



Donner Summit Association (DSA) Core Action Team Meeting Thursday, March 20, 2025 5-6 PM In-person meeting at Donner Ski Ranch



Donner Ski Ranch (DSCN7643.JPG)

Motions and votes are given in *italics*; action items are in **red bold**. For various reasons, the minutes below do not reflect the strict chronological order of discussions during the meeting.

1. Welcome:

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Pat Malberg. Chris set up a Zoom connection, but no one connected.

Core Action Team (DSA Board) Attendees: Tom Denzler, Pat Malberg, Bill Oudegeest, Chris Parker, Dick Simpson, Mike Spain, John Svahn, and Beth Tanhoff.

Others: Steve Carle (SLPOA)

2. Approval of the Agenda:

Steve noted that the month on the agenda should be March not February.

With that change Dick moved and Tom seconded approval of the agenda. The motion was carried unanimously (MSC-U).

3. Approval of Minutes from the February Meeting:

MSC (Bill/Pat) to approve the February meeting minutes. John abstained, noting that he had not participated.

4. Financial Report (Tom):

Tom distributed a summary financial report for February before the meeting. NextPixels submitted an invoice totaling \$1710 for web work. Intuitive Surgical made a donation of \$800. Otherwise, there was little activity.

5. Reports:

Nevada and Placer Counties: There was no representative from either county present, so there were no reports.

Convene, Champion, and Catalyze Forum Report: Pat said 52 people attended the March meeting either in person or virtually. (1) The main topic was how to address homelessness. An estimate of inadequately housed households in the CCC area is more than 4000. (2) Supervisor Hardy Bullock and County Chief of Staff Jeffrey Thorsby attended a meeting of the National Association of Counties in Washington, DC. They wanted to bring a rural perspective to DC — in particular, how funding freezes affect local economies. For example, the loan needed to construct the Alpenglow Timber Mill north of Truckee has been frozen. More broadly, there will be impacts on recreation and firefighting. Health care reimbursements will be delayed more; they are already two years in arrears. (3) Colleen Dalton met with Congressman Kevin Kiley about the impact of recreation on Nevada County's budget.

Discussion: John said land stewardship funding is being frozen or redirected. He wondered whether DSA, as the Summit's *de facto* voice and advocate, should become more vocal about this issue. For example, the Truckee Donner Land Trust is ready to start work on the southern half of the Donner Lake Rim Trail, but there is no one in the local Forest Service office to issue the necessary permits.

Bill noted that silence is sometimes taken to be consent. Although federal funding discussions today are tightly tied to politics, there are observations and conclusions that can be stated in an apolitical way. Chris added that now might be a good time to argue that fees collected by the local USFS office should be retained for local projects rather than sent to Washington. **Chris and John offered to look into past correspondence to find example statements that DSA might make.**

6. Ongoing Projects

Railroad/Tunnel/Camp Celebrations: Pat attended a meeting last month in Sacramento organized by the 1882 Foundation. The purpose of the meeting was to plan a celebration of designation of Summit Camp as a National Historic Landmark. Among others, Ted Gong (1882 Foundation), Phil Sexton, Dave Dupuy (Truckee Donner Historical Society), Scott Baxter (archeologist behind the NHL request), and a representative from Union Pacific Railroad were there. Ted wanted a two-day celebration, the first day in Sacramento (proposed date of July 19) followed by a day at Donner Summit (July 20) to install the plaque (which does not yet exist), commemorating the NHL designation.

There are two other groups considering related events. The National Railroad Historical Society has already prepared a plaque that Bill thinks could be installed near the vertical shaft at the midpoint of Tunnel 6; but the Society seems to have other ideas and is not communicating. Sugar Bowl has an easement for some parts of the Lamson-Cashion Trailhead property, so the NRHS plaque could be mounted in any of several locations there. The American Society of Civil Engineers wants to celebrate the Transcontinental Railroad itself; they have scheduled a dedication on June 21 for which invitations have already been sent.

