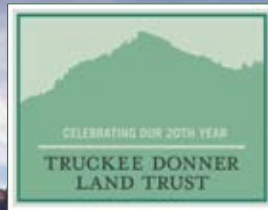


TRUCKEE DONNER LAND TRUST

Preserving and protecting important historic, recreational and scenic open spaces in the greater Truckee region.



Spring/Summer Newsletter
Volume 37 ❖ June, 2010

Announcing two new acquisitions

*7,000 Acres to be Protected
Near Henness Pass, page four*

*Protecting a Truckee
Landmark, page six*

*A Thank You to our
Donors, page eight*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Celebrating 20 years of conservation

Dear Friends,

On November 18, 1990, the Truckee Donner Land Trust Board of Directors held its first meeting around the kitchen table at Dan Wendin's and Ellie Huggins' home near Donner Lake. The Land Trust counted nine members at the time. The Treasurer's Report listed a balance of \$278.58 in the organization's checking account.

Modest beginnings did not deter this committed group from thinking big. Reading over the minutes of the Board's early meetings, I am awestruck by the vision of these initial Board members. In the early 1990s, they were identifying projects the Land Trust has recently completed, and in some cases, is still pursuing.

The June 2, 1991 minutes, under "active projects" notes, "A field trip was taken to view the headwaters of the Little Truckee River, including Perazzo Meadows. Director John Eaton will follow-up to see what is really for sale in the area." The Land Trust closed on the 982-acre Perazzo Meadows acquisition on December 28, 2008. This summer we will be constructing a new trailhead and trail for public access to the river.

The minutes of April 13, 1993, note a meeting with Mr. Sinclair regarding the Bucknam Tract. "This one is going to be a bit tricky," the minutes read. As I write this, in one hour I will go sign a purchase and sale agreement for this very property. (See pages six and seven).

The February 23, 1993, minutes note a project "dubbed Cold Stream II because of the creek that flows from the north flank of Mt. Lola." The Land Trust closed



A spring hike around Lake Ella (aka Dry Lake) at Waddle Ranch Preserve, acquired in 2007. Photo: www.TheCarmelGallery.com.

on this 1,320-acre project that includes two miles of the Mt. Lola Trail and the Cold Stream Meadow on December 10, 2009 – 16 years later.

Minutes from these early Board meetings also mention other acquisitions the Land Trust has completed: Schallenberger Ridge, Martis Valley and Billy Mack Canyon. There are a few we continue to work on to this day; Independence Lake and Van Norden Meadow being notable examples.

This is an exciting time for conservation in the Truckee Donner region. Despite the current economy, we are extremely happy with the Land Trust's momentum. Rather than retrenching during these recessionary times, as many non-profit organizations have been forced to do, we are positioned – with your continued support – to take full advantage of exciting new conservation opportunities that are blossoming in this economic uncertainty. In addition to the 7,000-acre conservation easement with Sierra Pacific Industries announced in this edition of the newsletter, the Land Trust will soon be announcing two other new projects totaling over 5,300 acres with a value of more than \$23 million.

Thank you for your continued support and concern. The Land Trust's success is due to members like you.

Warm regards,

*Perry Norris
Executive Director*



Cold Stream Valley and Schallenberger Ridge, the beginning of a conservation legacy.

DONNER LAKE RIM TRAIL UPDATE

Trail season is almost here! As the snow retreats quickly on the southern and western aspects, and a little more slowly elsewhere, many of us are ready to get our soles, tires and hooves dirty. A lot of us are also excited to get out on the trails to do maintenance, remove fallen trees, and turn the dirt on a new trail.

