

## **2019 Docent Program Hike Information**

The primary focus of the hiking program this year is for hikers to acquire some information about the particular property and the checkerboard in general, identify some trees, and experience the beauty of nature.

Besides the information we have provided below, the Land Trust website has additional information under “Plan Your Visit” and “2018 Hiking Series” about each hike. Please feel free to use it to supplement the information that we have provided. In the Appendix, we have included the information that we prepared for last year’s docent program in case you would like to use it.

During the hike, you can cover some of the following information. Please DO NOT use all of it—that will be too much talking. You can do it at rest stops, at the turn around point (if applicable) and while walking. Use your judgement as to the interest of the group— and select the information that you think fits best. You may find that some people just want to hike and experience the area in their own way. You may choose to gauge people’s interest and preferred timing at the beginning of the hike and divide into groups.

The source material is from Land Trust and Northern Sierra Partnership websites and additional specific sources identified below.

### **Checkerboard**

The “Sierra Nevada Checkerboard” is a mosaic spanning several thousand acres of land in public and private ownership, which resembles a checkerboard. This ownership pattern dates to the construction of the transcontinental railroad in the 1860s. As an incentive to build this dangerous and expensive railroad, the federal government offered railroad companies every other square mile of land along the route, reserving the rest to become National Forest. The square miles given to the railroad were sold to private owners to finance the railroad.

These private parcels of forestland could be converted to rural sprawl over the next 10 to 20 years, increasing congestion, decimating wildlife, and complicating fire management.

“Closing” this Checkerboard is a Land Trust priority

### **Property Information**

Following is some information about each property, including information about the Land Trust’s involvement and some general information.

Please be familiar with this information so that you can give a less than 5-minute overview of the information sometime during the hike.

## Lower Carpenter Valley

### Land Trust Involvement

In 1990, the beautiful Coldstream Valley near Donner Lake was about to be lost to logging. A small group of passionate hikers founded the Truckee Donner Land Trust and raised \$150,000 to purchase 160 acres in the valley. Since then, the Land Trust has participated in many land conservation projects in this area.

Lower Carpenter Valley comprises 1,320 acres, just north of Truckee's Town boundary and the Tahoe Donner subdivision. The Land Trust and its partners acquired Lower Carpenter Valley in 2017 in two separate acquisitions of about 600+ acres each. If the Land Trust and its partners had not acquired the 600 acres in the lower meadow area, which is only eight miles from downtown Truckee, it might have been subdivided into seven estate parcels.

The Land Trust conveyed the first acquisition (Crabtree Canyon) to Tahoe Donner, subject to a conservation easement. That area is open to the public. The second parcel is currently only available by docent led tours, until a trail system and adequate parking is in place. The Upper Carpenter Valley is still in private ownership.

An additional 80 acres in the Lower Carpenter Valley will be conveyed to the Land Trust in no more than 8 years.

### Area Information.

The Lower Valley contains a variety of habitat types and is a top priority for biodiversity conservation in the Sierra Nevada. The entire Valley, thanks to conservation-minded private landowners to the west and the previous owners, provides an extremely large, complex mixture of high-quality Sierra habitat.

The Carpenter Valley was originally used by the Washoe people as a summer habitat. The valley was later settled by dairyman William Carpenter and his wife, Julia. A 600-acre parcel was purchased in the mid-20th century by a group of fishermen, including newspaper publisher James McClatchy, who used it as a private retreat.

Lower Carpenter Valley is one of the best examples of a properly functioning meadow in our area. Willow forests abound on the valley floor, and the North Fork of Prosser Creek does not suffer the common ailments seen in local meadows - channelization and head cuts. Instead the creek meanders through the valley and vegetation grows right up to the water's edge.

The deep, spongy soils of Lower Carpenter Valley sustain important habitat in Prosser Creek and the Truckee River by capturing and holding spring runoff and releasing clean, cold water back into the river system throughout the summer. State officials have identified the North Fork of Prosser Creek as a potential recovery site for native Lahontan cutthroat trout. These federally threatened fish have been documented in the creek as recently as the late eighties and may still be present.

## **Donner Lake Rim Trail (Glacier Way to Drifter Hut)**

### **Land Trust Involvement**

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The Donner Lake Rim Trail (DRLT) is a Land Trust project to build a 23-mile multi-use trail on the mountains and ridges surrounding Donner Lake. Trails will run from downtown Truckee to Donner Summit and connect with existing trails, including the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT), Warren Lake Trail, Summit Lake Trail, the Hole-in-the-Ground Trail, and the trails leading into the proposed Castle Peak Wilderness.