Ted Gong had hoped to bring the three groups together in a single celebration; but ASCE already has their plans for June 21 and seemed offended not to have been invited to the Sacramento meeting. There is no more definite plan for the other dedications at this point; **Pat will keep in touch with Ted Gong and Dave Dupuy for updates.**

West Van Norden Planning: Pat contacted Alecia Weisman, who said Shavati Karki-Pearl (Nevada County liaison with DSA and South Yuba River Citizens League) has been very busy. Alecia estimates that it will take six months for the County to oversee a design project for West Van Norden; a Request for Proposals is needed first, and that has not been released. If the RFP were to go out soon, professional design work could be completed over winter 2025-26, and limited construction could begin in summer 2026. **Pat will contact Nevada County to see whether there is a way to move the RFP forward.** The design cost would come from the \$500K previously earmarked for the Donner Summit Visitor Center. Alecia estimates that construction of the boardwalk and trailhead would cost \$3M.

Gould Park: Beth obtained a list of nearby property owners from Placer County in both Excel and label form. There are 91 owners between Cisco Road and Rainbow Road. The question now is what to do with the list. We could post Gould Park plans on our web site, then invite comments. We could also invite locals to an informational briefing (possibly with finger food at a

place like Rainbow Lodge). Our Vision Statement could be tailored to this initiative and sent to residents with the invitation. Beth has a contact who could help with graphics. The Gould Park subcommittee's next meeting will be a with Placer County representatives at 9 AM on March 27.

Fuels Reduction Project Support: Alisa Adriani, whose family owns property in the Kingvale area, has requested a letter of support (LoS) for a project designed by her forester. The project will be jointly with Auburn Ski Club and would reduce fuels along I-80. Funding is unclear, but there was agreement among Board members that fuels reduction has a public benefit. Steve mentioned that PG&E has \$100K for fire reduction along Soda Springs Road; SLPOA is willing to provide \$30K in matching funds if the Soda Springs Road project is approved.

*MSC-U (Bill/Chris) to approve the template LoS (provided by Alisa) which **Dick will edit** to reflect Board uncertainties in project details.*

7. Computers and Web Site

Long-Term Digital Storage: There is no new information. Tom has been able to use the system but is still having some problems. Mike can help once he gets some free time (after April 20). He thinks there may be some permission boxes that must be checked.

Switch Web Site to WordPress: Beth needs to do some research on shipping options. Per last month's discussion, references to "membership" will be removed in the new web site, and the number of recommended donor levels will be reduced. A "set your own donation amount" option will be included, and a check box to subscribe to the DSA newsletter will be added. The new site could be launched as early as tomorrow with best-effort implementations where fine tuning is still needed. Users should see little difference in web site appearance; the switch to WordPress is to simplify maintenance.

8. Internal Matters

Future Meetings: The April 17 DSA Board meeting will be in the Village Hall at Sugar Bowl. John may not be available, and Tom will be in Mexico. April 24 was considered, but it had at least as many obstacles.

9. Announcements:

Bill put a DSA report, written by Pat, into the SLPOA newsletter. There was also an article from TDLT.

The Nevada County Recreation Fair will be May 3. John thinks a DSA table would be nice, but no action was taken.

Placer County has received a Conditional Use Permit application from the DeSilva Group for a temporary concrete batch plant to be located at 41855 Nyack Road in the Emigrant Gap community. The plant would support the Caltrans approved Monte Vista Pavement Rehabilitation Project and would include the concrete batch plant, an aggregate loading bin and stockpiles, a concrete washout area, and curing storage tanks. Operation of the plant is anticipated between July 2025 and December 2026, with its deconstruction and removal from the site anticipated for December 2026.

Beth said there is a new Mexican restaurant/bar in Nyack.

SLPOA Board member David Parisi is a professional traffic engineer; he has drawn up an informal proposal to reduce speed limits on Soda Springs Road. David has been working with Placer and Nevada County Public Works staff and now wants to go one step higher, such as to Supervisor Bullock regarding speeds on the road segment which is in Nevada County. Beth thought that the fact that school buses travel Donner Pass Road was an important factor in getting the speeds reduced there. She thinks there may be four (unmarked) school bus stops in Serene Lakes, which could be used in arguing for reduced speeds. Chris thought talking to Jeffrey Thorsby might be more useful than trying to go directly to Supervisor Bullock.

10.Adjournment:

There being no other business, Pat adjourned the meeting at 6:11 PM.

Minutes approved by the DSA Board of Directors at its meeting on April 17, 2025.

signed by DSA Secretary, Richard Simpson, _____



Board members gather for their meeting at Donner Ski Ranch (DSCN7644.JPG).