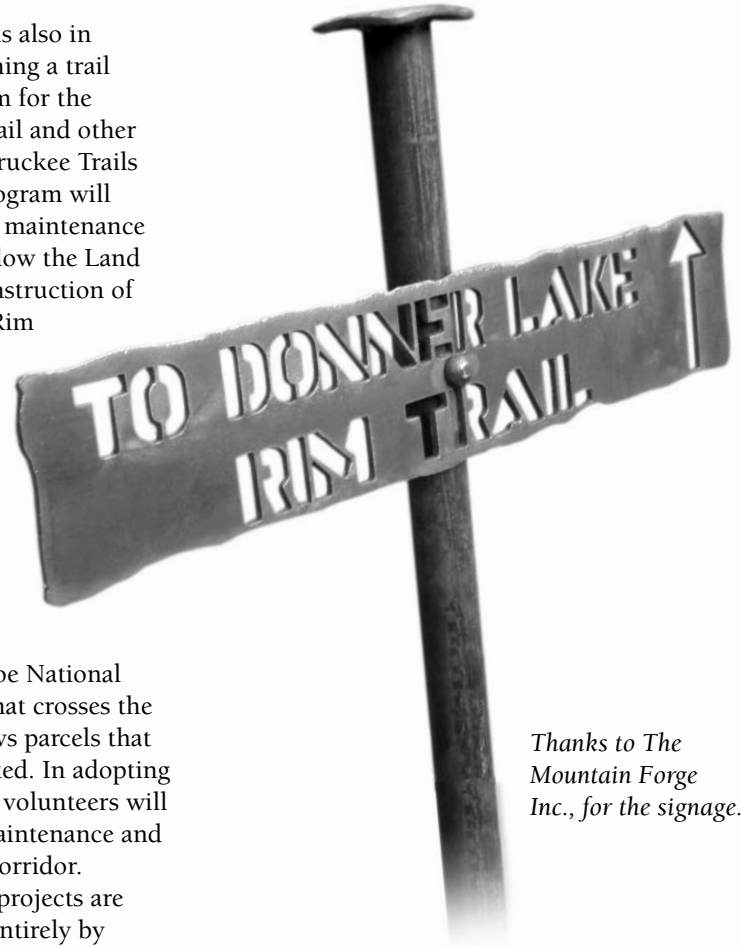
The Land Trust has two new trail construction projects this year. Crews of volunteers will be constructing the Beacon Loop, a two-mile loop circling Beacon Hill in the heart of Waddle Ranch Preserve. Also, staff and volunteers will complete the Perazzo Nature Trail and picnic site in Perazzo Meadows. Look for a new parking lot, kiosk, picnic tables, and new signs describing specimen trees.

For maintenance, the Land Trust staff is waiting excitedly to see the condition of the new section of the Donner Lake Rim Trail that was completed last fall on Donner Ridge. Often new trails need a spring “tune up” after their first winter, as they have not received compaction from seasons of use.

The Land Trust is also in the process of launching a trail maintenance program for the Donner Lake Rim Trail and other area trails with the Truckee Trails Foundation. This program will streamline volunteer maintenance efforts in the area, allow the Land Trust to focus on construction of new sections of the Rim Trail, and trails on other Land Trust properties. Please visit www.gooddirtyfun.org for more information.

Lastly, the Land Trust is working to adopt a part of the Mt. Lola Trail, a Tahoe National Forest System trail that crosses the Cold Stream Meadows parcels that were recently protected. In adopting this trail, Land Trust volunteers will be responsible for maintenance and cleanup in the trail corridor.

Land Trust trail projects are constructed almost entirely by



Thanks to The Mountain Forge Inc., for the signage.



