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LAND TRUST

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New Truckee Open Space Effort Emerges **Local groups back open space tax.**

A grassroots effort to conserve open space in the Truckee-Tahoe area may soon start growing again.

This time, a local campaign may place the proposed development in Canyon Springs, among other properties, in the cross hairs.

The Glenshire Devonshire Residents Association Board voted Wednesday to test public interest in the creation of an open-space tax to preserve properties targeted for development in and around Truckee.

The new movement may pick up where a 2004 Town of Truckee study left off, relying on public sentiment found at that time for an open-space tax.

“If the community wants to keep open space, the community has to come up with the funding to do so,” said Executive Director Perry Norris of the Truckee Donner Land Trust. “The town paid to have an open-space survey completed, but it died a slow death due to lack of interest.”

But Norris said things may be different now.

“When the poll was done it was more abstract; it didn’t identify specific land,” Norris said. “Now we are facing a couple of key properties that are raising some eyebrows; people are saying enough is enough.”

General Manager Geoff Stephens of the Glenshire Devonshire Residents Association said the association will send out a ballot to test support of such a tax in late July or early August, to be tallied Sept. 8.

The tax, as proposed by the town survey in 2004, could be either a sales or property tax to support open space throughout the region, said Town Manager Tony Lashbrook.

Stephens said that could mean projects from the Glenshire area to Donner Summit, but the proposed land to be preserved has not yet been identified.

Norris said defining that land and gaining community support could be a challenge.

“Are people in Tahoe Donner willing to tax themselves for open space east of Glenshire? Are people in Sierra Meadows willing to tax themselves for open space on Donner Summit?” Norris asked rhetorically.

Norris said he believes such an effort would require not only local funding but state money and philanthropic donations.

“Canyon Springs is a deer migration corridor, and Fish and Game has shown interest in the deer with their \$8.5 million contribution towards Waddle Ranch,” Norris said.

But even if voters approve another tax and all the funding is raised, preserving certain properties as open space still requires a willing seller, Stephens said.

Norris said the Truckee Donner Land Trust hasn't had any contact with the owners of Canyon Springs.

“Besides Canyon Springs there is a lot of open space treasured by the community that is either imminently slated for development or has the strong potential for development,” Norris said. “Truckee is the epicenter of development in the Sierra Nevada right now.”