

Sturtevant Camp

DONOR PROSPECTUS



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Overview

The Friends of the San Gabriels (FSG) was established in 2009 as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Its stated purpose is to support the recreational and educational use of the San Gabriel Mountains while promoting its preservation as a natural resource. FSG is proposing to buy Sturtevant Camp.

In 1893, during the "Great Hiking Era," Wilbur Sturtevant established Sturtevant Camp. It is the only remaining trail camp in the San Gabriel Mountains. Until 1945, all sleeping accommodations were tent cabins. When the current owners purchased the camp, they converted the tent cabins to comfortable guest cabins. The camp sleeps up to 42 guests in six cabins.

As with any business, the use of the camp has had peaks and valleys. For the last four years, the camp has struggled to stay viable. As a result, the current owner decided to sell the camp.

FSG is concerned that a new owner, not familiar with the Big Santa Anita Canyon, might not understand and honor the camp's place in history. With that concern as motivation, FSG offered to buy the camp and has until March 2, 2015 to raise the funds for the purchase price and three years of operating expenses, a total of \$75,000.00.

The long-term goal for the Sturtevant Camp is to provide guests with a unique experience in a beautiful location and to increase the use of the camp by non-profit organizations, youths, and adults with special needs. FSG plans to expand the camp's exposure through an extensive marketing campaign, which includes social media and direct contact with potential groups.

What is Sturtevant Camp?

Past

Sturtevant Camp, named for its creator Wilbur Sturtevant, is rich in history and unique in Southern California. The sign at the entrance to Sturtevant Camp provides the following introduction, “Over a century ago, this was one of several mountain resorts, complete with ‘honeymoon cottages,’ tennis courts where ladies played in long dresses, men wearing white shirts and string ties to dinner, and everyone danced to the fiddle underneath the stars. From the late 1890s until the Great Depression, thousands upon thousands of people rode the electric trolley cars out of Los Angeles to the end of the line in Sierra Madre, and then hiked the trails or rented horses and burros, coming to stay at Camp— or to go further into the real wilderness of the San Gabriels to hunt bears and mountain lions.” Today, only Sturtevant Camp remains. Fires, floods, and neglect wiped out the other resorts.

The Ranger Cabin at Sturtevant Camp is an historical gem. Louis Newcomb was one of the original mountain men of the San Gabriels. He and Wilbur Sturtevant went into business together to build a toll-road from the Big Santa Anita up and over the mountains into the Antelope Valley. Newcomb built the first part of the trail up to what we now call Newcomb’s Pass. The story is that by the time Louis finished the first part, he realized that there was no way to make money unless somebody would sit at the trail and collect the toll. That wasn’t how he wanted to spend his time and that was the end of the toll-road.

The Forest Service hired Newcomb as one of the first forest rangers. Newcomb built the hand-hewn log Ranger Cabin in 1903, just a stone’s throw from Wilbur’s “Swiss Dining Pavilion.”

The early work that Louis and Wilbur did to develop the mountains contributed to the federal government establishing what we now know as the Angeles National Forest. A further

testimony to the camp’s historical significance is its inclusion in the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.

Present

The camp has facilities to house 42 guests with accommodations that range from a two-bedroom cottage that contains a fully equipped kitchenette and small restroom to bunkhouses that accommodate eight guests. What was once the “Swiss Dining Pavilion” is now Sturtevant Lodge, an enclosed dining room and commercial kitchen.

Just as they did a century ago, guests hike into camp along a well-marked trail. Just as they did in 1936, Adams’ Pack Station uses donkeys to pack in the guests’ supplies.

Unlike a century ago, the camp has electricity supplied by a micro-hydro installation, propane heaters and stoves, and the all-important flush toilets. And, it no longer has the whisky still that was used during prohibition.

Today, the Angeles Crest Highway takes people by car into what was once remote wilderness. But, at Sturtevant Camp, you still have to hike in, just like a hundred years ago. Guests believe that the four-mile hike through the Big Santa Anita Canyon, through majestic tress, along the creek and waterfalls, is a great preparation for putting the busy city behind them (no telephone, internet, or cell service here). Having the donkey train deliver their supplies further sets the mood for a few days out of the fast lane.

The Lodge remains the same inside: same wooden floor, worn smooth by more than a hundred years of hikers’ boots and dancers’ shoes; the wall posts and beams are original, most of the roof beams too. A sign tells guests to “Step gently when you come into the Lodge, for you are stepping into a rich and wonderful history.”

