

Sugar pines get a little help from Soroptimist

By Sharon Sterling

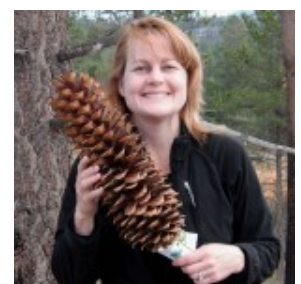
Members of Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe participated in the Sugar Pine Foundation's community planting event Nov. 6, helping to plant 750 sugar pine seedlings on U.S. Forest Service land in the Angora Fire burn scar area near Coyote Ridge Circle in South Lake Tahoe.

According to the Sugar Pine Foundation, the sugar pines of the Lake Tahoe Basin have been devastated by white pine blister rust, an incurable fungus that threatens the future of the world's largest species of pine, known for its beautiful, enormous cones.



Sue Novasel
and Ellen
Camacho

White pine blister rust kills 90 percent of all the trees it infects and natural white pine



Sharon
Sterling

regeneration cannot keep up with the pace of blister rust die-off. Fortunately, the Sugar Pine Foundation, founded in 2004, has identified and collected seeds from 64 rust-resistant trees in the Tahoe area which have been used to grow seedlings that are then planted by volunteers at community planting events such as this one.

Fewer than half of the 1-year old seedlings planted at the event are expected to survive, yet that didn't dampen the spirits of the dedicated group of Soroptimist volunteers.

"It is such an honor to be a part of helping to restore the forests of Tahoe for future generations," said SISLT President Ellen Camacho.

Restoring white pines in Tahoe forests not only benefits nature-lovers; it has many long-term benefits for wildlife, watershed health and the local economy as well.

For more information on the Sugar Pine Foundation, visit www.sugarpinefoundation.org.

They have another event planned for this weekend; Nov. 13, 10am-noon: Community Planting at Zephyr Cove Park near Whittell High School.

Sharon Sterling is a member of Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe.