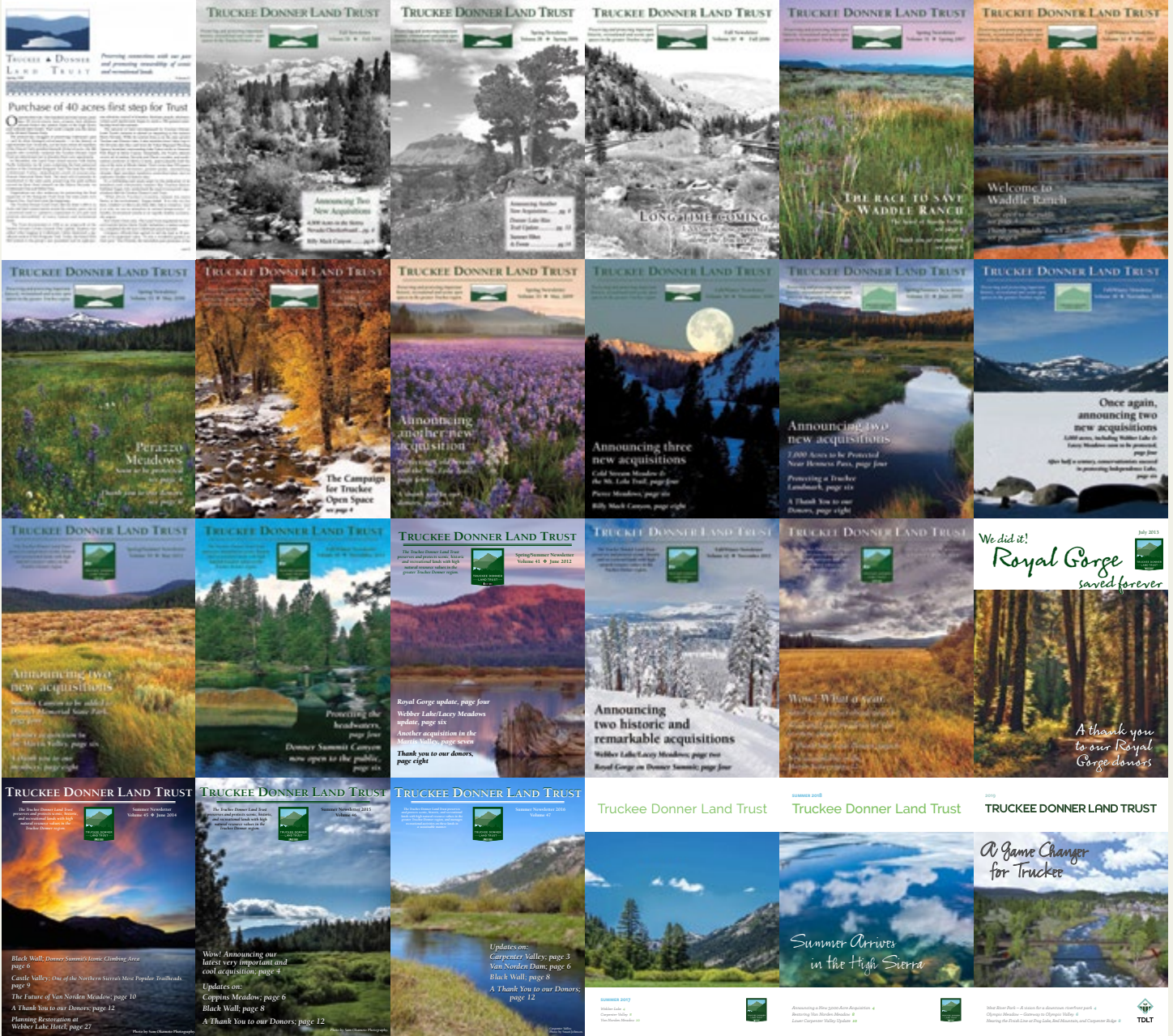


2020

TRUCKEE DONNER LAND TRUST

PROTECT AND ENJOY



30th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



GREETINGS!

FROM THE TRUCKEE DONNER LAND TRUST



Truckee Springs, as pretty as a postcard, will incorporate a pedestrian bridge connecting the historic commercial core of Truckee to the Wild Side of Downtown. Watercolor by Jen Mahoney.

We hope this newsletter finds you well amid what has been an unprecedented time. At the Land Trust, we've taken this time to take stock of our organization and the people that have made it successful. Our staff has navigated this challenging period with grace and compassion, continuing our mission while being sensitive to the struggles of our partners and supporters whose lives have been impacted in countless ways. Our board continues to steward the organization through these financially uncertain times while keeping a keen eye toward opportunity. And you, our donors and supporters, have showed remarkable passion for our work despite the hardships you may be experiencing. Our gratitude for the dedication of everyone involved has never been stronger.

As we face this new future, we feel our work is more important than ever. We've all seen how anxious the earth is to heal in recent months, and our opportunity to participate through conservation remains of paramount importance. We are thrilled to complete the acquisition of Frog Lake, Red Mountain and Carpenter Ridge – with plans to build our first year-round backcountry hut for overnight adventures. Our campaign at Truckee Springs continues full steam ahead with the promise of providing the most immediate access to the Truckee River within the downtown core, while providing critical connectivity to many of the region's favorite trails.

Two thousand twenty marks the 30th anniversary of the Truckee Donner Land Trust. I feel privileged to have inherited the responsibility of overseeing this amazing organization from a group of founders whose passion for conservation began around a coffee table at Donner Lake. I would love to know if in their wildest dreams they could have envisioned protecting 40,000 acres of the Sierra, filling in the Checkerboard and providing a critical service to a thriving community.

While there are many heroes in our story, a dynamic duo deserves special recognition for having dedicated their careers to this organization. Perry Norris and John Svahn have collectively logged more than 30 years with TDLT. Perry's vision and John's thoughtful planning have resulted in successful transactions rivaling much bigger organizations, the restoration of countless acres and access for the public to enjoy.

We are eternally thankful to Perry, the dedicated and tireless staff at TDLT, our Board and all of our supporters who have made this organization into what it is today. Best wishes for healthy, happy and safe rest of 2020.

