Message from the Board

The Amador-El Dorado Forest Forum is a group of forestry professionals, forest landowners, forestry educators, and others interested in forestry practices and issues.

Several Forest Forums were formally organized in the 1940’s, and the Amador-El Dorado Forest Forum is one of the last remaining forums in California, with many becoming Society of American Foresters chapters.

The lively nature of this group is well stated in a 1966 report, which said, “A cardinal rule was that the meeting place have a bar and a large dining room. The emphasis was always on good fellowship, and there was usually a speaker.”

Still going strong, this annual report is a summary and highlight of Forest Forum activities between September 2016 and May 2017. The Forest Forum takes a break during the busy summer months, so the annual cycle for this organization does not match the calendar year.

The 2016-2017 year was full of activities, from the Blanket Party in September to the Field Tour and Barbeque in May. Always looking to modernize and stay relevant, the Forest Forum launched an updated, smart-phone friendly website, and grew its Facebook page.

We hope you enjoy this report and encourage you to get involved in the many activities we offer.

Robert Little, President
Kevin Conway, Treasurer
Diane Dealey Neill, Secretary

Activities
The Forest Forum has monthly dinner meetings, an annual Holiday Party, and a Spring Field Tour. Although these activities are open to the public, the majority of attendees are Forest Forum members.

Outreach
The Forest Forum educates the public about sound forest management at three area Farm Days, a county-wide Career Fair, and through articles and information posted on its website.
“Blanket Party”
The annual fundraiser for the scholarship fund

The 2016 “Blanket Party” was generously hosted at Dobra Zemlja Winery in the Shenandoah Valley. With nearly 40 in attendance, over $1,600 was raised.

The proceeds fund the Edwin F., Lila, and Lyle Smith Memorial Forestry Scholarship. The scholarship is granted to students who have graduated from either an Amador or El Dorado County high school and are attending an accredited college, working toward a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Forestry.

The “Blanket Party” originated as an informal lawn party, but has evolved into an elegant affair. However, the infamous blanket is always the final auction item.
REMEMBRANCE

Warren Carleton
Longtime Forest Forum member Warren Carleton passed away on April 22, 2017. Warren received recognition for his service to the Forest Forum as the honoree at the 2011 Honors Dinner. He is pictured here with his wife Mellie. Many of those who worked with Warren attended the dinner, including Jim Davies, Anne (Delaney) Hiessenbuttel, Chip Walker, Ed Struffenegger, Dan Barringer, and Ron Monk.

RECOGNITION

BOS Proclamation
In 2016, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors recognized the Forest Forum with a proclamation, recognizing the Forest Forum's ongoing efforts to promote forest management through information and education. Pictured here is Supervisor Shiva Fretzen presenting the proclamation to Forest Forum Secretary Diane Dealey Neill.

EDUHSD Career Expo
On March 15, the El Dorado Union High School District put on its annual Career Expo at Union Mine High School. Career Expo is designed for students to connect with community members, to find resume-building opportunities, and to gather information to help them in making decisions about their future.

Representing the Forest Forum at the Expo were all three Forest Forum officers, as well as Ariel Thomson of Blodgett Research Forest and Kevin Vella of the Wild Turkey Federation.
Spring Field Tour and Barbeque

Heavy snow during the winter made planning for the annual field tour and barbeque difficult. The original plan was to go see the Calliecat project, a stewardship project on the Amador Ranger District of the Eldorado National Forest. With the snow not melting enough to get in and see the project, the plan was changed at the last minute. Tim Bordges, whose business specializes in fuel treatment, offered to lead a tour of his fuel reduction project at Lake Tabeaud, just east of Jackson in Amador County.

Forest Forum President Robert Little noted that this is not a fuel reduction project, but more of a fuel relocation project. The fuel relocation has to do with getting the fuel down on the ground where the fire wall is a more manageable three or four feet high, which can be effectively and safely fought by hand.

Managing crown fires is essential also. The current project is trying to open up the canopy to a space of thirty feet apart, to help keep the fire from crowning, and sending high flying embers ahead. The cost of fire safety treatment is well below the cost of fighting a fire, and it makes a lot of sense to invest in fire safety.

After the tour, everyone enjoyed a barbeque in the shade near the lake shore.
Farm Days

One of the biggest ways to make an impact on the youth of El Dorado and Amador Counties is to participate in the area Farm Days, educational events where grade school children are brought to a central location for a day of learning about agriculture, which includes forest products.

During the 2016-2017 year, the Forest Forum participated in two such events, one at Camp Richardson at South Lake Tahoe in September 2016, and one at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds in Placerville in May of 2017. At the Tahoe event, the Forest Forum reached approximately 300 children with three stations, Forest Management, Forest Products, and Tree Measurement. Students from the Natural Resources Academy at El Dorado High School assisted.

The Placerville event hosts children from the west slope, and had 60 stations and over 1,700 students. The more convenient location enabled the Forest Forum to not only set up four teaching stations (Forest Management, Forest Products, Forest Seeds, and Wildlife), but to also set up a portable sawmill, and bring in logging equipment and a loaded log truck. At this event, students from the AP Environmental Science classes at Ponderosa High School assisted, taking charge of the Forest Products station.

A special thank you goes to Hardie and Sandy Tatum of Tatum Tree Management for providing the logging equipment and sawmill, and to Sierra Pacific Industries for providing the log truck.

Forest Seeds

Bob Graton was back in action, demonstrating climbing gear used to collect cones and comparing foliage samples to the seeds of each major conifer species.

Portable Sawmill

After visiting one of the four teaching stations, students got to see how a log gets made into boards.

Big Dreams

Third graders wait in line to climb aboard a skidder and a loader, and imagine what it’s like to be a logger out in the forest.

Placerville Farm Day Crew

“Hardie, load that log!”

Fire Simulation - always a hit

Robert Randall: log truck driver extraordinaire
The Forest Forum is a steadfast supporter of the Forestry Challenge, an academic forestry competition for high school students that began right here in El Dorado County in 2003. It has grown from one event to five since 2003, with 415 students from all over California competing at 5 different events throughout the state in 2016.

Participants spend four days in the forest learning about the ecology and management of the forested landscapes that provide communities with water, recreational opportunities, and wood products. Youth benefit by better understanding the relationship of the forested environment to their community, by exposure to natural resource management as a potential career option, and by undertaking a rigorous critical thinking exercise.

Not only does the Forest Forum sponsor the Forestry Challenge, many Forest Forum members volunteer at events. Additionally, some foresters who are FF members mentor schools, helping to prepare the students for the events.

2016 – 2017 Dinner Meeting Topics

October 2016: El Dorado High School Natural Resources Academy
November 2016: Homeowners Guide to Removing Dead Trees
December 2016: Holiday Party and Gift Exchange
January 2017: Managing Tree Mortality on a Landscape Scale
February 2017: Blodgett Forest Research Update
March 2017: EDUHSD Career Fair (in lieu of Dinner Meeting)
April 2017: Land Use Planning to Reduce Fire Risk -- a Comparison of France and California