



## Warner Valley Projects

Summer 2012



Nestled at the base of a rugged glacier carved valley, Warner Valley provides superb outdoor recreation opportunities in a seemingly timeless setting. Initially homesteaded by Edward Drake in the 1880s, Drakesbad Guest Ranch continues to offer a rustic retreat experience. Visitors return year after year to celebrate their own long-standing traditions and enjoy the wonders of the valley. To protect the area's unique natural and cultural resources, various projects in the Warner Valley Comprehensive Site Plan will ensure the preservation of this special resource for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

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### Comprehensive Site Plan

The Record of Decision for the Warner Valley Comprehensive Site Plan (CSP) / Final Environmental Impact Statement was signed in March 2011. This document includes a description of the natural and cultural resource improvement projects included in the CSP.

Lassen Volcanic National Park will continue to implement the projects identified in the CSP as funding, personnel and other resources become available. The projects will be timed to minimize impacts on visitors' enjoyment of Drakesbad Guest Ranch and the many recreational opportunities in Warner Valley.

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### 2012 Plan Implementation

Plan implementation in 2012 will be focused primarily on Drakesbad Meadow and Warner Valley area trail improvements and maintenance. Park staff will begin the restoration of Drakesbad Meadow to its historic montane fen condition in late summer.

Additionally, park staff will replace historic siding on Drakesbad Lodge and sections of the dining hall, and continue re-vegetation of Dream Lake basin.

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### Drakesbad Meadow Restoration

Drakesbad meadow was ditched and partially drained in the early 19th century to provide pasturage for domestic livestock before its acquisition by Lassen Volcanic National Park. Prior to ditch installation, a section of the meadow contained an uncommon montane fen. In late summer, park staff will restore this section to its original condition by filling the ditches with specially selected soil and turf. Subsequent

re-vegetation of the filled areas will restore the subsurface fen hydrology. The water table within the meadow will be monitored throughout the process. Additionally, the existing gravel trail connecting Drakesbad Lodge and the area trail network will be replaced with a boardwalk in order to restore the natural water flow across the area and provide passage for hikers and horseback riders.



Native species were planted along the lake bottom



Native species were planted following dam removal



Vegetation flourishes along new stream beds

## Dream Lake Basin

In 2011, park staff breached and then removed Dream Lake dam. As the lake drained away, four spring-fed streams carved meandering channels in the exposed lake bottom and watered a flush of new meadow plants. Additional native plants were planted to vegetate the lake bottom and the area once occupied by the dam.

Visitors are invited to access the area around Dream Lake basin during the ongoing restoration process. Throughout the summer, park staff will monitor the area for invasive weeds and continue with re-vegetation efforts. Over the next several years, the area will return to its natural riparian habitat providing forage and cover for a diversity of wildlife.

## Trail Maintenance and Improvements

Throughout the summer, park staff will be working on trails in the Warner Valley area repairing boardwalks, brushing trails, replacing trail signs, and improving trails to prevent erosion and stabilize soils. Additional work will be completed in conjunction with the California Conservation Corps to log, brush and clear drainages on the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) from the

southern boundary of the park to Warner Valley in order to include spur trails to the PCT. Park trail crews will also construct a 20-foot section of boardwalk at the rerouted junction of Dream Lake and Boiling Springs Lake trails, and a 120-foot section of boardwalk at the intersection of the PCT and Warner Valley picnic area.

## Future Projects

### Drakesbad

The Warner Valley CSP outlines many projects to restore the historic character of the Drakesbad Guest Ranch. The integrity of the historic district will be restored by re-configuring the loop road and parking, and by moving employee housing and storage to a new service area outside the district.

### Warner Valley

A number of changes to be implemented in the Warner Valley area will improve the visitor experience and reduce impacts on natural

resources. These changes include:

- Expansion of the upper campground, and conversion of the lower campground to a trailhead parking area and picnic area.
- Removal of the existing trailhead parking area, and restoration to wetland vegetation.
- Replacement of the road to the pool by a footpath that will allow water to drain beneath it.
- Replacement of the dirt road to the Drakesbad water tank with material that will allow water to flow through to the wetlands on the valley floor.



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