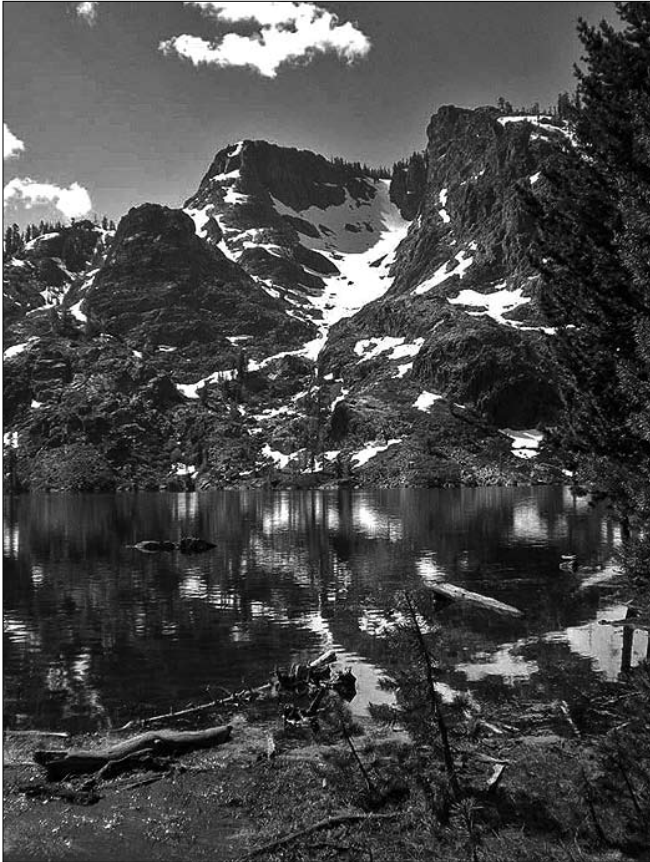
Volunteers from The American Hiking Society open a new section of the Donner Lake Rim Trail on Donner Ridge.

volunteers, of whom we are very proud. If you would like to volunteer this summer, please contact John at the Land Trust or email him at john@tdlandtrust.org. Trail construction days this year are scheduled to be the second Saturday of each month.

We look forward to seeing you on the trail! Please see trail building dates on page 16.

NEWLY

SEVEN THOUSAND ACRES TO BE PROTECTED NEAR HENNESS PASS



An inspiring view from the Henness Pass conservation easement.

Some of the richest natural and cultural assets of the Northern Sierra are found along a mountain byway rich in Gold Rush history known as Henness Pass Road. The Truckee Donner Land Trust, in partnership with The Trust for Public Land and The Northern Sierra Partnership, is buying time for this endangered landscape and bringing critical – and increasingly scarce – public funding to the table to ensure its permanent protection.

The Land Trust and The Trust for Public Land have reached an historic accord with Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) to purchase conservation easements over the first 4,365 acres of what will ultimately include 7,085 acres of lands that SPI owns on either side of the northern Sierra Crest, along Jackson Meadows Road and Jackson Meadows Reservoir. The Land Trust and its partners have received a \$6.4 million grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board's Working Forest Program and a \$1.83 million grant from The Northern Sierra Partnership for the project.

"This is the first conservation easement that SPI, the largest private landowner in California, has ever agreed to," said Perry Norris, the Land Trust's executive director. "It is a precedent-setting moment for conservation in California."

The easement terms provide for public access, recreation and trail development, and the permanent extinguishment of all development rights. SPI will continue to own the properties and manage them sustainably for timber production, thereby

contributing to the long-term health and stability of Sierra County's rural economy. Encompassing more than 11 square miles of private land, the deal will create a permanent unbroken habitat, viewshed, and recreational corridor along the entire length of Jackson Meadows Road that closely parallels the historic Henness Pass Road.

The original Henness Pass road was very popular in its day, providing an easier and safer crossing of the formidable Sierra Nevada. After the Donner Party disaster of 1846, emigrants avoided the rugged cliffs above Truckee Lake (later renamed Donner Lake). Instead, they turned northward taking a longer but more gentle route developed by Patrick Henness in either 1849 or 1850, although that is a subject of some debate. What is known is that Henness, along with his partner Jackson, is the probable discoverer of the pass that bears his name, and in 1852 the wagon road over it was improved in an attempt to draw overland emigrants to the country surrounding the north and middle forks of the Yuba Rivers and to the towns in Yuba and Nevada counties. Along the way, the route gives access to many attractions of the Northern Sierra region, including numerous lakes, peaks and meadows.

