

The EAGLE TIMES



Volume 17-1



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

December 2022

It's Jackie and Shadow Nesting Season Again!

They are back and very busy building, bonding, and (throat-clearing), shall we say, bonking...



Jackie, Shadow, the Cameras and the Weather...

In September, while Jackie and Shadow were still out and about around the lake on summer vacation, we brought in our camera system team to do maintenance, repairs and new installations on our bald eagle cameras. The nest camera was repositioned and updated. The wide angle camera was replaced with a camera with powerful zoom ability and relocated to a new, much broader vantage point...and all was well.

...until a big storm in October decided to reposition the nest camera the way it wanted. With 50 mph wind gusts, it loosened the camera mounts and turned the camera upside-sideways. So, we brought back the experts and went on a search for an available tree-climber.

This is not as easy as it might seem—this climber must be able to climb the 150 foot tree on only ropes so as not to damage the tree, have all the needed special equipment, be permitted (both state and federal) to work in bald eagle nests, be proficient in installing electronics and most difficult of all—be available in our small window of time before the eagles returned to start nesting.



Sideways camera view

Thankfully, Nate Melling rearranged his schedule, and with big assistance from Dr. Peter Sharpe, came to the rescue. He put the camera back in place, double-anchoring everything against any future wind issues...and all was well.

...until the next big storm. This 2-1/2 day storm had even stronger winds (67 mph gusts), intense rain (1.2 inches in 1 hour, 2.1 inches total), and then freezing temperatures and snow. Many snag trees were felled by the winds, including one of Jackie and Shadow's favorite perches, and much of the valley was without power for two days. The camera stayed in place, but in the middle of the storm, it suddenly stopped working! Also, the microphone on the wide angle camera became garbled. It took many days of running system tests, researching possible issues and tracing connections, but we finally found the causes—one of the connectors along the few hundred feet of cable had lost its weatherproofing, gotten corroded and stopped transmission; the 2nd mic had filled with water; and the internet connection cables had gotten loose and 'wonky'. We quickly replaced all of those, just under the wire before Jackie and Shadow got serious about nesting—many thanks to Shadow for being stubborn about letting go of summer vacation! And all is well once again.



Nate Melling, about 6' tall, shows size of nest

Since then, we've had wind, rain and snow storms and the cameras and equipment sailed through it all. Big thank you to Dr. Peter Sharpe, Nate Melling, Carl Picciolo, Cali Condor, Giacomo Renzullo, Jennifer Renzullo, Mike Bode, Cindy Bode, Jim Applebury and Mark Goodley, each providing a different aspect of all the work it took to make this happen. And huge Thank You to some special Jackie and Shadow fans whose donations made the repairs possible! Thank you all very much!! (Livestream at www.friendsofbigbearvalley.org)



New wide angle camera with powerful zoom

We Won! Moon Camp Approval is Cancelled...at least for now

Our legal challenge to San Bernardino County's approval of the Moon Camp development project was successful! The Superior Court ruled in our favor on two items—1) the proposed mitigation for the destruction of acres of endangered Ashy Gray Paintbrush was invalid; and 2) the potential impacts to fire evacuation from this project were inadequately analyzed and mitigated.

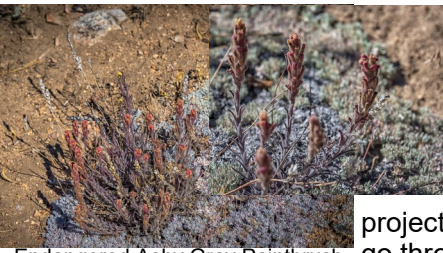
Background: In 2020, Friends of Big Bear Valley, Center for Biological Diversity and San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society filed a legal challenge under CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) to the County approval of Moon



Project site—photo by Erv Nichols

Camp. The proposal was for 50 (luxury home) lots and a 50+ slip private marina. The property is a primary foraging site for our Fawnskin nesting bald eagles and other wintering bald eagles. The site hosts 17 acres of endangered Ashy Gray Indian Paintbrush and Pebble Plains habitat found only in Big Bear Valley, as well as other endangered plant and wildlife species.

