



# The Sequoia

## Local Stakeholder Group Helps Craft Proposal for Huge Fuel Reduction Project in Stanislaus NF

For years local environmentalists have participated in discussions with other forest stakeholders and the Forest Service on ways to lower the risk of massive wildfires and reduce tree mortality during droughts. Those efforts resulted in the collaborative group called Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions (YSS). YSS has worked to get extra funding to support efforts to avoid another high-severity conflagration such as the 2013 Rim Fire.

Forest scientists have published studies such as GTR-220 (see link in left column) and other research showing that current forest conditions are far denser (with far more trees) compared to natural, historic times. Forest fuels have also accumulated greatly.

Last year the YSS group began discussing with scientists and Stanislaus Forest staff options for increasing the pace and scale of forest treatments. That resulted in what the Forest Service has named the “SERAL Project.” It includes 92,000 acres of national forest land stretching from near Columbia to an area east of Beardsley Reservoir and north of Pinecrest.

As now designed, the project would apply prescribed burning, thinning logging treatments, biomass removal, invasive weed treatments, and salvage logging of dead trees under certain conditions. Prescribed burning and thinning

logging would be applied widely across the SERAL project area, with lower intensity of treatments in protected activity centers (PACs) for the California spotted owl and the northern goshawk. Outside of those PACs, a key goal would be to shift towards historic forest conditions with widely scattered individual trees, clumps of trees, and openings (ICO treatments).

By going back to the more open, parklike conditions that John Muir described so eloquently, the forest would have flammable fuels separated more widely (to reduce fire intensity) plus fewer thickets of dense trees would mean less competition for water by the trees when there is a drought. Some fuels - such as in the photo - would also be cleaned up.

The SERAL project is just starting through a two-year planning process. The Tuolumne Group will provide input throughout the process. ■

### INSIDE

AMERICORPS VOLUNTEERS AT WORK IN THE SIERRA

TERRA VI AND UNDER CANVAS PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE HWY 120 YOSEMITE CORRIDOR

**DOWNLOAD AND READ PSW-GTR-220, "AN ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR SIERRAN MIXED CONIFER FORESTS." >>**

[www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw\\_gtr220/](http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw_gtr220/)



# Tuolumne County Pushes Forward Two Leap-frog Development Projects on Hwy 120 Route to Yosemite

By John Buckley



For more than a year, local citizens, conservation groups, and project neighbors have rallied together in opposition to two major development projects proposed on vacant land along the Highway 120 corridor that leads to Yosemite Park. The **Yosemite Under Canvas** project would allow 99 fancy tent cabins in what is featured as “glamping”— glamour camping. Many tent cabins would have their own bathroom. Each tent cabin would have a woodburning stove. And the overall facility would have food service, laundry, showers, etc.

Across the highway on the adjacent parcel, a giant **Terra Vi Lodge** resort would allow up to 550 guests and staff to be onsite with a lodge, guest cabins, restaurant, bar, market, and other facilities. The Terra Vi Lodge project would even include a helicopter landing pad.

All of this development would be in an area nearly a half-hour away from the closest County fire crew or CAL FIRE station, or from an ambulance service or law enforcement. Worse, both projects would depend entirely on wells that might fail in a drought or even in just

multiple dry years. And both projects would discharge millions of gallons of wastewater into septic systems on the same sites where they would suck up groundwater from their wells. It is a recipe for potential failure, and all with an impact on the scenic corridor into Yosemite Park and the site that is currently managed for forest purposes. The Tuolumne Group of the Sierra Club submitted comments of opposition and concern for both projects. Final EIRs will be prepared, and then County planning commissioners and supervisors will vote on both projects. ■

**DOWNLOAD AND READ  
THE TERRA VI LODGE AND  
YOSEMITE UNDER CANVAS  
PROJECT EIR DOCUMENTS  
FROM TUOLUMNE  
COUNTY WEBSITE >>>>**

[www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1158/  
Terra-Vi-Lodge-Yosemite](http://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1158/Terra-Vi-Lodge-Yosemite)

[www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1204/  
Under-CanvasHarding-Flat-LLC](http://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1204/Under-CanvasHarding-Flat-LLC)



*Site proposed for development along highway corridor to Yosemite Park.*

# AmeriCorps Volunteers Support Communities Across the Sierra

By Jenna Levy

**N**ATIONAL SERVICE IN AMERICA is often overshadowed by the image of the Peace Corps, which is one of the most highly visible programs of service run by the United States. AmeriCorps began just a few years after Peace Corps, in 1965, as a domestic volunteer program to support underserved communities in a myriad of ways and deserves to be just as conspicuous as Peace Corps.

AmeriCorps volunteers dedicate six months to four years of their time to projects that vary from working with inner city kids, to trail building, to supporting local governments and providing disaster relief. These programs not only support the needs of a community but also offer the volunteer the chance to give back and take part in meaningful work.