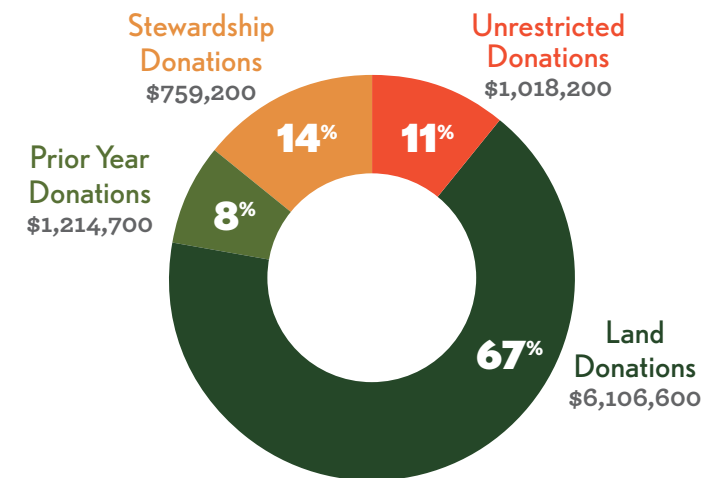
Onward,
J. Brown

Jeff Brown
Board President

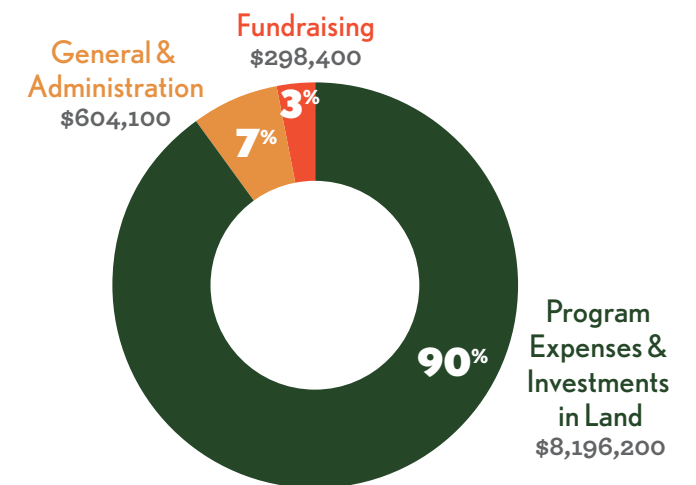
About the cover: A look back at newsletters from our last three decades.

A Look at Truckee Donner Land Trust Finances for the 2019-20 Fiscal Year

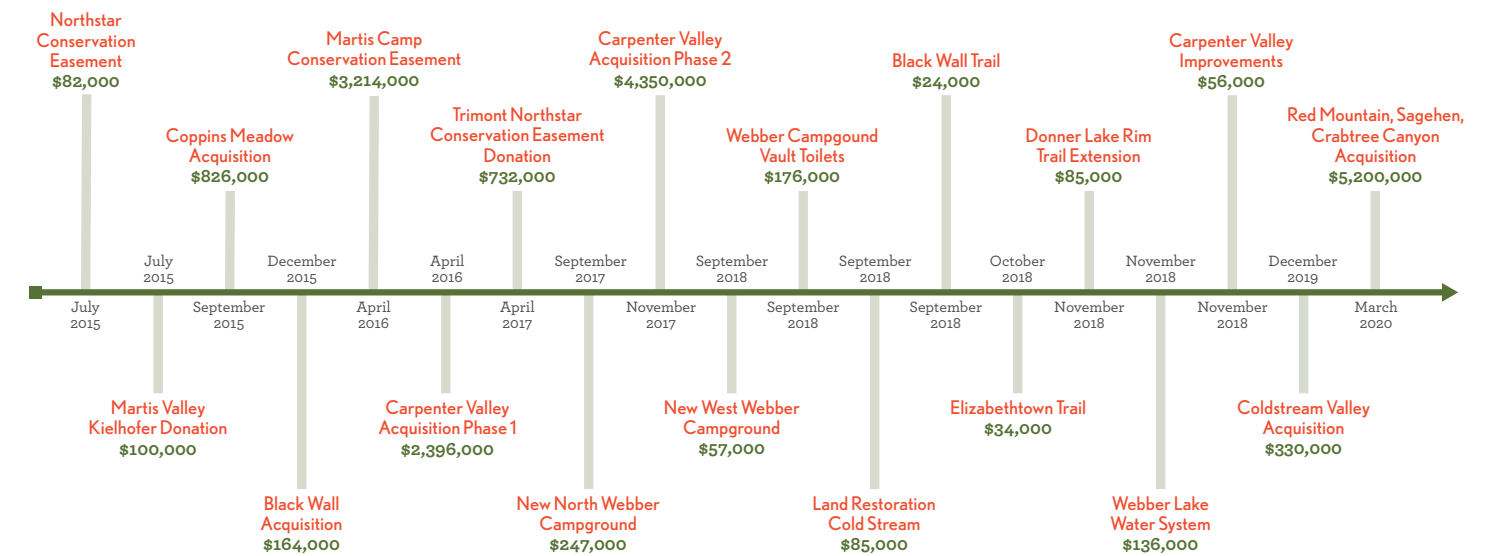
HOW FUNDS COME IN: \$9,098,700 TOTAL REVENUE