But, sadly, this is not the end of that project—the developer is already working with the County to make changes to the environmental analysis and re-submit the project for a new approval. When the next version of the Final EIR is released, it must again go through the public comment process. We will absolutely let you know when that happens so you have the opportunity to comment on it.



Endangered Ashy Gray Paintbrush
Photos by Ed Wallace

We also are continuing to pursue other options for protecting this magnificent land, such as a conservation purchase. Things are moving forward, but nothing definitive to report yet. We'll keep you updated as situations progress.

Bear Valley Ecotourism Coalition

The mission of the Bear Valley Ecotourism Coalition is to plan and implement pathways that bring economic benefits to Big Bear Valley through the conservation of, education about and promotion of our extraordinarily unique and diverse natural habitats, wildlife and resources. The coalition was founded in 2015 and continues to be sponsored by the Friends of Big Bear Valley.



The coalition includes non-profit organizations, Bear Valley agencies, local businesses and individuals with a desire to assist in the mission. The group hosts annual events that give locals and visitors a beneficial and fun experience of our beautiful natural surroundings.

This year the Outdoor Adventure Days event was based at the Big Bear Discovery Center. The outdoor adventures we offered highlighted our valley's many outdoor activities and amazing natural surroundings. They included kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding, hikes on trails of varying ability levels, bald eagle watch/nest viewing, Big Bear Queen paddlewheel boat lake tours, birding walks, birding lake tours, and a 'Jackie and Shadow' Fan party.



We are seeking coalition steering committee members to help bring ecotourism in our community to new levels of participation and awareness. Come join us! (for more information, write to: fobbvinfo@gmail.com.)

Marina Point Development Project

For the past 19 years FOBBV has lead other environmental organizations in multiple legal actions against San Bernardino County and the developer of the Marina Point development project in Fawnskin. Those suits are based on the illegal actions this developer continues to take, including: invalid environmental review, undertaking construction activities without proper permits, and moving forward based on a project approval that is now expired according to the County's own development code.

Each legal case has included years of court hearings and multiple appeals. In the latest case, the trial court ruled that the County's original approval of this development has expired and any actions to develop it require going through a new approval process. This ruling was recommended by the appeals court during the previous appeal process. Nevertheless, the developer has once again appealed the ruling.

The project on the north shore of Big Bear Lake was approved in 1983 with minimal environmental analysis and then reapproved in 1991 with no analysis updates. We are currently awaiting an appeal hearing date from the court. In the meantime, no work can proceed on the development of the project.



Project site on the north shore



Bald eagle foraging on site



...Our FOBBV Team is Growing...

We'd love to have you become a part of it!

Part-time contract or volunteer assistance with:

Public relations communications

—plan and coordinate sharing of bald eagle cam and other project information with members and followers.

Bald eagle social media updates

—assist in 'voicing' the stories of Big Bear's bald eagles with innovative creative writing and entertaining visual media

Social media/email monitoring and communications

—assist with answering comments and questions

Fundraising and event consultation

—design and implementation of creative fundraising projects; plan and guide ongoing and new events

Educational program implementation

—design and implementation of programs to bring education about nature to groups, classrooms, etc.

Assistance to Executive Director and Team

—general assistance in all areas

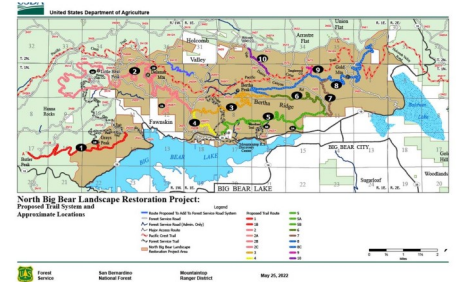
Social media chat and post moderators

Please write to: fobbvinfo@gmail.com for more info.

