

## **Ospreys Lose Home to Fire – Sequoia ForestKeeper® and Sequoia National Forest work together to build them a new one**

Sequoia ForestKeeper, Kernville, CA – April 18, 2018

The rain dripped off the nesting material on a Southern California Edison (SCE) power pole off Burlando Road in Kernville and arced to cause a small fire on April 7th. Firefighters quickly extinguished the blaze, but the fire left SCE and the ospreys in an awkward situation, how to protect the power line, the people, and the ospreys while allowing the birds to do what nature guides them to do in spring?

Several people called the offices of Sequoia ForestKeeper® (SFK) and Sequoia National Forest (SQF) about the distressed birds trying to renest on the pole that SCE was trying to make less appealing.

Wendy Rannals-Sarubbi, SQF biological technician, hatched a plan, build a platform for the ospreys to build a new nest near the burned pole. She searched the internet and found a design for a nest structure. She enlisted SFK to help pay for the materials and she built the protocol design with the help of Kern River District Archeologist, Tim Kelly, who has past experience as a carpenter. Forest Service staff worked with SFK to process the proper paperwork for a Special Use Permit to install the nest platform on SQF land next to the SCE power line right of way.

On Saturday, April 14th, volunteers from SQF, SFK, and the community gathered to install the platform while the worried ospreys flew overhead. It took one and a half hours to install. Due to safety concerns, SCE was trying to discourage the birds from using the burned pole by removing the nesting material. Frustrating as it is, our efforts proved to be in vain, as the ospreys found room even with the excluder to renest and have already laid eggs. A nest with an egg(s) is not allow to be disturbed and moving the eggs to the new platform would make the birds abandon the nest. SCE had placed protective shielding on the live wires to help prevent another fire.

SCE staff biologists are working to create artificial nest platforms so the raptors that prefer nesting on tall snag-like poles will be safe along with the power grid. Our collaborative will remove the platform and relocate it in the fall to a different location on Forest Service land to replace an osprey nest that was destroyed in the 2010 Cove Fire.

Both organizations appreciate the public's comments and concern and we hope to collaborate on future projects that help nature in the Kern River Valley.

Thanks go to Wendy Rannals-Sarubbi, Tania Ellersick, Steve Anderson, Marcella Lopez, Kathy Baker, Penelope Shibley, Tricia Maki, John Good, and Alison Sheehey. Photos courtesy Alison Sheehey



*Figure 1. Burned pole with nest excluder.*



*Figure 2. Ospreys refuse to take no for an answer.*



*Figure 3. New nest platform on a 12' perch. Built by Wendy Rannals-Sarubbi and Tim Kelly*



*Figure 4. Wendy Rannals-Sarubbi, Marcella Lopez, and Steve Anderson dig the hole with a power auger.*



*Figure 5. The male osprey checks out what the silly humans are doing near his nest.*



*Figure 6. Steve Anderson has to resort to hand tools to deepen the hole.*



*Figure 7. Tania Ellersick, Deputy District Ranger for Kern River Ranger District, staples predator excluding flashing to the nest pole.*



*Figure 8. Kathy Baker brings sticks that had fallen to the ground below the burned nest.*



*Figure 9. John Good adds supports to stabilize the new pole with assistance from Marcella Lopez.*





Figure 10. The finished nest structure.



Figure 11. The female osprey says nature will not be controlled as she lays an egg in the nest that burned. She seems to be saying better luck next time human

