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April 8, 2008

Placer County Board of Supervisors
175 Fulweiler Avenue
Auburn, CA 95603

Nevada County Board of Supervisors
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, CA 95959

Dear Supervisors:

At the crest of the Sierra Nevada, Donner Summit is one of the most treasured landscapes of both Placer County and Nevada County.

The region is the most important cultural crossroads of the American West, with a rich history written in the rock art of the Martis Indians, the wheel ruts of the first wagon trains, and the snowsheds of the transcontinental railway.

Donner Summit includes incredible wildlife values, unparalleled recreational resources, and a unique Sierra experience for visitors and residents alike. It's the great divide between three important watersheds in the Sierra – the Yuba River, American River, and Truckee River, providing water to downstream customers throughout California and Nevada.

In 2007, Sierra Watch and Sierra Club engaged a team of planners, biologists, and hydrologists to assess the existing resources and review development issues on Donner Summit. Their findings led to a set of "Planning Principles", designed to safeguard the Donner Summit region and its irreplaceable values for future generations.

As Placer County and Nevada County shape land use decisions for the region, we encourage you to incorporate these principles in your planning process:

Donner Summit Planning Principles

A. Donner Summit Values and Resources

1. *Natural Heritage*: Recognize the importance of Donner Summit to the broader Central Sierra and downstream ecosystems.

2. *Biological Resources*: Protect the wide array of habitat and the incredible range of biodiversity on Donner Summit.
3. *Wetlands and Meadows*: Protect the wetlands and meadows of Donner Summit.
4. *Forests*: Expand permanent protection of Donner Summit forest resources.
5. *Water Resources*: Improve and maintain the water quality of Donner Summit's lakes, creeks, and rivers.
6. *Cultural Importance*: Preserve the history and scenery of Donner Summit as the portal to California and as the region's primary recreational and economic resource.
7. *Challenging Climate*: Recognize the challenging climate on Donner Summit and the impact of climate change on the region's landscape and resources.

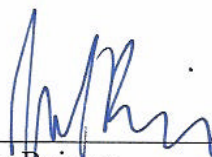
B. Donner Summit Development Issues

1. *Existing Development*: Protect the values of the existing Donner Summit communities.
2. *Water Supply*: Size Donner development to existing water sources and projected impacts of climate change.
3. *Wastewater Treatment*: Protect Donner Summit water quality from increased sewage outflows and polluted stormwater runoff.
4. *Transportation and Roads*: Prevent additional traffic from clogging regional roadways and diminishing the quality of the Donner Summit experience.
5. *Fire Safety*: Prevent leapfrog development and ensure fire-safe planning.
6. *Commitment to Conservation*: Expand permanent protection of Donner Summit resources.
7. *Community Planning*: Collaborate with regional jurisdictions and local residents to create a community vision for Donner Summit and update General Plans accordingly

Each group listed below shares an interest in Donner Summit and a commitment to its future. In the months ahead, we will apply these principles to the public planning process and, hopefully, use them to help establish a collaborative conservation blueprint for the future of Donner Summit.



Tom Mooers
Sierra Watch



Jason Rainey
South Yuba River Citizens League



David Kean
Tahoe Group, Sierra Club



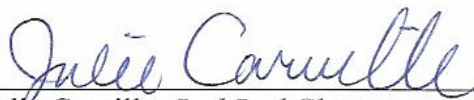
Jim Ricker
North Fork American River Alliance



Ellen Lapham
Snowlands Network



Don Rivenes
Sierra Foothills Audubon Society



Julie Carville *Red Bud Chapter,*
California Native Plant Society



Joan Clayburgh
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Barbara Rivenes
Forest Issues Group