



Penelope Curtis is president of Sustainable Tahoe and has a 50 year background in non-profit arts, culture, orchestral organizational management. She is a Board Source certified non-profit development consultant and founder of the Julia Morgan Conservancy (saved the Grass Valley North Star House) now a cultural heritage tourism site in Nevada County. From 2006-2008, she was the Coordinator of the California Cultural Heritage Tourism Council a department of the California Travel & Tourism Commission. She was also the planner for a Sierra Nevada National Heritage Area which led to the National Geographic Sierra Nevada Geotourism Map. In 2010, Curtis coordinated the California Preservation Foundation annual statewide conference in Nevada County & designed several heritage GeoTracks for conference attendees. With co-creator Jacquie Chandler, she produced the El Dorado County Geotourism Visitors Guide. Since 2010, she has been a volunteer guide for Donner Summit Historical Society's Donner Party Hike, and a guide for Trails & Vista Art Hikes. Curtis is a Certified California iNaturalist. She is also a volunteer translator of Spanish fundraising reports for Friendship Bridge, an international organization that provides microloans to low income indigenous Maya women in Guatemala.

Penelope Curtis' background includes a BA in Latin American Studies. She speaks Spanish and studied Italian, French, Japanese and Nahuatl. She also studied biology, botany, anatomy and physiology. She is a photographer and graphic artist and has produced many promotional brochures, newsletters, booklets, along with websites. She loves to travel and has been to Mexico several times, and many visits to Guatemala in coordination with Friendship Bridge. As a young woman, she traveled throughout Europe. On all of these travels she found ways to discover and study the local natural environment which was then photographed. When not out in the environment, she spent time in museums studying art and art history.



Her love for the outdoors began when she was just a toddler and her geology professor father took her and her family camping in the Sierra Nevada mountains where he studied and did field work. On those trips, he taught her to be observant and "walk softly" in order to be aware of the surrounding wildlife, especially the rattlesnakes that lived under rocks and in the tall grasses. It was also important to "respect the wildlife" because it was the home of the coyotes, bear, deer, chipmunks, squirrels, rabbits, and all the other mostly unseen wild animals. Having learned to "walk softly" and observe the habits of wild animals, she was able to sneak up on the deer, or frogs, salamanders, and fish to catch, study or eat. Lastly, she learned that if you've been through a wild area or have caught fish or game, it is important to be grateful for their existence and "share your gratitude".