



NEWS

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SIERRA NEVADA LAND PROTECTED FROM DEVELOPMENT

TRUCKEE, Calif. – The final phase of a four-year effort to protect timber land in the northern Sierra Nevada from development has been completed, two conservation organizations and California’s largest timber company announced today.

The agreements among Sierra Pacific Industries(SPI) and The Trust for Public Land and the Truckee Donner Land trust will allow SPI to continue logging the land near Jackson Meadows Reservoir north of Truckee, yet the conservation easements mean the property cannot be subdivided for development into homes.

The easements mean permanent protection for the land, which includes streams, meadows, and a variety of plants and wildlife. It will be available for recreation, including hiking, snowmobiling and other uses.

The easements were purchased with money from the California Wildlife Conservation Board, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, and the Northern Sierra Partnership. The latter is a group of organizations working to protect land in the region. The California money came from bonds approved by voters in 2006 as part of Proposition 84.

David Sutton, The Trust for Public Land’s director for Northern California and Nevada said “This project is the result of many strong partnerships, between SPI and the conservation community, between private philanthropy and state agencies, but most of all, credit is due to the far-sighted California voters who provided the funding for this project as an investment in the quality of their drinking water.”

“These lands straddle the headwaters of four major river systems, the very heart of California’s water supply for human uses,” Sutton said. “To get clean, plentiful water out of the tap, the whole system has to be working right, but without healthy forests at the top, the water is threatened before it even begins to run downhill.”

“Investing in projects that protect our natural resources, promote recreational opportunities and support our local economies fits the Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s mission perfectly,” said Jim Branham, Executive Officer of the Conservancy. “The public who provides our funding derives multiple benefits from projects like this one.”

"These kinds of partnership projects are incredible success stories," said John Donnelly, Executive Director of the WCB. "In areas where land use conversion is a sensitive issue, it is encouraging to see parties coming together over the negotiating table and devising constructive solutions. In this case, the results just go to show that ecological health, local economies and public use opportunities don't have to be in conflict. It's a fair, sustainable outcome."

SPI spokesman Mark Pawlicki said the company is pleased to be a participant in the historic agreement. “This property offers the public an opportunity to enjoy the many benefits the area has to offer and not be concerned it will one day be developed. At the same time, it allows us to continue our sustainable forest management which assures we will maintain the forest in a healthy condition while providing jobs in the local economy – it is truly a win-win situation all the way around” he added.

The Truckee Donner Land Trust will hold and manage the conservation easements. Executive Director Perry Norris said, “We look forward to the public’s continue access to this spectacular property and developing a regional trails plan with SPI and the Forest Service. This easement provides benefit for multiple user groups, for snowmobilers, equestrians, hikers and mountain bikers alike.”

The organizations involved in the agreement announced the terms of the deal in August, 2011. Today’s announcement marks the completion of the final phase of the agreement.

The Trust for Public Land creates parks, playgrounds and open space for people to enjoy. The Trust for Public Land is the leading national organization in creating local funds for conservation and is the only national organization working to create parks in cities around the nation. For more, visit www.tpl.org.

Founded in 1991, the Truckee Donner Land Trust works to preserve and protect scenic, historic and recreational lands with high natural resource values in the greater Truckee Donner region.

Sierra Pacific Industries is a third-generation family-owned forest products company based in Anderson, California. The firm owns and manages nearly 1.9 million acres of timberland in California and Washington, and is the second largest lumber producer in the United States. SPI is committed to managing its lands in a responsible and sustainable manner to protect the environment while providing quality wood products and renewable power for consumers.

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