Future

The objectives for Sturtevant Camp during the first three years of operation under the Friends of the San Gabriels include:

- Maintaining a 90% weekend occupancy rate for the Retreat Cottage, and a 75% weekend occupancy rate for the main area.
- Adding weekday reservations during the summer and holiday periods.
- Through incentives and increased exposure, increasing the off-season occupancy by 50% the first year.
- Developing a group of volunteers to be available for hosting instead of having an onsite manager. The initial goal is to develop a list of 25-30 volunteers so that no individual will be asked to host more than twice a year. FSG is developing a list of volunteers that have summer and holiday periods off that would be available for weekday hosting.
- Developing a greener Sturtevant Camp with solar power to supplement the Micro-Hydro, solar hot water, rainwater catchment system, composting toilets, and native plants replacing the non-natives ones.



Keys to Success

The primary keys to success for Sturtevant Camp are:

- Establishing an advisory board comprised of people with diverse backgrounds and skills.
- Marketing of scheduled events such as the folk dancing and writer's workshops.
- Providing quality meals for scheduled events.
- Encouraging private groups to use the camp for their events.
- Providing a unique experience in a rustic environment that is top notch.
- Retaining our guests to ensure repeat bookings and referrals.
- Developing the camp to become a conference center for environmental activists.



Location



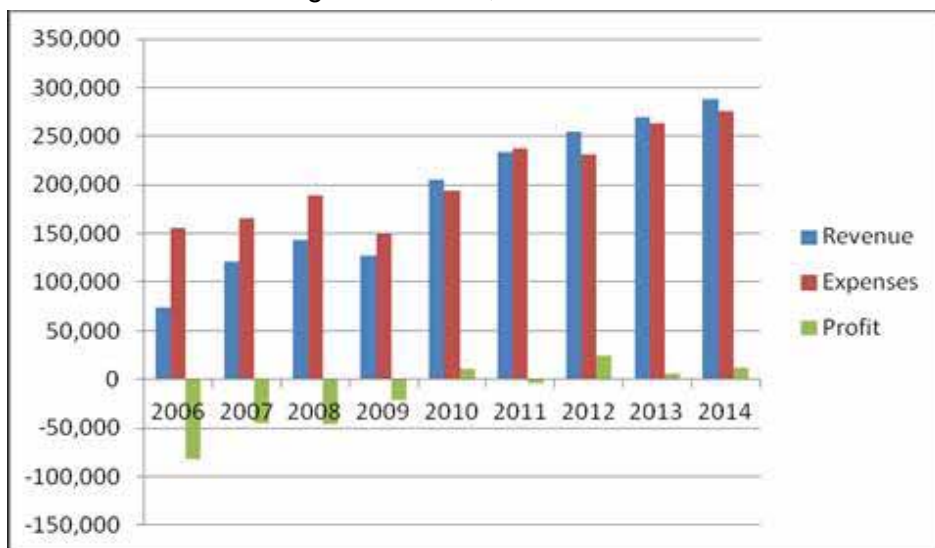
Sturtevant Camp is approximately four miles from Chantry Flat in the Big Santa Anita Canyon of the Angeles National Forest. It is approximately 28 miles from downtown Los Angeles, but it is a world away from the bustle and hustle of the big city. It has easy access from the 210 Freeway at the Santa Anita off ramp. It is, then, five miles to Chantry Flat and a beautiful four-mile hike to the camp.

Why the Friends of the San Gabriels?

When the 2009 Station Fire closed most of the local mountains to outdoor enthusiasts, they quickly discovered Chantry Flat and the Big Santa Anita Canyon. The influx of people took its toll on the canyon. Trash built up, graffiti grew, and trails broke down. Cabin owners and environmental activists tried to keep up with the growing destruction, but something more needed to be done. Deb Burgess organized the Friends of the San Gabriels to raise money for graffiti removal supplies and to organize work parties for trash pickup and graffiti removal. Friends of the San Gabriels raises most of its money from donations made at Adams' Pack Station.

