

Penny Pines



History

The Penny Pines Program began in California in 1941. Under the initial sponsorship of the San Francisco Sportswomen's Association and later school children of the San Mateo County Schools. The first contributions were used for reforestation on the Shasta-Trinity National Forests in northern California. Over the years, the number of the groups participating in the Penny Pines Program has continued to grow. They include such organizations as the Garden and Women's Clubs, Boy and Girl Scouts of America, civic and sportsmen's clubs, and many others. CGCI adopted Penny Pines as a state project in 1957 and it remains one of our major projects today. Over the years these groups have contributed more than a million dollars to the Penny Pines Reforestation Program. Through these donations, more than 27 million of seedlings have been planted, renewing 88,000 acres of national forest land in California –truly an outstanding achievement.

The basic contribution to Penny Pines is \$68.00. Why this amount? Back in 1941, seedlings cost about 1 cent each and, 680 seedlings were used to plant a typical acre. For \$68.00, seedlings for ten acres could be purchased. Site preparation and planting costs were met through regular Forest Service appropriations. The Penny Pines program was so successful that money contributed to purchase seedlings soon exceeded the appropriated funds available for site preparation and for the actual planting job.

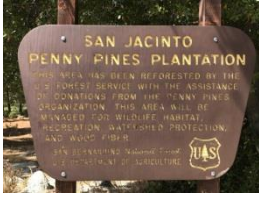
So in 1964 the original cooperative agreement was rewritten to provide that funds contributed under the Penny Pines program are to be used for reforestation, rather than for the purchase of seedlings only. Today, the minimum donation remains \$68.00. Weighing heavily in past decisions not to raise the minimum donation were comments received from the California Federation of Women's Clubs and the California Garden Clubs, Inc. about the program's purpose and the donation size. They felt that increasing the minimum donation would have a more adverse effect on fundraising than the fact that the \$68.00 minimal donation would plant somewhat less than one acre.

To date, those pennies have amounted to well over 1 million dollars, and the program is a statewide conservation project supported by numerous individuals and organizations. Garden clubs, women's clubs, men's service organizations, youth groups and schools have all cooperated to help keep California's forests green and growing.

Other states have cooperative planting programs, but the Penny Pines Program is unique to California. Almost every National Forest in the State has a Penny Pines plantation area. A sign at each plantation lists the organizations which have donated to that particular site. Since funds are sent to the closest National Forest, contributors are able to visit the plantation sites and enjoy the results of their cooperation.

Since 1941, Penny Pines donations have helped maintain the National Forests in California. Participation in the program has also helped many people understand important aspects of forest conservation and wise management of your national forests.

How the Penny Pines program helped reforest the San Jacinto Mountains



For more than 75 years, the Penny Pines Reforestation Program through the U.S. Forest Service has given local community groups a way to help sponsor reforestation projects, especially in the western United States.

Riverside County has had its share of these projects. In fact, they are still ongoing.

In 1941, the San Francisco Sports-Women's Association made the first donation in California, helping to reforest parts of the recently-burned Shasta-Trinity National Forest in Northern California. At that time, pine seedlings cost about one cent each. Using a figure of 680 seedlings per acre, local groups were encouraged to donate a minimum of \$68 (for 10 acres) to help reforest devastated and burned-out areas.

The first such "Penny Pine Plantation" to be established in the San Jacinto Mountains occurred at a site only labeled as "north of the Keenwild ranger station" on June 4, 1960, when Mrs. Henry Webber, chair of conservation of forest, water, and soil for the De Anza District Federated Womens' Clubs, acted as emcee for a ceremony dedicating the new site.

Supervisor Fred McCall attended, as did many people from the mountain communities who hoped this type of project would continue in the region. With them were Ed Walker, director of the Riverside County Parks Department, and girl scouts from the greater Idyllwild area.

Almost exactly a year later, four local womens' clubs each donated the requisite \$68 each to establish four more Penny Pines Plantations near the original one. Clubs in San Jacinto, Elsinore, Hemet, and Norco sponsored plantings. Again, a ceremony was held to dedicate those new efforts. This time, the ceremony was attended by Mrs. William Harriman, a California State Park commissioner.

In 1964, another site was selected near McCall Memorial Park and an acre of the new Penny Pines Plantation was dedicated in memory of McCall, for whom McCall Park was named. By 1968, another small site near Bay Tree Spring on the Banning-Idyllwild Highway was dedicated and planted using Penny Pines monies.

The 1977 Soboba Fire destroyed a large swath of forest west of the Banning-Idyllwild Highway. At that time, it was decided to use Penny Pines money to reforest some areas.

One of the areas that can readily be seen is a stop along Highway 243 somewhat near Bay Tree Spring. More than 50 groups, individuals, and other entities chipped in between 1977 and about 1983 to provide enough funds for a few hundred acres of new trees, which are growing there now. At the roadside stop, there are two signs that show the extent to which the public was involved in this major addition to the Penny Pines Plantation in the San Jacinto Mountains.

The Penny Pines program was and still is a good way to help reforest areas devastated by fire, infestations or other causes.