

**2023
Annual
Report**



MARIPOSA TRAILS

About Us

Incorporated in May 2020, Mariposa Trails is a charitable non-profit with Federal 501(c)(3) status obtained through the extended Form 1023 application process. Tax ID#: 85-1241296

Our Vision

We believe that individuals, communities and the planet can all thrive together, and that this health is attained through relationships of reciprocity. Through our sojourns, be it hiking, riding, camping or trail-tending, we offer a fresh hope of restoration and invite you to build comradery with one another and with nature.

OUR COMPASS

- points to understanding that through healing and sustaining the natural world, the natural world sustains us as well.
- includes a bearing that encourages people to nourish and teach a meaningful relationship of reciprocity with the earth and all her beings, to mindfully listen and learn from the natural world, and in gratitude, share and apply that knowledge.

OUR MAP

- charts the recognition that it is essential to gather, support and celebrate the diverse gifts of individuals and organizations to enable achievement of shared missions.
- reveals that exploring, tending and experiencing the natural world brings understanding that nature is an essential part of humanity, and in turn, humanity can be a benefit to nature.

OUR JOURNEY

- embraces trails as gifts, and in gratitude, we use them respectfully, enhancing and creating beauty and joy.

Our Mission

We provide trail access and promote its use for adventure, health, stewardship, education and community prosperity.

Our Board

Bill King, President and Executive Director

Beth Kellner, Treasurer

Ursula Stock

Steve Humphry

Marcus Padilla

Message from the Board

Hello Friends,

2023 was truly a remarkable year, with the impacts of the winter of 22/23; the publication of the Mariposa Trails Map; and, the start of the 4-year effort to restore the South Fork Trail, firm in our minds!

Foremost, Mother Nature took center stage as the year began, bringing us much needed rain and snow and quickly snuffing out the multi-year drought! We were very grateful for the moisture but there was a high price to pay on trails coming after an intense fire year. The combined effects of wildfire and wet storms, coming so close together, damaged or washed-out portions of many trails. We began the work of scouting the damage, planning and beginning restoration. It will be an ongoing effort by our trail heroes and stewards to reopen these trails.

This was also the year of the Mariposa Trails Map! After 9 months, at least 20 drafts and the diligent and dedicated work within our organization and the community, the **“Mariposa Trails - your map and guide to trails in the Mariposa area and the Merced River Canyon”** was printed. First of its kind, this map was made possible by the effort of our GrizzlyCorp fellow Clay Groetsch and the funding support of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. Special thanks to the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation for providing Miwuk place names.



Bill King and Beth Kellner on the Bishop Creek Trail with sign about the South Fork Restoration Project

In 2023, the vision of restoring The South Fork trail sprang to life! Volunteers spent countless hours (well not really countless, we track every hour, every tree and shrub removed and every foot of improved trail track) preparing the gateway trails into the South Fork Canyon. The eastern gateway, the Bishop Creek Trail, was greatly improved by volunteer efforts. Then, the Sierra Free Packer horses and mules tested the trail for pack animal worthiness, while also assisting with clean up in the camp itself. Packing in tools and supplies to crews working down in the canyon is an essential piece to restoration in the years to come. The western gateway, on the Savage-Lundy Trail, restoration continued with dedicated and trail tested volunteers continuing to widen track, take out logs and brush and build retaining walls in washed out sections. They were followed by our first ACE (American Conservation Experience) crew who continued the effort deep into the canyon. All this culminated in the first trip in decades by stock down into Devil's gulch when two Sierra Freepackers tested the historic trail in November. A giant Thank You to all the volunteers who answered the stewardship call and brought this vision into reality.

Our Board, with new members Steven Humphry and Marcus Padilla and officers Bill King, Beth Kellner and Ursula Stock, thank everyone involved for sharing your knowledge, vision, stewardship, and support, making 2023 a remarkable year.

Happy Trails



In November 2023, Kelli Land (pictured above) and Patricia Vallentyne, both highly skilled equestrians and members of the Sierra Freepackers, test-rode the Savage-Lundy Trail

Year in Review

2023 Accomplishments

Designed and Produced the Mariposa Trail Map!

Tabled at the Merced River Festival and the Mariposa's second National Trail Day celebration at the Mariposa Art Park.

Completed our first trail restoration of the lower portion of the Skelton Creek Trail, removing a total of 68 logs over the trail.

Obtained project grant funds from the "Rose Foundation" to improve the Bishop Creek Trail, black oak project and corridor.