While exploring the area, it is easy to assume that the forest landscape on either side of Jackson Meadows Road is fully protected. In fact, as a legacy of the 1860s construction of the

ACQUIRED

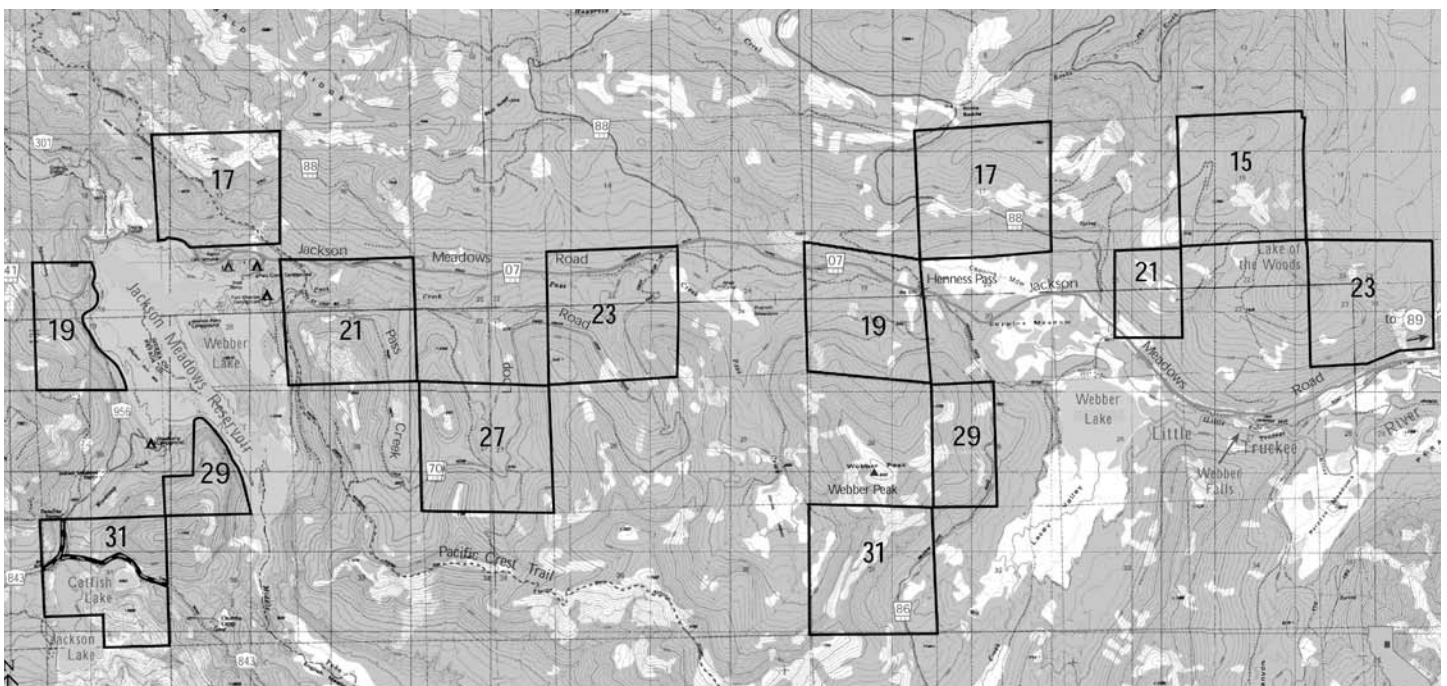
transcontinental railroad, land in this area is a “checkerboard” with every square mile in an alternating pattern of public and private ownership.

As pressures from a changing economic climate make timber harvesting less profitable, population growth has made timberland more attractive for residential development, and timber companies have started selling their lands to offset declining revenues from their mills. The combination of breathtaking scenery, opportunities for four-season wilderness recreation, and easy access to urban services has made the Northern Sierra attractive to those looking to build large residential compounds, even in the currently challenged economy. This kind of future development would have a devastating impact on our lands and make proper landscape-scale management impossible.



A backcountry skier atop English Mountain looking east toward the protected lands.

This is the first conservation easement that SPI, the largest private landowner in California, has ever agreed to. It is a precedent-setting moment for conservation in California.



A map showing the first 4,000+ acres to be protected. The Pacific Crest Trail runs through two of the easterly sections.

