



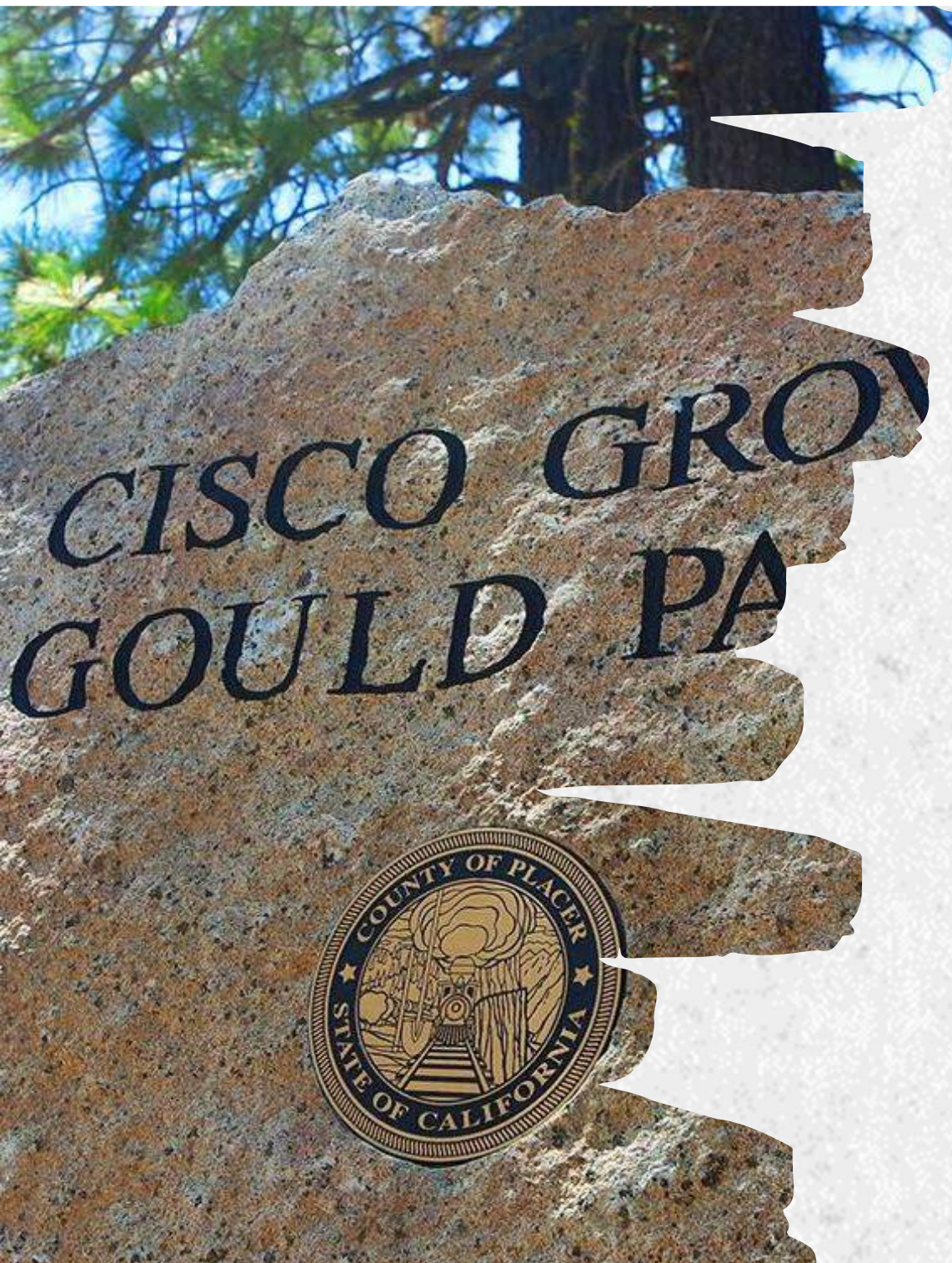
Donner Summit Visitor Corridor

- Gould Park (West) Portal -

Upgrade Proposal

JKAE

architecture + interiors + engineering



Agenda

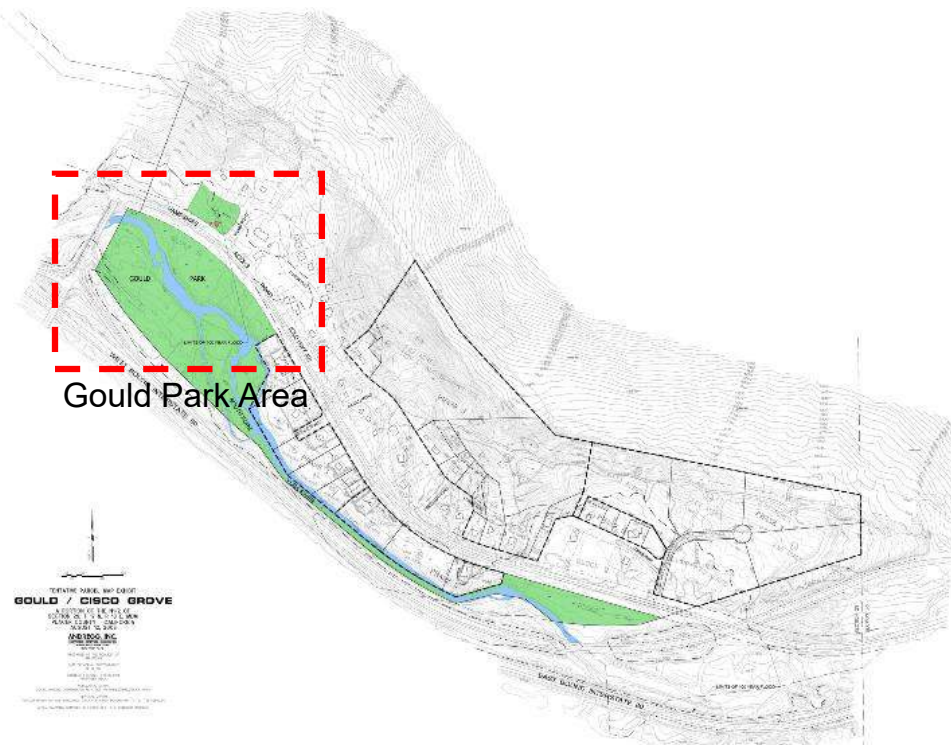
Design Items

- Park Design Update
- Signage Design
 - Historic Board Schematics
- Points of Interest
 - Artists Corner
 - Riverfront Area
 - Historic Buildings
- Sidewalk Repair
- Trail Path, Tiered Signage

Procedural

- Coordination with Placer County Planning

Design Brief



[illegible]

- Not currently allowed under use agreement....

- Within CEQA 2004 agreement, Park is designated for passive use and much of the site lies within the 100 year flood plain of the South Yuba river.
- Structural Considerations

Placer County Perspective

- Was there there previously approved parking at Fruit Stand?

- Sidewalk across bridge is dilapidated and does not avail itself to safe access to all site amenities, is there an opportunity to align with improvements for this?

