

Forni Meadows now part of Eldorado Forest

The Eldorado National Forest recently purchased Forni Meadows, adding 835-acres of ecologically valuable and historically significant land to an area adjacent to Desolation Wilderness.

The \$3 million purchase was facilitated by the Trust for Public Land with funding primarily from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). LWCF is a federal program which uses revenue from oil and gas leases for conservation.

This high-elevation property features views of Pyramid Peak and contains approximately 250 acres of meadows and wetlands, breeding populations of the endangered Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, two miles of streams, and a small pond. It also provides potential habitat for other sensitive species such as the California wolverine, the Sierra Nevada red fox, the northern goshawk, and the American marten. The large size of Upper Forni Meadow (over 100 acres) is uncommon on the west side of the northern and central Sierra.

The Forni Meadows property includes the historic Forni Ranch which was homesteaded by the Forni family in the 1880s and was used as a summer cow camp. The ranch contains the original cabin built in 1862, as well as other cabins and two barns. The cow camp is expected to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Forni Meadows is located north of Highway 50 and south of Lyons Creek Trail near Strawberry and is surrounded by National Forest System lands. There are currently no trails into Forni Meadows. However, the public can hike into this area along 4½ miles of primitive service roads which are closed to public vehicle access.