



Donner Summit Association (DSA) Core Action Team Meeting
Thursday, April 16, 2026 5:00-6:00 PM
In-person meeting at Engel & Völkers, Truckee



Engel & Völkers, Truckee; train depot and visitor center is to the left (DSCN9214.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:

Pat Malberg called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM. Beth Tanhoff provided pizza and drinks. Chris opened a Zoom session; Elissa and Tom connected. Attendees introduced themselves.

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

Others: Maria Beaton (Tahoe Modern), Andrea Broaddus (Soda Springs resident), Cory Caldwell (Truckee Trails Foundation), Meghan Lowry (Sugar Bowl Sustainability), Helen Lummis (DSA Administrative Assistant), Don Malberg (Pat's husband), and Amy Warren (new Executive Director, Auburn Ski Club).

2. Approval of the Agenda:

Bill moved to approve the agenda; Chris seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously (MSC-U).

3. Approval of Minutes from the March Meeting:

MSC-U (Dick/Elissa) to approve the March meeting minutes.

4. Financial Report (Tom):

Monthly Report: Tom had distributed a report in advance. Interest income was \$694.71. Mitzi Hodges arranged relocation of a SaniHut toilet to The Hub; DSA has paid the first month's service (\$176.96). Dick was reimbursed \$145.00 for registering the DSA logo. There were smaller charges such as for internet and web hosting and for bank services. Total assets are slightly over \$190K; \$100K is the Lamson-Cashion donation for Hub maintenance.



DSA's Hub toilet is not easy to reach, thanks to recent snow (DSCN9222.JPG).

5. County and Other Reports:

Nevada County: No County representative was present; no one else had anything to report.

Truckee Convene, Champion, and Catalyze Forum: The most recent meeting was on April 1. Pat said there was a report from a youth advisory committee, including four representatives from Supervisorial District 5. The report noted recent accomplishments but also acknowledged that there is an outward migration problem that is being addressed — youth leave Truckee

for education, job opportunities, etc.; and they don't come back. There was a report from Truckee's homelessness program; the shelter is at 87% occupancy rate.

Placer County: There was no representative from Placer County, so there was no report.

6. Ongoing Projects

Forestry on the Summit: Meghan is in charge of sustainability at Sugar Bowl; she has been working to reduce wildfire risk both at the resort and also across the Summit. The Summit effort involves collaborating with neighbors.

Placer County did a study within the past couple years to determine how to treat forestry on Summit; they used the Vibrant Planet tool. Priorities include saving lives, protecting property, and protecting wildlife. Sugar Bowl property came up as one of the top 30 project areas in the County.

Truckee Fire Protection District: Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan

Priority Project above Lake Mary

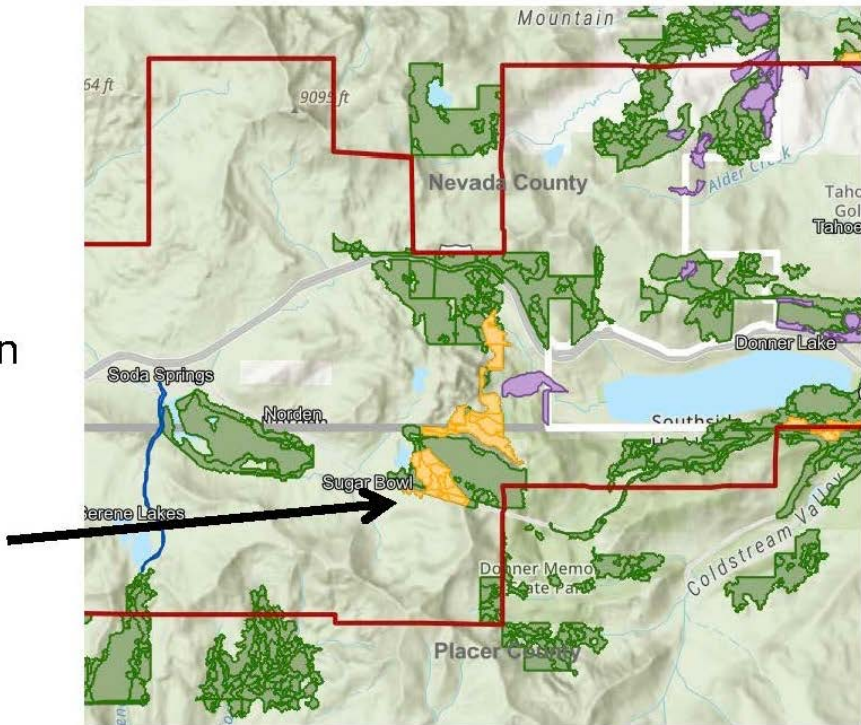


Figure 1. Truckee Fire project areas.