NEWLY

PROTECTING A SCENIC LANDMARK ABOVE DONNER LAKE



An aerial view of Donner Lake. Schallenberger Ridge is to the left and the newly protected Bucknam Tract is to the lower right.

A unique partnership between the Town of Truckee, Tahoe Donner Association and the Truckee Donner Land Trust has protected an important 240-acre scenic greenbelt within the town's limits. Called the Bucknam Tract, the property is actually a conglomeration of literally hundreds of 20-foot by 80-foot lots, created in 1911 after the San Francisco earthquake as temporary housing should another quake strike.

The Land Trust has been interested in acquiring the Bucknam Tract for several years due to its scenic qualities and potential trail connectivity to the Donner Lake Rim Trail. The Town's interest is similar to the Land Trust's — to preserve a prominent ridgeline as identified in the Truckee General Plan and to address the potential environmental degradation associated with the development of hundreds of lots on steep slopes in a highly visible location directly above Donner Lake.

Tahoe Donner Association was particularly interested in managing the forest to prevent catastrophic wildfire as part of their highly successful fuels management efforts. This property, bordering Interstate 80, is in a strategic location for enhancing fire safety for Tahoe Donner.

Tahoe Donner will own the property in fee with a conservation, public access and trail easement held jointly by the town and the Land Trust. The conservation easement will prohibit any future development while granting Tahoe Donner the rights to manage the property for forest health and to approve any trail alignment proposed by the Land Trust. Tahoe Donner is

planning to immediately invest nearly \$100,000 into forestry management.

The seller, Stanford University, received the property as a donation and has agreed to sell the property for \$525,000, well below its appraised value.

The property also has many natural resources. Numerous large granite boulders and outcroppings provide valuable dens for a variety of wildlife, including black bears. The property provides an undeveloped corridor through which wildlife

ACQUIRED

The property provides an undeveloped corridor through which wildlife can safely move and reside with minimal harassment. The project also augments an earlier 240-acre Land Trust acquisition in Negro Canyon, a mile to the west.

can safely move and reside with minimal harassment. The project also augments an earlier 240-acre Land Trust acquisition in Negro Canyon, a mile to the west.

The acquisition is the latest of the Land Trust's campaign for Truckee Open Space. Truckee is California's 29th largest municipality in terms of

geographic size, and protecting greenbelts and natural lands within the Town or in its sphere of influence is an increasingly important part of the Land Trust's work. To date, the Land Trust has protected more than 1,300 acres as part of its Truckee Open Space efforts.



A white-headed woodpecker on the Bucknam Tract.



A potential Donner Lake Rim Trail route across the Bucknam Tract. Note the planned subdivision dating back to 1911.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2009 DONORS

Your generous and continued support preserves the scenic, recreational, and historic lands that we all cherish.

\$1,000,000 or more

Northern Sierra Partnership
Preserving Wild California - Resources
Legacy Fund Foundation
Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Wildlife Conservation Board -
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and Game

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The view from Schallenberger Ridge, the Land Trust's first multi-million dollar acquisition.

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Visit Matt's website at www.chappawitzandco.com.

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**For more information about our
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call Kellie Wright at 530-582-4711.**

2010 SUMMER HIKES

The Truckee Donner Land Trust is very pleased to again offer a slate of very cool hikes. Most of these hikes explore lands the Land Trust has protected, or is working to protect. Contact K.V. at the Land Trust, 530-582-4711 or kv@tdlandtrust.org, for more information or to sign up for a hike. Sign up early as most hikes do fill up. Sorry, no dogs allowed. We hope to see you on the trail!



Cut-out Calendar of 2010 Summer Hikes, Events & Trailbuilding

May 29 – Wildflowers at Sagehen Meadows Hike

June 12 – Trailbuilding at Waddle Ranch Preserve

June 19 – Wildlife at Waddle Ranch Hike

July 10 – Trailbuilding at Waddle Ranch Preserve

July 31 – Sugar Bowl to Squaw Valley Hike

Aug 7 – Mt. Lola Hike

Aug 14 – Trailbuilding at Waddle Ranch Preserve

Aug 14 – Summit Canyon and Donner Memorial State Park Hike

Sept 11-12 – North Tahoe Plein Air Event

Sept 11-12 – Trails & Vistas Event

Sept 11 – Trailbuilding at Waddle Ranch Preserve

Oct 9 – Trailbuilding at Waddle Ranch Preserve

Call the Land Trust office at 530-582-4711 to sign up for a hike, event or trailbuilding day. All dates are subject to change.

