

June 25, 2013

Truckee-Donner Land Trust

Board of Directors and Perry Norris

Dear Land Trust Board Members,

It has come to my attention that there is a possibility that severe reductions of Lake Van Norden and its surrounding wetlands in Donner Summit Valley are being considered by the Land Trust. As a limnologist that has studied the ecology of open water lakes for the last 55 years, I would like to urge the Land Trust to consider a course of action that would preserve this valuable lake and wetland habitat in the Valley. I have visited the Lake and the associated wetlands off and on since I came to UC Davis in 1958 to establish the Lake Tahoe Research Group and appreciate the Lake and its surrounding environments. There was a time when limnologists' interest stopped at the shoreline but over the years the bond between watershed and lake and our understanding of it has reached a new level of importance and understanding. I had intended to write this letter much sooner but find myself in the San Francisco Airport in route to a lake-saving venture in Mongolia. I remembered the importance of this issue and am dashing off this letter before boarding my flight. I return on 22 July should you require any additional information than that contained in this letter.

It is my understanding that the current lake and wetland ecology has established itself over the last 40 plus years and currently provides habitat for a diverse collection of flora and fauna in Donner Summit Valley. From personal experience I know that it is a haven for amphibians in the Sierras. This is extremely important today with the threat to amphibian populations around the world from habitat reduction and virulent disease. In addition the Lake sits on the edge of the Pacific flyway and provides a refuge for a great variety of migratory birds. As you are doubtlessly aware, the reduction of lake and wetland habitat in the world has been an ever-increasing environmental problem for decades. Having studied lakes in most of these areas in my career, I have come to realize how important they are to the health and bio-diversity of any area and particularly now that climate change is upon us with the resulting warming and reduction of aquatic wetlands a very likely outcome. It is my understanding that there are some relatively simple measures that can be taken to maintain the Lake and wetland areas in the Valley and still meet the concerns of dam safety. I would urge the Land Trust to consider the serious consequences of reducing a valuable natural resource like Lake Van Norden and make every effort to maintain this valuable habitat for this and future generations. .

Thank you for your considering my comments concerning this important topic.

Charles R. Goldman

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