



***Open Letter to the Board of Truckee Donner Land Trust
From George Lamson & Bill Oudegeest
January 12, 2014***

The Truckee Donner Land Trust is an incomparable leader in the preservation of wild lands in the Sierras. The protection of over 33,000 acres of Sierra open space in the last 23 years is a superlative achievement. The successful protection in 2012 of the Donner Summit Valley and other Royal Gorge lands on Donner Summit was an unprecedented success brought about by the cooperation of many organizations and private citizens. We are proud to have participated in that effort.

Unfortunately, the acquisition of the Summit Valley includes the difficult problem of “fixing” the existing Van Norden dam which is out of compliance with the state of California. Over the last year we have been working with Perry Norris and John Svahn in exploring possible solutions that will remove the dam from state jurisdiction. We applaud the efforts that the Land Trust has made in its public outreach program and the studies it has commissioned to find a solution to the problem. We agree with the proposition that the current dam must be notched to bring the current lake down below 50 acre-ft in volume to remove it from state jurisdiction.

We believe that the notching of the existing dam and lowering of the lake is only part of the solution. Reducing the current lake to approximately a quarter of its current size will have drastic consequences to the valley. The reduction of the open water lake and its surrounding wetlands will remove valuable habitat that will adversely effect the biodiversity of the valley as well as much of its scenic beauty. The purpose of this letter is to urge you as members of the board of the Land Trust to implement a solution that will create a second non-jurisdictional lake that will mitigate the loss of this valuable habitat. We have created a new website, SaveVanNordenLake.org, the goal of which is to present information to support our “Two Lake Solution” for the disposition of the dam and the lake. Please visit our site at your convenience to learn about our proposal.

As strong supporters of the Truckee Donner Land Trust, currently and in the past, it is our goal to continue to work with the Land Trust to solve this problem. We understand that our solution is the harder row to hoe in solving this problem, however, in the spirit of protecting wild places that drives your organization, we believe that in this case the harder row of preserving the valuable lake and wetland habitat that exist in the valley is worth the extra effort.

Thank you for your attention in this important matter.

Respectfully,

George Lamson

Bill Oudegeest