NEW CHIEF OF INTERPRETATION & EDUCATION ANNOUNCED

Lassen Dark Sky Festival

Photo Courtesy of the National Park Service

Lassen Dark Sky Festival would like to congratulate Kevin Sweney on his new permanent position as the Chief of Interpretation and Education at Lassen Volcanic National Park.

Kevin has been acting as the interim Chief of Interpretation at the park since March of 2018. The Lassen Park Foundation works closely with Kevin in numerous ways, including in multiple committee and board meetings per year.

Kevin’s knowledge of and enthusiasm for Lassen is evident in all of his endeavors at the park. This joined with his background and training with the National Park Service, is the reason for which the foundation is excited to support him.

Kevin’s career at Lassen began in October of 2008, when he was selected to staff the new Lassen Volcanic Center, a project funded in part by the Lassen Park Foundation.

He has also worked in Alaska as a seasonal park ranger at Kenai Fjords National Park and as a professional guide at Black Canyon of the Gunnison. Kevin is responsible for creating and leading the annual Lassen Dark Sky Festival (see image above), for which he was awarded the nonprofit’s Friend of the Park award in 2013.

In addition to his responsibilities at Lassen, he serves regionally and nationally as a public information officer for large scale incidents, specializing in communicating wildfire fire information.

Prior to his career with the National Park Service, Kevin was a licensed bartender with the Hilton Hawaiian Village in Hawaii. He also served as a soldier in the U.S. Army Reserve in the Peace Corps while living in South Africa.

He lives near Lake Almanor with his wife, Amanda, son, Aiden, and two daughters, Avala and Athena. When not in the office, Kevin can be found hiking or backpacking in Lassen’s wilderness.

IRA DONATIONS FOR LASSEN

As much as you might like to, you can’t keep your dollars in a retirement account forever.

The IRS generally requires you to make withdrawals from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or your Roth IRA by age 70 1/2. The IRS formula to determine the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) that you must withdraw from your retirement account each year if you don’t take it from your IRA, you could be subject to a hefty federal penalty.

The annual withdrawal from your IRA account is taxable as income, if you are in the fortunate position of not needing your IRA for living expenses, you can avoid the additional income tax by using one of the IRS-qualified charitable distribution rules.

These rules permit you to request your retirement account administrator to directly contribute all or a portion of your RMD to a charitable organization like Lassen Park Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. In 2019, the minimum tax-free IRA that could be directed to a non-profit organization was $100,000 for a single taxpayer and $50,000 for a joint filing taxpayer.

Keep in mind, there is a portion of an IRA contribution which prevents such retirement account distributions from also being a charitable deduction on your tax return. If your IRA is first distributed to you, as an IRA owner, your IRA withdrawal does not qualify for income tax-free treatment under the IRS-qualified charitable distribution rules.

As RMD also applies to individuals who inherit an IRA. As RMD rules are complex and subject to change, we encourage you to discuss the IRS-qualified charitable distribution rules with your tax advisor and/or financial planner. Note that state tax laws may vary in respect to IRA-qualified charitable distribution rules.

If you or a family member has made contributions to Lassen Park Foundation under the IRS-qualified charitable distribution rules, please contact your IRA administrator.
2018 was a tough year to live in Northern California. (even areas that weren’t directly affected by the Camp and Carr Park fire felt their heat, and some are still dealing with the aftermath. Lassen Volcanic National Park is no different. Early summer 2018 was showing record high attendance of our favorite national park. But the two fires, led at an early stage and concern about public safety, led to a 35% drop in attendance at Lassen. We were not the only one affected by the fires. National parks throughout northern California received low attendance throughout the summer months of Lassen through the fall. There was a silver lining. Despite all of the fires, Lassen Foundation faced this year. Lassen National Park remained beautiful and visited. It became an escape destination for those around the fires. Campgrounds were kept clean and noise levels were reduced as fewer people visited the best camping spots.

Lassen Foundation also felt the sting of the fires this year. Our second annual reach the Peak Hike-A-Thon this past August had fewer than half the participants of the previous years. It was difficult to adjust to the park with visitors arriving earlier or both of these issues for a special outing. Unfortunately, our advance planning could not have anticipated the date selected would be a year after the fire. The fire season was longer than normal, and low attendance of the public reached a new low for those fundraising events generating our economy.