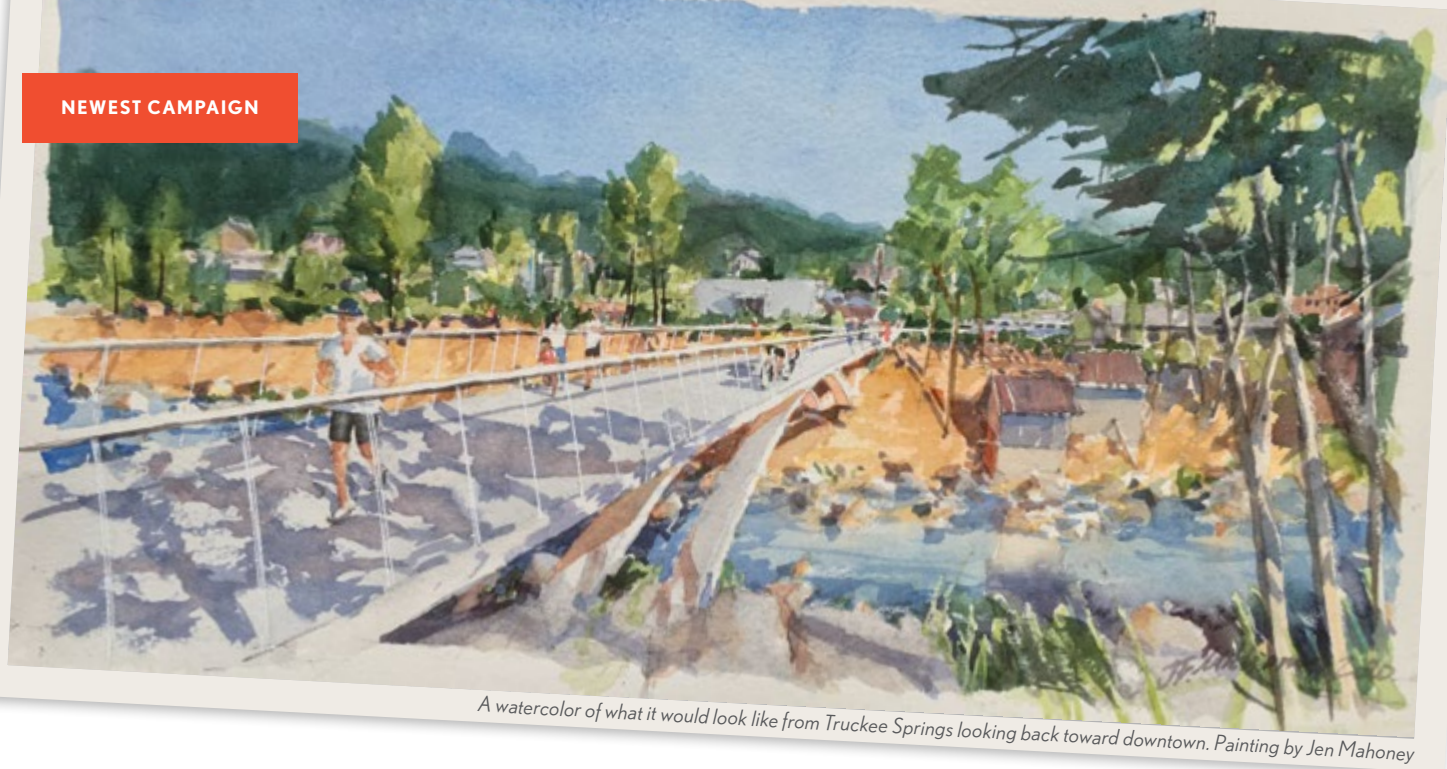


MONEY WELL SPENT: \$9,098,700 TOTAL EXPENSES



OVER \$18.31 MILLION IN LAND / CONSERVATION EASEMENT ACQUISITIONS & IMPROVEMENTS





A watercolor of what it would look like from Truckee Springs looking back toward downtown. Painting by Jen Mahoney

Take a Walk with Us on the Wild Side of Downtown: Truckee Springs

In these pages last year, the Land Trust announced a new kind of conservation project, one that isn't thousands of acres of far-flung wilderness – but a smaller piece of open space right in the heart of our community.

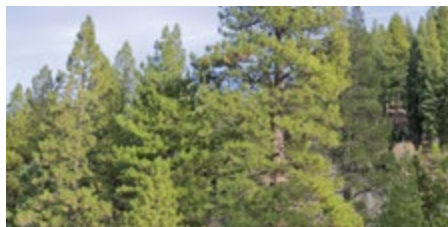
Despite Truckee Springs small size of roughly 26 acres, this is a critical acquisition that aligns with the Land Trust's mission – opening up river access right in downtown Truckee, connecting and opening public lands both upriver and uphill, paving the way for new trails, and preserving a key piece of habitat and watershed right on the Truckee River.

This year, the Land Trust comes back to you with updates on our progress, and a request for your help.

The community is enthusiastic about new open space in downtown. A diverse campaign committee of Truckee residents is leading the charge to raise the \$2.5 million needed from private donors. See the article on page 29 to learn more about this dedicated volunteer team.

The Land Trust is working diligently with the campaign committee to secure the necessary funding before 2021. Thanks to the help

of organizational partners, we're off to a good start. California Natural Resources Agency has granted \$1 million in Prop 68 funding, and the Town of Truckee has committed \$500,000. Vail Resort's EpicPromise program has contributed \$7,500, and the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation has pitched in \$5,000 to help make this project a reality. The Land Trust is pushing our chips forward with a \$2,000,000 contribution from a bequest and transfer fees it receives as mitigation from two developments.



(above) Professional cyclist and Land Trust Board Member Levi Leipheimer scouts bike routes on the property.

(left) Professional cyclist and Nordic skier Katerina Nash walks her dogs Lola and Ruby at Truckee Springs.

Even so, plenty of work still remains. Private donations will be integral to the success of this project. Depending on your ability to give, the Land Trust is offering numerous naming opportunities to leave your mark on this beautiful property.

For some, the excitement for this project lies with access and connectivity. Not only has this property – and any reasonable access to the Truckee River in our downtown core – been closed off to the public for decades, but it's also blocked access to



existing public lands owned by the US Forest Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Town of Truckee can continue the paved Truckee River Legacy Trail west on its route eventually connecting from Glenshire to Donner Lake. Truckee Trails Foundation will be able to link to trails from the property, connecting to Sawtooth Trail, Big Chief Trail, and even the Tahoe Rim Trail beyond. A pedestrian bridge from West River Street to the property will make the connection from downtown to open space even easier.

For other's, it's about preserving the wild side of downtown. The Truckee River and natural lands are as defining of Truckee's character as the railroad and the Victorian homes and western storefronts. Not only preserving open space right in the heart of town, but also giving people quick and easy access to it, will be a game changer for residents and visitors alike. Bear, deer, coyote and all sorts of other wildlife will still be able to move between the river's edge and thousands of acres of upland habitat unimpeded by fence or development. Melting snows or falling rains will sink into natural surfaces – not sheeting off concrete and contributing sedimentation of the Truckee River.

Students of Truckee History appreciate preserving a piece of our community's past – as the property is the sight of the Ice Palace – a structure dreamt up by C.F. McGlashan and fellows to draw tourists off the train and to spend money in Truckee in the winter months.

(above) Aerial view of Truckee Springs and the Truckee River. Photo by Lori Carpenter
(right) A map of Truckee Springs, planned trails and adjacent public properties that will be opened by this project.