Currently 8 miles of the 23-mile trail have been constructed and are available for public use. Most of this 8-mile segment was built by the Land Trust and volunteers and with the help of other partners such as the US Forest Service, Tahoe Donner, the Truckee Trails Foundation, California State Parks and the California Conservation Corps.

A new section from the Glacier Way Trailhead to Northwoods Boulevard, about 4 miles long, is expected to be completed in 2019. The route contours the landscape below Skislope Way in Tahoe Donner, passing through mixed conifers, opening to big views of Donner Peak, and passing by massive granite boulders left behind by glaciers. From here it will be possible to access Donner Summit from Downtown Truckee, all on trails.

## Donner Summit Canyon

### Land Trust Involvement

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This area was purchased by the Land Trust in 2010 and conveyed to California State Parks in 2012 as an addition to Donner Memorial State Park, Donner Summit Canyon is the gateway to perhaps the most important square mile in California's history. The conservation of this land respects that history, protects the tributaries that provide Donner Lake with clean, clear water, and ensures that the scenic viewshed remains intact and beautiful.

### Area Information

Native Americans seasonally crossed the Sierra over what we today refer to as Donner Pass. Petroglyphs from the Martis people, estimated to be up to 2,500 years old, can be viewed on the granite slabs just west of the Donner Summit (Rainbow) Bridge on Old Highway 40. The Northern Paiute, Western Shoshoni, and Washoe people of the western Great Basin, as well as the Maidu of the western foothills of the Sierra, are believed to have traversed this pass as a trade route.

In 1844, the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy Party was the first group of Euro-American emigrants to successfully cross this summit into California. Due to early snowfall, they left their wagons at the east end of "Truckee Lake" under the watchful eye of young Moses Schallenberger, who safely over-wintered in a hastily-constructed cabin in 1844-45. The high ridge rising from the south shore of today's Donner Lake is named Schallenberger Ridge in his honor.

As the Central Pacific built the railroad across the Sierra, they needed a way to move construction materials and laborers to the summit. Thus, they built the Dutch Flat-Donner Lake Wagon Road and operated it as a toll road from 1864 to 1867. Above the property you can view the famous China Wall, a dry-laid rock wall constructed by Chinese railroad laborers, hand-cut train tunnels, and snowsheds to protect the trains from avalanches.

Upon completion of the railroad, the old wagon road fell into disrepair. After the turn of the century, the old road was modified for automobile use and served as the Lincoln Highway, and then the Victory Highway, until Highway 40 was built in the 1920s. Highway 40 was instrumental in Truckee and Lake Tahoe's emergence as resort and recreation destinations, and "Old 40" remains heavily used as the area's gateway, despite the construction of Interstate 80.

## Elizabethtown Meadow

### Land Trust Involvement

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Litigation in 2005 between environmental groups and developers of Martis Valley stopped the planned residential and commercial development. The Land Trust acquired the 152 acres constituting Elizabethtown Meadows in 2011. The Land Trust has been acquiring land for conservation, piece by piece, in the Martis Valley for years.

### Area Information.

As far back as 1870, Elizabethtown Meadow was a Silver Rush boom town. Though the boom lasted only two years, the damage lasted for decades. A century later, poorly maintained access roads, constructed to enable development in the area, resulted in further sediment erosion into Middle Martis Creek. The area was named after the wife of a hotel owner.

Construction of Highway 267 impacted the creek. The Land Trust recently partnered with the Truckee River Watershed Council to restore the creek into its historical course.

The Middle Fork of Martis Creek runs year-round. The property includes Jeffrey Pine forest uplands and 3 large mountain meadows.

[Some information from Truckee River Watershed Council “ForRiver” November 2, 2016].

## **Farad-Fleish Bridge**

### **Land Trust Involvement**

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The Land Trust does not own this property and has been discussing possible acquisition with the current owners, Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA), for several years. The property is desirable as it enables legal access to the Truckee River to the public for fishing or enjoying the unspoiled river. The Land Trust is working many acquisitions currently and hope to see progress in the next few years.