Here in the Sierra Nevada foothills, I'm joined by another AmeriCorps volunteer to support the work of Tuolumne River Trust. We are joined by a cohort of 25 peers, spread throughout the Sierra Nevada, and are working with non-profits, local governments and tribal agencies to support environmental causes in the Range of Light. The local projects that we are working on vary as much as the terrain. We are supporting projects to restore areas lost to the Rim Fire and create healthy and resilient forests. We are providing education to local kids about the watershed they live in and protecting this sacred commodity. We are conducting stream monitoring projects and engaging with a vast array of stakeholders. As the fifth set of volunteers to join TRT, AmeriCorps has a legacy of helping the Tuolumne River watershed and communities that rely on this work.

For the past couple of months, our efforts have shifted to understanding the nuances of meadow restoration work. Cattle allotments in the Stanislaus National Forest offer ranchers the opportunity to move their cattle to the high country

when food sources start to disappear at lower elevations. However, these heavy animals can damage delicate meadows, change the hydrology, create erosion and introduce harmful bacteria to the water. Our work has been to assist with small scale repairs to previous meadow restoration projects implemented off the 108 corridor. Proper meadow function is essential to a healthy and resilient forest ecosystem.

AmeriCorps volunteers are the unsung heroes of so many amazing projects throughout the Sierra Nevadas, California, and the United States. With an alumni base of over one million volunteers and 55 years of service the impact is far reaching and hopefully will continue to bring help where it is needed. ■



*SNAP volunteer Jenna Levy places rock to re-enforce and stabilize a headcut.*



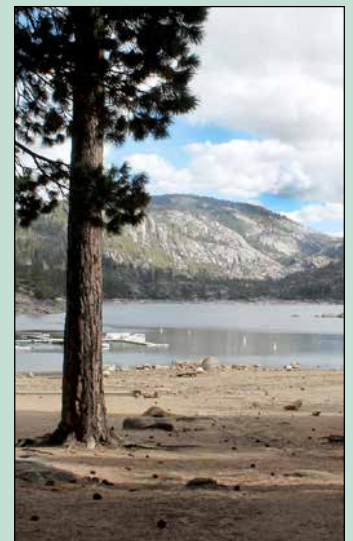
## LOCAL CONSERVATION UPDATES

### Hydro-Electric Plans

PG&E is finalizing its proposed management plan for Lyons Reservoir and the South Fork Stanislaus River for the next 40 years. CSERC is the local conservation group engaging in that controversial planning process.

### Will Dredging Return to Sierra Rivers?

State suction dredging proposal - The State Water Board has released a proposed permitting system to allow miners to use suction dredging equipment to suck up sediment in streams and rivers. For the past decade the State has enforced a moratorium on suction dredging. The new permit would re-authorize suction dredging use.



### Pinecrest Lake Levels

In a separate action, the State Water Board has approved a plan that would allow Pinecrest Lake to be drained lower during the summer instead of being kept moderately full to benefit up to 25,000 recreational visitors on summer weekends. The new plan could result in more water for future development.



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Due to COVID-19, the Tuolumne Group Executive Committee is currently only meeting by phone or with online sessions. For information on how to participate in the next ExCom call, contact Elaine Hagen at the email listed below.

**Chair** Elaine Hagen, [elainehagen@att.net](mailto:elainehagen@att.net)

**Secretary**

Karen Swanson, [tuolumnegroupsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:tuolumnegroupsecretary@gmail.com)

**Treasurer** Kevin Rice, [kjrice@ucdavis.edu](mailto:kjrice@ucdavis.edu)

**Outings** Keith & Beth Martin, [keithwmartin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:keithwmartin@sbcglobal.net)

**Chapter Delegate** Kevin Rice, [kjrice@ucdavis.edu](mailto:kjrice@ucdavis.edu)

**Webmaster** Jim Bearden, [jbearden@ieee.org](mailto:jbearden@ieee.org)

**Membership** Elaine Hagen, [elainehagen@att.net](mailto:elainehagen@att.net)

**Political Chair** Kara Bechtle, [campaignerkara@gmail.com](mailto:campaignerkara@gmail.com)

**News Editor** Joe David, [jd@daviddesign.com](mailto:jd@daviddesign.com)

**We welcome your input and feedback.**

## NOTES & UPDATES

### GET INVOLVED • TAKE ACTION

Today, years of hard-fought environmental protections are under threat—and to influence governments and businesses, we need everyone to speak up and shout out. Explore how you can get involved: go to [www.sierraclub.org/take-action](http://www.sierraclub.org/take-action)

### CONNECT WITH YOUR SIERRA CLUB TUOLUMNE GROUP

Want to get more involved with your local Sierra Club group? Interested in joining our Executive Committee? Have a great idea for a local Sierra Club presentation? There are many ways to volunteer for whatever time you are able to share. Members are invited to attend our monthly ExCom meetings. New energy and ideas are welcome! Email your ideas to Membership Chair, Elaine Hagen at [elainehagen@att.net](mailto:elainehagen@att.net).

### RATHER RECEIVE NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL?

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email either instead of, or in addition to our printed edition, email your request to [mail@sierratuolumne.org](mailto:mail@sierratuolumne.org).

The Sequoia Newsletter is designed to provide local Sierra Club members with a trusted source of information on people, events, and issues impacting our environment. Members can also find additional information on our updated web page: [www.sierratuolumne.org](http://www.sierratuolumne.org).

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