Through the challenges of this year, imagining grabbing a sandwich from a downtown restaurant, walking over the pedestrian bridge, and sitting on a warm granite boulder on the edge of the river under an aspen tree has given the committee, Land Trust staff and board a lot of motivation to keep going. Others imagine riding a complete Legacy Trail with their children, removed from the road and speeding cars, from their neighborhood to Donner Lake. And others still are scheming major adventures, linking miles of dirt trails across our region.

Together, we can turn these dreams into a reality that will change the face of our town. Whether you see yourself on Truckee Springs on foot or on two wheels, sitting at a picnic table with friends or inflating a boat at the river's edge for a trip downstream, we hope you share our excitement. To learn more go truckeedonnerlandtrust.org, or reach out to our staff today.



A Retrospective:

30 Years at the Truckee Donner Land Trust



Two young hikers look across Donner Lake to the Land Trust's early work on Schallenberger Ridge. Photo by Susan Johnson.

The story goes like this: it's 1990, and a couple attorneys, a neurologist, a county supervisor, a software engineer and a retired oil executive huddle around a kitchen table on Donner Lake's west shore, scratching their heads. They're trying to figure out how to prevent a timber harvest, which would turn the historic Emigrant Trail in Coldstream Canyon into a skid path for dragging logs. Everyone gathered is a die-hard hiker, and treasures the outdoors and Truckee's rough-and-tumble history.

This unlikely group went on to raise \$150,000 to acquire 80 acres in Emigrant Canyon behind Schallenberger Ridge – the Truckee Donner Land Trust had just made its first acquisition!

In the following 30 years, the Truckee

Donner Land Trust's preserved acres have grown from those first 80 acres to roughly 40,000.

Started as an all-volunteer organization, the Land Trust hired its first two part-time employees in the mid-90s: Roz Lorenzato as its first Executive Director, and Perry Norris, our current Executive Director then brought on to assist with fundraising and communications. At this point, the Land Trust accepted a 34-acre donation near Donner Lake that would become a part of Donner Memorial State Park, and began an ambitious project to ring Donner Lake with the Donner Lake Rim Trail.

Other small acquisitions and little-known projects followed – including purchasing timber rights next to a wetland to protect

carnivorous plants and recording a conservation easement on Jackass Ridge donated by Stefanie Olivieri. The year 2000 marked the Land Trust's biggest and most important acquisition to date: Schallenberger Ridge. Founding board member Dan Wendin successfully wooed the Trust for Public Land into assisting in the acquisition of the 2,200-acre ridge that forms the southern backdrop of Donner Lake. The Trust for Public Land knew where to find state funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board in the form of Prop 117 funding – which leads to a shout-out to California voters.

Props 117, 40, 50, 84 and 68 provided critical state-wide funding for conservation – something without which the Land Trust's work would be impossible.

That Schallenberger Ridge acquisition changed the Land Trust overnight – adding to the young organization's credibility in creating long-term partnerships with like-minded organizations, state funders, agencies and donors.

TDLT carried that momentum into the Truckee River Project in 2002, partnering with The Nature Conservancy to acquire 3,200 acres of open space and secure conservation easements in riparian areas on the north side of Interstate 80 between Floriston and the Nevada border. Then County Supervisor Ted Owens literally saved the deal by accelerating a parcel boundary line adjustment from six months to a matter of weeks. The Land Trust and its partner The Nature Conservancy later conveyed the property to California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Between 2000 and 2007, the Land Trust aggressively pursued new acquisitions including Johnson Canyon, Grey Creek and

McIver Hill, allowing for the creation of the new Truckee campus for Sierra College. Staffing grew to accommodate the growing responsibilities, including Nancy Dulumyea, Kris Norris, Jeff Cutler, Tanya Africa, Kellie Wright, Sara Taddo Jones, Dale Lawrence and Stan Wingate.

Work began in 2005 on what is still the Land Trust's most pricey acquisition: Waddle Ranch. Owned by one of the wealthiest families in America – the Pritzker family of Chicago – this Martis Valley property had a proposed 1,315-unit resort development on the table. The sellers showed up with no fewer than three attorneys and said, "We're serious about development, you better be serious about buying." The Pritzkers were, however, kind and patient as The Trust for Public Land and the Land Trust scrambled to come up with the \$23,500,000 purchase price – closing the deal in February 2007.

Success begets success, and soon sellers were seeking out the Land Trust. Shortly after Waddle Ranch, TDLT set its sights on two remarkable places we never thought attainable: Donner Summit Canyon and Webber Lake.

Donner Summit Canyon, at the west end

of Donner Lake, was owned by Frank "Bucky" Cadjew – a born-and-raised Truckee local and one of the few folks who can say he actually spent the night in the old Truckee Jail on Jibboom Street – but that's another story. The Dutch Flat Wagon Road, Old Highway 40's predecessor, runs through the property, making it an important part of the region's history. Stories of Frank running off "trespassers" with a shotgun are not untrue.

That daunting reputation made this transaction no small feat –



Land Trust purchases and conservation easements throughout the Truckee River Canyon protect much of the view along Interstate 80 between Truckee and Reno.





The sun rises on a snowy Donner Summit Canyon. Photo by Bill Stevenson

one conversation went like this: “Frank, we’re trying to make you a rich man,” to which he replied, “I am already rich, you got-ta-do better than that!” In the end, however, working with Frank was a real pleasure.

The canyon was conveyed to Donner Memorial State Park, which the Land Trust has tripled in size. At about the same time, the Land Trust received an email inquiring if it might be interested in 3,000 acres north of Truckee. Staff instantly recognized the land in question: Webber Lake and Lacey meadows, 3,000 acres of “God’s perfection,” as the sellers described it.

The Webber Lake and Lacey Meadows campaign was remarkable and seemingly unlikely, because the sellers, Clifton and Barbara Johnson, did not have a particularly high opinion of tree-hugging environmental organizations. Though Clif repeatedly reminded the Land Trust that he “was an environmentalist before it was even a word,” he was rumored to have hung up on inquiries

from the Nature Conservancy several times. The land had been in the Johnson family since the 1870s.

After a year of meeting in the Johnson’s kitchen, Clif and Barbara entrusted the Land Trust to steward Webber Lake and Lacey meadows in perpetuity – declining much more lucrative offers to ensure this truly magical place would “stay just as it is.” Today, their legacy lives on, and any management decision is guided by the question, “what would Clif and Barbara do?”