Truckee Fire also uses Vibrant Planet and rated Sugar Bowl as one of its top 10 project areas. Colored areas (dark green, yellow, purple) in Figure 1 were identified as “projects” – yellow areas are top 10 priority. Figure 1 reflects work done by Truckee Donner Land Trust — for example, property west of Summit Station (not shown) is being treated now. Serena Canyon

(dark green, south of Serene Lakes) is a future project but is not rated in the top 10. Grants are available; accessing those funds is easier when property owners can show they are working closely with their neighbors on forestry.

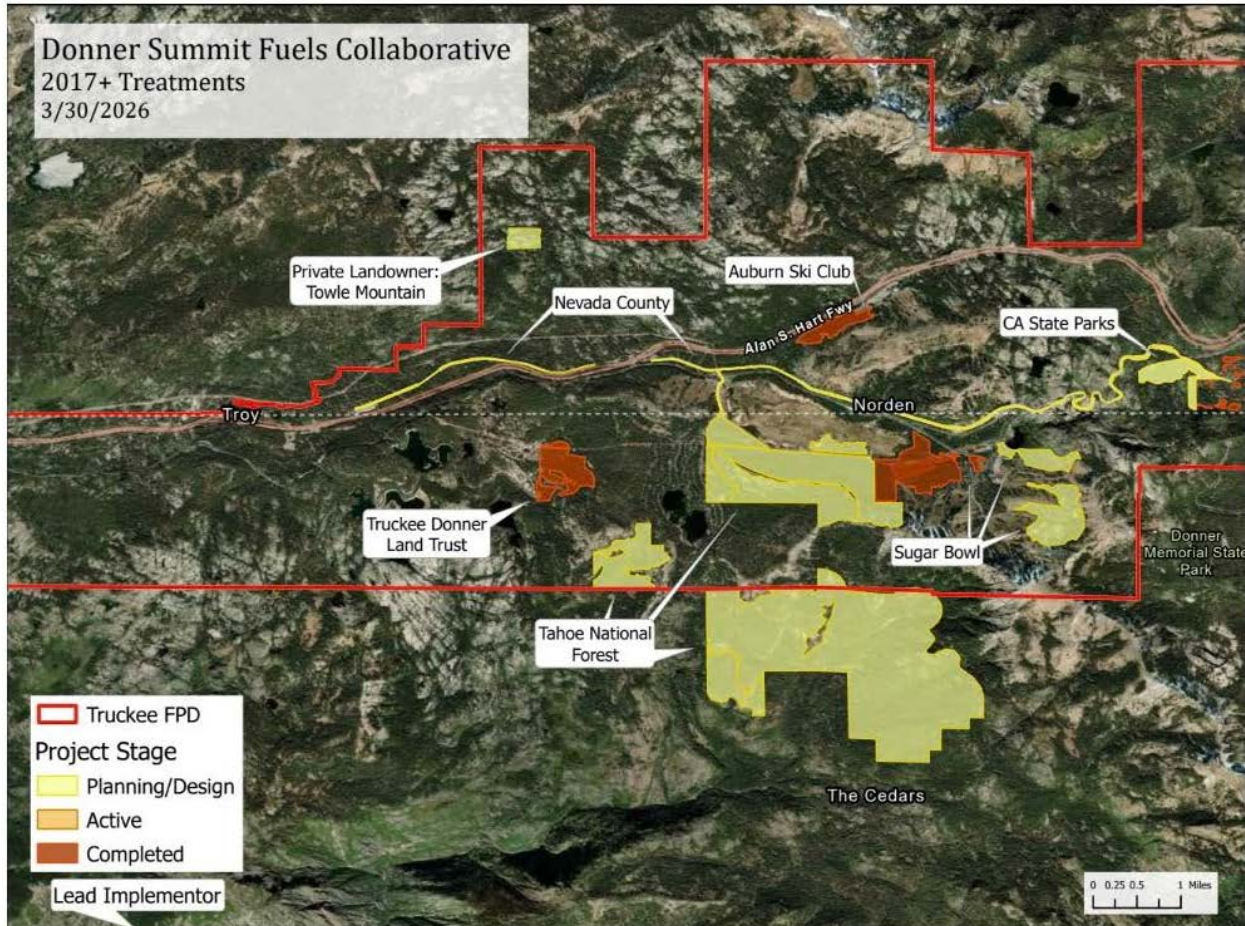


Figure 2. Donner Summit Fuels Collaborative areas of interest.

