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'Walking the talk' of stocking the lake

Crowley Fish Foundation brings 1,600 pounds of trout to Mono County reservoir



Doug DiMezlio of Oregon's Desert Springs Trout Farm uses his foot to weigh down a chute that delivered more than 700 trout to Crowley Lake Tuesday, courtesy of Crowley Fish Foundation and its donors.

Crowley Fish Foundation board member Jarett Coons holds up the first of 10 trophy trout released into Crowley Lake Tuesday.

Photos by Louis Medina

By Louis Medina
 Register Staff

The praise for Crowley Fish Foundation Tuesday morning from dozens gathered on the Hilton Bay shore of Crowley Lake was as plentiful as the spring rain that had been falling steadily since the night before.

Mammoth Lakes Chamber of Commerce board chair Alisa Mokler Harper called CFF "a relatively new yet very important nonprofit for the Eastern Sierra."

Town of Mammoth Lakes councilmember Chris Bubser said, "There are no better stewards of our waterways than fishpeople."

"Thank you for your dedication to fishing in the Eastern Sierra," Bishop Chamber of Commerce and Information Center executive director Tawna Thomson said.

Betsy Truax, Mammoth Lakes Tourism's vice president of community engagement, said that CFF shared MLT's values of conservation, sustainability, education and community, and that the passion the organization puts into its work is "contagious."

The work CFF was specifically conducting that morning was its inaugural stocking of trout on the lake: some 1,600 pounds of quality sport fish raised at the Desert Springs Trout Farm in Summer Lake, Ore.

"How so excited about today," said CFF presi-

dent Joe Contaldi. "This has been two years in the planning. We worked very hard. And the commitment we've gotten from all the people who donated to the foundation has been just amazing. We've come a long way in a short period of time. And so, this is finally where we say, 'We talked the talk, today we got to walk the talk.'"

Established in May 2024, and having gained its nonprofit status last November, according to foundation board secretary Chris Leonard, CFF raised just upwards of \$9,800 to pay Desert Springs for Tuesday's stocking — cash on delivery.

The manager of the hatchery, Ethan Negus, had driven 10 hours overnight with the precious cargo of more than 700 fish, most of them weighing about 2 pounds each. However, among them were 10 specially tagged trophy trout weighing up to 5 pounds apiece, according to Contaldi.

Any of these trophy trout, if caught, will be redeemable for a special prize, including guide trips and gift cards to local businesses, Contaldi and Leonard explained.

With Negus' help, CFF board members took turns releasing the 10 trophy trout into the lake one by one, and then, Negus and his accompanying coworker, Doug DiMezlio, hooked up a chute to the tanks of the live fish transport truck to release entire streams of them into the lake, to the excitement of several photographers and vid-

eographers from CFF and local media outlets who documented the occasion.

Leonard said the foundation works to ensure that future generations can enjoy world-class trout fishing in Southern Mono County, and sees teaching kids how to fish and opening up fishing opportunities for veterans as "a cornerstone" of its work. It regularly hosts free fly fishing clinics in the local community, too, he said.

He added that CFF partners with the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, supports scientific research efforts and surveys conducted at Crowley Lake and its tributaries, and works to preserve the region's reputation as a world-class fishing destination.

Truax said that in MLT's most recent visitor profile study, which surveyed both warm and cold weather visitors to the area, close to one out of two warm weather respondents, and close to one out of three cold weather respondents, cited fishing as an activity in which they or someone in their party participated. She said this makes fishing "one of our most sought after activities."

Leonard and fellow board member Michael Tu said the organization is planning two more similar stockings of trout for the lake: one in July, and another in September or October. Depending on donations received, they said, those efforts could be larger than Tuesday's.

To support CFF's work, visit crowleyfishfoundation.org.

Bishop comes a-courting for tennis, pickleball players

Revamping City Park playing surfaces moves forward

By Terrance Vestal
 Contributing Writer

After a month's delay, courts at Bishop's City Park will finally get a makeover.

The Bishop City Council awarded a \$98,430 contract to CH Court Tech Inc. for the courts resurfacing project at the park last week.

Community Services Department director Dan McElroy said awarding a contract was pushed back a month after bids came in incomplete and with

higher-than-anticipated cost estimates.

CH Court Tech's was the sole bidder last month, and although its estimate was about \$8,000 higher than the city's, staff found the increase acceptable for the project to be completed, McElroy said.

Resurfacing the courts has been a city priority, he said, not only because the current 16-year-old surface is now worn beyond usefulness, but the courts continue to be popular among both tennis and pickleball players.

Earlier this year, local tennis and pickleball players brought potential court striping configurations before the council as allegations from both sides regarding clashes and a lack of civility have increased.

Meanwhile, Wood Rodgers Inc. has been contracted by the city to develop a parks master plan with a focus on City Park,



The Bishop City Council awarded a contract to CH Court Tech Inc. last week to resurface the tennis/pickleball courts at City Park.

Courtesy www.pickleheads.com

which currently is in development.

The master plan's goal, based on feedback from residents and an analysis of current infrastructure, is to provide guidance

regarding the community's parks and recreation wants and needs for the next 10-20 years.

McElroy said the resurfacing project should take about two

weeks once it gets started.

"We will be posting notices on social media and everywhere with plenty of time for people to know when it will begin," he said.

For more information about the resurfacing project and the master parks plan, contact McElroy at (760) 873-5863, ext. 135, or dmcelroy@cityofbishop.ca.gov.

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Time you enjoy wasting, was not wasted."

— John Lennon