When the current owner offered Sturtevant Camp for sale, FSG became concerned that it would be purchased by an organization that did not understand and honor the camp's historical and environmental significance. Because the U.S. Forest Service designates Sturtevant Camp as an organizational camp, it cannot be privately owned. Friends of the San Gabriels is a perfect organization to buy and manage the camp because FSG has been actively involved with restoring and preserving the beauty and historical value of Big Santa Anita Canyon. These activities include organizing work parties to complete projects such as trail maintenance, trash removal, and graffiti cleanup, and providing visitors and hikers with information and tools to get involved. FSG has intimate knowledge of Sturtevant Camp and was instrumental in developing some marketing material, an on-line reservation system, and a website dedicated to the Camp for the current owners. FSG understands the importance of working in partnership with the Forest Service to achieve its goal of promoting the physical, mental, and spiritual health of young people, individuals with a disability, and their families through activities conducted in a natural environment. Because of the team's involvement with Adams' Pack Station, FSG is intimately familiar with the needs and interests of the area's visitors. They also know the problems of making this type of business successful.

Deb bought Adams' Pack Station for similar reasons that she is proposing that Friends of the San Gabriels buy Sturtevant Camp. The Pack Station's previous owner had numerous setbacks, and the Pack Station was struggling to survive. The buildings and grounds were in need of repair and the donkeys were in need of medical care. The first few years were tough with expenses far out running income. As the following chart shows, the business now makes a modest profit and it runs smoothly.



All of these factors combined show that FSG is perfectly situated and qualified to preserve and enhance Sturtevant Camp.

Who will Manage Sturtevant Camp?

The Friends of the San Gabriels (FSG) will manage Sturtevant Camp. The two officers of FSG are Sue and Deb Burgess (mother and daughter). Deb is the primary officer and is responsible for creating The Friends of the San Gabriels.

Friends of the San Gabriels

The Friends of the San Gabriels is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, established in 2009, with the stated purpose of supporting the recreational and educational use of the San Gabriels while promoting its preservation as a natural resource. FSG focuses its efforts in the Big Santa Anita Canyon of the Angeles National Forest. Through fundraising, FSG helps to maintain trails, remove graffiti, preserve historic structures such as the call boxes and crank phone system, and maintain the camp sites and picnic areas.

Deb Burgess

Deb has an extensive background in successfully managing small businesses. She and her husband owned a construction business that specialized in remodeling and repairs of residences. Through this endeavor, she gained knowledge of construction techniques, managing workmen, and marketing. For many years, she ran a consulting business that designed and installed computerized financial systems for large corporations. From all of these jobs she has gained a strong knowledge of accounting and financial reporting. Eight years ago, Deb purchased Adams' Pack Station at Chantry Flat in the Angeles National Forest. Adams' Pack Station manages the pack train of donkeys that serves Sturtevant Camp. The pack station provides information to hikers, and sells food and souvenirs. During the first few years of operating the pack station she was operating her consulting business as well as commuting weekly by plane to jobs in Anchorage, Alaska, Florida, and many places in between. She returned Thursday nights and packed with the donkeys into the Canyon the following day. Since those two jobs didn't seem to keep her busy enough, she attended law school and passed the California Bar. She also is an avid long-distance runner, having completed over 100 marathons in the last ten years. She finishes what she starts. At the pack station, she manages multiple employees, volunteers and ten donkeys.

Sue Burgess

Sue Burgess lived at and managed Adams' Pack Station for its initial three years. Before that, she owned several businesses, worked for her daughter, Deb, in Deb's consulting business (they make a great team), and was vice-president of commercial real estate lending for a major savings and loan. Her business background has taught her how to make realistic plans and see them through to completion. She has extensive experience working with and managing volunteers through years of experience with nonprofit organizations. She currently is the CFO for the Friends of the San Gabriels and does the accounting and bookkeeping for them as well as the Pack Station.

Brad Bryce

During the initial phase, Brad Bryce has offered to live at Sturtevant Camp as the unpaid camp manager. Brad lived in a cabin in Big Santa Anita Canyon for six years. He is a contractor, cabinet and furniture maker, and a volunteer fireman. During his years in the canyon, he was a major contractor for repairing the aging cabins. He also helped Deb with packing and has an intimate knowledge of the canyon. Before moving to Big Santa Anita, Brad owned and operated a bed and breakfast in Arizona. This gave him unique insights into what it takes to fulfill a guest's expectations. His experience makes him a perfect person to host the camp's guests and perform maintenance and repairs.

The Volunteers

The current owners of Sturtevant Camp use a volunteer model to manage it. This includes hosting guests as well as performing maintenance and repair duties. The volunteer model works well for the current owner and Friends of the San Gabriels intends to follow this model. Many of the current volunteers are dedicated to the camp and intend to continue volunteering; however, FSG understands that volunteers burn out. FSG intends to expand the volunteer pool. There are several targets for candidates. The local colleges and universities have programs for Forest Service, recreation management, and environmental science. FSG believes that these people will be a good fit for the new Sturtevant Camp. In addition, several local hiking, running, and outdoor activity groups have expressed an interest in hosting.

