



Forni Meadows, a Natural and Cultural Legacy is Now Part of Eldorado National Forest

The Eldorado National Forest has recently completed the purchase of Forni Meadows, adding 835-acres of ecologically valuable and historically significant land to an area adjacent to Desolation Wilderness. The \$3 million land purchase was facilitated by the Trust for Public Land with funding primarily from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). LWCF is a federal program which uses revenue from oil and gas leases for conservation. "The American people have been entrusted with a very special place," said Forest Supervisor Laurence Crabtree regarding the recent acquisition. "We are committed to caring for this land as well as the Forni family did." This beautiful high-elevation property features a stunning view of Pyramid Peak and contains approximately 250 acres of meadows and wetlands, breeding populations of the endangered Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, two miles of streams, and a small pond. It also provides potential habitat for other sensitive species such as the California wolverine, the Sierra Nevada red fox, the northern goshawk, and the American marten. The large size of Upper Forni Meadow (over 100 acres) is uncommon on the west side of the northern and central Sierra. With the surrounding complex of wet meadows, this property is exceptionally biologically diverse. The Forni Meadows property includes the historic Forni Ranch which was homesteaded by the Forni family in the 1880's and was used as a summer cow camp. The ranch contains the original cabin built in 1862, as well as other cabins and two barns. The cow camp is expected to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Adding Forni Meadows to Eldorado National Forest will allow long term conservation of this unique property for the benefit of the public and continues the stewardship provided by the Forni family. It also supports the Sierra Nevada Checkerboard initiative which aims to reduce habitat fragmentation by consolidating parcels of public land. Forni Meadows is located north of Hwy 50 and south of Lyons Creek Trail near Strawberry and is surrounded by National Forest System lands. There are currently no trails into Forni Meadows. However, the public can hike into this area along 4 ½ miles of primitive service roads which are closed to public vehicle access.