

Truckee Donner Land Trust recognized for environmental efforts

Truckee Donner Land Trust is one of *Sunset* magazine's 2012 environmental award winners.



Independence Lake won in the category of best lake or lakeshore preservation. As an award winner, the Land Trust joins the ranks of the most creative and effective environmental organizations in the West.

William Thauvette, president of the Land Trust, in a statement said, "Independence Lake was on and off the market for 50 years before it was purchased from NV Energy by The Nature Conservancy and the Land Trust. To receive this award really illustrates how important our work is in the northern Sierra."

Independence Lake, considered to be one of the finest pristine sub-alpine lakes in the West, supports California's last wild and self-sustaining lake populations of threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout.

In the 1970s, Disney Corporation planned on building a mega-modern ski resort and complex on the ridges and bowls encircling the lake. Disney had plans for a four-lane highway from the current turn-off to Sagehen Field Station on Highway 89. Mt. Lola, Carpenter Peak and other peaks were to be connected via gondolas and chairlifts.

Independence Lake would have been ringed with marinas, piers and docks leading to vacation homes and estates. Plans included a golf course, equestrian center, hotel, condos, hundreds of miles of roads, parking for 2,500 vehicles, and

hundreds of thousands of square feet of commercial development to accommodate visitors to the new resort.

The lake was again threatened by development in 2002 when the property was nearly sold to a Silicon Valley icon.

Today, visitors can enjoy the lake's day use facilities, which include, picnicking, swimming, mountain biking, hiking, wildlife viewing, and fishing. A fleet of boats and kayaks offered by the Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy are available for free to visitors.

The 2012 Environmental Awards are featured in the March 2012 issue of *Sunset* magazine.