Developed a plan to initiate a voluntourism program.

Explored options to incorporate trail use and stewardship with shaded-fuel-breaks.

Completed restoration of the Bishop Creek Trail, enabling use by backpackers and equestrians.

Completed 5 miles of the 18-mile South Fork Project.

VOLUNTEERS

- 21 new volunteers
- 155 volunteers
- 1,169 volunteer hours
- \$35,011 of volunteer work value

CONTRACT CREWS

A six-person *American Conservation Experience* (ACE) crew, together with two forest service wilderness rangers, worked 1 hitch (6 days on the trail) to improve the Savage-Ludy Trail, enabling stock use to Devil's Gulch.

Trail Conditions

Trails within our service area continue to be negatively impacted by the consequences of long-term drought, mega-fires and extreme storm events. Consequences of these events include tree fall, soil erosion, rockslides and rampant emergent plant growth. Beginning with the 2018 Ferguson Fire, trail work has become more about restoration, than simple trail maintenance. Some areas of the service area have had double-doses of these events and consequences, as well as a significant change in plant communities. For example, prior to 2018, the upper segment of the Skelton Creek Trail wound its way through a forest of pines, firs and cedars. While the bark-beetle infestation and 2018 Ferguson Fire killed many trees, the trail still enjoyed a high degree of overstory pines and oaks. In 2020 and 2021, MT volunteers restored the trail, enabling hikers, backpackers and equestrians on the upper trail. The Oak Fire (2022), heavy equipment and the extreme winter of 22/23 decimated that work and many of the remaining trees, drastically

modifying the trail and surrounding landscape. Mariposa Trails remains committed to trail restoration, but the challenge is ENORMOUS. Approximately 80-miles of trail exist in our service area, and many have not seen the level of work needed to restore and/or maintain them.

In 2023, MT trail crews removed:

- 136 logs that had fallen onto trails
- 918 branches growing across trails
- 11,878 plants located within trail corridors

In 2023, Mariposa Trails (MT) completed 41 trail-tending outings on 8 different trails. * (#) denotes number of trail-tending outings in 2023.

SAVAGE-LUNDY TRAIL (19)

This trail serves as the western access for future stock support to the South Fork Restoration Project. Volunteer and paid crews worked hard to re-open this trail; Stock use by highly trained equestrians is now possible to Devil's Gulch.

BISHOP CREEK TRAIL (5)

This trail serves as the eastern access for future stock support to the South Fork Restoration Project. Volunteer crews worked hard to re-open this trail; Stock use by equestrians is now possible to Bishop Creek Campground.

TRAIL TO HITE'S COVE (5)

While MT crews restored the majority of this trail in 2019, 2020 and 2021, volunteers continue to repair the trail from rock slides, tree falls and encroaching plants.

OWL CREEK TRAILS (4)

Prior to 2018, the trail network wound its way through a forest of pines, firs and cedars. The Ferguson Fire (2018) and Oak Fire (2022) drastically transformed the landscape to one dominated by chaparral, oaks and an understory of brush. Trail-tending is focused on removing brush and trees from the trail, enabling non-motorized recreational access.

SKELTON CREEK TRAIL (3)

Significantly impacted by the 2022 Oak Fire and subsequent soil erosion, volunteer crews removed 65 logs off the trail, removed invasive and brush seedlings, and re-established trail tread and rock retaining walls. Much work, however, remains especially the lower portion.

MERCED RIVER TRAIL (2)

MT assisted BLM with clearing two rockslides.

SOUTH FORK - RIVER CROSSING SEGMENT (2)

In 2017, MT located the original upslope trail between Devil's Gulch and the upstream river crossing, a distance of 0.25 miles. MT located and flagged the trail, then cut a rough opening through downed trees and brush growth. ACE crews are scheduled to begin work here in Fall 2024.

HITE'S COVE AREA TRAILS (1)

No trail work has occurred in the cove. In the fall of 2023, MT reconned the cove to determine which trails to restore.