FSG will require that all volunteers have background checks to ensure that Sturtevant remains a safe sanctuary for its guests.

The Advisory Board

FSG is in the process of building an advisory board of a diverse group of people. The board will consist of people with knowledge of the area, management, marketing, and people who are creative and energetic. The nascent board has a past manager of Sturtevant Camp, a person with vast experience with volunteers, an attorney, an environmental activist, a photographer, an environmental designer, and members of local historical societies.

The Advisory Board is responsible for new ideas, critiques, and generally keeping Sturtevant Camp going in the right direction.



Marketing

There are numerous reasons why Sturtevant Camp has not reached its potential. The current owners do not market the camp. They depend solely on word of mouth. They have a web site, which contains a charming history of the camp, but no easy way to make a reservation.

Friends of the San Gabriels plans to actively market the camp as a destination choice for people looking for a place to relax, recharge, learn something new, be with friends, or make new friends. The camp's major guest segments are Scouts, youths, adults with special needs, specialty groups (such as dancers, jugglers, writers, and artists), other non-profits, hiking, running, and equestrian clubs, and individual visitors to the area. FSG envisions guests making the short drive from the various Southern California cities to enjoy the beautiful San Gabriel Mountains, as well as guests from farther away drawn to the uniqueness of the area.

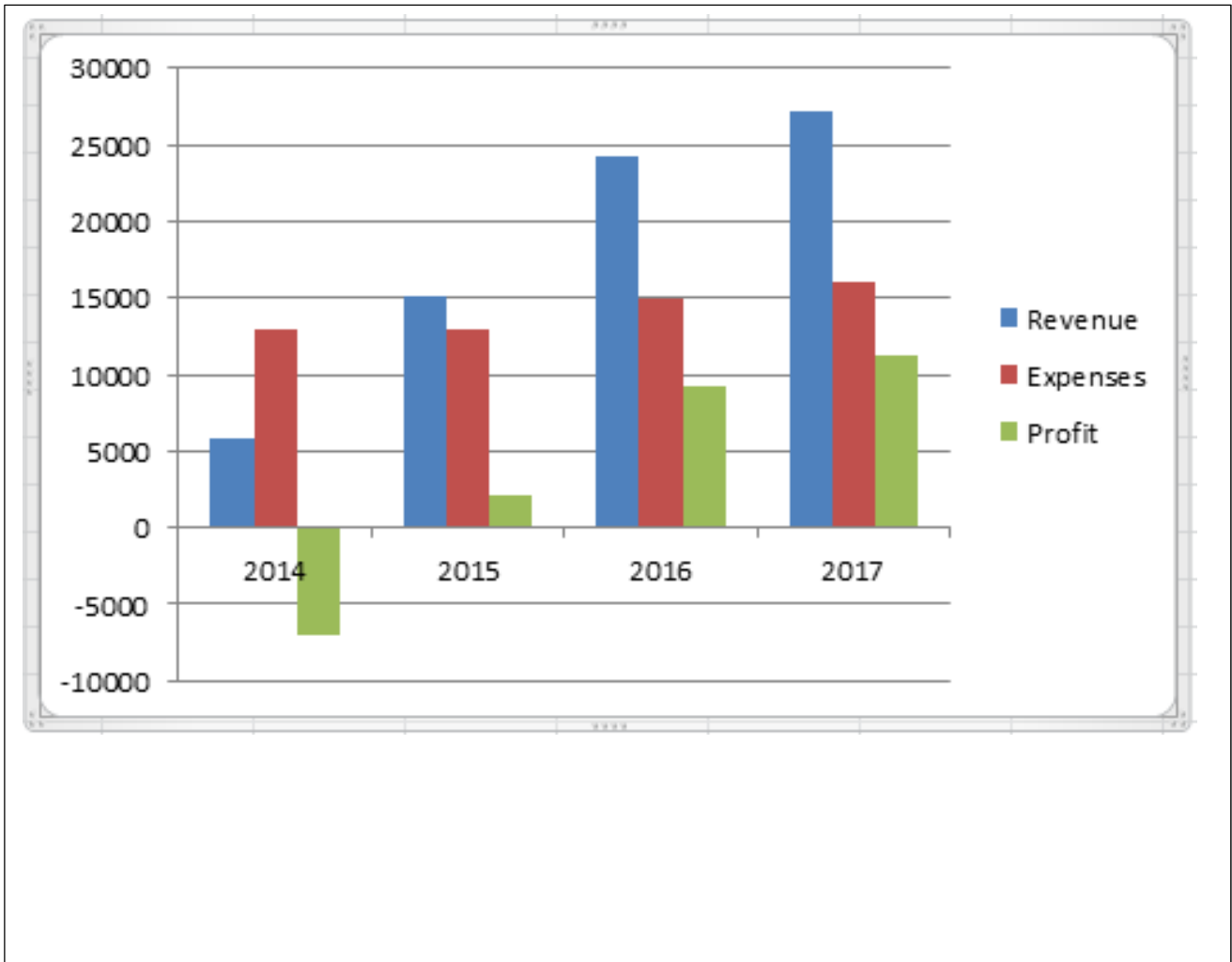
FSG will have an online reservation system that will allow guests to see what is available, make a reservation, and pay with a credit card.

