

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



PRESERVE, RESTORE, EDUCATE, ADVOCATE





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ON THE COVER:  
Emerald Bay, Photo Credit to Jon Thompson of [twilightandrust.com](http://twilightandrust.com)  
THIS PAGE:  
Hellman-Ehrman Mansion, Sugar Pine Point State Park



## MISSION

Sierra State Parks Foundation provides critically needed financial and professional support to the Lake Tahoe - Donner Lake region state parks for education, interpretation, restoration, and cultural and environmental preservation consistent with the mission of California State Parks.

We believe our parks are unique treasures worthy of our support by funding projects and educational programs that connect visitors with a rich cultural heritage and natural resources.

Because of this work and advocacy, our parks will continue to be places of inspiration and education for generations to come.





## REFLECTIONS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"Be the change that you wish to see in the world." – Mahatma Gandhi

On May 1, 2024, after 12 wonderful years, I stepped down as the Executive Director of the Sierra State Parks Foundation (SSPF). We have seen SSPF grow in both **philanthropy and impact**. The Foundation has matured from a three-person board to a strong and strategic 11-person Board of Directors. In addition, we did not let the historic snowpack of 2023 slow us down to prepare for our summer crowds. Our annual revenue has grown from \$229,000 in 2011 to \$1,510,335 (donor-advised and unrestricted) in 2023 enabling the Sierra State Parks Foundation to annually contribute, on average, over \$500,000 to our State Park partners at the eight California State Parks our organization is privileged to support.

I want to thank the amazing staff of SSPF whom I have been privileged to collaborate, our valued donors and dedicated volunteers, our business community, and the many professionals of California State Parks who have believed in me and the work of the Sierra State Parks Foundation as we create a welcoming park experience for all. It is truly a team effort!

I am thrilled to **welcome Michael Myers as the 4th Executive Director of SSPF**. I moved to an advisory role through the end of 2024 to assist with the transition, manage current projects, and support with future planning. Michael is the perfect fit for our organization.

2024 marks 50 years since the incorporation of the Sierra State Parks Foundation as a 501(c)3 in 1974. As we look towards the future, we envision our state parks to remain places that continue to be a source of joy and bring physical and mental benefits to all. I am excited to announce the establishment of an endowment legacy campaign for the exclusive use of restoration projects at the Hellman-Ehrman Estate at Sugar Pine Point State Park, where our organization began. We are working with our park partners on several projects that will continue to enhance the user experience. The future of SSPF is bright and our commitment of creating welcoming park experiences for all is as strong as ever.

Yours in Parks,

Heidi Doyle



# WHAT WE DO:

## Creating welcoming spaces



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

These magical spaces hold history we want to protect. As a nongovernmental partner, we expedite, fund, coordinate, and complete cultural and natural preservation projects. These restorations allow future generations to experience the same magic that inspires us today.

## EDUCATION PROGRAMS

We fund virtual classrooms that educate students globally on fire ecology, wildlife, and the Donner Party. In 2023, SSPF supported State Park Interpretive Specialists offering 127 free-of-cost virtual programs that **served over 11,300 students** ( vs. 6,000 students in 2022).





# HOW WE DO IT

## DEPENDABLE AND FRIENDLY FACES AT THE PARKS

Find helpful and knowledgeable staff at the four SSPF-operated visitor centers, providing access to information, and retail items that enrich the park experience. We also manage historic house tours for the Hellman-Ehrman Mansion and Vikingsholm Castle, connecting folks to the rich natural and cultural history of the area.



## MEMORABLE EVENTS

We produce unique fundraisers that provide unforgettable park experiences, nurturing current and future donors and supporters, and promoting stewardship and sustainability.





# HOW WE DO IT

## THROUGH THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS & VOLUNTEERS!

Creating high-quality events can cost an arm and a leg, but that's where sponsorships and partnerships come in. Media partners Tahoe.com and Tahoe Guide supported our marketing campaigns. Other local business partners donated gift cards, in-kind services, beer and wine, and more. All this allows us to put more proceeds back into the parks!

In addition, our volunteer champions are essential in helping us execute unique events and projects. 62 active volunteers collectively contributed a whopping **1,248 hours of service** to the Tahoe State Parks via the Sierra State Parks Foundation in 2023. That means our passionate team contributed a **value of \$41,795.52** to the parks through volunteering!