Our 2023 Trail-Tending Volunteers

Mariposa Trails would like to thank the following 59 trail hero volunteers:

- Ursula Stock
 - Sean Murray
 - Steve Humphry
 - David Nelson
 - Paul Wagner
 - Marcus Padilla
 - Matthew McCormick
 - John Helwig
 - Ed Davis
 - KT Ehrlinger
 - Earl Heitzman
 - Tim Wright
 - Alex Keeton
 - Lori Pontious
 - Ivan
 - Meagan
 - Larry Frates
 - Judd Volino
 - Sydney Keeton
 - Elaine Denny
 - Ben Kurtz
 - Michael McDonald
 - Erin Stacy
 - Debra Rockwood
 - Carmelina (Wildland Trekking Co)
 - Sam (Wildland Trekking Co)
 - Patrick Coico
 - Clay Groetch
 - Mary Odell
 - John Wagoner
 - Craig Fish
 - Demitri
 - Steve Montimer
 - Dayna Vissher
 - Theresa Ho
 - Tom Lambert
 - Amy Miller
 - Zach Higgins
 - Sesar Sanchez
 - Vanessa Aiaga
 - Nerei Hernandez
-
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Building Community

RECIPROCITY

Mariposa Trails embrace trails as gifts, and in gratitude, we use them respectfully, creating beauty, joy and understanding. Learning about nature and the peoples who have come before us is an integral part of our outings. Sitting together, sharing ideas and stories from historic figures, esteemed ecologists, humanitarians and scientists become memorable moments cherished by outing participants.

At Mariposa Trails, we view trail stewardship as a means to an end. It's a ceremony of gratitude for what nature provides, and a hope that others will have an opportunity to witness natural beauty in all its forms.

ACCESS FOR ALL

Mariposa Trails provides trail access and promotes trail use, inviting all to build comradery with one another and with nature. Each year, Mariposa Trails creates outing opportunities for a diverse set of groups.

COMMUNITY

In 2023, Mariposa Trails outreached to the community via two festivals (1) National Trails Day; and (2) Merced River Festival, and one fundraiser- the “Mariposa Trails Wildflower and History Tour” on the Merced River Trail.



Fiscal Overview

For fiscal year 1/1/2023 to 12/31/23
Figures as of December 31, 2023

Assets	96,246
Liabilities	1,327
Funding Sources & Revenue	
Grants	121,304
In-Kind Donations	4,900
Donations - Direct public support	1,957
Fundraising/Programs	5,455
Total Annual Revenue	133,616
Expenses	
General Administration/Operations	6,872
Program Services/Supplies/Equipment	12,931
Contract Services	21,834
Total Annual Expense	46,537

OUR 2023 DONORS

We would like to express our profound gratitude to our financial supporters. Without their contributions, we would not have been able to lay the foundation for “Mariposa Trails,” upon which our work will grow into the future.

AmazonSmile
Bill King
Steve Humphry
Beth Kellner
Candace Gregory
Kim Hastings
Margarita King
Bob Worcester
Benjamin Kurtz
Judd Volino
James Bishop
Mike Wenrick
Michael Fruth
Mark Reigel
Jane Smith

GRANTS

- Sierra Nevada Conservancy
 - Yosemite-Mariposa Tourism Bureau
 - The Rose Foundation
 - Mariposa County Fire Title III
 - Gabe Charitable gift Fund
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RECEIPT CLUB MEMBERS

To those who gave their grocery store receipts to Mariposa Trails, THANK YOU! Both *Pioneer Market* and *High Country Health Food and Café* offer a receipt program to support local non-profits. We are grateful to these grocers and shoppers who made it possible for this year's \$548 donation. As every penny counts, the same can be said for receipts.

Save your receipts and join the Club!

Ralph Menderhausen
Wendy Brown
Jeff Gabe
Ron Allen
Ruth Kepler
Tracy and David Greenwood
Margarita King
Ralph Ariola
Thomas Sims-Brown
Mark Norman
Nicole Belle Isle
Larry Frates
And anonymous shoppers

SPECIAL DONOR

We are very grateful for the donation made by Roger Wyan of Merced CA (Roger J Wyan Photography) that supported the housing needs for our GrizzlyCorp fellow Clay Groetsch. His generous gift was an essential ingredient in attracting and supporting Clay in her stay with us in Mariposa.

Thank you, Roger!!!



Clay Groetsch
Mariposa Trails GrizzlyCorp 2023 Fellow

Our Thanks!

Our success is a measure of your support and collaboration. Thank-you volunteers, donors, grantors and to the Sierra National Forest -notably Cori Hayth, and our Yosemite National Park partners as well as the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation and the Sierra Freepackers.

Your support for Mariposa Trails is essential to providing access to local trails. Mariposa Trails is dedicated to supporting, maintaining and educating the public about Mariposa's unique trail system. To support our efforts, please visit: www.MariposaTrails.org



Mariposa Trails

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