

1,000 acres added to Tahoe National Forest

By Ann Westling

NEVADA CITY – In four transactions, more than 1,000 acres of upper elevation land has been added to the Tahoe National Forest.

With contributions from private entities and funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) totaling \$3 million, these acquisitions have been finalized during the past two months.

“I would once again like to thank the Trust for Public Land, the Truckee Donner Land Trust, Northern Sierra Partnership and the Smith family,” stated Tom Quinn, Tahoe National Forest supervisor. “These are very scenic lands along the Middle Yuba River, the Little Truckee River, Rubicon River and in Pierce Meadow. They are especially valuable for recreation and wildlife habitat.”

Webber Falls (Sierra County) – 480 acres along the Little Truckee River incorporating the spectacular Webber Falls was purchased from Sierra Pacific Industries. The parcel is located along the Henness Pass Road approximately 15 miles northwest of Truckee. Approximately one-third of the funding for this parcel was donated by the Gene and Elaine Smith family with the remaining from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The falls have several terraced pools in late summer and spectacular iced canyon walls in the winter. The Trust for Public Land was instrumental in acquiring this property.

Pierce Meadows (Nevada County) – 160 acres near Eagle Lakes was purchased with funds from the Northern Sierra Partnership and LWCF. Pierce Meadow comprises a large portion of the

parcel and is located north of Interstate 80 near Cisco Grove. The Truckee Donner Land Trust acquired the property and obliterated the roads into the parcel to protect the meadow before deeding it to the Forest Service.

Rubicon River/Granite Chief (Placer County) – 417 acres of land along the Rubicon River were added to the TNF with funding from LWCF; 270 acres of these are within the Granite Chief Wilderness. In this same purchase 406 acres were also added to the Eldorado National Forest. Both parcels provide high value recreation and wilderness land as well as habitat for black bears. The Trust for Public Land was instrumental in this acquisition from Sierra Pacific Industries.

English Mountain (Sierra County) – 160 acres south of Jackson Meadows Reservoir and 11 miles north of Interstate 80 were purchased with LWCF by The Trust for Public Land from Sierra Pacific Industries. This parcel contains lovely meadows along the Middle Yuba River and French Creek and is near the Grouse Lakes Vehicle Closure Area.

“These parcels contain vital biological habitat, scenic and recreational values. Protecting them from dispersed second-home residential growth under private ownership is a boon to public resources and the successful management of the lands. We’re trying to prevent catastrophic fire, protect water resources and maintain needed wildlife habitat and corridors, all of which will give the area more resilience in adapting to climate changes,” said David Sutton, director of the Trust for Public Land’s Northern California and Nevada Program. “We’re very pleased to see the Tahoe and the Eldorado National Forests leading the way in prioritizing these parcels for protection.”

Northern Sierra Partnership – The Trust for Public Land, Truckee Donner Land Trust, Feather River Land Trust , The Nature Conservancy and Sierra Business Council formed a collaborative group called the Northern Sierra Partnership in

conjunction with land management agencies to raise private, corporate and public funds to protect lands with high quality watershed, wildlife, and recreation values. In the north central Sierra, early day land grants to the railroad companies dating back to the 1860's, created a checkerboard pattern of public and private ownership that exists today. Due to the increased complexity and cost of managing these checkerboard lands, the Northern Sierra Partnership has focused its efforts to acquire lands that may be at risk of development. The objectives of the Northern Sierra Partnership include protecting the area's high-quality water supply and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – Funding is collected from off shore oil drilling and allocated to acquire private land for conservation. In 2009, \$2.5 million was allocated for purchase of land in the Tahoe and Eldorado National Forest from the LWCF.

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