The excitement over Webber Lake was quickly overshadowed by a campaign to “Save Donner Summit,” and in 2012, the Land Trust purchased Royal Gorge, 3,000 acres of open space on short sale from a bank in Kansas City for \$11.75 million. But bucks and acres hardly tell the story: over the course of a six-month-long grassroots fundraising frenzy, the Land Trust, working with The Trust for Public Land and the Northern Sierra Partnership, raised the money. This success is largely thanks to the homeowners in Sugar



Perry Norris of the Truckee Donner Land Trust and Dave Sutton of Trust for Public Land dedicate the historic protection of Waddle Ranch.



A hiker on Waddle Ranch near Dry Lake.

Bowl and Serene Lakes (thank you Rob Kautz, Cliff Busby and Ken Hall). During this harried time, staff drew inspiration from Winston Churchill: “Play the game for more than you can afford to lose ... only then will you learn the game.”

The Northern Sierra Partnership is the brainchild of Jim Morgan, a highly regarded CEO from the Silicon Valley, and his wife, Becky Morgan, a longtime California State Senator. Besides TDLT, Jim and Becky’s family foundation was supporting the Feather River Land Trust, the Sierra Business Council, The Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land. With development pressure rising and more land coming on the market than ever before, Jim and Becky believed a new strategy was needed to accelerate conservation and brought together the five organizations to attract new allies and resources. The Northern Sierra Partnership has been a booster rocket for conservation in throughout the region.

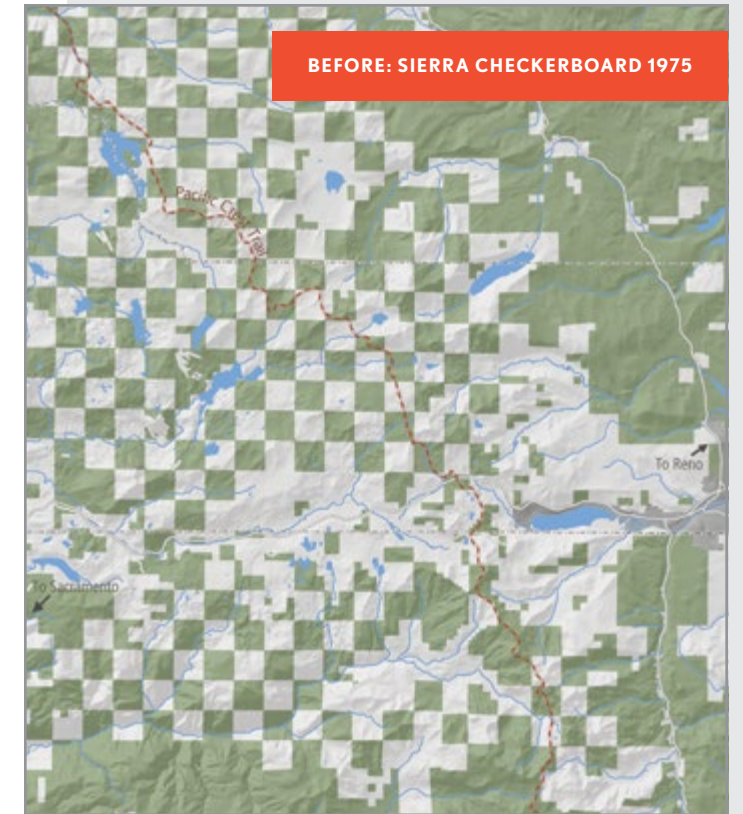
As the acreage numbers went up, so too did the importance and many challenges of managing the land for both conservation and public enjoyment. A campground, access to trails, lakes and skiing all added up on the public access side, while critical forestry work, an inherited illegal dam and watershed restoration projects all took significant time and money to get right, ensuring the ongoing health of our lands.

Fast forward to 2016. The Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy, again working within the Northern Sierra Partnership, acquired what was referred to by national publications

Which Brings Us to Present Day

Looking forward at the next 30 years, the Land Trust still has plenty of work to do. Joining the multi-thousand acre projects TDLT is known for, smaller projects like Truckee Springs open a new chapter for the organization. Looking at our Sierra Checkerboard map, it’s easy to see so much more opportunity for conservation, building a larger and larger contiguous landscape preserving critical habitat, wildlife migration corridors, and endless opportunities for recreation. The future looks bright for the Truckee Donner Land Trust, and our work is nowhere near finished.

as the “secret garden of the Sierra,” Lower Carpenter Valley. Despite only being eight miles from downtown Truckee as the crow flies, very few knew about or visited the pristine and ecologically rich valley prior to the Land Trust’s acquisition. Since 2017, the valley has only been accessible via docent-led hikes to protect its fragile ecology – but this summer, the gates will swing open, allowing unrestricted public access to this Truckee gem.



The maps above show public lands in light green, private in white, and lands protected by the Truckee Donner Land Trust and its partners in dark green.

- Conserved Lands by NSP Partners and Truckee Donner Land Trust
- US Forest Service and State Lands
- Private Lands



Last summer engineers shored up the Webber Lake Hotel and carefully lifted it off the ground to pour a foundation.

SAVING HISTORY

Last summer the Truckee Donner Land Trust lifted the historic Webber Lake Hotel, a monumental undertaking to preserve this structure built in 1860 to serve overland emigration to California and later vacationers like Red Cross Founder Clara Barton, actress Lola Montez and painter Thomas Hill. This \$300,000+ project would not have been possible without your support, but ongoing work to preserve this historic structure and open it to public visitation still needs your help.



(above) Bob Gilliom and Patty Schifferle sit with the plaque that commemorates donors to Lower Carpenter Valley, a deal that would not have happened without their help. (top right) *Lupinus grayi* illustration by Lissa G. Dodds



DONORS THAT MAKE THE LAND TRUST TICK:

Bob Gilliom & Patty Schifferle

NEW WAYS TO SUPPORT CONSERVATION IN THE NORTHERN SIERRA

Truckee Donner Land Trust is only able to support 30 years of conservation, 40,000 acres of open space protected, 45 miles of trail and so much more because of your support.

Our staff continues to seek out opportunities to make your generous gifts make the most difference for the northern Sierra, and to have the greatest tax benefits for you. Take for example a FLIP Charitable Remainder Unitrust. It's quite a mouthful, but if you own a highly appreciated, low-income-producing and hard-to-sell asset such as real estate, and are interested in selling the asset for a higher investment income, it could be the right tool for you.

