



TRUCKEE ▲ DONNER
LAND TRUST

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Land Trust Closes on Final Phase of 4,000 Acre Project

The Truckee Donner Land Trust and its steadfast partner, The Trust for Public Land, have acquired 2,000 acres surrounding Independence Lake and 640 acres in the North Fork of the American River watershed that includes parts of Snow Mountain. This is the final phase of a project involving nearly 4,000 acres. The other properties, acquired in June 2005, include 1,400 acres in the Truckee River Watershed.

Costs of the acquisitions are over \$5,000,000 with funding coming from Proposition 40 River Parkway grants administered by the State Resources Agency and Preserving Wild California, a program of the Resources Legacy Foundation Fund.

Fran Herbst, Director of Acquisitions for Tahoe National Forest, sent a telling email of the importance of these lands:

“Saturday, Larry Gruver and I finished the inspections of all the Independence Lake parcels; I want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the gift of these lands to all Americans. Larry and I have both worked on this forest for many years but saw some of the most spectacular country we have ever seen on the Tahoe National Forest. And that’s saying a lot. We can’t tell you how much we appreciate this. One view almost made me cry...but I was too busy laughing. Thanks so much.”

The Independence Lake and Snow Mountain properties will eventually be conveyed to the USFS while the State of California will eventually hold title to The Truckee River Watershed parcels.

All of the properties are a part of the larger “Sierra Checkerboard.” This is a several thousand-acre mosaic of public and private ownership, resembling, of course, a checkerboard. This ownership pattern dates back to the construction of the transcontinental railroad in the 1860’s. As an incentive to build this dangerous and

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expensive railroad, the Federal government offered to grant the railroad companies every other square mile of land along the route, reserving the rest to become National Forest. If these private parcels are not acquired for protection and proper management much of the forest land in our corner of the Sierra will convert to rural sprawl over the next 10 to 20 years. This will decimate habitat and recreation opportunities, increase congestion, facilitate the spread disease among flora and fauna, and further complicate fire management.