

AN ECONOMIC AND CONSERVATION VISION FOR DONNER SUMMIT

We, the undersigned, support the following principles as they apply to Donner Summit. This list represents the collaborative effort of all of us and is based on survey data and community planning meetings that took place on the Summit over the past three years. We have created this vision so that it might serve as a framework for planning decisions that affect the region.

Our passion for Donner Summit, which compelled us to come together and create this vision, is well founded.

One can stand on Donner Summit, on the route that Native Americans traveled and where the first wagon trains crossed, and feel the history. For centuries, Truckee basalt was used for tools and weapons throughout California. Reciprocal trade was conducted from central California to the Truckee-Tahoe area. One can see remnants of the first trans-Sierra road, the first transcontinental highway, and the roadbed of the first transcontinental railroad.

At the same time, one can stand atop a buried transcontinental fiber optic cable while transcontinental air routes cross overhead. At night, satellites traverse even higher above. From the same point, there are incomparable spots for skiing, trekking, and exploring. Nearby are towering old growth trees, beautiful open spaces, important wetlands and habitats, and the source of three Sierra rivers.

Donner Summit is unique and an asset to all.

1. Recognize Donner Summit as a region of local, state, and global significance, which must be protected for future generations.

Few places in the world have its combination of highly significant history and archeology, awe-inspiring geology, and vulnerable yet complex and beautiful ecosystems. In addition, it is the source of three rivers, an avian flyway, and is a recreation hub.

2. Respect and maintain the rugged rural character and existing scale of Donner Summit communities.

The region's long history and harsh environment mold and temper the community and its buildings to make them distinct and different from less demanding areas.

3. Focus new commercial development on Old Highway 40 and in Soda Springs.

The Donner Summit community desires a vibrant, healthy economy. New economic activity should be in current and historic commercial areas.

4. Preserve natural open spaces and scenic viewsheds.

Donner Summit is an area of spectacular vistas from its many ridgelines and mountaintops with expansive views of rugged crags, and vast forests, some with towering old growth trees.

5. Protect and restore the lakes, wetlands, and meadows of Donner Summit.

As the source of the Truckee, North Fork American, and South Yuba Rivers, Donner Summit provides water for a large part of California and Nevada. Its many lakes, streams, and wetlands keep the water pure, provide recreation for people, habitat for animals and plants, and connect the parts of a vibrant environment.

6. Protect and improve the health of the North Fork American and the South Yuba River watersheds.

Downstream residents depend on these rivers for clean, clear water for habitat, recreation, and consumption.

7. Sustain and enhance the health and viability of our forests.

The forests of Donner Summit provide recreation opportunities, critical habitat, incredible viewsheds, soil stabilization, and carbon sinks. If they are healthy, they will be more tolerant of the forest fires which are part of their natural history.

8. Maintain and improve regional air quality and limit greenhouse gas emissions.

Control of greenhouse gasses involves minimizing traffic and using alternative sources of energy. If greenhouse gasses are not controlled, virtually every climate model shows there will be no snowpack in the northern Sierra by the mid twenty-first century.

9. Protect and enhance the region's present and future biological diversity.

Diversity is critically important in defending the ecosystem from external and internal stresses. The rich flora and fauna of Donner Summit put the region in a globally significant context – especially in an era of climate change.

10. Invest in conservation to protect the region from the impacts of climate change.

Climate change puts tremendous stress on natural ecosystems, increasing the importance of the integrity of our watersheds, the viability of wildlife habitat, and access to wildlife corridors.

11. Preserve, protect and enhance the region's cultural and historical resources.

Because of its rich history, Donner Summit has a wealth of historical assets: the Emigrant Trail, Chinese Wall, Native American petroglyphs and grinding rocks, Lincoln Highway, the first transcontinental railroad, the first transcontinental highway, historic buildings, and Rainbow Bridge.

12. Maintain quality of and access to passive recreation on the Summit where it is consistent with the well being of the environment.

Donner Summit is a unique recreational area offering opportunities for: rock climbing, hiking, climbing peaks, resort and back country skiing and snowboarding, snowshoeing, fishing, bird watching, botany, general exploration, mountain and road biking, star gazing, orienteering, history appreciation, geology, and snowman making.

All these activities must be done in a way that respects the health of the ecosystem and the well being of its flora and fauna.

SIGNATORIES:

Donner Summit Area Association (DSAA)
Mountain Area Preservation Foundation
Sierra Club
Serene Lakes Property Owners' Association

North Fork American River Alliance
The Palisades
Sierra Watch
South Yuba River Citizens' League