**We look forward to having you on the team!

North Big Bear Landscape Restoration Project U.S. Forest Service

In 2021, the U.S. Forest Service released a draft Environmental Analysis for a proposed major restoration project—covering 13,000 acres on the entire north side of Big Bear Valley from Big Bear dam to east of Baldwin Lake, including all bald eagle nesting, foraging and roosting areas and many endangered species habitats. The project, proposed to last for 30 years, would include extensive tree-cutting, plant removal, prescribed burns, adding over 50 miles of new trails and e-bike access on all existing trails.



After receiving over a thousand public comments and meeting with several 'objectors' citing lack of proper analysis (including FOBBV), the Forest Service is now removing all new trail creation and e-bike access into a separate future project. They plan to move the remainder of this project forward toward official approval with minimal changes to their original proposal. It has not been officially approved as of yet. We'll keep you posted on next steps.

Over 50 miles of proposed trail additions.

Special Thank YOUs!!

Much appreciation goes to the Virginia Commonwealth University ICU nursing staff and medical team in Richmond, Virginia. They held an 'eaglet' shower to celebrate the hatching of Jackie and Shadow's fish-loving chick, Spirit... ..and raised donations for FOBBV. They, of course, served sushi, seafood salad, and fish and chips!



Thanks to the beautiful generosity of grade school teacher, Johanna (left), every student in her classroom had their wish come true—they now each have their very own Baby Spirit T-shirt! (Thank you, Johanna!)

A big Thank You to Olivia Watson and Andrew Goodwin Brown!—in celebration of their recent wedding, they asked guests to donate to FOBBV in lieu of wedding gifts. Their donations are helping fund our new Educational Programs

Thank you also to our amazingly supportive eagle fans who greatly increased the size of their donation this year to help cover the costs of repairing the eagle cameras.

News from the "Jackie and Shadow" Online Shop



Inspired by an adoring eagle fan, we now have a Children's Book about last season's famous chick — **'I Am Spirit'**...both children and adults love it!

We've added 2 new T-shirt designs, including— a comfy long sleeve shirt!

(And we have sweatshirts coming soon.)

We still have available:

—2023 "eagle nest cam" photo calendars...

...with frameable full page pictures of our favorite bald eagle family for each month!

—a 30-page full-color photo book of the 2020-2021 nesting season

—And while you're shopping, remember to snap up a pair of adorable Jackie & Shadow plush eagles!!



Please visit our online shop: <https://www.friendsofbigbearvalley.org/shop/>
All purchases help support our mission!



*****For the Love of Nature*****
Your donations support all this and more...



Big Bear Bald Eagle Cameras



Environmental Monitoring and Advocacy



Bear Valley Ecotourism Coalition



New Educational Programs

FRIENDS OF BIG BEAR VALLEY
2023 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!!

Friends of Big Bear Valley is a 501(c)3 tax-deductible non-profit organization!

EIN: 20-0650845

Join/Donate online at friendsofbigbearvalley.org

Or send checks to:

Friends of Big Bear Valley
P.O. Box 422, Fawnskin, CA 92333
fobbvinfo@gmail.com

Name: _____

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

Mailing address: _____

City, St., Zip _____

Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

Your environmental concerns: _____



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

Wishing You HAPPY HOLIDAYS
and a Bright, Beautiful 2023!!



~~STAY CONNECTED~~

Please visit us online at all these places

WEBSITE (and access to both eagle cam live streams)— friendsofbigbearvalley.org

YOUTUBE — 2 Live Streams

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4-L2nfGcuE>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qk_rwlthYpc

FACEBOOK—Main FOBBV and eagle page:

www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Big-Bear-Valley-and-Big-Bear-Eagle-Nest-Cam-705508029491602/

Community Eagle page

www.facebook.com/groups/531281757566020/

(for more information on any of our articles:

fobbvinfo@gmail.com)