FSG has a three-pronged approach to stabilizing the camp and increasing business:

- 1) Brad Bryce, cabin owner and long-time canyon volunteer, will live at the camp and manage it in a non-paid capacity while FSG is building the volunteer base. This will provide for stability in operations and open the camp to weekday guests.
- 2) Heavy marketing including social media, FSG website, email and phone call campaigns to potential groups such as those mentioned above. FSG has made contact with many groups and are pleased at the positive response.
- 3) FSG has a strong relationship with local newspapers and plans to use that relationship to promote weekend events, which will increase awareness of the camp and introduce guests to an affordable get away. FSG will offer these events at an affordable flat fee that includes all expenses. On the lower end of the economic scale, these events will include a hand-quilt making weekend, Scout merit badge workshops and summer camps, board game weekends (chess, checkers, backgammon, Monopoly, whatever they want), live music weekends, art camp, writer's retreat, and Thanksgiving at Camp. FSG also plans to offer some higher-end events such as weekends with catered cooking by local chefs and wine tastings. FSG would love to hear more ideas.

Financial Overview

Monthly fixed and standard variable costs such as packing in supplies and propane are currently around \$15,000 per year. Peak and off-season periods impact monthly earnings and costs. For the first year, on-season revenues will offset off-season losses. As FSG builds its market position among Southern California patrons, they anticipate that off-season revenues will be enough to break even during that season. The following table shows the projections for the next three years. As you can see, FSG anticipate a 15% increase in revenues during the first year, followed by a 60% increase the second year and then settle back to a 12% increase the third year.



Donor Opportunities

Friends of the San Gabriels is a tax-exempt 501(c)3 charitable organization as recognized by the Internal Revenue Service.

All donations are tax-deductible and funds will be used to purchase Sturtevant Camp and maintain it for the first three years.

Sturtevant Camp deserves to be the vibrant place it was in Wilbur Sturtevant's day. You can make this happen.

<i>Donor Benefits</i>	<i>Diamond Level</i> <i>\$10,000</i>	<i>Ruby Level</i> <i>\$5,000</i>	<i>Sapphire Level</i> <i>\$1,000</i>	<i>Platinum Level</i> <i>\$500</i>	<i>Gold Level</i> <i>\$100</i>
Anything you want.	✓				
We'll name a guest cabin after you or an honoree .	✓	✓			
Reserve the Retreat Cottage for yourself and up to 5 friends twice a year for two years.	✓	✓			
Adopt a cabin (you will get your name on a plaque in the cabin)			✓	✓	
Reserve the Retreat Cottage for yourself and up to 5 friends during a non-holiday weekend in 2015.			✓	✓	
We will enter your name in a drawing to win a weekend in the Retreat Cottage for yourself and up to 5 friends.					✓
Lunch at the Pack Station.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Listed on the donor wall in Sturtevant Lodge.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Receive a T-shirt.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

A Final Word

Sturtevant Camp was once a popular destination for people escaping the city. More than ever, people need a place to relax and recharge. Sturtevant Camp can be that place again. There are a lot of drive-in camps, but few walk-in camps that don't require a high level of hiking skills. This is a camp blessed with mild sunny weather and easy access. Sturtevant Camp has a wide variety of plant and animal communities, interesting rock formations, and sweeping views. It's a place where guests experience the joy of being with old and new friends in a beautiful natural environment.

Sturtevant Camp deserves to fulfill its potential, but it can only happen with your help. Please consider making a donation or volunteering to grow this camp.

Friends of the San Gabriels



Deb Burgess



Sue Burgess

FRIENDS OF THE SAN GABRIELS



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