**THAT IS AN IN-KIND  
VALUE OF:**

**1,248 HOURS X \$33.49 PER  
HOUR (FEDERAL VOLUNTEER  
VALUE) = \$41,795.52!**



**SEE LIST  
OF 2023  
PARTNERS  
&  
SPONSORS  
ON PAGE  
13**



# OUR IMPACT

## IN-PERSON PROGRAMMING



Through consistent support over the years, SSPF-funded educational programming expanded to include mountain bike, kayak, raft, and snowshoe tours. In 2023, a total of **29,347 park visitors and local students** participated in these programs. By sharing the cultural and natural history in accessible and interactive programs, we're creating future park stewards through unforgettable memories.



# Signature Project: THE EDUCATION INITIATIVES



The Sierra State Parks Foundation sponsors multiple education initiatives in the parks to help foster a welcoming environment for all. Coupling a \$30,000 SSPF investment with a grant of \$22,000 from Parks California, we launched a vibrant program -- purchasing 75 adult and youth snowshoe packages, outdoor storage, and outdoor gear for those who came unprepared. The target is for underserved youth to experience winters and the Olympic Heritage history at Sugar Pine Point State Parks, and perhaps inspire them to become Olympians themselves!



A new educational rafting tour program was launched in 2023. 286 lucky participants went on free ranger guided tours of Donner Lake, Truckee, learning about the rich natural and cultural history.



## DO YOU KNOW:

Classrooms can book free field trips with SSPF-sponsored public school transportation included! Donate \$1,000 today to sponsor a classroom of 60 students, connecting them to the outdoors, wildlife, and local history.

Support Park Magic at  
[SierraStateParks.org/Donate](https://SierraStateParks.org/Donate)

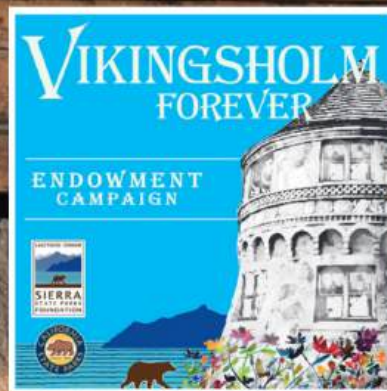




# Signature Project: **VIKINGSHOLM FOREVER**

The need for operational and maintenance funding for Vikingsholm, since it became a part of the California State Parks System in 1954, is a continual challenge. With inadequate State resources to address the annual costs and long-term needs, the Sierra State Parks Foundation has stepped up to keep the historic house museum open and maintained. As with all old homes, the needs increase each year. The Foundation has created a solution to ensure future funds will be available for the upkeep of Vikingsholm Castle.

A minimum investment of \$1000, will grant you membership as a Founding Member.



Why an endowment campaign? Funds will be used to support a dedicated Restoration Specialist with the expert skills to perform delicate maintenance and restoration work at Vikingsholm. Additionally, materials will be purchased for the completion of top-priority needs. The Foundation will coordinate with California State Parks and other entities as future large-scale projects are identified at Vikingsholm.

**The Vikingsholm Forever Endowment Campaign is your legacy opportunity.**

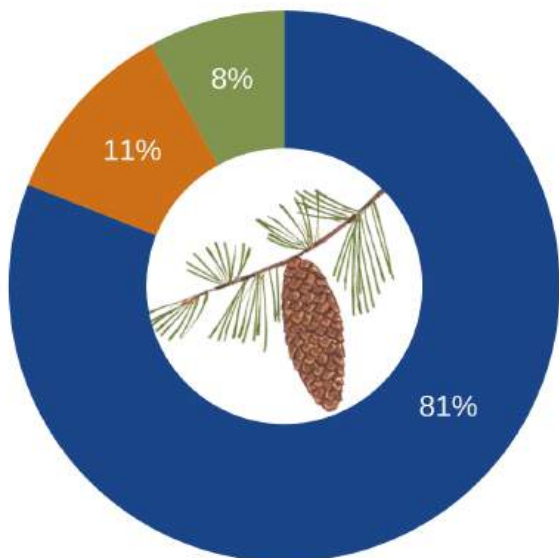


# OUR FINANCIALS

Your donations are hard at work! Eighty-one cents of every dollar goes directly to facilitate education programs, natural and cultural restoration, and other initiatives to create welcoming and accessible experiences. We are poised to help strengthen parks as a major partner at the beautiful eight California State Parks we serve at Lake Tahoe and Donner Lake.