Here's What It Does

- ▶ Tax-free reinvestment: bypass the capital gains and resulting taxes on the sale of the contributed asset
- ▶ Increase your lifetime income and financial security
- ▶ Obtain a substantial income tax deduction
- ▶ Make a significant legacy gift to support the Truckee Donner Land Trust
- ▶ Transfer tax dollars to charitable dollars

This is just one of many tools available for planned giving, and we'd love to explore alternatives and create custom illustrations for your benefit. Contact our Chief Financial Officer, Ward W. Fansler, CPA to learn more at **(530) 582-4711** or **ward@tdlandtrust.org**.



The next generation of Sierra stewards explore Lower Carpenter Valley.

It's not an overstatement to say that the landscape of the northern Sierra would be different – and not in a good way – without Bob Gilliom and Patty Schifferle. Bob and Patty share an indefatigable passion for the Sierra, both playing pivotal roles in conservation at the state and local levels. The two are a force to be reckoned with.

Now retired, from careers spent with the USGS and California Legislature respectively, the couple loves spending time hiking, skiing, paddling and biking throughout the region. But their commitment to conservation continues, with Bob serving on the boards of the Placer Land Trust and the Northern Sierra Partnership, and Patty lending a hand at numerous environmental causes and nonprofits.

"Bob and Patty are two of the Land Trust's most stalwart and supportive donors. Several important conservations wins would not have happened without their help, leadership and generosity," said the Land Trust's Associate Director John Svahn.

Bob and Patty have been involved in many Land Trust projects such as Waddle Ranch, Royal Gorge and Frog Lake. But even more

noteworthy was the instrumental role they played in protecting Lower Carpenter Valley. When one of the sellers required a purchase timeframe that was simply impossible for the Land Trust, Bob and Patty stepped in as interim buyers, giving the Land Trust time to raise the money to protect the property in perpetuity.

"We support the Truckee Donner Land Trust because we cherish the protection of wetland meadows, streams and lakes, and other critical habitat from development –and that's what TDLT does!" Bob said. "TDLT is a truly grass-roots organization that knows their landscape, makes smart decisions, and has a proven track record of protecting natural lands."

"TDLT has the foresight and the long view necessary to ensure the open space that is the natural fabric of our community is protected," Patty added. "People who love Truckee and our surrounding region for all it offers should join us in supporting TDLT. Local land trusts are the most effective way to put your contributions to work for on-the-ground action and to save these places we love in perpetuity."

Thank You to Our 2019 Donors

\$100,000 and over

California Natural Resources Agency
Theresa and Richard Crocker
Ralph Eschenbach and Carol Provan
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
Patricia Schifferle and Robert Gilliom

\$50,000 to \$99,999

Overall Family Foundation
Sierra Nevada Conservancy

\$10,000 to \$49,999

Anonymous (2)
Trudy and William Ausfahl
Robert and Marcia Barnett
Lori Carpenter
Dianne and Jeff Child
Emily and Lance Conn
Pam Polite Fisco and Dennis Fisco
Connie and Jon Hartung
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Serene Lakes Property Owners Association
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TruSource Consulting Group
Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation
Ward-Young Architects
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Louise and Jim Wholey
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Sandy and Peter Golze
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Geoff and Barbara Griffin
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Anne Harper and Rick Ronald
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Chris Ottenweller and Barbara Lovero
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Steve Paterson and Nicky Stenton
Matthew and Erin Perry
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Gretchen and Thomas Selfridge
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Carl Anderson
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Lorelle Banzett
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Damon and Stephanie Becker
Gina and John Biondi
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Frits and Letty Vanderlinden
Robert and Diane Wagner
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Dan Wendin and Ellie Huggins
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Jaz Zaitlin and Mark Nienberg
David Zimmerman
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Karen Andrews
Walter Auerbach
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Linda and Steven Blake
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Leveraging Your Donations for Impactful Grants

Over the course of the last three decades, the Land Trust has protected nearly 40,000 acres of open space in the northern Sierra. Although TDLT relies on many large grants from public agencies to support these acquisitions, roughly half the funds come from private donations – from people like you.

Each dollar donated helps attract even more funding; public support, both in actions and in dollars and cents, is a major consideration in the awarding of grants from entities like the California Natural Resources Agency, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation. Your contributions, whether it's \$100, \$10,000, or a few hours volunteering, are critical to helping the Land Trust secure public agency funds.

Not only does your support increase TDLT's likelihood of receiving these funds, but the money wouldn't be available without your vote. Propositions 117, 40, 50, 84 and 68, all passed by California voters, have helped fund many of the Land Trust's most important acquisitions.

So, just as each conservation win builds on and multiplies the benefits of the last, your contributions and votes build and multiply, ensuring that the Land Trust continues to be able to meet asking prices and protect northern Sierra gems.

On behalf of everyone here at the Land Trust, thank you. Without you none of this would be possible.

A sandhill crane in Lower Carpenter Valley. Photo by Bill Stevenson



The Milky Way over Frog Lake. Photo by Helen Pelster

Opening Frog Lake with New Backcountry Huts



Conceptual renderings of planned backcountry huts at Frog Lake, created by SageModern Designs.

Truckee Donner Land Trust and its partners have successfully purchased Frog Lake – a spectacular crystal-clear lake framed by 1,000-foot cliffs that hasn't been open to the public for nearly a century.

Part of a campaign that also included nearby Red Mountain and Carpenter Ridge totaling nearly 3,000 acres – Frog Lake not only preserves a new, beautiful wild place, it creates a new opportunity for the Land Trust: backcountry huts.

Open year-round for hikers, riders and skiers – these planned huts will provide a truly unique wilderness experience and open up multi-day adventures. The huts will be located in a breathtaking granite cirque more reminiscent of the Yosemite high country than

the metamorphic peaks common in the region.

Set northeast of Castle Peak, Frog Lake will be accessible via Crabtree Canyon Trail out of Tahoe Donner, and from the Warren Lake Trail starting from Donner Summit. In winter, access will be via skis, snowboard or snowshoes. The backcountry ski terrain in the area is fantastic, with beginner to expert runs on all aspects. A three to four hour ski will get most skiers to the huts, depending on conditions.

"I've been skiing back near Frog Lake for many years. The terrain is expansive, with steep chutes, wide-open bowls and mellow tree skiing," said John Svahn, associate director of the Land Trust.

