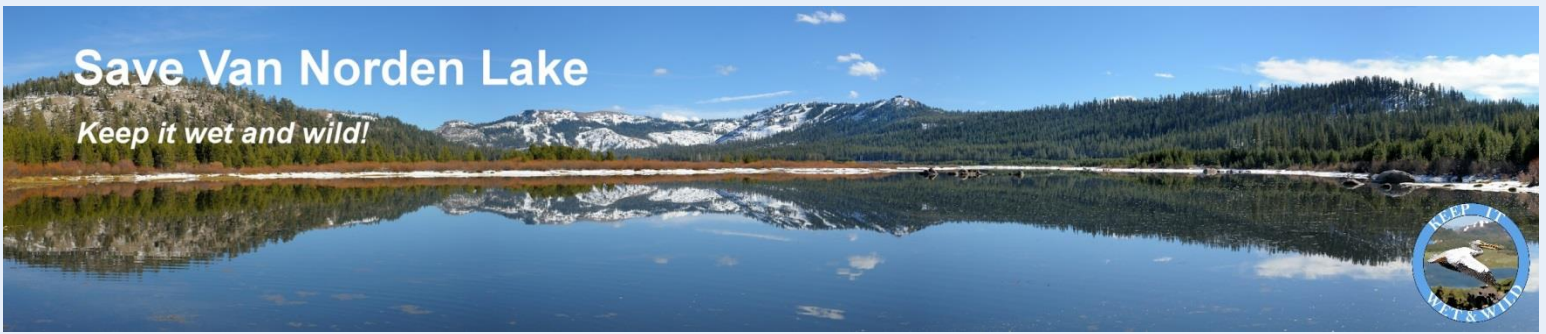


Save Van Norden Lake

Keep it wet and wild!



Open Letter to the Truckee Donner Land Trust

June 2014

Boardmembers:

As long time supporters of your organization, many of us have become increasingly concerned about the actions you are planning with regard to the Donner Summit Valley and Van Norden dam, lake and wetlands. Your announced plan to drain the lake and wetlands will have devastating consequences for two of the most bio-diverse habitats in the Summit Valley. These actions run contrary to the preservation goals that supporters like us have come to expect from your organization.

We understand that these actions have been prompted by threats from the U.S. Forest Service to back out of their agreement to purchase the land unless the lake and wetlands are removed. The actions of the Forest Service are perplexing in light of the federal mandate to preserve wetland areas as laid down in their own policy of best practices for the land management of wetlands. It brings into question the wisdom of transferring the stewardship of this valuable natural resource to an organization that acts contrary to their professed core values.

We are also disturbed about the release of several documents by your organization, including the white paper, that make statements that test the credibility of the intentions of both the Forest Service and the Land Trust. Included with this letter is our blue paper that addresses many of the claims that have been made in support of the removal of the lake. We have examined the actual reports and consulted with agency officials at DWR, DSOD and USBR and do not believe they support the statements that have been made.

We believe that uncharacteristically, the Land Trust is making a serious mistake in considering the devastation of the Crown Jewel of the Summit Valley. We would suggest that if the Forest Service will not adhere to their mandate to preserve wetlands, that the Land Trust should seriously consider retaining stewardship of the Summit Valley. There are options that would allow compliance with DSOD and still provide for support of the valuable lake and wetland habitat. The valley is an icon in the Sierras and represents a unique ecosystem whose preservation would serve as a shining example of what it means to ***“To preserve and protect scenic, historic and recreational lands with high natural resource values in the greater Truckee Donner region”***.

Thank you for your attention in this important matter.

Respectfully,

George Lamson

Bill Oudegeest