Opportunities and Issues Accessibility



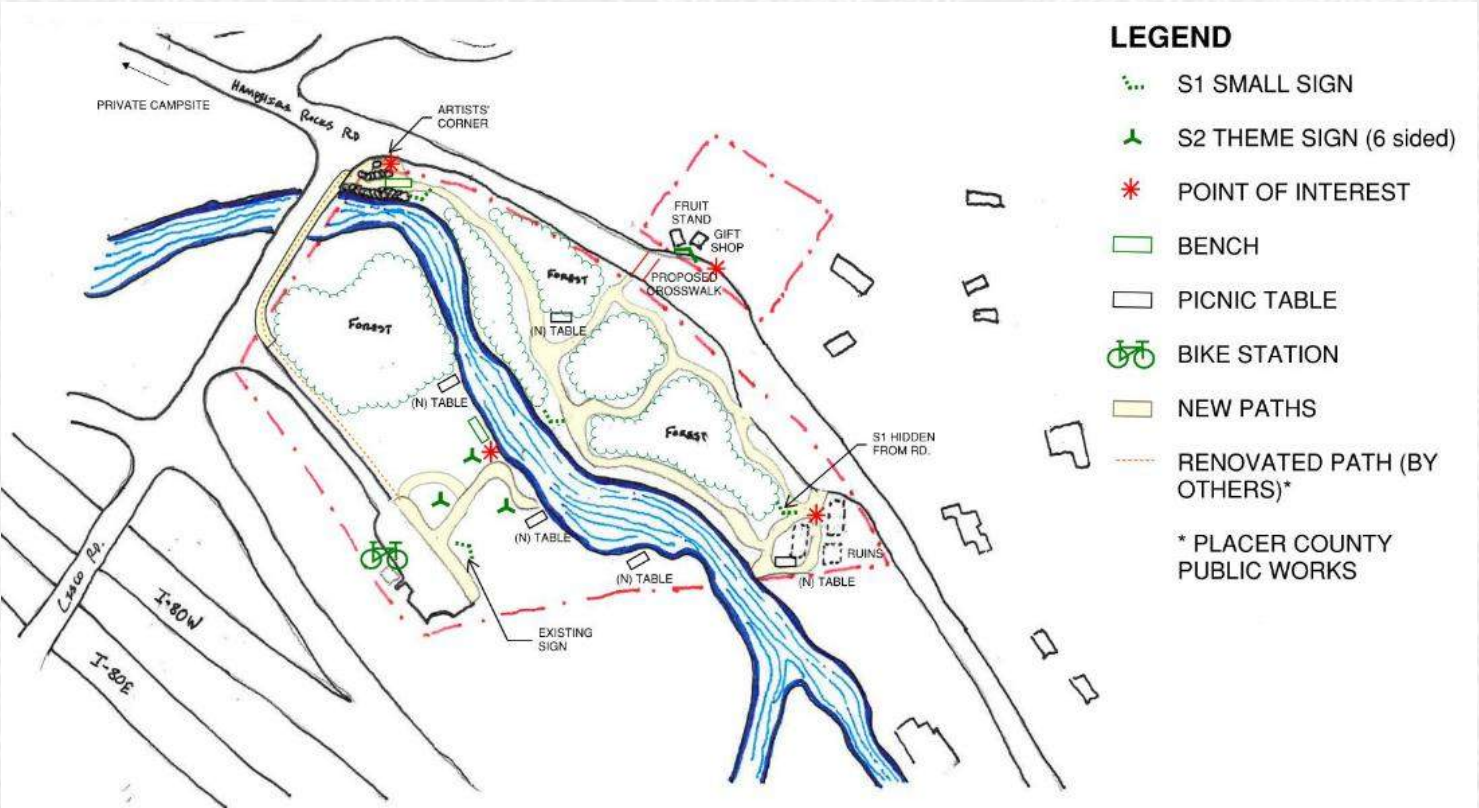
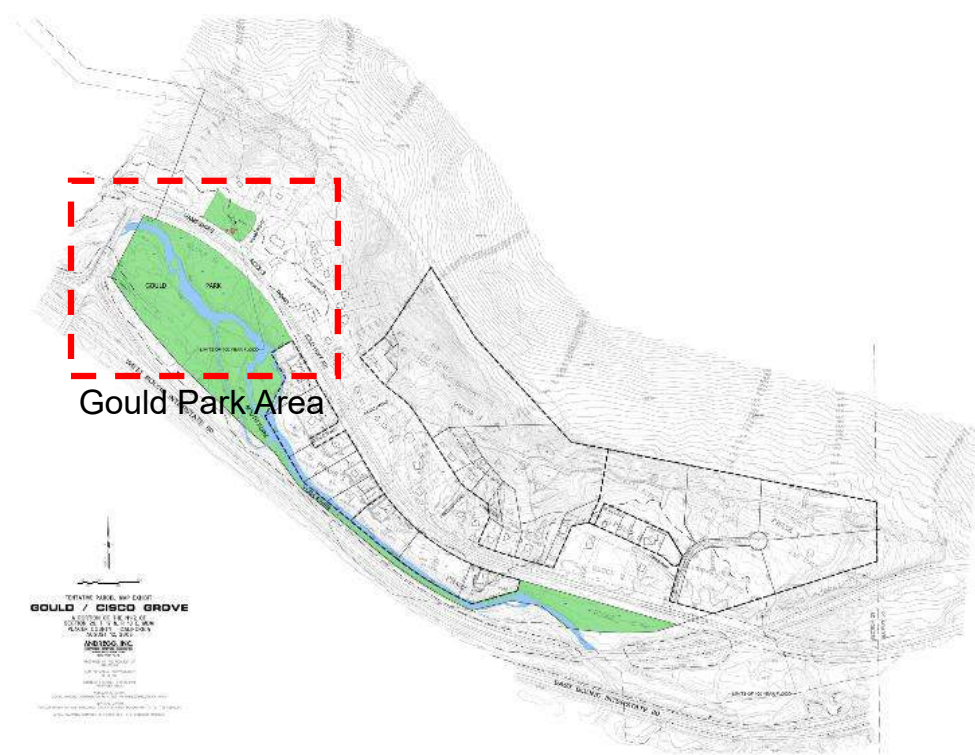
Opportunities

- What are main actions to get started with design and implementation?
- Engineering for Artists' Corner landing
- Opening up use to the Artists' Corner, Gift Shop/ Fruit stand and Ruins as an accessible interpretive journey
- ADA Accessible parking to provide access to the North

Issues

- Or, Rehabilitate Pathway from South
- Sidewalk is out of the scope of the Park, and an opportunity for Placer County Public Works