The Donner Summit Fuels Collaborative is a group of Summit landowners working together on forestry. Figure 2 shows areas they are focusing on; orange indicates active/completed projects. USFS is planning forestry south and west of Sugar Bowl, including in the Onion Creek Experimental Forest. The Towle Mountain property shown is probably the holdings of only one landowner. Dick noted that there was an initiative within the Clair Tappaan Lodge community to begin a forestry project on their land (fewer than 100 acres); but internal divisions within the Sierra Club forced it to the background. There has been a recent resurgence of interest; **Dick will put Meghan in touch with the CTL proponents.** Amy is trying to do outreach from her new position with Auburn Ski Club; there may already be some collaboration with CTL, though not necessarily on forestry.

Meghan concluded by noting that Sugar Bowl is dealing with over a century of fire suppression. There are also bark beetles and other issues. Some forestry management has already been completed, but disposing of cut timber is a challenge. Construction of the Alpenglow Timber plant north of Truckee has been delayed (Pat noted that DSA submitted a comment favoring the plant). A quarter of the timber harvested last year was shipped to Oklahoma (at considerable cost) where it is being used for housing. Some low quality residue is burned off site.



Sugar Bowl did some of its own wood product disposal in January using controlled burns (DSCN8994.JPG).

Gould Park: Pat has tried unsuccessfully to reach Erika Seward three times. Without Placer County cooperation it is difficult to see how we can move forward with Gould Park projects planned for this summer. Herman Fillmore has returned heavily edited text for the sign about Native Americans in the Gould Park area. Among other changes, he wants us to focus entirely on Washoe. Bill is considering how to respond to Herman.

Wayfinding: Chris talked to the Executive Director of the Bear River Land Trust about roadside and trail signage at the Summit. His conclusion is that BRLT intends to follow design standards adopted by Nevada County Parks. This appears to be a strategy that will simplify BRLT requests for Nevada County funding of sign creation and installation. We can follow their lead if we want to tap into that funding stream; but Chris is concerned that the recommended signs will not fare well in open terrain or where there is heavy snow. Our informational, typically 4x4-foot signs are outside the design space considered by BRLT, so would likely not be affected. So far as Chris

can determine, there has been no movement toward fabricating and installing new signs by either BRLT or Nevada County.

Economic Development: This part of the meeting was preparation for the community exchange of views on the cannabis dispensary. The event is scheduled for May 21 6:30-7:30 PM at Soda Springs Mountain Resort. It will follow the monthly DSA Board meeting (5-6 PM) at the same location. It is likely to run late, but 8 PM is the final cutoff. The meeting will be hybrid Zoom subject to Dick's working with Mike to make sure that there is good internet connectivity and screen sharing of slides is possible. **Dick will arrange a dry run with Mike (and possibly Helen and others) before May 21.**

Maria said that it is important to settle on a title for the meeting and to decide on its goals. Several titles were proposed, but none was finally selected. Something along the lines of "Opportunities for Donner Summit Economic Development — A First Case Study: Cannabis Dispensary" received some support.

A rough agenda, starting with an overview of DSA's interests and goals, had been agreed previously. DSA wants to explore opportunities for economic development on the Summit. A dispensary has already been approved by Nevada County; selection criteria are being developed. It seemed a worthy case around which to draft a more general plan for encouraging businesses. There is a risk that the meeting will be sidetracked to a discussion of whether the Summit wants/needs a cannabis dispensary.



Figure 3. Bill found photos that show what the Summit looked like 80+ years ago. A different slide lists over 40 businesses between Emigrant Gap and Donner Lake. A few historical photos could be part of the introduction.

The meeting would then be handed over to the Truckee/North Tahoe Leadership Group team (Summit Slayers), which has been working with DSA to characterize the dispensary issues. Cory said that Summit Slayers would like to be portrayed as consultants — helping DSA navigate the complexities of dispensary selection. Pat, Dick, and Helen have been DSA’s representatives in this collaboration. Maria and Cory felt that it is important to get the title and basic information to the public as soon as possible. The meeting would end after 20-30 minutes of Q&A with the audience. We want everyone to be heard; but we also want to “contain” the discussion.

This morning (April 16) Dick announced the meeting using the “News” page at <https://www.donnersummitca.com>; but the announcement is very short on specifics. He said that PDFs can be added to the web site as we develop posters and summaries of existing knowledge. Andrea, who claimed no particular knowledge about this issue, said her first reaction was “Why is a dispensary coming to Soda Springs in the first place?” Anyone with internet access should be able to download the PDFs and come to the meeting better prepared to discuss issues still open to community input.