"NEW CAPITAL PROJECTS LIKE PHASE II OF THE VULCANO ADVENTURE CAMPS AND PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING FACILITIES AT THE PARK THAT WE ALL KNOW AND LOVE." A new five-year Strategic Plan is in the works with Lassen Foundation’s Board of Directors. They are currently developing a Strategic Plan that will guide us into the next decade. It will focus on expanding our donor base, welcoming new Board Members, increasing outreach efforts at local events and through our local community groups. It will encompass new capital projects like Phase II of the Volcano Adventure Camp that will build four more cabins in the facility and raise program capacity for 200 children per week at low and high elevations. Lassen will build a year of growth and new donor points at Lassen Foundation.

Our Youth Camp Program, housed at the Volcano Adventure Camp, continues to build up momentum and participation at more youth groups learn about the opportunity. Grant program aided in providing kids with the chance to learn about nature from a professional. Our week of adventure continues and the Parks and facilities at Lassen are looking forward to new growth and new donor points at Lassen Foundation.

To ensure Lassen Foundation’s security for the generations to come, LFP now has both an Endowment and an investment Fund through State Regional Community Foundation (SRCCF). Donations to both can be made through either Lassen Foundation or the SRCCF. These funds can be used for future projects and grants at Lassen National Park.

"BUMPASS HELL" PENDLETON BLANKETS If you would like to order your "Bumpass Hell" Limited Edition Pendleton blanket please visit our website at www.LassenFoundation.org and go to the "SHOP" page. The blanket retail for $289 and can be shipped for $7.95 or picked up for no additional cost our office located in Anderson, Ca.
LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK 2019

www.nps.gov/lassen/planyourvisit/special-events.htm

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN EFFECT ON LASSEN

Lassen Volcanic National Park announced that recently closed areas of Lassen Volcanic National Park will remain closed through January 26, 2019. Some limited visitor services have been restored by using reverse aerogravity, by restricted fees. Visitors should visit the park website at www.nps.gov for updated information on accessibility and available services.

Areas that have been recently closed but that will be available to park visitors include:

- Lassen Volcanic National Park Roadway (Northeast from the junction of Highway 89 and the Riffle Fork Dr, then west to the Lassen Volcanic Rock Campground) and Lassen Volcanic Rock Campground. All roads are currently closed except for access via snooakers or skis. The campground is open for winter visitors, and all other camping areas remain closed for the winter season.
- The roads to Butte Lake, Warner Valley, and Juniper Lake remain closed for the winter season.

National Park Service officials have determined that by using Federal Land and Recreation Enhancement Act funds to improve existing hiking back in 2019, maintenance crews to plan roads and provide limited visitor services, the park will be able to remain accessible to the public. The park will remain accessible. However, all facilities will be closed.

"We greatly appreciate the generous contributions of CALFIRE for providing marketing services during the season in anticipations, park superintendent. However, there is a lack of resources to continue operations and services.

While basic services have been restored, the Lassen Volcanic National Park will remain closed for the winter season. All roads to Butte Lake, Warner Valley, and Juniper Lake remain closed, as well as the ability to sell-reserve. Use enforcement officers will be providing the National Park Service will continue to operate under limitations. In addition to the closure of the local weather forecast, winter visitors should know before they go and be encouraged to contact the National Park Service for the latest information on conditions near the park.

Updates on the shutdown, please visit www.nps.gov/lassen.
SUPPORT RESEARCH INITIATE CULTIVATE ACHIEVE DONATE

A contribution to the Lassen Park Foundation will be used towards supporting park programs, enhanced interpretive and educational activities, and restoration, wildlife research, park improvements, and cultural resource development. Those who contribute to the Foundation support the Lassen Volcanic National Park and conserve the park's heritage today for the enjoyment of future generations. You may make your contribution payable to the Lassen Volcanic National Park Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and qualify as a charitable contribution for income tax purposes.

Donate Online: www.lassenparkfoundation.org

Call: (530) 378-2600 or mail a check to PO Box 33, Anderson, CA 96007.

YES! I would like to help support the Lassen Park Foundation by making a donation.

Method of Payment: [ ] Cash [ ] Check [ ] Credit Card

Name ____________________________

City State Zip Phone ____________________________

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SIGNATURE______________________________________