



**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**THE JMT WILDERNESS  
CONSERVANCY**

**2022**

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Marla Stark



2022 was filled with hard work backed by solid science. But as with most success stories, we also benefitted from good timing.

With a strong board, a resourceful staff and your matching donations, this year we successfully completed work in two major project areas. Strong recruiting at Stanford allowed us to field two JMT Intern Cohorts who performed spectacularly. We are now working directly with the JMT's prestigious federal units to design and implement the projects discussed in this booklet.

Good fortune added wind to our sails! The State of California turned its focus on water resiliency and biodiversity in the Sierra, particularly as both were impacted by climate change. A study showed that more than 50% of alpine meadows across the Sierra Nevada were already compromised, driving political priorities.

Our Board decided to take a long shot at securing some of California's enormous budget surplus for the difficult job of restoring the vast meadow ecosystem and riparian habitat across the central Sierra Nevada. With strong scientific backing, a thoughtful operational proposal and some key political support, we succeeded!

We are now jet-fueled to start the most vital restoration projects from Yosemite to Mt. Whitney. For the expanding JMT Internship Program, we are now recruiting from University of California Berkeley, as well as Stanford University. Our workload will more than double next season!

**Leveraging this state funding depends on strong private donations.** Please consider supporting our mission and the growth of our organization through your yearly giving.

The JMT Wilderness Conservancy is a nonprofit public benefit corporation tax exempt under IRC section 501(c)(3).

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## 2022 ACHIEVEMENTS



### **Ansel Adams Wilderness**

Inyo National Forest

*In our 2nd year of the WCB Grant, we restored over 100 badly impacted sites around Thousand Island and Garnet Lakes, while completing several key river-crossing reconstructions. Our JMT Intern Cohort covered roughly 350 miles per person. Next year's cohort will work in Donohue Basin, headwaters to the Owens River, and expand to a new project re-routing deeply cut and braided trails around Agnew Meadows.*



### **Reds Meadow**

*Inyo National Forest & Devils Postpile National Monument Development work has begun to remodel 5 public campgrounds in Reds Meadow west of Mammoth Mountain. Landscape architects are designing master plans for each that will retire campsites in riparian habitat, remodel parking and camp amenities, and better manage social trails for sustainability. The Sotcher Lake Trail, a mile-long loop featuring Sierra botanical species and indigenous cultural history, is being re-designed and re-opened.*



### **Vermilion Valley**

Inyo & Sierra National Forests

*Archaeological compliance and field data collection were completed this year along the eastern access trails over McGee and Italy Pass. This work sets up restoration next season over a 10-mile stretch of trail in the Inyo. Having found many indigenous artifacts along the way, our JMT Intern Cohort will conduct first-line archaeological monitoring as work proceeds. Extreme care will be needed to preserve artifacts of what may have been an ancient trading route over the Sierra crest.*



### **Kings Canyon / Evolution Valley**

Kings Canyon National Park & Sierra National Forest

*This season in our first year of WCB grant work, 150 severely impacted sites were restored on the South Fork of the San Joaquin River, along Piute Creek and Marie and Sallie Keyes Lakes. Our JMT Intern Cohort hiked over 250 miles each to cover the terrain and report on field work. We are engaged now on a significant re-route of the JMT through Evolution Meadow to avoid deep peat fens that are vital to the meadow ecosystem.*



### **Mt. Whitney Westside**

Sequoia National Park

*Having completed a field reconnaissance tour in late September, we have assessed the areas of impact in the most remote and challenging terrain along the JMT. This trail is the gateway to summiting Mt. Whitney, at 14,505' elevation, the highest and most visited peak in America. Next season's plan is coming together: a compliance team, pack stock support, and a skilled restoration crew equipped for this wide-scale effort.*

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## OUR MISSION'S IMPACT

*"I have been involved in water policy, land conservation, and organization strategy and management for decades. What the JMT Wilderness Conservancy is doing to restore the meadow ecosystems of the central Sierra Nevada is precisely what we need to go beyond theory and put multiple-benefit strategies into action on the ground. The Conservancy is doing the hands-on implementation work necessary to make our water supply more resilient while providing multiple benefits for people, wildlife and ecosystems."*

### **Felicia Marcus**

*Former Chair California State Water Resources Control Board;  
Visiting Fellow Stanford Woods Institute,  
Water in the West*



*"Among the environmental priorities for this State is the wide-scale restoration of meadow ecosystems and riparian habitat. These measures are necessary to brace ourselves for the impacts of a changing climate, to promote water resiliency and to support our tremendous biodiversity. The JMT Wilderness Conservancy is making great strides to support those priorities."*

### **Secretary Wade Crowfoot**

*California Natural Resources Agency*

# JMT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Our JMT Internship Program is growing in both geographic scope and responsibilities. This year, we introduced the program to University of California Berkeley, adding over 5,000 qualified students to the recruiting base already engaged at Stanford University. Recruiting is underway now on both campuses!

For our 2022 projects, we trained and supervised two JMT Intern Cohorts in successful deployments more than 100 miles apart. As we now design the program for next season, new recruits will be trained to add both archaeological monitoring and sustainability sweeps to their summer duties. These disciplines will assure early detection of historic artifacts and durability of our restored sites.

Take a look at the new deployments we are putting together that will span the JMT region. An experience in environmental leadership that inspires for a lifetime!