Cory suggested that DSA recruit a moderator. Kimberly Parker was suggested, but she is spearheading economic development for Nevada County and was judged too involved to serve as a moderator. On the other hand, she has offered to attend, and that could be valuable. Steve Frisch (Sierra Nevada Business Council) was also suggested; he has helped DSA in the past. **Pat will contact him about availability.**

Cory said the goal of Summit Slayers is to develop a plan for economic development that could be applied to a range of businesses. Amy noted that the landscape is changing; focusing on what is happening and how the future might look could be a theme. She said that Patagonia Films has released videos about using mountain biking (as a business) to help small towns recover economically when locals were resistant at first¹.

Elissa said there are 14 different cannabis services that might come into play based on State regulations. Her experience with such meetings is that people will want to know precise locations. Cory said that he has maps showing areas where current zoning would allow a dispensary (or where zoning could be changed). Nevada County is currently offering a permit only for a dispensary; a cultivation permit could be added later, but there is nothing available today. On-site consumption is also not possible under current regulations. Cory believes a company currently offering delivery services in the Truckee area is planning to apply for the Soda Springs permit.

¹ See, for example, *Dirt Magic* (2019) and *Fire Lines* (2022).

Whether to offer refreshments was discussed. Most agreed that refreshments would improve attendance by locals. Bill said Summit Soups has cleared all of their inspections and may open as early as this weekend; perhaps they could provide something.



New homes in Soda Springs for Serene Lakes Realty (left, DSCN9224.JPG) and Summit Soups (DSCN9221.JPG).

Summit Clean-up: June 6 was confirmed as the date. Beth asked whether DSA would be willing to spend \$100 to print a large banner advertising the event.

MSC-U (Bill/Dick) to authorize spending \$100 for a banner to publicize this year's clean-up.

SummitFest 2026: The event was confirmed for September 26. This avoids conflict with Donner Party Hikes on September 19.

7. Internal Matters

Web Site: Dick noted that DSA decided not to sell merchandise about a year ago; the administrative overhead did not justify the benefits to the organization. But the DSA web site still has a section which offers on-line sales of stickers, hats, T-shirts, etc. After a brief discussion there was consensus to mothball merchandise sales and its part of the web site.

That effectively frees a tab on the home page top menu bar, which could be used for the Resource page that the Board has previously agreed would be useful. By consensus, the Board approved substituting the new Resources tab for the mothballed "Shop" tab. The Shop pages will be saved in case DSA wants to resume merchandise sales at some future date.

Future Meetings: The next DSA Board meeting will be May 21 at Soda Springs Mountain Resort. It will be followed by the community meeting on economic development (and the cannabis dispensary).

Summit Slayers will meet with DSA representatives virtually on April 23.

8. Announcements:

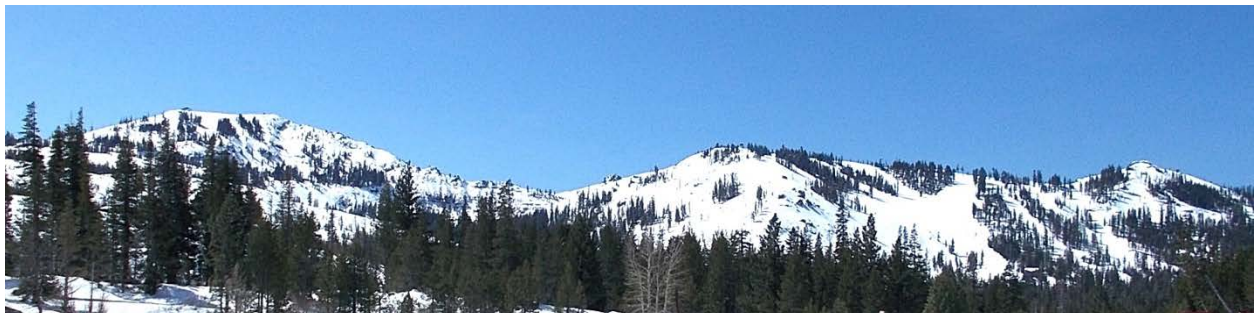
Beth reported that the Donner Summit Public Utilities District has approved a rate increase that will raise water and wastewater charges for a typical residence from about \$4000 per year to about \$6000. There will be a workshop to discuss rationale at Judah Lodge April 18 starting at 10 AM. On May 19 there will be a public hearing at which customers can object (one vote per parcel). If more than 50% of all customers object, the rate increase will not go into effect. Andrea has been following this issue and asking questions. Her research shows that DSPUD is one of top ten most expensive districts in California, and it is the most expensive in the local area.

9. Adjournment:

There being no other business, Pat adjourned the meeting at 6:28 PM.

Minutes approved by the DSA Board of Directors at its meeting on May 21, 2026.

signed by DSA Secretary, Richard Simpson _____



Mt. Lincoln, Mt. Disney, and Crow's Nest from near Donner Ski Ranch on April 17
(DSCN9223.JPG)