Park Design Update

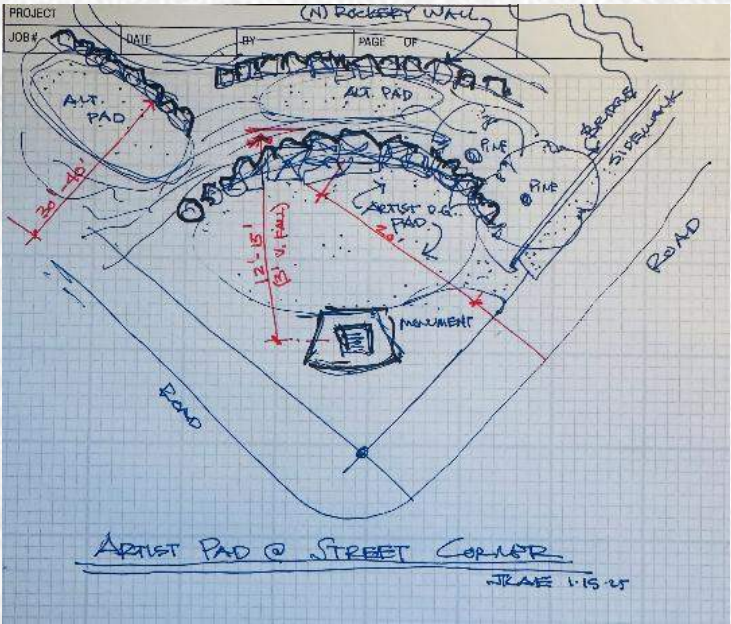
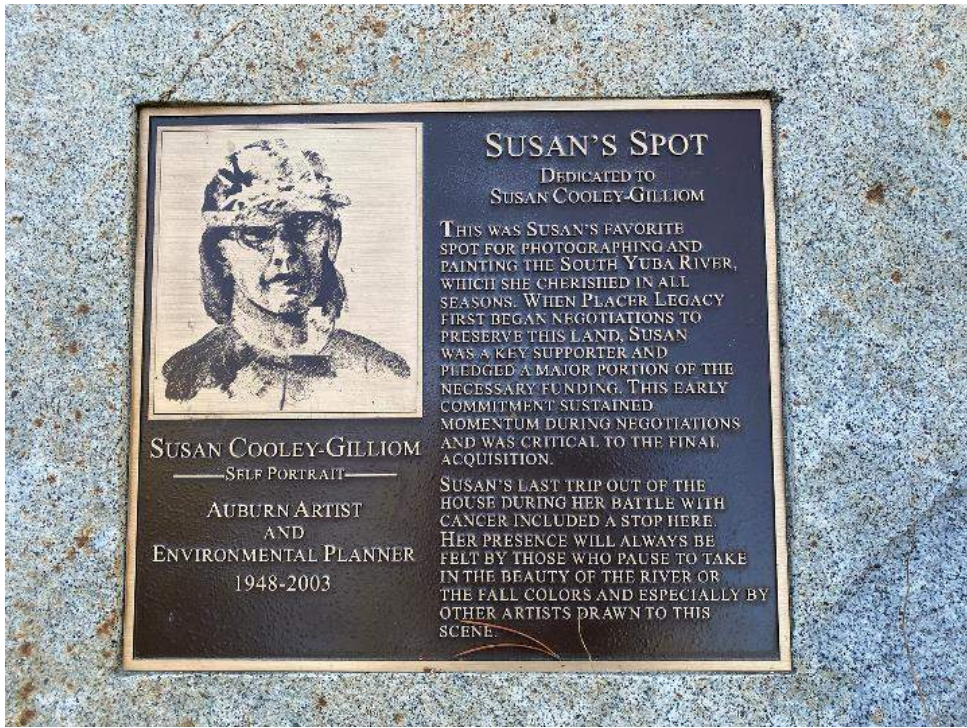


Points of Interest



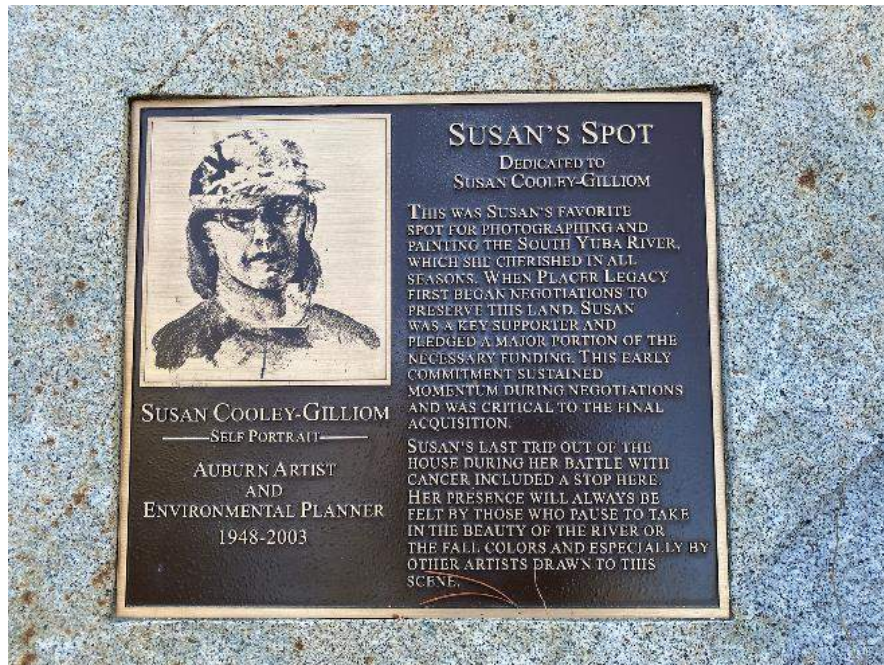
Points of Interest

Artists' Corner



Points of Interest

Artists' Corner



Objectives

- Preserve Susan's Spot Plaque
- Expand landing(s) with accessible paths and seating
- Add new directional signage
- Add rockery walls to buttress flat landings and pathways
- Address ADA path of Travel- what is approved, what's in place. Equal access to north trails

Next Steps

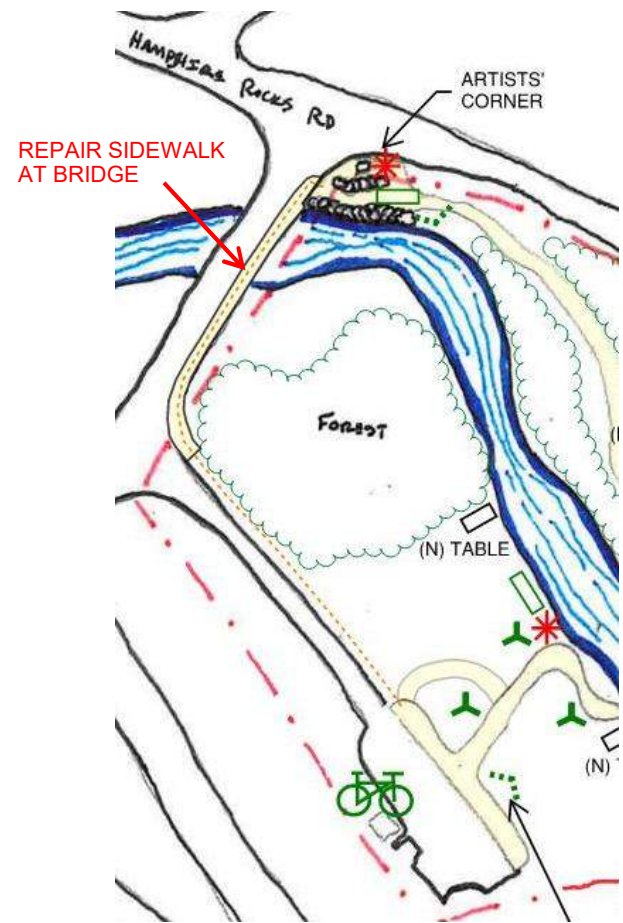
- Develop plan for landings for review with Placer County including intended grades
- Upon Design Approval, conduct land survey to develop grading approach
 - JKAE to develop approach for Access- broach this subject with county (ADA parking)