The huts, which will be able to accommodate as many as 24



visitors total, will be professionally staffed with comfortable accommodations and a fully furnished kitchen for overnight stays. Running water, flush toilets, lights and heat will all be available. Beer and wine sales are also planned.

“The huts will be well furnished,” Svahn said. “You just bring your sleeping bag, food and a toothbrush, and we’ll have the rest covered. It’s not the Ritz, but the views are world class.”

Backcountry huts have proven popular in the European Alps for more than a century. Colorado has well over 100 huts, while the Sierra lags behind with less than 10 – some more akin to simple shelters than huts.



“People are going to want to hang out and relax,” Svahn said. “It’s no big deal if it’s a storm day – bring a book, bring some friends.” The Land Trust will begin accepting reservations online later in 2020. The huts will fill quickly; other huts in the Sierra use a lottery for making reservations.

“There’s no doubt the demand for this type of experience is there,” Svahn said.

The Land Trust is also working with local professional mountain and ski guides to provide access for less experienced backcountry travelers.

Two of the huts will each accommodate four to six guests, while a larger hut will comfortably house groups of eight to ten. Both groups and individuals are welcome.

Two local firms with extensive experience in design and construction – Paradigm 8 and SageModern – are spearheading the design and permitting of the huts. The huts employ a high-tech modular design that will be durable, easy to transport and construct, and utilizes materials that are eco-friendly. Building them off-site will minimize impact to the natural splendor of Frog Lake as well.

Want to get in on a backcountry adventure at the new huts? Stay tuned to truckeedonnerlandtrust.org or sign up for our monthly eblasts to be the first to know when reservations become available.

(top of page) A skier descends down to Frog Lake.

(left) Frog Lake at sunrise. Photo by Helen Pelster



Lupins blooming among the mule’s ear.



NEWLY PROTECTED LANDS

The sunset hitting Red Mountain. Photos by Robb Hirsch

Opening Red Mountain & Carpenter Ridge

Frog Lake, framed by 1,000-foot granite cliffs and surrounded by pristine forests, may be the headline-getter of the Land Trust’s recent acquisition, but Red Mountain and Carpenter Ridge, which complete this nearly 3,000-acre deal, are just as important.

As climate change and development threaten northern Sierra wildlife, migration corridors become increasingly important. These new acquisitions multiply the conservation benefits of nearby TDLT projects by creating larger contiguous swaths of protected land for wildlife like deer, bear, bobcats and coyotes, and countless

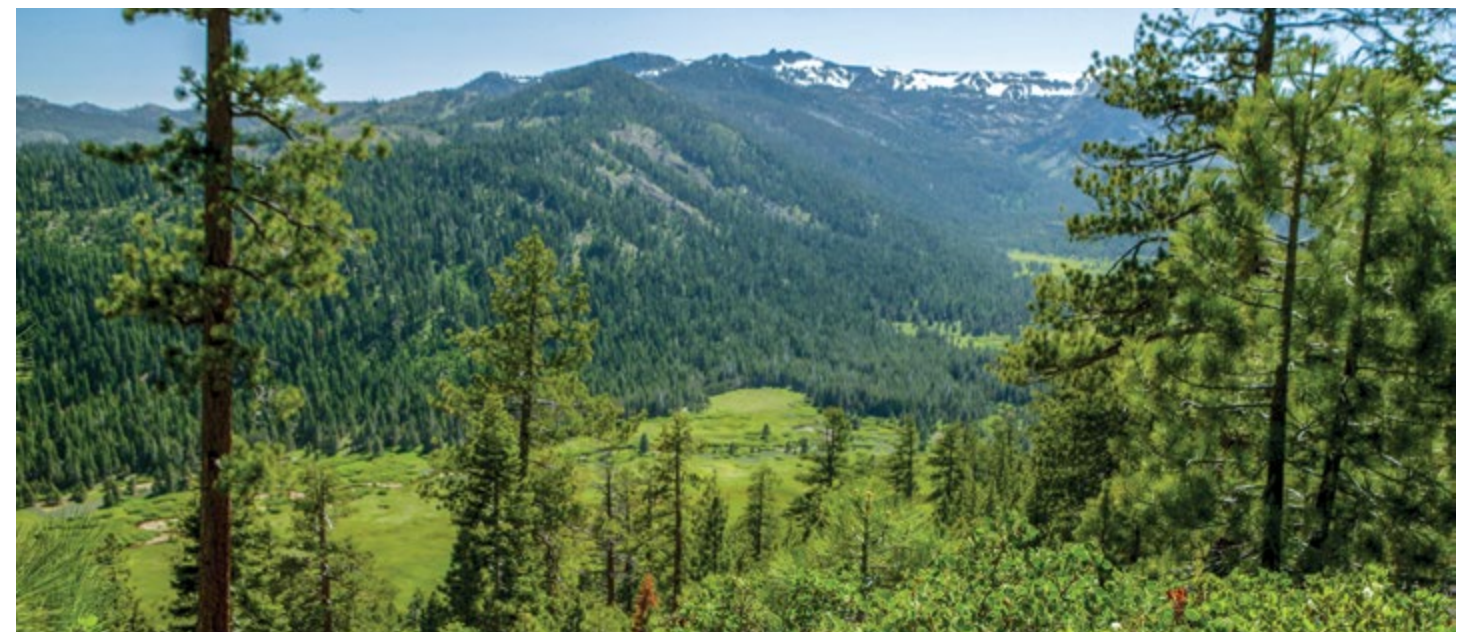
native bird populations. Red Mountain and Carpenter Ridge connect with previous conservation wins like Independence Lake, Lower Carpenter Valley, and Crabtree Canyon to fill in some notable blank spots in the Sierra Checkerboard.

In addition to this acquisition’s importance for wildlife, it also protects watersheds. Red Mountain splits Euer Valley and Crabtree Canyon from Lower Carpenter Valley. Carpenter Ridge divides Lower Carpenter Valley from Independence Lake. Both ridges collect water and feed springs that are critical to

the waterways in the valleys below.

From a recreation standpoint, conserving these lands will allow us to create incredible trail connections. We have our sights set on new trail projects that will link Donner Summit to Frog Lake, over Red Mountain into Lower Carpenter Valley, up to the top of Carpenter Ridge above the Sagehen drainage, and eventually down to the shores of Independence Lake. Extensive new backcountry adventures will become possible right in Truckee’s backyard.

