



Big Pines Volunteers

Volunteer NEWSLETTER

24537 Angeles Crest Hwy, Wrightwood, CA 92397 (760) 249-3504

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"100 years of Caring for the Land and Serving People"

Trail Cleanup Begins...

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Special points of interest:

- Angeles Crest Highway (Hwy 2) is now open from Big Pines to Glendale, adding increased traffic to our area.
- Engineers have repaired the wash-out near Camp Lupine. The road is now open.
- The opening of the new Zipline near Mt. High East on July 1st will no doubt increase visitors to our area of the forest.
- The AC100 race begins on July 23rd at 5:00 am in Wrightwood.



Mine Gulch Trail

Big Pines, CA – The heavy winter storms have wreaked havoc on many of the trails in the area. From the PCT, to the Acorn; from Vincent Gulch to Baden Powell; many trees have come to rest across the trails and washouts are common.

Volunteers are coming to the rescue. Frank Trejillo, a USFS Volunteer working out of the Big Pines station has been doing trail maintenance in the area for many years.

Frank has recently been joined by a new volunteer, Kevin Quinn. Between the two of them and any others who volunteer to help, they hope to have all the trails

in good condition for our area of the forest by the beginning of the Angeles Crest 100 Mile Endurance Run.

The AC100 will begin in Wrightwood on Saturday, July 23rd, at 5:00 am. It will start at the Wrightwood Community Building, make its way up Acorn to the Acorn trail which will connect to the PCT trail. The PCT trail will take them to Islip Saddle, 25.9 miles from the start of the race, at which point they leave the Big Pines patrol area.

No doubt the AC100 racers will greatly appreciate all the trail work that has been done.

The Acorn Trail



Before



After



Before



After

Photos courtesy of Kevin Quinn

Getting to know... “Todd Cook”



2007, where he is still assigned. At first he commuted between Big Pines and his Forest Service residence at Monte Cristo. After about a year of driving 100 miles round trip, he moved to Wrightwood. Today, Todd also serves as the Assistant Volunteer Coordinator for the volunteers working out of the Big Pines Station.

Todd is an avid weather watcher and enjoys all types of outdoor activities including snowboarding, hiking, fishing and camping. He also enjoys spending time with his girlfriend, who is also very active with Forest Activities in the Big Pines area, and his dogs; Merced and Sierra. One of his favorite spots is Mammoth California where he enjoys snowboarding in the winter, hiking and camping in the summer and visiting friends.

One of Todd's passions is cooking. He makes his own sushi and has become quite the expert in smoking meat and fish in his BBQ smoker. He has been experimenting in using different types of hard woods in his smoker which gives the meat subtle but unique flavoring.

Todd works in close cooperation with the “The Volunteers of the Angeles National Forest”, the volunteer organization that operates out of the Grassy Hollow Visitor's Center, as he serves as their Forest Service liaison.

One of the projects he is proud to have helped implement is the soon to be constructed; new amphitheater at Grassy Hollow which will be utilized for various programs conducted at the Visitor's Center.

Another project he hopes to complete soon is a permanent stand that will display the dedication plaque at “Bob's Rock” which is located at the entrance to the Grassy Hollow VIS. Bob Moore, for which the rock was named, passed away this past May.



“It's easier to go down the hill than up it, but the view is much better at the top.”

Arnold Bennet
English Writer 1867 -1931

Big Pines, CA – If you stop by the Big Pines Station, the man greeting you from behind the counter will be Todd Cook. As the Big Pines VIS Visitor Information Assistant, his job is to provide the public with Adventure and other Agency Passes, Wood Permits, Campfire Permits and answer any questions they may have about the Angeles National Forest. From trail and road conditions to information on campgrounds in the area, he has the answers.

Michael Todd Cook was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. His travels would take him to Kansas City, MO, St. Petersburg, FL and Breckenridge, CO before moving to California in 1998. He attended college at Southern Illinois University, Glendale College and took online classes at Northern Arizona University.

Todd began volunteering with the Angeles National Forest Fire Lookout Association in 2000. He got his first Forest Service position in visitor information working out of the Clear Creek information station and Chilao Visitor Center on the Los Angeles River Ranger District. He also worked as a “Rec Tech” and information receptionist on the same district.

Todd moved to the Big Pines VIS as a permanent Visitor Information Assistant in



Location for the new Amphitheater



Current Temporary Stand for “Bob's Rock”

Big Pines History... "The Llano Del Rio Colony"



Before



After

Photos: the West Antelope Valley Historical Society

Valyermo, CA – Above are some of the ruins of the Llano del Rio Cooperative Colony. Evidence and remains of its existence can still be seen today from Jackson Lake to Big Rock Creek, from Valyermo to Little Rock.

Llano Del Rio was a corporate-run socialist Utopian society that was founded in May of 1914 by Job Harriman, a prominent lawyer and socialist who had ran for Vice-President of the United States, Governor of California and Mayor of Los Angeles. He wanted to prove that the socialist theory of cooperative living could work. It didn't work... and as Desert Magazine of the Southwest put it in May of 1963, "It was desert-1 and Marx-0."

In exchange for an honest day's work a member received free shelter, food, education, health care, a job, a guaranteed minimum wage, free cultural activities, and more. The colony was set up as a corporation. One bought a set amount of stock to become a member, originally \$1000 worth.

From the time of its official formation in 1914 until 1917 the colony experienced extreme economic and political growth. In just over three years, the colonists of Llano were able to form a school system, create high producing farms, start numerous clubs and sports teams, and build many industries including an award winning dairy and bakery. The colony took off like a rocket...but its retro-rockets

fizzled to gas fumes in only a few years. What happened?

