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**Long-term Resiliency Fund Launched to Empower Revitalization and  
Local Stewardship of Central Sierra Communities in Response to Creek Fire Devastation**

*The Central Sierra Historical Society, a long-standing non-profit in Shaver Lake, will manage the restricted fund to provide resources for rebuilding a thriving mountain community living within healthy forests for generations to come.*

**SHAVER LAKE, CALIFORNIA** - October 2, 2020...The Board of Directors of the Central Sierra Historical Society and Museum, Inc. (Historical Society) proudly announced its formation of the Central Sierra Resiliency Fund (The Fund) and financial support for long-term revitalization efforts are being accepted at [www.sierrahistorical.org/resiliencyfund](http://www.sierrahistorical.org/resiliencyfund). The announcement was made at a community gathering at the Historical Society on Friday, October 2, 2020.

Efforts to form a long-term fund began before the ash from the fire had settled, and became a reality when local families rallied the support and trust of the community to galvanize a collaborative local response to the Creek Fire. The Historical Society and other community members who know the region's unique history seek to rekindle a sense of hope for the future by stewarding financial resources to rebuild a thriving mountain community within healthy forests. Two of the families with roots in the Central Sierras since the 1800s are the McDonald family, whose history dates back to their pioneer ancestor CB Shaver, and the Gillett family, who are lifelong residents of Pine Ridge and current proprietors of the iconic landmark, Cressman's General Store.

The locally-held Fund was established to reforest, rebuild and boost community revitalization efforts in the wake of the devastating 300,000+ acre Creek Fire. Representatives of the Historical Society and the Fund explained their shared values of restoration, community and stewardship. All donations will be managed in a restricted fund by the Historical Society, which is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in Shaver Lake.

“In the wake of the largest single fire in California history, the mountain community has come together to empower and lead its own revitalization effort and support the long-term stewardship of this unique region. We want to ensure the resources are available to restore the forests and get people back living, working, and recreating on the mountain again,” explained Jacqueline McDonald Pucheu. “We love this mountain community and our shared stories, which are an important part of where we all came from, and how we will move forward in light of this year's natural disaster. Our Central Sierra legacy is one of determination, service, and boundless optimism. We need to revive the Central Sierras in a manner that honors this unique heritage.”

The next generation, represented by the Ridge Top 4-H, Sierra 4-H, Sierra FFA, and local Scouts, participated by planting pine tree seedlings at several tour stops in fire impacted areas to inspire hope

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for the future. The reality of the fire’s devastation, as well as the signs of hope were shared through Central Sierra Resiliency Fund Ambassador-led tours; around Shaver Lake with retired forester John Mount; at the Central Sierra Historical Society Museum with Mono Nation group founders; at China Peak Mountain Resort in Huntington Lake with management; at Shaver Ranch where the McDonald family was joined by Huntington Lake Volunteer Fire Department; and at Cressman’s General Store in Pine Ridge with the Gillett family.

The Fund’s mission is to support the revitalization of the forests and communities in Fresno County’s Central Sierra through land restoration, local stewardship and economic efforts that honor the region’s historic legacy. The community continues to assess long-term needs for revitalization as the Creek Fire is currently just 40 percent contained. The Fund’s Resiliency Council provides the necessary structure to support future, collaborative efforts to respond to the most pressing needs by involving forestry and natural resource, and economic experts and listening to the needs of the local community. The Historical Society Board of Directors will provide mission-aligned oversight and ensure the restricted Funds are used only for this revitalization effort. The Resiliency Council seeks to partner with local, state and national organizations to maximize available resources and empower local stewardship of the unique historical and natural resources of the region.

“The Creek Fire changed our lives, our business, our residence and the land we have called home forever beginning September 4, 2020. It destroyed everything in its tracks including our business, Cressman’s General Store, built in 1902, the house we live in, and our family cabin” said Ty Gillett, lifelong mountain resident and current owner of Cressman’s General Store. “Thanks to the expert aid of first responders, mountain volunteers, firefighters and law enforcement, our communities were evacuated in time to spare human lives.”

“I told my wife, Tara, that nothing was going to get in the way of rebuilding our lives and Cressman’s. This is where we grew up, fell in love, established our family and built a community of friends that feel like family,” continued Gillett. “Helping to establish the Central Sierra Resiliency Fund with the Historical Society means that monies raised can help support collaborative community efforts now, while also focusing on long-term needs. Providing a tax-deductible way of contributing also allows for funding to come from people outside of the region who love the area like we do.”

The Resiliency Fund will support Creek Fire recovery efforts in communities within the vicinity of Fresno County’s Central Sierra region including, but not limited to, Huntington Lake, Lakeshore, Big Creek, Shaver Lake, Pine Ridge, Meadow Lakes, Alder Springs and Auberry. Organizers encourage those interested in learning more about the Resiliency Fund to visit [www.sierrahistorical.org/resiliencyfund](http://www.sierrahistorical.org/resiliencyfund) and to also visit the Historical Society Museum in Shaver Lake to experience over 200 years of artifacts, photos and more saved by firefighter efforts when the Creek Fire blazed across the road at its entrance.

#### **THE CENTRAL SIERRA RESILIENCY FUND - RESILIENCY COUNCIL**

- Jacqueline McDonald Pucheu - Resiliency Council Chair, Community Member
- John R. Mount - Registered Professional Forester, Historical Society Board of Director
- Juli Stewart – Registered Professional Forester, Historical Society Board of Director
- Chasie Thiele, Community Member
- Riley Young, Ecologist, Senior Advisor for Southern California Edison

**ABOUT THE CENTRAL SIERRA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Central Sierra Historical Society and Museum, Inc., founded in 1991 in Shaver Lake as a non-profit 501(c) (3), opened its museum in 2007, which is located at 42642 Tollhouse Rd., Shaver Lake, CA 93664. Its mission is to enrich the cultural and educational experiences of visitors to the Sierra Nevada Mountains, by deepening their understanding of the human and natural history of this area. They hope to inspire future generations by bringing to life the challenges and achievements of the people who lived here. Its purposes include the restoration and preservation of landmarks and sites of historical value in the Central Sierra Nevada, cooperation with other organizations, institutions, and individuals doing work of a nature related to the purposes and goals of the Historical Society, and supporting the revitalization of the forests and communities surrounding Shaver Lake through land restoration, local stewardship, and economic efforts that honor the historical legacy of the Central Sierra region. For more information about the Historical Society visit [www.sierrahistorical.org](http://www.sierrahistorical.org).

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Attachments:

- Shaver-McDonald Family Story
- Gillett Family Story
- Photos and video available upon request