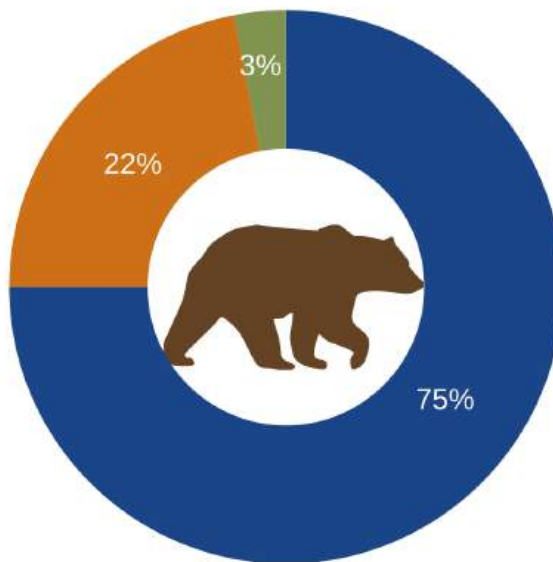
In 2023, we steadily continued to implement our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, providing education, interpretation, restoration, and cultural and environmental preservation for our magical Tahoe parks. We are fortunate to be a part of the sustainability of our parks and are grateful for your dedication to our shared vision. We can't do this critical work without you!

## HOW WE SPEND YOUR MONEY



● PROGRAMS ● MANAGEMENT ● FUNDRAISING

## PROGRAM BREAKDOWN



● EDUCATION / INTERPRETATION ● RESTORATION & PRESERVATION ● ADVOCACY

**Platinum  
Transparency  
2023**

**Candid.**

Our organization earned the Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency *again*, which means The Foundation has achieved (and retained) the highest level of financial transparency to its donors.

We are proud to share our key metrics with the world and highlight the changes we're making. We give donors and funders an alternative to simplistic financial ratios to evaluate us.



# THE STRATEGIC PLAN: 2021 - 2025

## OVERARCHING GOAL: ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

### Create Meaningful Park Experiences

The Lake Tahoe and Donner Lake California State Parks were created to provide recreational opportunities in a landscape that was quickly becoming less accessible to the public. Creating welcoming and accessible park experiences with maintained facilities, and inviting our visitors to experience the parks in a manner meaningful to them, is central to our mission.

### Grow Resilient Funding

Public funds, through fees and General Fund allocations, cover just 60% of the expenses of operating the State Parks at Lake Tahoe and Donner Lake. Restoration costs for the many historic treasures is on-going, expensive, and unbudgeted. The need to create sustainable funding for SSPF to achieve its desired impact requires mechanisms that will endure economic turns.

### Enhance Collaborative Opportunities

SSPF operates within the ecosystem that includes not only our local State Park partners but a multiple of local and state government agencies and non-government organizations. Recognizing the benefit of collaboration in meeting our mission, we will commit to nurturing proactive collective relationships.

### Increase Visibility

Parks are essential landscapes, treasured and required for our mental and physical health. Yet a disconnect exists between the impact of SSPF and the visitor. This detachment is also between California State Parks and the public. The creation of programs and opportunities for engagement, coupled with unified messaging, will bridge this gap and have the effect of bringing more resources to SSPF.





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**CURRENT YEAR ROUND STAFF (2024)**

Michael Myers, Executive Director  
 Heidi Doyle, Senior Consultant  
 Brian Herlihy, Business Manager  
 Rose Payne, Retail Manager  
 Kiley Mac, Community Engagement Manager  
 Denise Tran, Communications Coordinator

**CURRENT SEASONAL STAFF**

Judith Markward, Retail Supervisor  
 Nicole Bastille, Retail Lead  
 Rachel Kay, Visitor Center  
 Kyle Adams, Visitor Center  
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 Mary Lynn Hingano, Community Engagement Assistant

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Logos displayed include: California State Parks Foundation, West Shore Sports Lake Tahoe, Camp Richardson, Highway 12 Vineyards & Winery, Tahoe Guide, Tahoe.com, Truckee Chamber of Commerce, Granlibakken Tahoe, Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation, Zephyr Cove Resort, Rotary, Sustainable Truckee, Visit Truckee Tahoe, Dancie Kent Vineyards, Plumas Bank, Nevada County Library, Placer County, Add Your Logo Here For 2024!, Forlorn Hope 2020 Expedition, Pasqua, Lake Tahoe Dance Collective, Epiopromise, North Tahoe Cruises, Parks California, Tahoe Truckee School of Music, and California State Parks.



# THANK YOU DONORS

## \$10,000+ Donation

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In its purest form, philanthropy is etymologically defined as 'love for humanity.' A philanthropist is one who acts out of love for humankind.