Points of Interest

Gift Shop/ Fruit Stand



Opportunities - Sidewalk Connection



Points of Interest

Gift Shop/ Fruit Stand



Objectives

- Preserve Historic Buildings
- Connect this to other Points of Interest throughout site
- Align/ Augment Signage to include new Gould Park and 'Donner Summit Visitor Corridor'

ACCESSIBILITY

Next Steps

- Coordination with Placer County Planning
- Propose accessible parking improvements at Gift Shop to connect to trail system via crosswalk
- In person meeting 3/27

Points of Interest

Ruins



Points of Interest

Ruins



Objectives

- Preserve Ruins as part of 'Donner Summit Visitor Corridor'
- Connect this to other Points of Interest throughout site
- Create new signage (informational kiosk at main parking lot, directional only at the ruins)
- Picnic Area

Next Steps

- Develop trail paths to coincide with ruins and existing pathways
- Coordination with Placer County Planning

Signage



Informational Displays

- Draw visitors close to river with a passive 'landing'
- Sign Type 2 = 3 Legged Display Boards, 6 Total Panels Each

Local/ Historic Theming

- Develop more detailed site plan to find best view area for bench and picnic tables
- Coordination with Placer County Planning

Bike Trailhead



Cyclists Embarking from Existing Parking Lot

- Popular Out-and-Back Ride to Donner Summit and Truckee

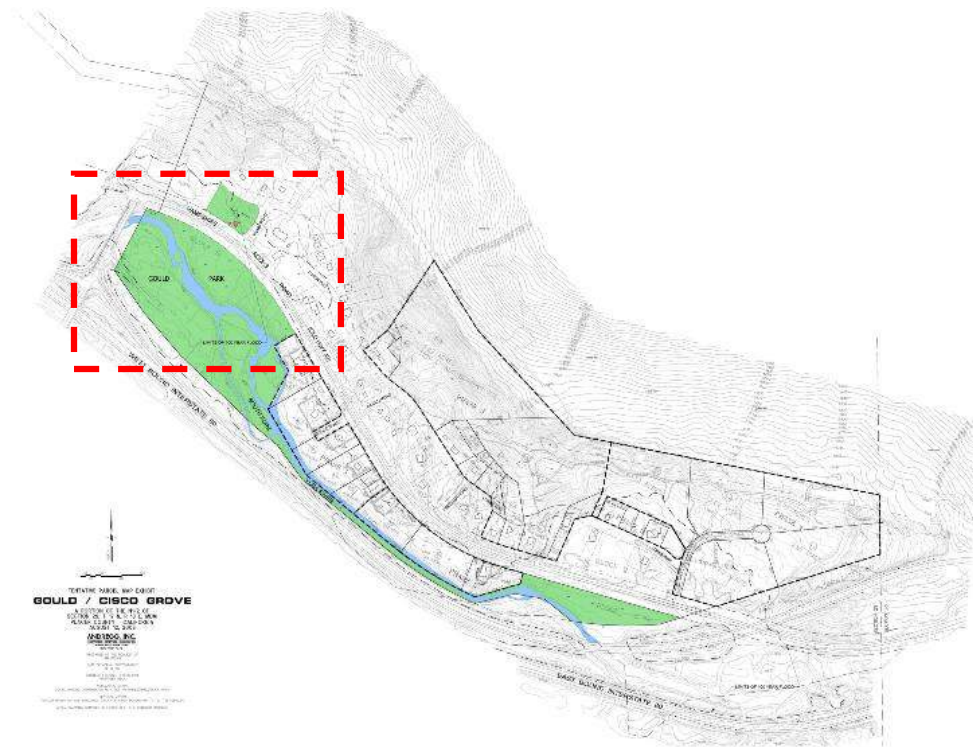
Equipment

- Bike Stand
- Simple tools including allen wrenches, philips and flat head screwdrivers, box wrenches, and tire levers
- Pump for tires

[illegible]

- Look at specific grading and placement of pathways within forested areas of parkiDevelop signage themes
- Identify picnic amenities-
 - Wooden Tables (similar to Truckee Donner Land Trust)

- Coordination with Placer County Planning
 - Kyle (Parks and Recreation – Gould Park site improvements and maintenance, discuss current plans)
 - Sit down with Erica, Casey ,and Kyle to review preliminary designs towards end of March
 - Team to share tentative subjects for signs
 - Placer County Maintenance Improvement Program



CEQA Context

- Work will be within conformance with former CEQA approvals for park

Funding Opportunities

- Potential Donors
- Susan Cooley Gilliam Husband – Bob Gilliam
- Rattlesnake Campground
- Park funds – \$90k
- Placer County O+M

Schedule

- Placer County Summer Plan
 - Opportunity for Quick Strike Alignment
- DSA Work party for light work such as trail



THANK YOU!

