

Fens are unique wetland ecosystems that support rare plants and animals, sequester carbon, and provide insight into past climates and vegetation.

Fen Restoration in the Bucks Lake Wilderness

Restoring wetlands is never easy, but restoration in a remote wilderness area without the use of mechanized equipment is even more challenging! With the help of numerous partners and volunteers, the Plumas National Forest restored several fen wetlands in the Bucks Lake Wilderness during the summer of 2017.

Key Findings

- The Bucks Lake Wilderness on the Plumas National Forest supports numerous fen wetlands, but some of them have been degraded as a result of cattle grazing, altered hydrology, and drought.
- Restoration of these fen wetlands required planting thousands of sedges, filling erosion gullies and channels, and installing fences to exclude livestock.

Seeds were collected by Colorado State University students from fens in the Bucks Lake Wilderness and grown in a nursery.



Many fen wetlands show signs of degradation, including exposed peat and altered hydrology.



The Bucks Lake Wilderness supports a number of rare fen wetlands.



Temporary fencing was installed with assistance from the Feather River Land Trust to exclude livestock until fen vegetation can re-establish

Project Overview

In order to comply with wilderness regulations, restoring fens in the Bucks Lake Wilderness had to be accomplished without vehicles or machinery of any kind. Without the assistance of partners and volunteers, this project would not have been possible.



The Sutter Buttes Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California and current and former students from the Feather River College Equestrian Program packed almost 1,000 lbs of fencing materials over 7 miles into the wilderness.



American Conservation Experience crews, interns from Feather River College and the Geologic Society of America, and Forest Service staff carried several hundred pounds of seedlings 3.5 miles, and up 1,000 feet of elevation, and planted them in the degraded fens in order to reestablish vegetative cover.

Numerous volunteers and partners made fen restoration in this remote wilderness area possible.