

Forest sees rebirth after devastating King Fire

By Hudson Sangree, Sacramento Bee

The day after an arsonist pleaded guilty to setting the massive King Fire in September 2014, dozens of volunteers gathered Saturday near Stumpy Meadows Lake to help bring the forest back to life.

The volunteers ranged from children to senior citizens. They were members of the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, the Auburn Kiwanis Club and an off-road-vehicle club, among others. They planted hundreds of pine seedlings in the popular Black Oak Campground, which was singed by the King Fire.

With another fire season looming in drought-stricken California, the landscape decimated by the nearly 98,000-acre King Fire in El Dorado and Placer counties is slowly coming back to life. Wildflowers are blooming in the blackened earth, and the long, arduous task of replanting a vast swath of the Eldorado National Forest is just beginning.

“The recent fires are horrible events, but they present a great restoration opportunity,” Maria Mircheva, executive director of the nonprofit Sugar Pine Foundation, said last week. The foundation, based in South Lake Tahoe, helped coordinate the recent volunteer effort, as it has in other fire zones.

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