Jkaedesign.com

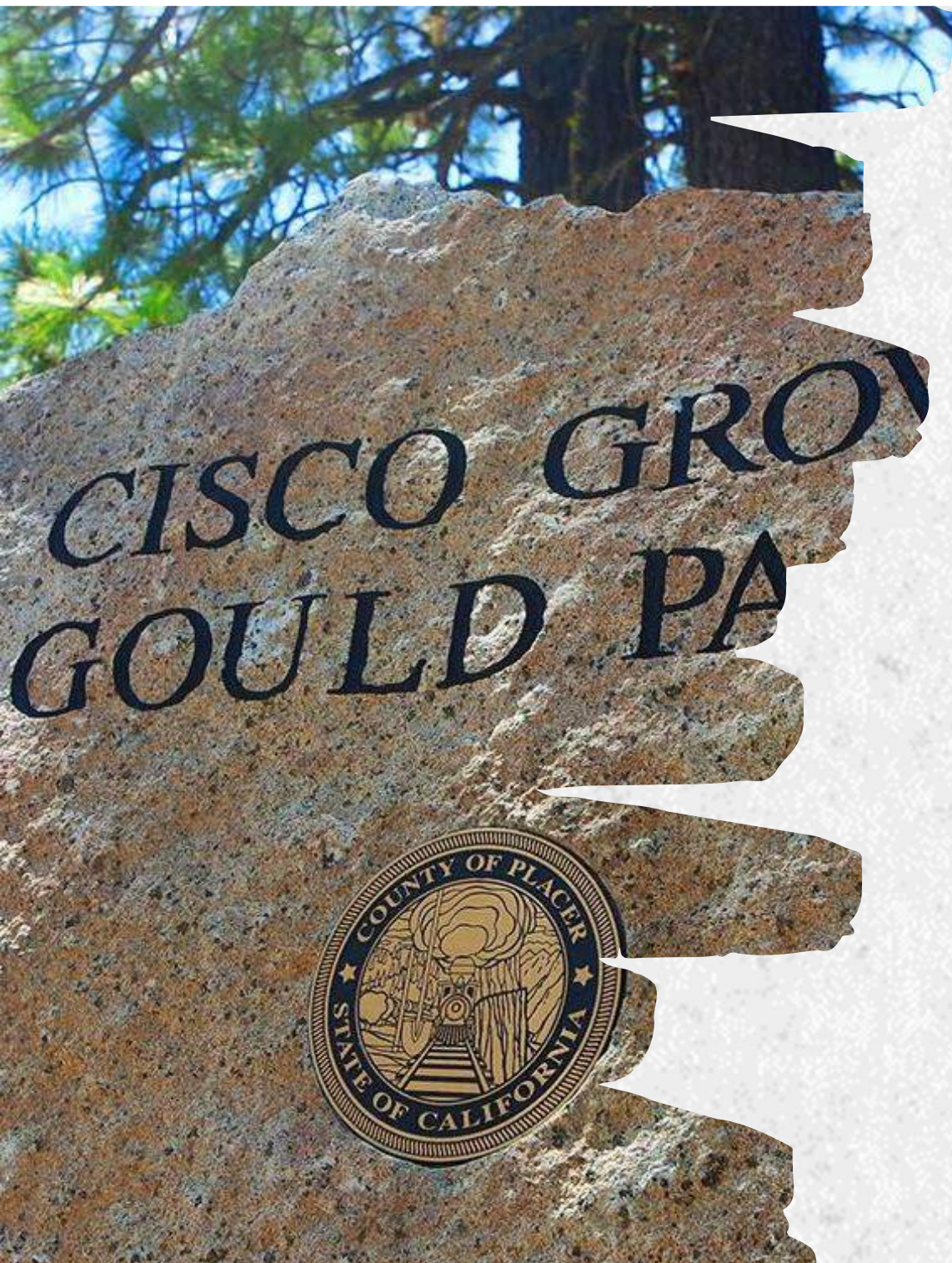


Signage Board Themes

- Gould Park (West) Portal -

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architecture + interiors + engineering



Signage Board Themes

Story Boards

- Red Mountain
- Auburn Ski Club
- Auburn Ski Club – Boat Sled
- Cisco
- Cisco Grove
- Donner Summit Historical Society
- Native Americans

Red Mountain



Informational Displays

- Historical Pictures
- Map for people to visit
- Purpose of the fire lookout
 - Call to Cisco, telegraph to fire trains on standby
- First telephone in California
- Include story that 65 million years ago this was an island in the pacific

Auburn Ski Club



Informational Displays

- Established at Baxter, moved to Cisco Grove
- Responsible for popularization of winter sports. How that was done with stories as the ski jumps at Berkley and Treasure Island.
- Wendell Robie
- Pictures of ski hill

Auburn Ski Club Boat Sled



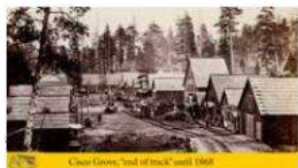
Informational Displays

- What is was and note that it is still there on the mountain side

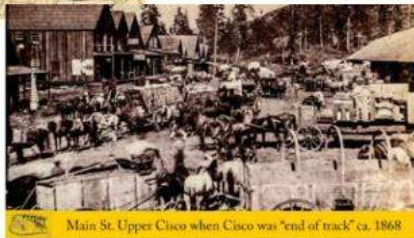
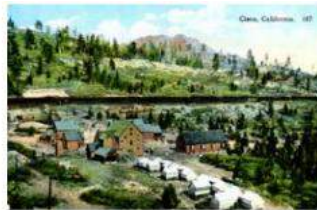
Cisco

Informational Displays

- Cisco was “end of track” during construction of the tunnels over Donner Summit. Upper and Lower
- Cisco was a town of several thousand people.
- Flesh out the story but mostly historical pictures.



Cisco



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Cisco Grove



Informational Displays

- Historical pictures, purpose of Cisco Grove
- What happened to it and why.
- Talk about the various communities and mention the many inns.
- Include information from the Gould Family
- Maybe tell the story of the gold and the murder at Rainbow? Or Include Rainbow Tavern on this sign as an e.g. of inns.
- The coming of I-80 and its effects

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Poster Edition

Public Lodges & Hotels of Donner Summit

Second Year Vacation At The Great Mountain Resort

RAINBOW TAVERN

Before I-80 took travelers quickly over the Sierra with no stops necessary, Highway 40 was the route from Sacramento to Reno. It was a two-laned curving highway that followed the contours of the land rather than blasting through them.

All along Highway 40 there were little communities with stores, cabins, and lodges. Above a few thousand feet some communities also had small ski areas boasting rope tows and maybe "T" bars.

These little vibrant communities with their heavy traffic counts have disappeared or become sleepy little vacation communities. For an interesting couple of hours, take Old Highway 40 from Rocklin to Truckee instead of Highway 80. (see below)

Take Old Highway 40 from Rocklin to Truckee. You can obtain a brochure with turn by turn directions and pictures from the Donner Summit Historical Society in Soda Springs. You can also download the directions as a Word document from www.donnersummithistorical.org.

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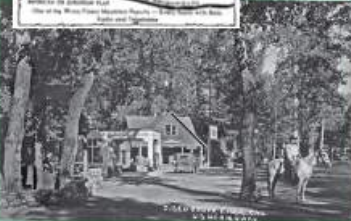



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**Donner Summit Lodge and Hotel**




**house of VANDERFORD**










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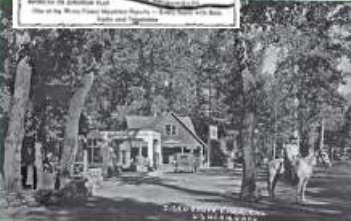



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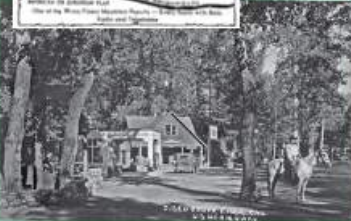
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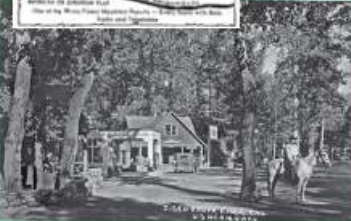
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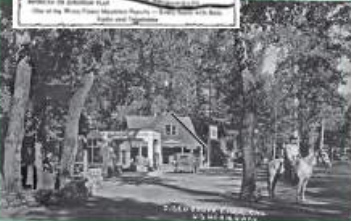
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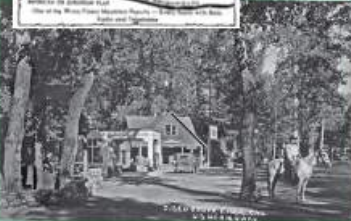
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Poster Edition

Donner Summit - Unique

Stand on Donner Summit in any of many places and you are surrounded by history.

For thousands of years Native Americans came to the Summit in summers to hunt and over the Summit to trade. The first wagon train to reach California, the Stephens-Murphy-Townsend Party, crossed Donner Summit. Almost the same route was used for the first transcontinental railroad, the first transcontinental highway, the first transcontinental air route, and the first transcontinental telephone. Once the railroad was completed the first transcontinental telegraph moved to Donner Summit as well.



In 1913 the Lincoln Highway was inaugurated, putting together stretches of road all across the country to form America's first transcontinental highway. You can see sections of the highway, and hike them, all along Donner Summit. Below, a truck is approaching the underpass just below Donner Pass.



The Stephens-Murphy-Townsend Party was the first wagon train to reach California, doing so in 1844. They approached the Sierra after a grueling journey across the Nevada desert and along the Truckee River. As they climbed to the Pass it was snowing. They came to a rock wall and there appeared to be no way to pass save a small cleft that an ox could just go through. They disassembled the wagons and hoisted them up.