*“Spending 8 weeks in the JMT backcountry placed into real context the value of wilderness restoration, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and urgent fights to promote resilience against climate risks. As I carry forward my experience, I’m grateful to have explored meaning behind the concepts of sustainability and stewardship. It was an incredible opportunity.”*

**Eric Bear, 2022 JMT Intern;** Stanford B.S. '22 & M.S. '23




*“Being part of the first JMT Intern Cohort in the middle of the '20 pandemic was an experience I will never forget. Secretary Wade Crowfoot met us all on the trail and over a camp meal gave us an insider’s view of environmental policy. I decided to join the Conservancy’s staff earlier this year, and will return full time as its Eastern Sierra Project Coordinator after I finish my masters degree next June”*

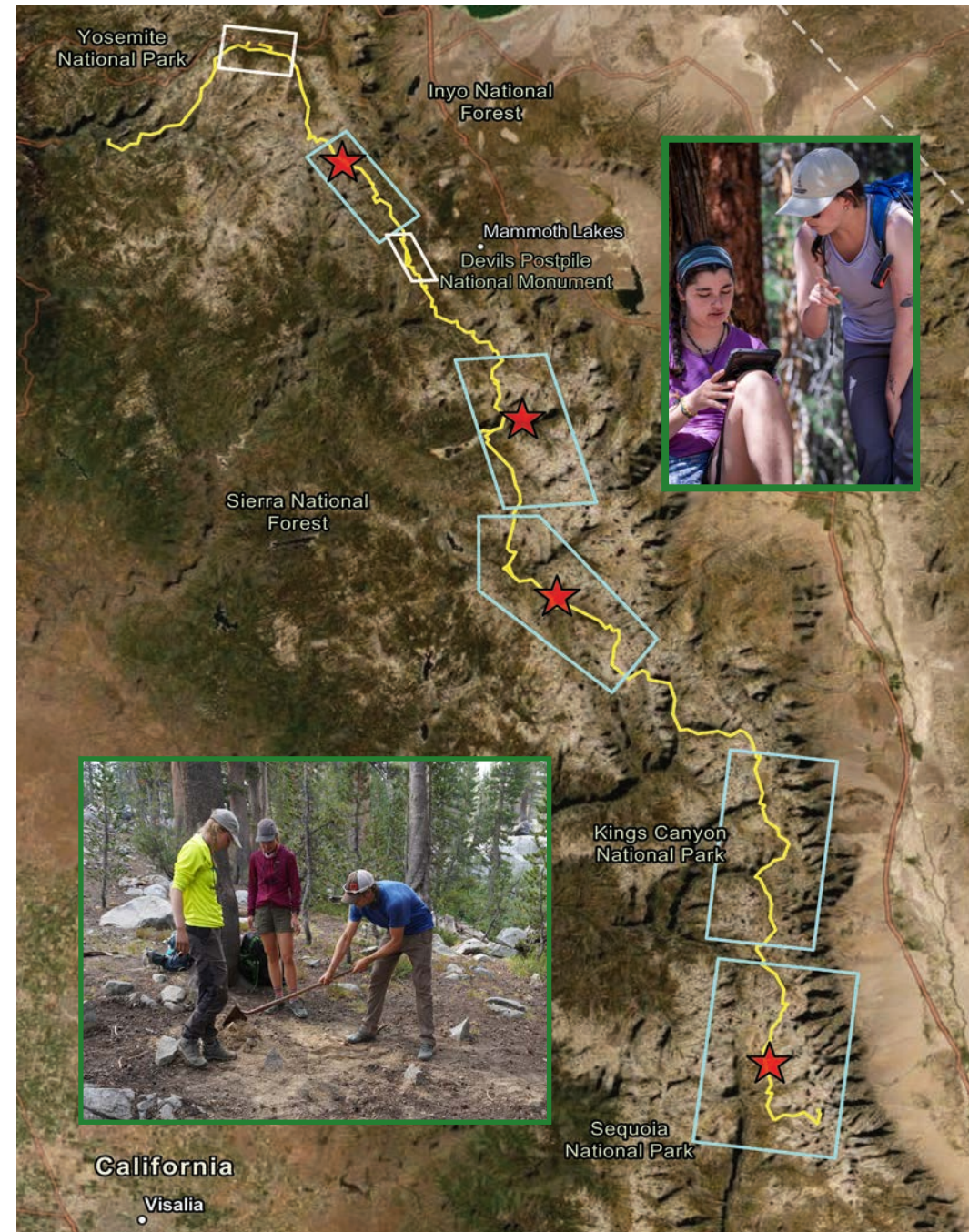
**Hannah Young, 2020 JMT Intern (1st Cohort);** Stanford B.S. & M.S. '23



LAST DAY: 2022 Kings Canyon JMT Intern Cohort, on Selden Pass.  
All images & cover top image © Franklin Lurie, JMT Intern 2022.

# 2023 INTERN DEPLOYMENTS

-  Sustainable Infrastructure Projects
-  Restoration of Meadow & Riparian Ecosystems
-  2023 JMT Intern Project Locations



California

Visalia

# A CALL TO ACTION NOW!

We are all told the next decade—maybe less—are critical for our water resiliency and defense against climate impacts. We have started an enormous job in the central Sierra Nevada.

Like building a new 5-G network, the California state funding allows us to build state-of-the-art infrastructure in the most vital areas. But there is a lot more to it.

**We need YOU** to finish the job and do it well!



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## **Join our 2023 JMT Backcountry Outings**

*Offered for those interested in learning more with leadership philanthropy in mind.*

### **DONATE TODAY**



The Conservancy hopes to leverage the state funding with your philanthropic donations to ***Make it Wild Again!***

**Contact Jessica Albee, Director of Development.**  
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**[www.JMTwilderness.org](http://www.JMTwilderness.org)**