### REAL PEOPLE

## CONSERVATIONIST

Executive director of nonprofit – Stewards of the Sequoia – fights to keep public trails open

Compiled by Bekenfield Life Magazine

heis Horgan created Stewards of the Sequencin 2004 tohers, he ways, her ware the terring on the wall " that local mails would suffice closures unless someone agreement of the second the director. Horgan leads a group 2,800 members strong with a "trail agreedation program" that maintains 2000 miles of trails such year. The proop attends local opensy planning documents to draft comment letters that are able to proserve access to public lands.

"Unless the sherit majority wate up and because invulved, we stand to lose access to our public lands," Horgan said. "Get out and enjoy the grant outkness."

#### What's your favorite trail in Kern County?

That depends on the time of year, and whether I volated to go for a hike or mountain hike, dirt

156 Bakandield Stuffingenine August 2



bike or 4x4. The "Just Outstanding" trail is great. The "Trail of 100 Giants" is a great hike, although that is not outside of Kern, in Tukee County.

#### For visitors of Kern County, where would you say is a must visit?

Salmon Falls in the spring can be pretty incredible, but more than ary one place, adventure and variety is what Kern County offers. Put some food and water in a pack, get out the map and take a trail in a new direction.

#### What's the state of public land in Kern?

Our public land is suffering. Dree just the past few months, Stewards of the Sequnia has decreed more than 1,000 downed trees that were blocking the tasks. There are titerally millions of decast trees in areas that have experimented serverwiddfires, from the Paste and McNathy fires, for example. Ensails fields are explaining that were forested areas only a fer years ago.

Sailly, these destructive wildfires totaling hundreds of thousands of acress did not have to happen. Unnatural wildfires have the fosset watersheet and wildfile. Dest Dürstmericht indirfer andere Freihen einen.

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#### How has 'Stewards' been successful?

Steriorchied the Sequeia is the largest on-the-privat volunteer organization in the Sequeia National Forest. We have adopted 18 forest trails and our "trail appendixion program" has performed mainterance on more than 3,000 miles of trails, including clearing more than 3,000 downed trees and building almost 3,000 water bars to reduce existion.

Stewards have been able to keep many trails from being closed or reviricted by working preactively with U.S. Forest Service and Bareau of Land Management staff.

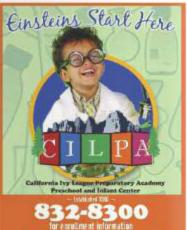
#### Where in Kern do you call home?

Lake Isabella. It poorsites such a diversity of outfoor experiences — the deset helow, the jagged forest peaks above, and the lake in the middle. Follow might not know that diviting down to the lakeshore would have been prohibited if not for Stenards working with the Fored Service to find an alternative to closure.

#### How can Kern residents help with your cause?

There is one thing that has been lackfuster, and that is fundraising. We need your donations so we can keep doing what needs to be done to keep your trails open We are a nonpublit, so donations are tax arituatilati, and use get more done with \$1 than most groups do with \$100. We can also use volunteers to help on "Stewards Trail Appreciation Days."

There is no charge to become a Stewards member, and to add your voice to the growing group of 2,500 people who want their trails open. More information: stewardsoffbesequoia.org. 10



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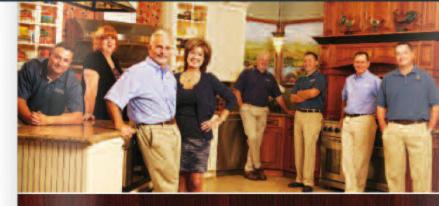
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