At their camp at Big Bend, on the Yuba River, the first white baby was born in California, Elizabeth Yuba Murphy.



The first transcontinental air route crossed Donner Summit. The beacons, markings, and arrows guided flyers through the Pass. The building above sat on the east side of Donner Ski Ranch, Signal Hill. It was airway station 15. On one side of the roof "Donner" was painted and on the other, "SL - SF".



Fighting avalanches, accident, fire, and blizzards the workers of the Central Pacific blasted fifteen tunnels through solid granite, built forty miles of snowbeds, filled ravines, built stations and turntables, and laid rail. They built a railroad that united the nation. Suddenly it took only days to get to California instead of months. Letters brought news that was still "news."

The railroad brought settlers, business, and ideas. In exchange it took the products of California to the rest of the nation. The railroad opened California and it went, and still goes, right over Donner Summit.



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"I don't believe I have adequate words to describe the real beauty of Donner Pass. As we stood looking down I had a burning sensation...I lost all fear as I looked at one of the most beautiful blue lakes (Donner Lake) I had ever seen. Everything below us seemed suspended in shimmering lights."

Thorman Round, 1914
on the Lincoln Highway

First Transcontinental Highway

Lincoln Highway Across Donner Summit

As America entered the 20th Century, it was an amazing time. Electricity, the telephone, labor saving devices, better health and sanitation, and industrialization were changing lives. In 1900 America had become the richest country in the world and a world power. Automobiles and trucks would change lives even more.

With the automobile people suddenly had more freedom. They could travel and that's what they wanted to do. So a movement arose to join together existing stretches of roads into a transcontinental highway. No longer would people be limited to railroad routes. They could go and see what they had only seen in pictures or heard about.

In 1915 the Lincoln Highway was born, the first national commemoration of President Lincoln. With the Lincoln Highway came guide books and road standards. Now people could travel at uninterrupted incredible speed across the country. The design of the highway specified that automobiles should be able to travel at an average 10 MPH and trucks at an average 10 MPH. This was a time when California speed limits were 35 MPH in open country, 20 MPH in residential areas, and 15 MPH at intersections.

And travel people did. Where there had only been 150 transcontinental trips in 1913, by 1923 there were more than 20,000. Where it used to take 60 days to drive across country, in 1913 "20 days is an easy drive for anyone."

Traveling Advice for the Lincoln Highway, 1913

The through trip can be made from New York to San Francisco at any time between June 1st and November 1st. The passes in the Sierras do not usually open at spring break before June 1st and are likely to be closed by snow any time after November 1st.

It is wise for the transcontinental motorist to take as a prompt the statement that when it rains in Iowa, Nebraska or Utah and he has a dirt stretch ahead of him the thing to do is to stop and not attempt to continue the journey until the rainy spell is over, and the roads have had a day or two to dry up.

- Don't quit your gasoline in almost gone before filling up. There might be a delay, or it might not be obtainable at the next point your general use.
- Don't allow your carmen... to be other than full of fresh water.
- Don't carry loaded firearms in the car.
- Don't forget the correct goggles (auto glasses).
- Don't forget the camphor ice. The dry air of the west will crack your lips and fingers without it.
- Don't drink water without first washing through it.
- Don't drink alkali water.
- Don't wear new shoes.
- Build a cigarette fire to warmen help in case of trouble.

Equipment to take for highway travel, 1913:

chairs, shovel, axe, jacks, tires and inner tubes, and a set of tools.

These photographs were all taken on the Lincoln Highway on Donner Summit during the 1910's.

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The Heirloom

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“Plucky Trophy Chasers”* Win Race

June, 1911 - The Season's First Auto Over Donner Summit

Each Spring people in Truckee and Tahoe were anxious for the highway over Donner Summit to open. The opening brought automobile tourists. There were snow shoveling bees, and ashes and soot were even spread on the snow to speed melting and road opening.

The Tahoe Tavern, an upscale resort in Tahoe City, held a contest awarding a silver trophy to the first automobile over the Summit in 1911.

Arthur Foote, of Nevada City decided he'd be first along with three friends, Foote's mechanic, and Foote's Model 'T'.

The party left Sacramento on June 2. They ran into snow a few miles past Emigrant Gap and then travel got harder. Drifts were sometimes fifteen feet high. They soon learned to travel early in the morning when the snow was hard. As the snow softened the car slipped into crevices and had to be freed by block and tackle. When they got to the Yuba River at Big Bend, five and a half hours but only a mile or so from Cisco, they found the bridge had washed out.

A cable was stretched across the river and the car was brought across suspended from the cable. After a fourth day of effort the men headed back to Grass Valley for more equipment. Returning to the car by train, the men continued to fight the snow. The car was put on runners.

A week after they'd started the men had gotten to Soda Springs and then the Summit Hotel after pushing on all night. The next day they pulled the car to the top of a snowshed at 2 AM. They camped there until dawn, then drove along the snowshed top until they could get down to the road. They then "bucked" snow down to Donner Lake. They arrived at the Tahoe Tavern by Noon.



Foote's Model 'T' in Summit Valley. Soda Springs the Hill on the background.



Caught in the Ice and Snow

"The car "is caught in the ice and snow of the high Sierras." The party forced the car "...over ice, snow and torrents. Fifteen feet of snow were encountered in places and the snowsheds were utilized for a short distance."

San Francisco Call June 7, 1911



4 Miles in One Day!

"A telephone message received to night from the top of the snowbank at a point above Cisco, stated that the expedition had advanced four miles today and expected to gain the summit by morning. The party carries a portable telephone outfit. ...The party is spending the night in the snow 40 miles from habitation."

San Francisco Call June 7, 1911



At the Yuba River

Perilous Feat and a Record

"...News of the accomplishment of the perilous feat was received here with much joy and pleasure and the record they have made is one that will be heralded from every section of the nation. The deep snows were almost insurmountable, but the plucky trophy chasers did not relax their efforts and were confident from the start that they would win the cup."

Grass Valley Union
June 11, 1911



How the logs were used around the wheel to serve as portable ice chucks.



*Grass Valley Union, June 11, 1911

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It Wasn't Always Easy Crossing Donner Summit

The Sierra Crossing was the hardest part of the emigrant's Transcontinental trip.

The Sierra was as "steep as the roof of a house."

Joseph Hackney (1849)

The Sierra were a "formidable and apparently impassable barrier..."

Edwin Bryant (1846)

"When we reached Sierra Nevada mountains they looked terrible."

David Hodson (1845).

"As we came up to it the appearance was exactly like marching up some immense wall built directly across our path ..."

Elisha D. Perkins (1849)

The Sierra were "tribulations in the extreme."

Wm. Todd (1845)

"When we struck the main ridge of the mountains, every heart was filled with terror at the awful site [sic]."

William Tustin (1846)

The crossing validated emigrants' fears. It was ~~hard~~ excruciatingly difficult. Wagons coming up Donner Pass had to be taken apart. Even when Roller Pass was discovered ten or more oxen had to be used to pull up each wagon and a few hundred yards of progress took hours.

