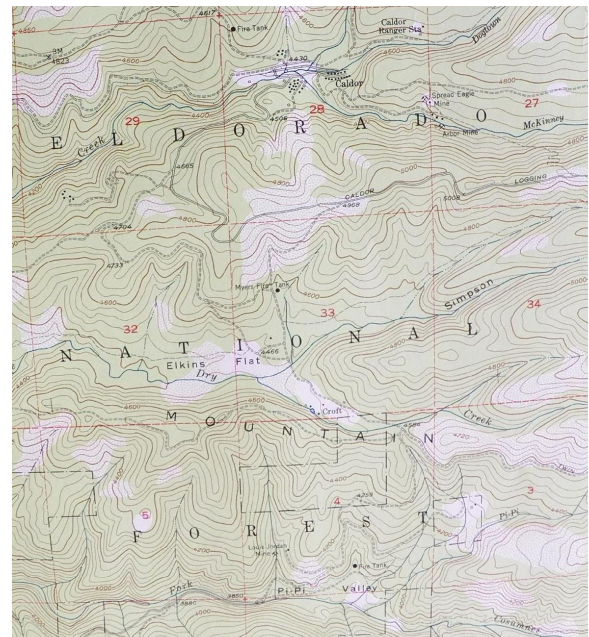


Photo of a 1951 topographical map supplied by Frank Tortorich

The company began building a system of railroads in the forest and by 1904

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<sup>1</sup> Dana Edward Supernowicz, *Historical Overview of the Eldorado National Forest*. Master Thesis. California State University, Sacramento. 1983. 119.

had just over thirty-four miles of track at a construction cost of \$388,788.<sup>2</sup>

The Caldor mill continued operation until August 13, 1923, when a fire burned down the sawmill. The board of directors decided to build a new sawmill in Diamond Springs, bringing logs to the new mill site via the railroad system.



By World War II and wide use of diesel trucks, the railroad system was abandoned.

In 1910, US President William Howard Taft signed a proclamation creating the Eldorado National Forest.<sup>3</sup>

On California maps, the local county and town uses two words, El Dorado, meaning The Golden One.

The United States Forest Service, in their wisdom, officially named the national forest “Eldorado.” Evidently no one noticed there was a difference. However, the one-word name could also be considered correct.

After the Eldorado National Forest was established, it was divided into

six ranger districts: Pacific, Georgetown, Lake Valley, Ice House, Caldor and Long Valley. It soon changed the name of the Ice House District to the Silver Creek District.

By 1950, the Eldorado National Forest had been restructured into four ranger districts: Pacific, Lake Valley, Georgetown, and Caldor, the summer office for the Amador District.

Then in the early 1950s, the forest was again restructured into Amador, Placerville, Pacific, and Georgetown districts.

Lake Valley District became the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Area and Caldor Station’s area of responsibility was divided between the Placerville and Amador districts.

By looking closely at the topo map it is clear to see the number of buildings at the town of Caldor.

When the Caldor Ranger Station was permanently closed, their buildings were removed. Today there is little evidence of the town or ranger station of Caldor.

Today the Eldorado National Forest is in the process of combining the Pacific Ranger District with the Placerville Ranger District and expanding the Amador Ranger District area of responsibility. So, the Eldorado National Forest will be composed of the Placerville, Amador and Georgetown Ranger Districts and

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 145.

the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Area.

## **Carson Pass Docent**

### **Susan Lesch**



Susan Alison Lesch, 66, passed away September 22, 2021, at home in Pine Grove, CA from her long battle with cancer. She was born November 7, 1954, in Belleville Illinois, daughter of Patricia and Lloyd Naasz. Susan spent her early years in Belleville where her father was stationed while enlisted in the United States Air Force. When her father was deployed to Adak, Alaska, she returned with her mother, Patricia, to the family hometown of Stockton, CA. She attended Grover Cleveland Elementary, Stockton Jr. High School and later graduated from A.A. Stagg High School in 1972. She attended San Joaquin Delta College where she received her Associate Arts degree in 1974.

Susan lived and worked in her beloved Pine Grove for many years

with her loving life partner and husband Joel. Together they managed their real-estate and property management enterprise. Susan was a lifelong environmentalist devoting her time and money to the Yosemite Conservancy and as a guide and docent at Carson Pass.

She is survived by her son Patrick Katzakian, his wife Ashley; stepdaughters Rachel Lesch and Erin “Cookie” Luxemburg and her husband Aaron; grandson Drew Luxemburg; brother David Naasz; nephew Adam Naasz and his wife Allyssa; niece Allison Naasz; sister-in-law Lori Naasz; uncle Robert Dustin and aunts Judy Dustin and Linda Melson; cousins Christine Dustin, Julie Dustin, and Karen Miller; and many close friends. She is preceded in death by her parents Lloyd and Patricia Naasz. Susan dedicated her life to her son, husband, family, and the natural beauty of the world. She is missed daily by all of us and our community because of her kindness, caring soul and as an inspirational fighter.

Please join Susan’s family in a celebration of life on Saturday, November 13, 2021, at 12 p.m. at Teresa’s Restaurant in Jackson, CA. There will be wonderful memories and stories to be shared.