Wildflowers at Sagehen Meadows

Saturday, May 29th, 2010

Explore meadows filled with colorful High Sierra wildflowers on this popular hike led by Land Trust Board Member Janet Zipser Zipkin. We'll delight in many species of wildflowers as we hike to the spectacular Camas Lily fields. Hikers will enjoy nearly 40 species of wildflowers (while being accompanied by butterflies and playful birds). The trail is gently rolling and family friendly. **Distance and difficulty: 5 miles roundtrip; easy.**

Wildlife at Waddle Ranch

Saturday, June 19th, 2010

Waddle Ranch, in the heart of the Martis Valley, is one of the land trust's proudest conservation victories. Join Land Trust Board Member Bill Goerke for a hike through this wildlife sanctuary of scenic meadows and lush, green forests. There is a lot of sun exposure on parts of this trail. **Distance and difficulty: 6 miles roundtrip with moderate elevation gains; moderate.**

Sugar Bowl to Squaw Valley

Saturday, July 31st

Led by the Land Trust's Executive Director Perry Norris, this classic and scenic hike follows the Sierra Crest south from Sugar Bowl to Squaw Valley with a final steep descent through Shirley Canyon. This is a long and arduous hike, but has stunning, 360-degree views and, with an early start, we can take our time to identify the plethora of wildflowers we'll see. A shuttle will be arranged from Squaw Valley to the start of the Mt. Judah Loop Trail. **Distance and difficulty: 17 miles with major elevation changes; very strenuous.**

Mt. Lola – the Highest Peak in Nevada County

Saturday, August 7th, 2010

Mt. Lola is named after the famed dancer, actress and courtesan, Lola Montez, who lived for a time in nearby Grass Valley in 1853. Hikers will enjoy panoramic views of the Sierra Crest, the Sierra Buttes, the Sierra Valley, Perazzo Meadows and Independence Lake — the latter two recently protected by the land trust and its partners. Land Trust Board Member William Thauvette leads this inspiring hike where you can sign the summit register at 9,103 feet. **Distance and difficulty: 10 miles roundtrip; strenuous.**

Summit Canyon and Donner Memorial State Park

Saturday, August 14th, 2010

Join the land trust's former conservation director Sara Taddo Jones on a semi-cross country trek that crosses past and current efforts by the land trust to expand Donner Memorial State Park. We'll hike the Pacific Crest Trail from Lake Mary up to Roller Pass and descend through historic lands protected or soon to be protected by the land trust. **Distance and difficulty: 6 miles roundtrip; moderate.**

We hope to see you on one of our great hikes!

WELCOME TO OUR NEW PRESIDENT & OFFICERS

We are very pleased to welcome J. Thomas Van Berkem as our new president of the Board of Directors. Van Berkem is a retired senior executive from Wellpoint Inc., a Fortune 50 health insurance company, and vice president of the Truckee Tahoe Airport District Board. He and his wife, Cathy, live in Northstar.

Van Berkem replaces Martin Bern as president, while Janet Zipsper Zipkin takes the office of vice president, William Thauvette was elected treasurer and Jeff Hamilton was elected secretary.

New faces on the advisory council

The Land Trust is fortunate to welcome two new members to our valued advisory council: John Stewart and Anne Chadwick.

"We are fortunate to bring these talented, conservation-minded leaders onto the advisory council and are especially appreciative of their expertise and insights as well on the stewardship committee," said Truckee Donner Land Trust President Thomas Van Berkem.