Falls at Lake Tahoe, California July 31 1975

# CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF PARK PHILANTHROPY!

PREPARED  
 The second annual art show at the Ehrman Mansion at Sugar Pine Point State Park commences September 4 and continues through the ninth. Preparing exhibits are, from left, Betty Layton, manager of Greater North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce, holding one of her paintings which will be on display; Isobel Bruch-

City on the Lake Tahoe Advisory Committee to the state parks and recreation department; Lillian Farr of Tahoe City, displaying one of her paintings; and Dave Stollery of Tahoe City, chairman of the advisory committee. Exhibitors will deliver their paintings and artifacts to the Ehrman Home September 3 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. at the Ehrman Mansion, which is

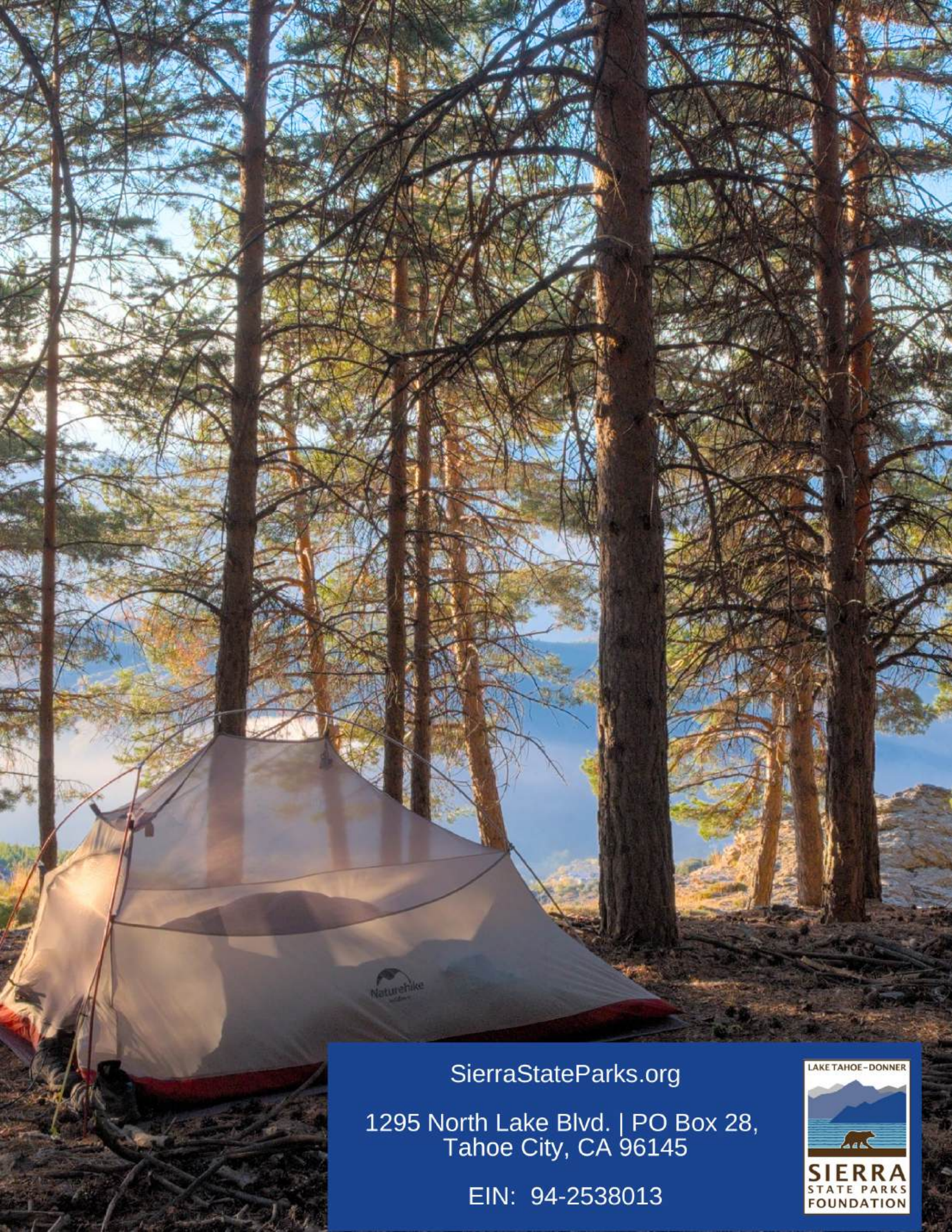
Point State Park, was recently set aside as a museum to house material dealing with the history of the Lake Tahoe area. —Sun Photo.



FOUR LAKES: TAHOE, FALLEN LEAF, UPPER AND LOWER ANGOORA, CAI

DETAILS & LIST OF ALL 2024 EVENTS AT  
[WWW.SIERRASTATEPARKS.ORG](http://WWW.SIERRASTATEPARKS.ORG)





[SierraStateParks.org](https://SierraStateParks.org)

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