

The EAGLE TIMES



Volume 16-1



Protecting
Big Bear Valley's
native habitats and species
through
environmental education,
monitoring and advocacy

December 2021



HAPPY HAPPY BIRTHDAY!! Friends of Big Bear Valley

20 years ago, Pat Klous and Roman Silberfeld founded Friends of Fawnskin in their back yard

When the County of San Bernardino announced a new housing development was about to be approved and built in Fawnskin with no environmental analysis, Pat and Roman invited their Fawnskin neighbors over to hear more about it...and 75 people showed up!

The County claimed that this development (Moon Camp) would have no environmental impact. So many people wrote comment letters to the County pointing out the truth about that land (containing endangered habitat

and species) and the area of Fawnskin, that the County had to require that a full Environmental Impact Report be prepared for the project. The group of neighbors formed an Environmental Educational nonprofit to follow up on this and Friends of Fawnskin was born.

Shortly after that, another developer (Marina Point) started building their project even though all their permits had expired...and the new FOF jumped into action to contact agencies and insist that they follow the law. Soon, other organizations contacted us about proposed projects in their area of the valley. So, FOF brought education about our valley's special habitats and species and about our California and Federal environmental laws to those organizations, to local residents and visitors and to valley agencies.

Since we grew quickly in our work all around the valley, we changed our name to Friends of Big Bear Valley to reflect our broader perspective. Over our history, we have negotiated with the City, County and with a multitude of developers and agencies to bring compromises and find ways for development projects to work around and protect our special habitats and species.

FOBBV also founded the Bear Valley Ecotourism Coalition that hosts the annual Outdoor Adventure Days, showcasing our valley's amazing outdoor activities and 'unique in the world' natural surroundings.

And, of course, to bring a deeper understanding of nature to the world and allow everyone to fall in love with Jackie, Shadow and their chicks, we installed the live stream bald eagle nest camera in 2015, in partnership with the USFS.

That's just the 1st 20 years. *Imagine what we'll do in the next 20!*

New Camera, New View, New Adventure

This was the year of big upgrades to our live stream nest camera system. As many of you are aware, we did a few days of maintenance during the off season.

New Camera: We installed a brand new camera (same model) in the nest, along with a new mount arm and higher location to avoid Shadow's ever-growing stick collection and to give a better view of the nest and perches. Another goal was to be able to view some of their favored roost trees, which we accomplished!

New View: We re-installed the old, still working camera in a new location that gives a wide view of the nest to watch things happening in the surrounding area and see Jackie and Shadow flying in and out of the nest.

New Adventure: Our contracted camera/installation experts Dr. Peter Sharpe and Nate Melling both climbed the nest tree

during the installation. With all of the wiring, location and equipment changes, Nate was in the nest on 3 (cont. on page 2)



Nate Melling, IWS, works on the camera in Jackie and Shadow's nest. (Photo by: Teri Ashmore)

Update on CEQA Challenge to Moon Camp Approval

Last year, Friends of Big Bear Valley, along with Center for Biological Diversity and San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society filed a legal challenge under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to the San Bernardino County approval of the Moon Camp development project. The proposed project consists of 50 lots for luxury homes and a huge private marina. This property is a primary foraging site for our Fawnskin nesting bald eagles, Jackie and Shadow, and other wintering bald eagles. In addition, it hosts 17 acres of rare ashy gray Indian paintbrush and pebble plains found only in Big Bear Valley, as well as other endangered habitats and species.



Project site—photo by Erv Nichols

The County approved this project even though environmental analysis concluded “Significant Detrimental Impact” to Bald Eagles and in spite of hundreds of letters, expert testimony and thorough documentation submitted regarding the impact to the eagles, other endangered species and to the entire Big Bear community due to huge and growing fire danger, evacuation insufficiency and inadequate infrastructure.

The opposing attorneys filed a request to dismiss the case based on a technicality, but the court ruled in our favor and the case will proceed to hearing. That hearing is currently scheduled for later this month.

We are also pursuing other options for protecting this magnificent land, such as a conservation purchase. We'll keep you updated as situations progress.

2021 Outdoor Adventure Days

After a year hiatus, the Bear Valley Ecotourism Coalition, founded and sponsored by the Friends of Big Bear Valley, hosted our 2021 Outdoor Adventure Days.

Event activities, highlighting our valley's outdoor adventures and amazing natural surroundings, included 2 full days of kayaking, -hikes on the Pebble Plains, Woodlands Trail and Happy Trail, -eagle watch/nest viewing, -yoga in the forest, -Big Bear Queen lake tours, -birding walks, -bike tours, -birding lake tours, and a Jackie and Shadow Fan party. Watch for information about next year's event on our ecotourism website: BigBearEcotourism.org



Other Advocacy Updates

—Marina Point Development:

Even after 19 years of multiple environmental lawsuits, each with a series of appeals, the opposition in this case has appealed the trial court decision yet again.

The trial court, based on previous rulings from the state appeals court, ruled that the County's original approval of the Marina Point development project has expired according to the County's own development code.