To learn more about this project, go to truckeedonnerlandtrust.org.



Looking down from Carpenter Ridge to the meadows of Lower Carpenter Valley below. Photo by Robb Hirsch

Opening Lower Carpenter Valley



Prosser Creek meanders through Lower Carpenter Valley. Photo by Robb Hirsch

Lower Carpenter Valley was acquired and protected by the Truckee Donner Land Trust in 2017, a win that gained national attention. The press latched on to describing it as “the secret garden of the Sierra” because of its lush meadows that support abundant biodiversity, including a rare species of carnivorous plant, and threatened bird species.

Lower Carpenter Valley’s ecological importance fueled impressive public support for the campaign to purchase and care for it. Unlike other Land Trust projects, that sensitive and rare ecology also meant that the gate couldn’t just swing open to the public when the acquisition was completed.

Since 2017, the Land Trust has led hundreds of visitors on free docent-led hikes into the valley to experience and better understand the meadow’s incredible and abundant natural resources. At the same time, TDLT’s stewardship team was hard at work creating plans for public access that will not compromise the

fragile biodiversity that makes it unique in the Northern Sierra.

Fast forward to 2020, and staff are ready to implement these thoughtful plans. Trail crews have completed the dirt work on new trails. Boardwalks to protect the meadow, a trailhead and parking will be completed shortly after the snow melts. The Land Trust’s goal is to permit public access as early as possible this summer. Docent-led hikes will continue until then if allowed under current health guidelines. The property will be open for day use only, sunrise to sunset.

A new trail replaces the old roadwalk, skirting along the edge of the meadow, and quickly reaching the edge of Prosser Creek. From there it meanders through willow thickets, offering numerous wildlife and bird-watching opportunities. Along the way you’ll find picnic areas and viewpoints.

Sign up for our monthly emails to be the first to know when the trail is open at truckedonnerlandtrust.org.

Thank You to the Truckee Springs Committee!

The Truckee Donner Land Trust Board and Staff are continually amazed by the support of people like you. Each year hundreds of volunteers take to our trails with tools in hand to build and repair trails, and dedicated volunteer docents share their passion for and knowledge of the area with the public on TDLT hikes.

But this year a new set of volunteers stepped up in a very big way by helping the Land Trust raise awareness and money for a major new acquisition: Truckee Springs.

We would like to express our heart-felt thanks to Andy Barr, Jeff Brown, Lisa Gelfand, J-P Patkay, Anna Klovstad, Jennifer Pearsall Kobert, Tony Lashbrook, Levi Leipheimer, Paco Lindsay, Jack Macy, Stephanie Olivieri, Breck Overall, Ted Owens, Jim Porter, Daniel

Simmons, Brita Tryggvi and Lisa Wallace. We couldn’t do this without you.

Each of these individuals brought their expertise, unique perspective, and a whole heap of enthusiasm to this project. They’ve been critical in spreading the word to their friends, families and colleagues. They have spent hours in committee meetings, working together to develop strategies, pick projects, and take on the daunting work of raising millions of dollars.

So again, on behalf of the staff and board of the Truckee Donner Land Trust, thank you to our Truckee Springs committee members. We look forward to standing together at Truckee Springs and raising our glasses in celebration!



Members of the Truckee Springs Campaign Committee hard at work 2020-style: via video conference.

Forestry Projects Underway to Improve Forest Health and Safety

As the manager of tens of thousands of acres of open space, Truckee Donner Land Trust takes sustainable forestry very seriously. As wildfires become an ever more common threat in the Northern Sierra, TDLT aims to both enhance the health of our forests, and protect our community.

At Webber Lake and at Royal Gorge, the Land Trust is beginning its second year of forest restoration work thanks to more than \$750,000 in grant funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. The work will reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, create a healthier ecosystem, and help make the forest more resilient in the face of a changing climate. Work is complete on 105 of the 200-acre project at Royal Gorge and 120 of the 185-acre project at Webber Lake.

The Land Trust is working with local and state agencies on two other forestry projects. The first is with CalFire that includes 1,170 acres owned by the Land Trust, US Forest Service, Sierra Pacific Industries, Teichert, Vail and Truckee Tahoe Airport District improving wildfire safety along Truckee's eastern edge. The other is a Truckee Fire Protection District Project working on Land Trust lands along with areas in Tahoe Donner and Alder Hill to reduce hazardous fuels and improve forest health.

More information about Truckee Donner Land Trust's stewardship work ensuring the protection of these lands for generations to come can be found at truckeedonnerlandtrust.org.



BEFORE: UNHEALTHY FOREST



AFTER: HEALTHY FOREST

A before-and-after example of forestry on Truckee Donner Land Trust lands.

Making Miles on the Donner Lake Rim Trail



A cyclist passes through a field of forget-me-nots on the newest stretch of the Donner Lake Rim Trail.

Truckee Donner Land Trust couldn't celebrate its 30th anniversary without celebrating big progress on the Donner Lake Rim Trail.

A marquee project for the Land Trust born in the organization's early days, the Donner Lake Rim Trail was originally envisioned as a 25-mile trail circling Donner Lake on the peaks and ridges of the Sierra Crest.

Last year marked a major milestone for the popular multi-use trail – the northern portion of DLRT is complete! Four new miles added last summer brings the total to a little more than 12 miles running from Castle Valley to Northwoods Boulevard in Tahoe Donner. The new section, which adds to popular existing segments of trail and the Wendin Way Trail, has been popular with hikers, runners, and riders. The trail meanders through beautiful forests and alpine meadows, and winds between

massive granite boulders below the Tahoe Donner ridgeline, offering unique views of Donner Lake and the crest.

Behind the scenes, staff has been hard at work planning the southern and western reaches of the loop trail. Planning and permitting is underway for a route tracing the spine of Schallenberger Ridge above the south shore of Donner, gaining the summit, and working west toward our Royal Gorge Property before swinging north to connect to the existing trail on the other side of the Interstate.

The Land Trust is teaming up with Placer County, who will share this stretch of trail as part of their Memorial Overland Emigrant Trail, which will continue west. Donner Lake Rim Trail will connect to our Royal Gorge Trail System as well, opening up countless opportunities for adventure. Learn more at truckeedonnerlandtrust.org.



Mahala mat flowers grow up to the edge of Wendin Way Trail, a popular connector trail on the Donner Lake Rim Trail.



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