### **Area Information**

The Farad Hydroelectric Plant was built alongside the Truckee River at by the Sierra Pacific Power Company in 1899 as the first electric plant on the eastern Sierra. Mining interests bankrolled the project so water could be pumped out of the Virginia City silver mines as the mine shafts were sunk deeper into the ground.

In 2017 the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, took ownership of the property from NV Energy, But the plant has been out of service since 1996 when flooding destroyed the dam and TMWA, the primary water provider for Reno, says resuming electrical production at the site wouldn't be worth the estimated \$30 million cost.

The powerhouse itself is a tan, brick, two-story-tall structure with large windows on the sides and front and a large, steel rollup door. Inside the 4,200-square-foot building, the electrical generation hardware is still largely in place.

On the floor are two large, cylinders that house the electricity generating turbines. Also, the gauges, fuses, switches and other electrical components used to operate the plant are still in place, although they appear badly degraded. The interior also has a hand-operated crane fixed to a trolley that runs along steel beams near the roof.

The powerhouse is connected by penstocks to the forebay building, a 1,900-square-foot structure that's upslope from the main building and accessed by several large flights of stairs. The forebay is where water diverted from the river arrives by flume and flows into the penstocks that deliver it to the turbines.

{Reno Gazette Journal, April 4, 2018} [This is Reno, June 20, 2018]

## Frog Lake Cliffs

### Land Trust Involvement

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The Land Trust is currently in contract with the Smith Family to purchase Frog Lake. If the campaign to raise money is successful, Frog Lake will be added to the Land Trust's holdings in 2020.

The Warren Lake Trail, which is the route to the Frog Lake Cliffs, is a connection from the Donner Lake Rim Trail. The Donner Lake Rim Trail (DRLT) is a Land Trust project to build a 23-mile multi-use trail on the mountains and ridges surrounding Donner Lake.

### Area Information

The cliffs overlook Frog Lake, which Charles McGlashan (1847-1931), a lawyer known as one of Truckee's patriarchs and famous for interviewing surviving members of the Donner Party, christened "Nona" for his wife Leonara, who went by Nona McGlashan.

It was then owned by the Southern Pacific Railroad, part of the "Sierra Checkerboard" gift of every-other-square-mile in the area from President Abraham Lincoln to Southern Pacific to get the trans-continental railroad built.

According to "Give Me a Mountain Meadow," a book about Charles McGlashan written by his granddaughter, also named Nona, Charles had a unique plan for Nona Lake: "In recent years frog legs had been in demand at gourmet restaurants in San Francisco. Virginia City and Truckee residents too would pay good prices for such delicacies," she wrote in the book. "It occurred to him that production of frog legs might be profitable if frogs could survive the sub-zero winters."

McGlashan ordered two dozen French frogs from San Francisco, then hired a man to carry them, slung in two milk cans across the saddle horn of a horse, up to Nona Lake. Now it sounds like we're leading up to how the lake came to be known as Frog Lake, but here the history takes a turn. The author wrote that the frogs didn't make it through the first snow, and the lake was named for a frog-shaped boulder on its shore instead.

The Smith Family, who is selling Frog Lake to Truckee Donner Land Trust in our current campaign, purchased the land and lake from the Southern Pacific Land Company (spinoff of the Southern Pacific Roadroad) in the 1930s and have been fantastic stewards of the land and lake ever since.

## Johnson Canyon

### Land Trust Involvement.

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In 2006, the Land Trust acquired 280 acres in Johnson Canyon (also known as Negro Canyon). Johnson Canyon is the home of the headwaters of Gregory Creek, an important tributary of Donner Lake. As part of the Royal Gorge acquisition in 2012, the Land Trust acquired an additional 350 acres in the canyon, effectively protecting the entire canyon from development.

### Area Information

The canyon is a key deer migration corridor, home to four species of birds listed as protected by state or federal programs, rich in wildlife. The canyon serves as a migratory route for the Loyalton deer herd. Bears, coyotes and porcupines also live on the land that is split by Gregory Creek, which runs into Donner Lake. It also provides direct access to the Donner Lake Rim Trail (DLRT).

The canyon is also an important link to the Castle Peak and Donner Summit recreation areas. Preserving the canyon prevented sprawl development at the edge of Truckee town limits.

Until the Land Trust acquired the property, the canyon was referred to as “Negro Canyon”, in reference to the African-American landowner at the base of the canyon around the turn of the century.

