

Recent CSHS Projects

The Russ & Sally Westmann Gravity Fund:

The Russ & Sally Westmann Gravity Fund honors the generosity of Russ and Sally Westmann and the life work of Russ Westmann in educating youth in structural and mechanical engineering. The fund is intended to assist the Central Sierra Historical Society (CSHS) with the retention or “gravity” of exceptional individuals doing work in a region that they might otherwise leave without competitive salary options.

The Gravity Fund will support the focus on maintaining quality staff and attracting critical talent to further the fundraising and the mission of the Central Sierra Historical Society, Museum of the Sierra, and the Central Sierra Resiliency Fund.

Museum Endowment Fund:

Through the generosity of an anonymous donor, our fund has been seeded with \$1 million and your contribution to our endowment will be matched – up to \$1 million. As the fund grows, the future of the museum transitions from a year-to-year challenge to a self-sustaining model.

Partnership in Education Program (PEP):

The Central Sierra Resiliency Fund and the Central Sierra Historical Society are committed to educating our community and youth restoring and maintaining our natural resources through the shared education task force that is in its beginning stages of formation. This will include education programs for mountain and valley youth, a California wildfire exhibit at the Museum, and more.

Education Center Building Expansion:

With over 19 acres in the beautiful Sierra Nevada, there is so much history and science to explore at the Museum of the Sierra. Some of our major exhibits lend themselves naturally to lessons demonstrating STEM principles – magnetism in hydroelectric power generation, the physics of steam generation, the volume of flowing water in the lumber flume, to name just a few.

STEM exhibits include:

- Functioning, early 20th Century Steam Donkey
- Replica Log Flume & Tenders Cabin
- Functioning, Early 20th Century Hydroelectric Generator

More than 1,000 students have experienced our hands-on STEM education program!

We are also developing dedicated programs featuring Native American history and wildfire education. Finally, with a nature trail on our property, students may take a docent-led walk to introduce the Sierra forest ecosystem here at mile-high elevation.

Our education program aligns with state standards, providing learners with a connection to the content.

CA NGSS Science concepts:

- Newton’s Law
- Force & Motion



- Energy Transfer
- Action & Reaction
- Matter Properties & Change
- Friction & Lubrication
- Viscosity
- Gravity

Recent CSRF Projects:

Fuels Reduction Projects in Collaboration with Sierra RCD & Local Partners

The Central Sierra Resiliency Fund continues to support the Sierra RCD and partners working on local property post-fire fuels reduction clean-up projects.

The latest community workdays included getting the Pine Ridge School surrounding area cleared of low debris and ready for seedling planting in the spring. We had a successful fuels reduction/clean-up day in Shaver Springs on January 22 with nearly 60 volunteers.



Partnership with Blue Forest:

We are proud to announce our partnership with Blue Forest Conservation (Blue Forest) to develop financial solutions addressing the long-term environmental impacts of the 2020 Creek Fire, including the financing of hazard tree removal, ecological thinning, site prep and tree planting on public and private lands. Together in partnership with the Sierra National Forest, CSRF and Blue Forest are seeking to support the implementation of reforestation projects in areas impacted by the Creek Fire.

Relief through ReLeaf California Grant with Tree Fresno:

CSRF and Tree Fresno were recently notified that our joint grant was approved through ReLeaf California (funding from the USDA Forest Service). The Relief Through ReLeaf program supports critical urban and rural reforestation efforts in multiple underserved California communities adversely impacted by extreme weather events, like extreme wildfire. Funding through this grant supports the planting of seedlings at Pine Ridge School and helps fund the professional foresters' work on the Seedlings of Hope program. The Pine Ridge School planting day involved local families and youth service groups from the mountains and the Valley.

Spring Seedlings of Hope Planting:

In late February, volunteers helped ready the seedlings and move them from Mulholland Citrus, who generously grow many of our Seedling of Hope seedlings, free of charge, to cold storage in Big Creek in preparation for plantings. In early March, we worked with local property owners in the Creek Fire footprint to plant seedlings as a community effort. Working with Pine Ridge Elementary School, Tree Fresno, and the Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Commerce Youth Ambassador's Green Team there was a diverse participant engagement.



To Date, CSRF has planted and distributed 51,830 seedlings in the Creek Fire scar with help from Registered Foresters, the community, and our remarkable supporters.

The work that the Central Sierra Resiliency Fund does in our community would not be possible without the generous support of individuals, families, foundations, and sponsors. We are deeply grateful for the continued gifts of time and finances. There is no magic bullet to fix complex system problems in the face of both post-fire recovery and ongoing climate change.

CSRF believes that collective impact requires collaboration – bringing together organizations, donors, government representatives, and, most importantly, communities to work towards common goals.

Spring Seedlings of Hope Cone Collection:

In May of this year, CSRF was awarded grant funding through Edison International to expand our Seedlings of Hope Program to include Cone Collection.

Widespread wildfires and bark-beetle devastation in recent years have led to a serious shortage in seed and seedling supply across the state of California. In response, we are taking action to stock our very own seed bank so that we can continue our reforestation efforts in the Fresno County Creek Fire footprint!

In early August, CSRF council member, Gus Wicks (from Edison Forestry), and certified climber, Nick Smith (from The Woods), collected cone samples from Jeffrey, Ponderosa, and Sugar pinecones. The majority of the samples pulled contained large quantities of seed with either limited or nonexistent bug damage.

In collaboration with the Creek Fire Recovery Collaborative (CFRC), Sierra RCD, Provost and Pritchard, and our dedicated volunteers, all seed was harvested from the cones in September and will be stored at the Edison Nursery. In Spring 2023, we will begin sowing seeds from our seed bank at Mulholland Citrus and Intermountain Nursery. This effort will allow us to continue replanting within the Fresno County Creek Fire footprint for several years!

Storytellers Project:

The Resiliency Fund is committed to honoring the historical legacy of the Central Sierra region by collecting community stories of the Creek Fire—and the unique histories that precede it— and preserving those stories through the Central Sierra Historical Society.

For a year and a half now, the Creek Fire Storytelling Project Team has been hard at work collecting community stories of the Creek Fire. We've gathered stories from foresters, firefighters, cabin owners, campers, and full-time residents. We have poems, oral interviews, and even game-camera images. We are preserving these eyewitness accounts so that down the road, as memories fade, future generations will be able to fill in the gaps of those parts of history that are more closely documented—the statistics, the maps—with the words of the people who experienced the Creek Fire themselves. CSRF plans to publish the book in 2023, and it will be available for purchase at the Museum of the Sierra.

