



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Lake Tahoe's Forest Topic at Squaw Valley Institute Presentation**

**OLYMPIC VALLEY, Calif.** – Highlighting the important impacts of man and nature on our surroundings, Squaw Valley Institute presents the “Future of our Forests,” a discussion led by Sugar Pine Foundation founder John Pickett and the foundation’s executive director, Maria Mircheva. The presentation takes place at PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn on Thursday, January 22, with a no-host bar reception beginning at 6:30 PM and the presentation following from 7:00 – 8:00 PM.

Pickett and Mircheva will address a variety of issues including global warming, invasive species and other human influences that are having profound effects on the health of Sierra Nevada forests. The forests of the Sierra Nevada support a diverse wildlife population, clean the air and store water into the dry summer months. The speakers will explain how changes to the forest ecosystem now threaten the very foundation of the biodiversity that visitors to the Sierra Nevada enjoy. They will also explain how the divide between environmentalists and loggers is narrowing, and what the Sugar Pine Foundation is doing to create sustainability for sugar pines and western white pines.

The Sugar Pine Foundation is a non-profit that is restoring sugar pines and western white pines in the Tahoe basin. White pines are being devastated by a non-native rust introduced into North America around 1910. The group has located over 30 sugar pines that are resistant to the fungus and has planted over 2000 resistant sugar pine seedlings in the Tahoe basin. The Sugar Pine Foundation is now looking to expand its operations to the entire Sierra Nevada.

In addition to being the founder of the Sugar Pine Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to restoring white pine species in the Sierra Nevada, Pickett is also the operations manager for the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, a collaboration that is implementing fuels reduction projects in the Tahoe Basin. Governor Schwarzenegger appointed Pickett to the California Nevada Tahoe Basin Fire Commission in 2007.

Mircheva earned a Masters degree in Environmental Science and Management from the University of California at Santa Barbara. She is also currently working on the Lake Tahoe Clarity Crediting Program, a program designed to create incentives for water quality similar to carbon credits.

A \$10 donation to Squaw Valley Institute is requested. Children and students with I.D. are free. Squaw Valley Institute thanks PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn for sponsoring this event.

For tickets, more information, or to become a member of Squaw Valley Institute, visit [www.squawvalleyinstitute.org](http://www.squawvalleyinstitute.org) or call 530.581.4138. Further information on programs and member benefits is available on the Website too.

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