Even once there were roads and motors, crossing was hard. The first motor bicyclist and the first bicyclists had to resort to the snowsheds to avoid impassable roads and snow.



painting by Harold Van Edwath

"You can form no idea, nor can I give you any description of the evils which best us. From the time we left the [Donner] lake ... until we reached the top [Lake Mary] it was one continued jumping from one rocky cliff to another. We would have to roll over this big rock, then over that; then there was bridging a branch; then we had to lift our wagons by main force up to the top of a ledge of rocks... Three days... found ourselves six miles from the lake... you never saw a set of fellows more happy than when we reached the summit."

William Todd (1845)

"At last we came to the Sierra Nevada Mountains which seemed insurmountable it was some time before we could see which way we must go, at last we had to take the wagons apart & take them up in pieces over the mountains & the poor cattle got over(r) or rather they were dragged up with bleeding shins, the folks got over the best they could & reached the summit & rested two days." [sic]

Eliza M. Gregson (1845)

"It took us a long time to go about 2 miles over our rough, new-made road up the mountain, over the rough rocks, in some places, and so smooth in others, that the oxen would slip and fall on their knees; the blood from their feet and knees staining the rocks they passed over. Mother and I walked, (we were so sorry for the poor, faithful oxen), all those two miles—all our clothing being packed on the horses' backs. It was a trying time—the men swearing at their teams, and beating them most cruelly, all along that rugged way.

Sarah E. Healy (1845)



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1st Auto Over the Sierra Went Over Donner Summit

Alexander Winton and Charles Shanks decided to make an automobile trip over Donner Summit, ... in May, 1901. They were trying to be the first "automobilists" to cross the continent going from San Francisco to New York. It was only the second transcontinental attempt by anyone by auto. The success would be good advertising for Winton automobiles.

Winton and Shanks experienced breakdowns, rescues, driving over snow, and sliding off snowbanks because in May the snow has not yet left Donner Summit.

From Auburn the "climb commenced." It rained and it snowed. There were rocks and boulders, unbridged streams, washouts, and fallen trees.

Travel was over rough trails that were not quite roads. At Gold Run they had averaged just over ten miles an hour, slower than a stagecoach, but faster than a horse.

"Up, and up we went, winding around and turning in many directions - but always up." The grades got steeper and "dangerously slippery."

Then it began to snow and hail in earnest and the men were wet to the skin.

It was like an "ugly nightmare." "During the entire day, working up there among the clouds, we were cold and drenched. When it did not rain it snowed and hailed." It took all day to go from Cascade to the Summit - 17 miles. Then the car sank into the snow just below Tunnel 6.

They spent the night at the Summit Hotel and the next morning men from the hotel helped dig the car out of the snow and they were off to Truckee.

Winton and Shanks could not conquer the Nevada desert and so could not complete their transcontinental trip. It would be a few years before automobiles could conquer the desert and use the Donner Summit route to cross the country. The first transcontinental automobile trip would be by Dr. Horatio Nelson Jackson who took the northern route in 1903 and won a \$50 bet for being the first to cross the country in a four-wheeled vehicle.

Automobilists Stalled in Snow.

TRUCKEE, Cal., May 25 -- Alexander Winton and Charles B Shanks, the Cleveland, O., automobilists, en route from San Francisco to New York, are reported here to have reached Summit last evening. As they have not arrived here yet, it is supposed they are stalled in the huge snow drifts above Donner lake.

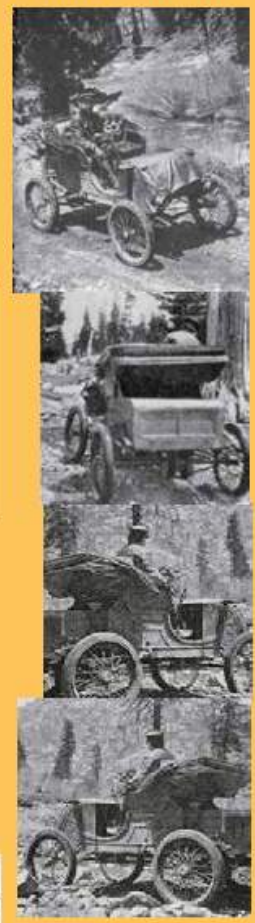
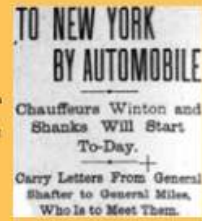


Cleveland News-Tribune May 21, 1901 A large crowd gathered by the road off.

What to Take in 1901:

- Clothes
- Camping equipment
- Two regulation army revolvers.
- Rope
- Block and tackle
- Axe
- Cyclometer
- Winchester rifle

Letter of introduction to the So. Pacific Railroad to use to get assistance.



pictures from top
Winton along the Yuba River
Unidentified spot in the Sierra
Unidentified spot in the Sierra
Unidentified spot in the Sierra

Above left:
Winton at what is today's Eagle Lakes 1-40 exit

At Hampshire Roads near Rainbow Union



Donner Summit Historical Society

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The Heirloom

Poster Edition

The Lincoln Highway

on Donner Summit in the Old Days - Pt I

The Lincoln Highway, completed in 1913, was the first transcontinental highway and the first national commemoration of Abraham Lincoln. The highway was not constructed but rather put together as one route from existing roads. This was a completely private effort by the Lincoln Highway Association and was "sold" to the public (to get contributions) as a patriotic endeavor.

Motor travel had grown more popular, especially with the advent of automobiles lots of people could afford. The Model "T" debuted in 1908.

The Lincoln Highway Association developed the first national road standards which in the best, graded and graveled spots, would allow automobiles to travel at 35 mph and trucks at 10 mph. To begin with, only half of the transcontinental route was graded and graveled so imagine what the other half was like and how fast automobiles could go.

The new route proved popular for "Transcontinentalists." There were 150 transcontinental travelers per year in 1913 and by 1923 there were between 20,000 and 25,000 cross-country automobile travelers.

The 1914 official guide to the Lincoln Highway said it would take 19 days to cross the country traveling 10 hours per day at 18 mph.



View of Donner Summit



Along the Yuba River west of Big Bend.



The 1913 outcrop under the snowbank east of Tunnel 8 and just above China Wall.



Partly on the Lincoln Highway on the east side of Donner Summit.



Bridge over the Yuba River west of Big Bend.



At Big Bend.



Below China Wall, the same telephone pole is still there.



Just below Donner Summit, east side.



Along the Yuba River south of Big Bend.



Looking for snow on Donner Summit.



The Interstates

It was a trip by Dwight Eisenhower in 1919 that is at least partly responsible for I-80, which also goes over Donner Summit. He was a young lieutenant in 1919 and part of the first transcontinental U.S. Army convoy. The convoy was only able to average 54 miles a day and the experience was so miserable that in his memoirs Eisenhower said that was motivating factor for his Interstate Highway initiative.



Poster Edition

on Donner Summit in the Old Days - Pt II

JKAE

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The Heirloom

Poster Edition

First Bicycle Trip

across the Sierra
across the Country
around the world

Went Over Donner Summit

Thomas Stevens had never been on a bicycle when, in 1884, he decided to ride across the Sierra, across the country, and around the world by bike.

He solved the inexperience with a quick lesson in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

No one had ever done what he planned.

Stevens left San Francisco in April, not realizing the snow lasts a lot longer in the Sierra.

Bicycle riding in those days was harder than today. In many places it was more bike walking than bike riding. Stevens used the path that ran next to the railroad because it was "occasionally rideable." The roads were not.