The Land Trust replaced the dated and offensive name “Negro Canyon” with “Johnson Canyon”, in honor of Albert Johnson, the African-American man who moved from Kentucky to the Truckee area around 1871 and eventually settled near the canyon.

Johnson was a well-known and respected resort owner. He was initially employed by the Truckee Hotel as a cook, then as a cook on a Lake Tahoe Steamer, before becoming an innkeeper in the canyon near Donner Lake. According to historical records, he may have also been a veteran of the Civil War. Johnson was listed in the 1910 U.S. Census as a single, literate man who was a hotel keeper. At the resort, Johnson rented out both hotel rooms and cabins to guests.

During a heavy snowstorm in 1911, Albert Johnson was stranded in his hotel in the remote canyon. After the storm subsided, he was found ill and transported to the county hospital in Nevada City, CA, where he died at the age of 79.

[some source material from JP Chronicles]

## Lacey Meadow

### Land Trust Involvement

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In October 2012, the Truckee Donner Land Trust acquired the 3,000-acre property from its longtime owners, Clif and Barbara Johnson. Webber Lake had been in the Johnson Family since the 1870s. Until the Land Trust's acquisition, the property had been closed to the public for decades. The property consists of Webber Lake, Lacey Creek and two large meadows, Lower Lacey Meadow and Upper Lacey Meadow.

### Area Information

The modern history of Webber Lake and the surrounding Lacey Meadows began in 1860 when Dr. David Gould Webber, a physician and pharmacist in Downieville, constructed a small hotel on the shores of what was then called Little Truckee Lake, now Webber Lake. At the time, the area North of today's Donner Pass was the most densely populated area of the Sierra due to numerous gold mining camps that focused their activities on the northern end of California's Mother Lode. Webber's vision was to capitalize on the attractiveness and convenience of the lake to Downieville, Nevada City, Grass Valley and the numerous northern mining camps to provide a recreational diversion from the hard days of gold mining. The Land Trust, working with the Trust for Public Land, acquired the 1,174-acre meadow in 2010. Additionally, the Henness Pass trail, only a few hundred yards from the lake, had become one of the easiest and most popular routes across the Sierra. The Truckee Turnpike Company began further development of the route in 1859. Webber Lake and Webber's hotel, originally known as "Webber's Station", was in the perfect location. Dr. David Webber's hotel, built in 1860, is the last standing stagecoach hotel (out of about 30) on the historic Henness Pass Road

The Johnson family acquired the property in 1915. Johnson and his father and grandfather used to drive 2,000+ sheep from their ranch in Roseville to Lacey Meadows every summer for grazing. Over the years, two private campgrounds were developed on the shores of the lake along with a private fishing concession.

## **Mt Lola and Coldstream Meadow**

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### **Area Information**

Mt. Lola is named for a famous 19th century Irish dancer Lola Montez, an actress of questionable morals and talent. She lived with her third husband, Patrick Hull, in Grass Valley. Glamorous and boldly unconventional, La Lola attracted an enthusiastic following based more on her persona and her beauty than on her talent. She thrilled Gold Rush San Francisco with her amorous scandals and famously suggestive "Spider Dance." A "liberated" woman, she was also known for her affairs with Franz Liszt and King Ludwig I of Bavaria. First appearing in San Francisco in May of 1853, Lola Montez spent a year in California's sleepy Sierra town of Grass Valley. Famous for being the inspiration for the expression "Whatever Lola wants, Lola gets", Miss Montez serves as an excellent example of what one can do if possessed of a little drive and ambition.

The summit is 9,143-feet, the highest peak in Nevada County and the northernmost point from which the waters of Lake Tahoe can be seen.

## **Royal Gorge Rim Trail-Mariah**

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In 2012, the Land Trust acquired 3,000 acres on Donner Summit known as the Royal Gorge Property, along with 351-acres in Johnson Canyon (Negro Canyon) above Donner Lake. The property was proposed for 950 housing units but in 2011, Royal Gorge fell into foreclosure, the victim of downward spiraling economy and stiff local opposition. Now all of Royal Gorge's remarkable meadows, peaks, and natural resources as well as the Nordic ski area have been protected forever and are open to the public for world-class recreation.

