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LAND TRUST

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Our View: Making Martis Valley Work for All

If you've followed the Martis Valley saga, you may be a little confused by now.

Plans, appeals, lawsuits, negotiations, agreements and court rulings have come fast and furious over the last three years. It's enough to make your head spin.

Tuesday, however, a truly significant event took place that bodes well for the future of the valley. Placer County, sued over and over on its plans to allow widespread development in the Martis Valley, voted to help the Truckee Donner Land Trust and the Trust for Public Land preserve a large, undeveloped tract in the valley from development.

The county, which spent nearly three years defending its plan that would have allowed 6,000 homes in the area and approximately a million square feet of commercial development, will likely contribute \$10 million toward keeping development from the 598 acres called Waddle Ranch.

The money actually comes from open space fees generated by Martis Valley developments that have already been built or are approved. It's an example of development and preservation working hand-in-hand — something we are starting to see a lot of in Martis Valley and Truckee.

The outcome marks an evolution in both the environmental and development mindsets. The core environmental movement is no longer chaining people to trees or advocating absolutely no development. In fact, in Truckee, development dollars are one of the reasons local land preservation has truly taken off during the last several years.

And developers, at least savvy ones, are no longer sending a fleet of bulldozers to level the landscape with a disregard for everything environmental. While we've seen our share of 18-hole golf courses, developers now are investing in water quality protections, clustered building layouts and other progressive development practices.

These private partnerships have played out outside of Placer County's control in the years following the initial lawsuit against the Martis Valley Community Plan.

But now, Placer County is stepping up, becoming part of the Martis Valley solution. With the \$10 million funding for the Waddle Ranch acquisition, Placer will become an effective player in the preservation of _the valley rather than a facilitator of widespread development.

We applaud that move. Because whether you are a developer, conservationist, _or somewhere in the middle, everyone recognizes that the Martis Valley is special and deserves more than the status quo.