One problem was productiveness; long hours of cooperative labor produced very little. Tony Vacik, who was a child living at the colony, explained, "Some people just would not cooperate. Fourteen comrades would be assigned to a project and probably four of them would do all the work." [Llano's Withered Dream. David P. Bailey, Desert Magazine of the Southwest, May, 1963, pp 16, 18] Also, nearly all of the money went to the governing body "the committee", who used it for their own personal gains.

By 1916, the colony's population reached 1,000 and there was not enough housing, crops, or infrastructure to keep pace with the new members. In a land always screaming for more water, friction flared over water rights. The socialist colony made a fatal miscalculation on the water that upper Big Rock Creek provided. Their estimation was based on rain and snow run-off and the measurements were done on the upstream side of San Andreas Fault. Most of the water below the upstream side was absorbed by the great lateral fracture far below.

Many miles of canals that channeled water from the Big Rock Creek Fan to the colony were built; making use of water that the socialist colony was sure would be enough. It wasn't. Lack of water was just another problem that caused the doom of the colony.

Tempers flared... and thoughts of moving to a better location were more than tempting as not all were happy campers. In 1917, two hundred of the one thousand packed their bags, chartered a train and moved the entire colony to the town of Stables, Louisiana. During 1918 the Llano del Rio filed for bankruptcy, became deserted and only tumbleweeds visited its remains. -Contributed by Terry Graham



Ruins of the Llano Kiln
Photo: Terry Graham Collection



Remnants of Llano Water Pipes along
Big Pines Hwy near Big Rock Creek
Photo: Bob Morgan Collection



Remnants of Llano Water Pipes along
Big Pines Hwy near Big Rock Creek
Photo: Bob Morgan Collection

Being Prepared...

Weather Extremes Big Pines Station

June 2011

Low: 6th 32°

High: 21st 87°

Wind: 1st 36

Precipitation: 0.03 in



Big Pines – When disaster strikes, whether it be an earthquake or severe mud or rock slide it is quite possible that many people will be occupying the forest. In preparation, many are being trained.

Many of the members of the VANF working out of Grassy Hollow as well as those working in many of the Organizational Camps in the area have become certified members of CERT. Many have also become HAM operators working with the Wrightwood Disaster Communications Group. Knowing that preparation and training is ongoing brings peace of mind, that should an emergency happen, volunteers in the area are prepared. There will be more on this in an upcoming article.

Grassy Hollow Summer Programs...



- **Saturday, July 9th, 11AM / 1:30 PM**
Reptiles!

See LIVE specimens. You will learn about the snakes and lizards that slither and crawl around in our area!

Time: Approximately 1 - 1 1/2 hours

Location: Grassy Hollow VIS

Leader: Jim Bass;
Herpetologist.

- **Sunday, July 24th, 1:00 PM**
Rocking Geology Talk

What's underfoot in the San Gabriel Mountains? Learn about the rocks you might see when out hiking.

Time: Approximately 1 hour

Location: Grassy Hollow VIS

Leader: Donald Prothero;
Professor of Geology, Oxy College

- **Saturday, July 16th, 1:00 PM**
Keeping Forest Green/Fire Safe
Learn how NOT to start a fire in the forest while protecting humans, animal life and trees.

Time: Approximately 1 hour

Location: Grassy Hollow VIS

Leader: Jim Wilkins;
Captain SBCo Fire, Retired.

- **Saturday, July 30th, 1:00 PM**
Plant Identification Walk
Join a botanist who will take you on a walk and teach you to identify some of our local plants.

Time: Approximately 1- 1 1/2 hours

Location: Grassy Hollow VIS

Leader: Kim Williams; Professor of Biology, CSUSB and Naomi Fraga;
Conservation Botanist RSABG



"Backpacking is the art of knowing what not to take"

Sheridan Anderson
Outdoorsman and Author
1936 - 1984

- **Saturday, July 23rd, 1:00 PM**
Lightning Ridge Nature Walk
Walk through the forest containing examples of the forces of nature that shape our region. ½ mile walk

Time: Approximately 45 min to 1 hr

Location: Inspiration Point

Leader: Ellen Wilson, Sabrina Johnson
Volunteers of the Angeles National Forest.





Current Fire Danger



c. 1925



c. 1930

Interested in Volunteering out of the Historic Big Pines Station?

Call: (760) 249-3504 or Email:
Todd Cook: mtcook@fs.fed.us or
Ron Heinig: rheinig@fs.fed.us

Photos: From the Collection of Terry Graham



The Wrightwood Communications Group has a disaster preparedness net each Sunday evening at 6:00 pm.

<http://www.kw6ww.com/>



Wrightwood CERT has weekly FRS Nets on Sundays at 5:30 pm

<http://www.wrightwoodcert.com>



Non-profit 501 (c) (3)

Upcoming meetings (3rd Tues each month)

Tues Jan 18, 2011
Tues Feb 15, 2011
Tues Mar 15, 2011
Tues Apr 19, 2011
Tues May 17, 2011
Tues Jun 21, 2011
Tues Jul 19, 2011
Tues Aug 16, 2011
Tues Sep 20, 2011
Tues Oct 18, 2011
Tues Nov 15, 2011
Dec 2011 - No Meeting

7pm, at the
Wrightwood Museum
6000 Cedar St.
(Old Fire Station)

Meeting Information:
(760) 249-5248



Grassy Hollow
Visitor's Center

www.grassyhollow.net

The Volunteers of the Angeles...

Meetings of the Volunteers are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm at the United Methoist Church located at 1543 Barbara Street in Wrightwood. All meetings are open to the public.

Volunteers of the Angeles National Forest

Wrightwood, CA

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