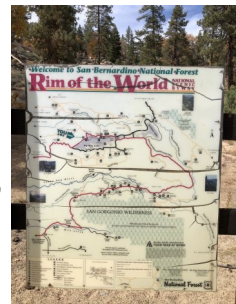


Bald eagle on site—this perch tree was later illegally removed by developer.

This development project in Fawnskin, on the north shore of Big Bear Lake, was approved in 1983 with minimal environmental analysis and then reappraised in 1991 with no updates to that analysis. In 2001 Marina Point began development work even though their permits had expired. FOBBV filed a legal challenge to halt that operation.

—North Big Bear Landscape Restoration project:

The U.S. Forest Service has proposed a major restoration project, which would include extensive tree-cutting, plant removal, prescribed burns and trail relocation, all along the north side of Big Bear Valley from the Big Bear dam to the Baldwin Lake area, including in and all around the bald eagle nesting area.



Due to public concerns regarding the potentially underestimated severity of the impacts from this project, the Forest Service received thousands of comments about this proposal. They are now in the process of reviewing and addressing those comments.



Dr. Peter Sharpe, below nest;
Nate Melling, in the nest.
(Photo by: Teri Ashmore)

New Camera...continued
separate days and for over 6 hours on one day alone. Thank you for your patience and understanding while the cameras were down. And thank you to Pete and Nate (and the Institute for Wildlife Studies) for their expertise.

With all this new equipment and contracted installation expertise...

a **Big Thank You** goes to **Peter and Sallye Ehmcke**

of Big Bear Lake for generously covering almost half of the costs!!

If you would like to donate to assist in covering the remainder, it would be greatly appreciated!

You can donate on our website at:

www.friendsofbigbearvalley.org/donate/

Thank you for your support and for enjoying Jackie and Shadow!



The 'Love Birds' are back for a new nesting season!

IT'S NESTING SEASON!!

...Jackie and Shadow are back to rebuilding...

Jackie and Shadow have returned to start the new nesting season. Bringing in and arranging sticks, bonding, and showing us how playful they can be with a nudge here, tail nip there and always fitting in a few beak kisses. We have seen them mate on the nearby snag (a bit more private than in front of the nest camera!) plus Jackie has been sitting in the nest bowl to try it out. She has



Cam2 lets us see them fly in

even started bringing fluff to the nest...which seemed to surprise Shadow. Her most frequent egg-laying time from past years is early January. We will be fascinated to watch and see what this season brings.



Having a bit of a 'discussion' over where this particular stick belongs.



After the Jackie & Shadow Fan party, our "Eagle Team" went looking for eagles...and got to see Jackie catch a fish and have lunch in a nearby tree. (photos by: Teri Ashmore)

New In The FOBBV "Jackie and Shadow" Online Shop

Our 2022 "eagle nest cam" photo calendar is now available...
...with framable full page pictures for each month!



Over the summer, we added 2 exciting new T-shirt designs, including—
at your request—our 1st long sleeve shirt!

For long-time viewers (and anyone wanting to catch up)...a 30-page photo book with color pictures from the nest camera showing the history of the nest from 2015 to 2020.

A 'must have' for all fans—
a pair of adorable Jackie & Shadow plush eagles!!

New this fall, we have also added a keychain, silicone coasters, a tote bag featuring our fantastic duo and a stick pen made from real wood.

Please visit our online shop: <https://www.friendsofbigbearvalley.org/shop/>



"If found, return to Jackie & Shadow"



JOIN US FOR OUR EXPANDING ADVENTURE!!

We are seeking an:

Administrative Assistant
to our Executive Director

to assist our expansion, create new projects and more

Please contact us for more information:

sandy@friendsofbigbearvalley.org

Thank you!

Year-End Fundraiser—Please join/donate!!



**Your donations support...all of this
and much more...**



BB Bald Eagle Nest Cameras



Environmental
Education and Advocacy



BB Outdoor
Adventure Days

**FRIENDS OF BIG BEAR VALLEY
2022 Donation/Membership Form**

Please select type of membership or donation--

- \$25.....*Student membership*
- \$50.....*Individual membership*
- \$95.....*Family membership*
- \$250.....*Wildlife Watcher*
- \$500.....*Bald Eagle Buddy*
- \$1000.....*Habitat Hero*
- Other amount \$ _____

PLEASE CONSIDER setting up a MONTHLY DONATION!!
Sign up at friendsofbigbearvalley.org

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!

Join/Donate online at friendsofbigbearvalley.org

Or send checks to:

Friends of Big Bear Valley
P.O. Box 422, Fawnskin, CA 92333

**Friends of Big Bear Valley is a 501(c)3
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EIN: 20-0650845 sandy@friendsofbigbearvalley.org

Name: _____

(Note: We do not share our member information with anyone!)

Mailing address: _____

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Your environmental concerns: _____

<https://friendsofbigbearvalley.org/donate/>



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Fawnskin, CA 92333

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Address Service Requested

**Wishing you Wonderful HOLIDAYS  
And a bright HAPPY NEW YEAR!!**