### **Area Information**

Royal Gorge is America's largest nordic ski resort. It started in the 1970s when Nordic skiing in the U.S. was still in its infancy. Over time, it became a Nordic skier's dream, sporting more than 200 kilometers of scenic trails rambling over 6,000 acres of terrain. With features such as Snow Mountain, Van Norden Meadow, Mt. Rowton, Devils Peak, Point Mariah and its namesake, the Royal Gorge of the American River, it offers an unrivaled Nordic ski experience. Royal Gorge became renowned within Nordic circles worldwide. Legendary winter athletes, including Glenn Jobe, Katerina Nash, and Marcus Nash, trained at the area. Nordic skiers from the Midwest and East Coast made a week-long visit to Royal Gorge the high point of their winter. Royal Gorge is managed by Sugar Bowl in the Winter.

After the snow melts, the Nordic ski trails are open for hiking, biking and equestrians. The property abuts the 4,417-foot-deep Royal Gorge on the North Fork of the American River, where the North Fork cascades over cliffs to create numerous waterfalls and deep pools

## **Royal Gorge Rim Trail - Rowton**

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## **Waddle Ranch**

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The Land Trust and The Trust for Public Land purchased the 1,462-acre Waddle Ranch in 2007 for \$23.5 million, protecting it forever. In 2009, title to Waddle Ranch Preserve was transferred to the Truckee Tahoe Airport District. The Land Trust holds a conservation easement on the property, forever prohibiting development while assuring the public's right to access and enjoy the property. The Land Trust and the Airport District manage the property jointly.

### **Area Information**

The Martis Valley ranch was in the Waddle/Joerger family from the 1870's until its sale to Fiberboard in 1964. Part of the ranch was subsequently acquired by the Army Corps of Engineers for flood control and is now a part of Martis Creek Lake National Recreation Area, and the Truckee Tahoe Airport. The Pritzker Family of Chicago acquired the remaining ranch property, what is now Waddle Ranch Preserve, in the 1970's for potential resort development.

Waddle Ranch Preserve was home to indigenous people. Artifacts left by the Martis people are estimated to be two to three thousand years old. More recently, the Washoe Indian Tribe used the valley as a summer encampment until the 1910s.

## **Tree Identification**

During the docent orientation, we will be going over some of the most common trees that you will find on the hikes.

Here are some mnemonic devices:

"Gentle Jeffrey, Prickly Ponderosa," since the cone scales of Jeffrey Pine tend to turn inward, so you don't feel the prickles when you pick up a cone, while in a Ponderosa Pine the sharp points at the end of the cone scales aim outward, making the cones feel pokey in the hand.

"Friendly Firs, Spiky Spruces" —The blunt, rounded needles on fir trees are gentle on the hand, while those on spruce trees are sharp.

“L” has two sides—the Lodgepole pine has needles in 2s

Included in the Appendix is some information about wildfire management, in case you get any questions.

## APPENDIX

### Forest Wildfire Management

[From Sierra Sun—March 20, 2019]

As wildfires become a greater and greater concern with each passing year, the Truckee Donner Land Trust has been awarded \$783,760 by Sierra Nevada Conservancy in funding for critical forestry work on its properties.

Two grants — one totaling \$364,510 for forestry work at Royal Gorge on Donner Summit, and another for \$419,250 for work at Webber Lake — will allow the Land Trust to undertake significant forest health projects that will not only improve the local ecology on its protected lands, but also improve resiliency and help reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

The forestry project at Royal Gorge would thin the forest primarily around Serene Lakes. Serene Lakes has roughly 600 lots, making this project important for wildland-urban interface wildfire management. Historic fire suppression has led to overstocking of trees and declining forest health. This project will thin nearly 200 acres.

The second project will thin 185 acres of forest surrounding Webber Lake and Coppins Meadow, eliminating encroaching lodgepole pines in the meadow, and thinning overly dense, wildfire-prone thickets in the area. With the Webber Lake Campground open to the public, fire mitigation is key and reducing pine encroachment on the meadow will improve meadow habitat and function for water quality and storage.

Both projects will take place from 2019 to 2021.

[From presentation Thursday, March 21 by Dana Nucitelli, an environmental scientist and climate journalist, and Jerry Hinkle, an economist with advanced training in climate policy. The presentation was sponsored by Citizens' Climate Education, the Sierra Business Council, Elders Climate Action, the Town of Truckee, the Truckee Fire Protection District ]

In 2018, the largest acreage burned in California than any year on record.

As a result of forest management (suppressing wildfires), and higher temperatures drying forests, there was more fuel to burn.