Stewart is a native Californian, a retired U.S. Army Major General with 32 years of service and an active outdoorsman who shares his perspective on trail signage and recreational opportunities with the Land Trust. "I look forward to contributing to the wonderful work being accomplished by the Land Trust in managing land in this lovely part of our great nation for ourselves and for future generations," said Stewart.

Chadwick, a writer and professional photographer, uses her camera to monitor Land Trust easements and capture images for the newsletter.

"The Land Trust provides such an effective vehicle to preserve the wild and rugged nature of our region. I am truly honored to serve on the advisory council," Chadwick said.

A new face at our Truckee office

As we bid farewell to our membership coordinator, Carol Herrington, who relocated, we welcome Keaven "K.V." Van Lom. K.V. has deep roots in the area,



Tom and Cathy Van Berkem at Tom's Meadow, the headwaters of Perazzo Creek.

having grown up in South Lake Tahoe.

"I left this area 20 years ago, and have now returned to live the mountain lifestyle. I couldn't be more thrilled to be a part of an organization dedicated to saving and preserving such a special place in the Sierra," she said.

K.V. will be handling membership and administrative duties in addition to communications and outreach.

SAVE THE DATE

7TH ANNUAL TRAILS & VISTAS

September 11-12

The mission of Trails & Vistas is to create experiences of art in nature that inspire environmental awareness. This year's theme is "If Dreams were Clouds." Hiking in small groups led by an experienced guide, audiences will visit eight art venues, each set against a striking alpine backdrop.

The event is a unique collaboration between the Truckee Donner Land Trust, InnerRhythms Dance Theater and Arts for the Schools. The three organizations work closely with Founder and Artistic Director Nancy Tieken Lopez, and Co-Director/Choreographer Elizabeth Archer, to strengthen ties between art and the environment.

This year's event will be hosted by Squaw Valley USA. For more information visit www.trailsandvistas.org.

If you are interested in performing, volunteering or sponsoring Trails & Vistas, please contact Nancy Lopez at 530-550-8262 or nancy@trailsandvistas.org.

4TH ANNUAL PLEIN AIR PAINTING EVENT

September 11-12

This year's North Tahoe Plein Air event will be held at the Village at Northstar in partnership with the 25th Annual Autumn Food and Wine Festival. Well-known local and regional artists will paint at locations throughout North Lake Tahoe during the week. The artists' work will then be featured at a silent auction and public sale.

The event benefits the Truckee Donner Land Trust, North Tahoe Arts, and the Community Fund of North Lake Tahoe. This is a wonderful opportunity to acquire beautiful works of art and support local non-profit organizations.

For more information contact Lois Skaff at pleinair@gmail.com and visit www.northtahoearts.com.

CARING FOR WADDLE RANCH

Since Waddle Ranch was acquired in 2007 for \$23.5 million, managing and restoring its diverse resources continues to be a substantial and exciting effort. Suffice it to say, this 1,482 acre property, the heart of the Martis Valley, is well loved and managed.

Our partners at the Truckee Tahoe Airport District will be continuing a forest thinning project on the property to prevent the possibility of catastrophic wildfire. Land Trust volunteers will also be constructing a new trail encircling the highest point of the property. The new trail is called the Beacon Loop Trail due to the airport beacon located on top of the knoll.

Days will be busy and you may encounter crews working on the property making it better for critters, plants, and the public's enjoyment. The property remains gorgeous and will offer a chance to get away from it all and find some quiet places to enjoy.

The East Martis Creek Valley, in particular, feels strikingly

remote and peaceful. The year-round creek has a trail next to it, and many flat, shady places to enjoy the sound of moving water. The more open areas of this valley have a riparian environment complete with large willows and numerous small birds that call this habitat "home".

In addition to the ongoing mechanical thinning and chipping, Cal Fire is proposing a small prescribed fire to occur in the fall on the southeastern end of the property. As partners in stewardship of the property, the Land Trust and the Airport District convened a panel of fire

ecology, air quality, and prescribed fire experts to discuss the pros and cons of prescribed fire, which has recently become an increasingly important management tool for Cal Fire, State Parks, and the U.S. Forest Service. The event was at the Town Council Chambers in Truckee and was very well attended, covering topics ranging from air quality and burn day selection, to carbon sequestration and the history of importance of fire in the Sierra.