Approaching the Sierra people began asking how he was going to get through the snow.

Snowsheds, he said.

The streets in Dutch Flat were a torrent and it was snowing on the Summit. The snowsheds were the only way over the mountains and through them he "trudged merrily along" pushing his 48 lb bicycle.

When he heard a train he'd "proceed to occupy as small an amount of space as possible against the side, and wait for the 'smoke-emitting monsters' to pass. The engines 'fill every nook and corner of the tunnel with dense smoke, which creates a darkness by the side of which the natural darkness of the tunnel is daylight in comparison. Here is a darkness that can be felt; I have to grope my way forward, inch by inch; afraid to set my foot down until I have felt the place, for fear of blundering into a culvert...." "I pause every few steps to listen" for an approaching train. (Punctuated as originally punctuated.)

Stevens finished his cross-country jaunt in August in New York. It had taken 103 days and covered 3,700 miles. Then he embarked on his round-the-world adventure. In 1887 he returned to San Francisco from the west having covered 13,500 miles. He'd walked about 1/3 of the journey and confronted a mountain lion, lack of roads, 130 degree Indian heat, inability to communicate in foreign lands, loneliness, almost being stoned to death, being arrested as a spy, and being waylaid by highwaymen. He'd lost 25 lbs.



What to Take on a Long Ride in 1884

Stevens traveled lightly, taking only socks, a spare shirt, a raincoat that could be a tent, a bedroll, and a pistol (which he used to dissuade a mountain lion and thieves). He did not even take a coat since "coats are not in style among the Wyoming cowboys."

His bike:

- 50" Columbia Ordinary (known as "bone crushers")
- 49 lbs.
- \$110.00
- black enamel
- nickel plated
- wooden wheels
- solid rubber tires



Donner Summit Historical Society
The 1884 bike is available for sale on the Internet. Its purchase is a great idea, as is a trip to the mountains.



Donner Summit Native Americans

DONNER SUMMIT NATIVE AMERICANS



In pre-Columbian times* California was the most populated area on the continent and the most diverse ethnically and linguistically. There were nine language families in the Sierra alone.

The first known residents of Donner Summit were the Martis Culture. They occupied the summit in summers starting about 2,000 B.C.E., retreating to the foothills or both sides of the Sierra in winters. They left behind evidence of their presence in petroglyphs, grinding rocks, and the remnants left from knapping projectile points. There are hypotheses but no one knows why they left about 500 A.D., although the climate had changed again and become drier. That was about the time that the bow and arrow was developed in the area.

The Martis Culture arose when the climate of Western Nevada changed becoming cooler and wetter. Lake Tahoe filled and overflowed down the Truckee River. Game increased and the Sierra became more hospitable.

Long after the Martis left, and into the late 19th Century, the Moish, Native Americans from the California side of the Sierra occupied the Summit much as the Martis had.

*Before Columbus

THE SIERRA DIET

For the Martis, and the Kings Beach Culture which came later, the Sierra had a wealth of food sources. There were all kinds of game from small to large. Birds and fish were caught with nets. Larger animals were hunted with spears thrown with atlatls (throwing sticks). The Martis did not yet have bow and arrows.

Besides hunting there was also much to gather. Acorns were a staple food but had to be carried up from lower elevations and processed to remove the tannins (bitterness) by soaking or washing acorns in water. On the Sierra Crest itself there was a wide variety of other seeds, nuts, and berries.

Nuts and seeds were ground into flour and then made into a gruel. Acorn meal was also roasted, baked into tortilla type breads, or made into mush using boiling stones which were heated and then placed in baskets holding food or water.



Besides seeds and game food Native Americans ate tubers, bulbs, fruits, berries, grubs, lizards, caterpillars, grasshoppers, and other insects. Sugar pine sap was harvested for eating and seasoning. All of those foods could have been processed in the mortars we see today.

They carried things in watertight baskets which were also used for cooking. Heated rocks, called boiling stones, were placed in the baskets to cook food.

SIERRA FOOD SOURCES

ANTELOPE ■ RABBITS ■ SQUIRRELS ■ DEER ■ FOX ■ MOUNTAIN
SHEEP ■ MOUNTAIN LION ■ TROUT ■ SUCKERS ■ WOLVES ■ BISON ■ ELK
COYOTES ■ BOBCAT ■ RODENTS ■ SMALL GAME ■ GRASSES
FERNS ■ SEEDS ■ POLLEN ■ PLANT BULBS (E.G. CAMUS LILY)
TARWEED SEEDS ■ MULE EAR SEEDS (WYETHIA) ■ BRODIAEA BULBS
SQUAW ROOT (EPOS) ■ MANZANITA BERRIES ■ GOOSEBERRIES
WILD ONION ■ GREEN SHOOTS ■ MINER'S LETTUCE ■ CRESS
JUNIPER BERRIES ■ TERMITES ■ BLACKBERRIES ■ GRASSHOPPERS
LARYAE ■ CATERPILLARS

SHELTER



The houses in which the Martis lived were depressions dug into the ground with conical coverings of buck, brush, and skins.

Illustration courtesy of the National Park Service
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Petroglyphs



The petroglyphs on Donner Summit were produced by the Martis and are between 2,000 and 4,000 years old. No one knows the purpose behind them but because of the effort it takes to inscribe granite, one of the hardest rocks on the planet, they must have been very important to the Martis Culture. Perhaps they were a method of record keeping. Perhaps they had magical or shamanistic meaning. Perhaps they were prayers.

The petroglyphs show Native appreciation of Donner Summit. They are found in many places but only on gently sloping granite slabs with spectacular views of surrounding peaks and scenery.

The closest petroglyph site is just below the Donner Summit Bridge at the first turn in the road. Look for the concrete monument just off the uphill side of the road.

GRINDING ROCKS, CUPULES & KNAPPED BASALT



The grinding rocks on Donner Summit are not as picturesque as the petroglyphs but they are maybe far more impressive. The grinding rocks were used to prepare Native Americans' food. Imagine the time it takes for a depression to form in the granite by grinding soft foods into it.

We can imagine Native American women working at the grinding stones, talking to their friends, while at the same time passing on important cultural lessons to the young girls playing nearby. Generation after generation little bits of culture passed on with each meal ground into the mortars.

GRINDING ROCKS



The Native Americans of Donner Summit also ground smaller depressions into granite, called cupules which are about an inch deep and an inch and a half in diameter. No one knows why they were made or their significance but like the petroglyphs, they must have been important, because grinding holes into granite is exceedingly difficult.

CUPULES



Near the biggest collection of grinding rocks Native American men knapped detritus, which are left over little flakes from grinding rocks. Lashing the rock pieces into projectile points for spears. They too passed on cultural knowledge to the boys, summer after summer, generation after generation, until the basalt discards littered the ground in the thousands and thousands.

MORTAR WITH DETRITUS



Another kind of grinding rock is a metate or grinding slick. The concavity in the lower rock here is the grinding area and on well-used metates they are very smooth. Metates were used for grinding foods such as flour or for preparing animal skins. The oval rock on top is a mano, which has a function similar to that of the pestle for the mortar.

METATE & MANO

Photograph by J. K. A. E.



Needle Point

Illustration courtesy of the National Park Service
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