2012-2016—California drought

2014-2018—highest temperatures on record in California

Therefore, more dead trees than usual —drought and bark beetles —Bark beetles usually die out during the winter, but mild winters led to beetles continuing to destroy trees.

[From Capital Public Radio—“Can California Improve Forest Management And Prevent Wildfires Without Going Broke?”

Ezra David Romero

Friday, December 14, 2018 ]

Various ways to thin trees: logging, thinning, controlled burns and reforestation.

Forest thinning projects require people and machines to have access to the area. Trees need to be cut down by harvesters or crews with chain saws. Then machines called masticators pick up downed trees, clear their branches and cut them. Then it puts them into piles depending on their size and destination. Skids move the cut trees to another location.

[From Forest Unlimited—California Forest Statistics]

There are 33 million acres of forest(ed) lands in California.

- Federal ownership is 57%

- State and local agencies (including land trusts) own 3%

- Privately owned forest lands are 13.3 million acres = 40%

  - Industrial private owners are 14%

  - Non-industrial privately owned forest lands are 26%

## **What is a Land Trust?**

We do not want you to fund raise for Land Trust as a docent. Each participant will receive a fundraising email at some point. We do want you to help hikers understand how a land trust works, so please cover the talking points below at some point during the hike.

- Land trusts preserve sensitive natural areas, farmland, ranchland, water sources, cultural resources or notable landmarks. It is up to each organization to decide what type of land to protect according to its mission.
- Land trusts to conserve property from development have been around since 1891 but were not well known before the 1980s.
- Many different strategies are used to preserve land:
  - outright acquisition of the land by the trust (like the hike property)
  - the land will remain in private hands, but the trust will purchase a conservation easement on the property to prevent development
  - trust purchases the land, puts on the easement then sells (e.g. Crabtree Canyon)
  - funding to assist like-minded private buyers or government organizations to purchase and protect the land forever.
- As non-profit organizations, land trusts rely on donations, grants and public land acquisition programs for operating expenses and for acquiring land and easements.
- International land trusts like The Nature Conservancy and the World Land Trust.
- There are more than 1,600 land trusts operating in every state of the United States.
- California has the most land trusts, with more than 170 operating statewide. Massachusetts is a close second
- Land trusts were instrumental in the 2004 creation of Great Sand Dunes National Park in Colorado, as well as the expansion of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park by 50% in 2003.
- In California, land trusts helped create the Pt. Arena National Recreation Area as well as expanding the footprint of land protection.
- Locally the Truckee Donner Land Trust and its partners more than tripled the size of Donner Memorial State Park and protected more than 36,000 acres surrounding Truckee.

## Outdoor Recreation in the Sierra

### A. Hiking /Natural Beauty

- Even when people experienced the incredibly difficult journey to get over the Sierra crest, they took note of the natural beauty.
- Alonzo “Old Block” Delano
  - came from New York in 1849.
  - settled in Grass Valley
  - said he never wanted to see a mountain again.
  - 5 years later couldn’t resist and put together a party to go to Donner Summit and beyond. The group included Madame Lola Montez, who was a local dancer/actress (namesake of Mount Lola). Lola didn’t like the trip—got as far as Donner Summit. She didn’t like the meal service, lumpy mattresses, winds. The group came back in a few days.
  - Block kept going to the mountains every summer with wife and wrote essays about the beauty of mountains.
- Delano was part of a group of roving reporters/essayists who were taken by the beauty of the mountains, including John Muir and Mark Twain.
- Alonzo Delano “No need of Alps and Italy here. We have them of our own. Get upon the grand old hills of California. My word for it, you will come back recuperated, revived and charmed.”
- Mark Twain about Lake Tahoe “Three months of camp life on Lake Tahoe would restore an Egyptian mummy to his pristine vigor and give him an appetite like an alligator”.
- Legislation to preserve beautiful open space—May 17, 1864
  - War news was depressing, US had financial issues
  - John Conness of California pushed a Senate bill to grant to California Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Big Tree Grove, “for public pleasuring, resort and recreation” Senate Bill 203
  - On the Senate floor he said the property beautiful but worthless for any other use—that is what got it passed
- 1901 - Sierra Club’s first outing—William Colby leads 96 participants on a trip to Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows, beginning a tradition of annual High Trips.
- 1934 - Sierra Club builds Clair Tappan Lodge near Donner Pass and publishes A Guide to the John Muir Trail by Walter Starr.