A volunteer monitors water quality in the east fork of Martis Creek.

The Land Trust is continuing to work in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop a new trail linking the southernmost parking lot on Martis Dam Road with Waddle Ranch via a route that crosses the valley and Martis Creek. The trail is still awaiting necessary approvals, but the Land Trust plans to begin construction later this summer.

Lastly, the current state of the economy has impacted some of the stewardship projects on Waddle Ranch. As part of a settlement, Integrated Environmental Restoration Services (IERS) was contracted by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Board to mitigate past road construction damage and curb future erosion. However, the recent filing for bankruptcy protection by East-West Partners has put the funding for this project in jeopardy, and the project has been suspended indefinitely. We thank the members of the steering committee and IERS for their hard work.



Tough love at Waddle Ranch; thinning to improve forest health.

STEWARDSHIP OF OUR LANDS

The Land Trust owns over 4,625 acres in fee title, and holds conservation easements on 2,037 acres. With each of these properties the Land Trust has the responsibility to manage the property and uphold its conservation values. Stewardship responsibilities include developing recreation facilities such as picnic areas, signs and trails; working with partners on forestry and habitat restoration; and fulfilling annual monitoring obligations, a necessary procedure for land trusts.

Here are a few highlights of the work ahead for the Land Trust and its partners:

Truckee Open Space Properties

In cooperation with the Sierra Business Council, several Land Trust properties — including the Old Greenwood Open Space, Pine Forest, and Billy Mack Canyon — will be assessed this spring for thinning to reduce wildfire fuels. If they can be thinned, the cut-and-chipped material will be hauled away to the biomass power plant in Loyalton for power generation. The plant was briefly closed due to a lack of stock and because of haul costs. Keeping the plant open saves 30 jobs in this community that has been especially hit by the economic downturn.

Perazzo Meadows Restoration

Although very scenic, the Perazzo Meadows ecosystem is not functioning optimally as a fish and wildlife habitat. An ongoing restoration project by the Truckee Donner Land Trust, the Truckee River

Watershed Council and the U.S. Forest Service aims to improve the river and wet meadow habitat in the area. This project involves re-routing the Little Truckee River into its historic watercourse and creating a series of ponds to hold back spring runoff, keeping it in the Perazzo Meadows system for a more even flow over the warm summer months. Although the process impacts the meadow's beauty and serenity, the end result in just a couple of years will be improved habitat for wildflowers, birds, amphibians, and fish.

Thanks to a grant from The Northern Sierra Partnership, the Land Trust will be constructing a new trailhead, picnic area, and trail to the Little Truckee River. Access to the river has previously been difficult due to the lack of trails and confusion in the public's mind about what was private and public property.

Sierra College Campus

We are working with the college to develop a new earthen trail connecting Highway 89 to downtown Truckee.



Boy Scouts and their Scoutmaster from Troop 267 on the Donner Lake Rim Trail.



A volunteer from Patagonia celebrates the removal of an invasive thistle plant.



The soon-to-be day use area and trail accessing the Little Truckee River at Perazzo Meadows.

The Truckee Donner Land Trust was founded in 1990 in order to preserve and protect important historic, recreational and scenic open spaces in the greater Truckee region.

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The Truckee Donner Land Trust is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations to the Land Trust may be tax-deductible under the Internal Revenue Service Code.

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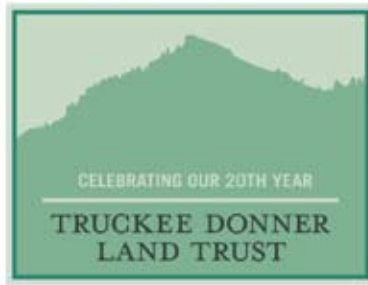
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COVER PHOTO:

Van Norden Meadow with Castle Peak in the distance. Photo: Anne Chadwick



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*Perazzo Meadows in early June, protected by the Land Trust in 2008.
Photo: www.TheCarmelGallery.com*



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