### B. Development of resorts—1860s through early 1900s

#### Webber Lake (Land Trust property)

- 1860, Dr. David G. Webber, from NY and Chicago built one of the first Sierra resorts called the Webber Hotel—no cures, just enjoying the beauty and quiet
  - Horses
  - Boats

- Buggy roads and saddle trails
- Guides for hunts and hiking
- Stocked lake with trout

Strawberry on Placerville-Carson Road—Washoe gold rush overwhelmed it with visitors

#### 1860s and 1870s

- dozens of new resorts
- elite professional nature lovers
- Wanted to add magnificent mountains to other symbols of California (gold, lumber baron, desert)
- Donner Lake as a summer resort —railroad to Truckee and stage from Truckee to Donner Lake.

1869—Central Pacific Railroad bringing in eastern tourists

1890—Yosemite (excluding valley) became national park

1906—Yosemite Valley given back to US from California

#### Fun to look at on the Internet:

Tourists' Illustrated Guide to the Celebrated Summer and Winter Resorts of California, Adjacent to and Upon the Lines of the Central and Southern Pacific Railroads – Benjamin Cummings Truman. 1883. (Digitized by U Chicago and publicly available)

### **C. Fishing**

#### Fishing Trips

- parties—on horseback—outfitted by Abercrombie and Fitch, went to lakes near Tahoe
- early cookbook specified 170-225 pounds of food for four men for 2-week vacation
- Lower Carpenter Valley. Purchased from Carpenter family in mid 1900s as a private fishing camp
- Early 1900s—fishing guides, fishing Derbies.

#### Stocking

- Nearly all lakes and streams in the Sierra Nevada above 6000' were historically fishless, Sensitive habitats, particularly for the Sierra Nevada yellow and red legged frogs, evolved without having to worry about predatory fish
- Starting in the mid-1800's and continuing until the 1960's, trout were introduced into formerly fishless streams and lakes to provide recreational fishing.
  - Some introductions were transfers of trout native to the Sierra Nevada (e.g., golden trout, rainbow trout, Lahontan cutthroat trout),
  - many introductions of trout species not native to California. (brook trout, lake trout, and Atlantic salmon from eastern North America, kokanee salmon from northwestern North America, and brown trout from Europe.)

- Early trout planting efforts largely by sporting groups (e.g., Bishop Fish Planting Club, Sierra Club, Visalia Sportsmens Club). U.S. military conducted extensive trout planting in Sequoia, Kings Canyon, and Yosemite National Parks.
- By the 1940's fish stocking was conducted almost entirely by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). Today, the DFW is responsible for nearly all authorized trout stocking throughout the Sierra Nevada, although the emphasis has changed from introducing trout into fishless lakes and streams to stocking waters to augment or maintain existing non-native trout populations.
- Fish stocking caused a severe decline in Sierra frog populations which resulted in the listing of these species as endangered. Due mainly to the concerns about frog populations Sequoia, Kings Canyon, and Yosemite National Parks began phasing out trout stocking in 1969. In 1991, all fish stocking was terminated in national parks.

#### Carpenter Valley fishing

- A portion of Carpenter Valley is within the critical habitat for endangered Sierra Nevada yellow legged frog.
  - Interestingly, fish are native to Carpenter Valley and the two species likely co-existed.
  - Lower Carpenter Valley is not ideal habitat for trout and subsequently the recreational fishery is poor.
  - The water exceeds the optimum range for trout seasonally. There is no suitable spawning habitat.
  - The prior recreational fishing was based largely on the stocking of fish in the Prosser system.

#### **D. Skiing and other winter sports**

- First ski competitions in 1850 in Sierra County by Scandinavian miners
- “Dope” was combination of materials skiers used to increase speed—combinations of whale oil, tars, pitch, wax. Closely guarded secrets
- Tuck position with single pole held out front to cut the air.
- 14 foot skis—also 15 to 25 foot
- Truckee ice palace 1894 to 1901—toboggan slide and roundhouse for skating
- Acre in the middle of main street downtown Truckee
- Railroad brochure in 1916 to get people to come to Sierra in the wintertime.
- Train to Norden, Soda Springs and Truckee before WWI
- Ski resorts were established in 1930s and 1940s, abandoned during war, again after war.
  - 1932 to 1940—train excursions in the winter from SF
  - Snowball Special—left SF after midnight and arrived back next day at midnight for a day in the snow.
  - Discontinued because of automobiles