
The Campaign for the Northern Sierra

Northern Sierra Partnership





Upper Sardine Lake and Sierra Buttes ©RichReidPhotography.com

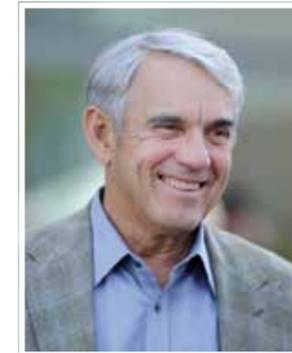
A Message

From the Chairman & President

Dear friends,

The Sierra Nevada is a place we each hold dear: a place to gain perspective, to engage with nature, to bond with our friends, our kids, and our grandkids. It is also a primary source of drinking water for California and Nevada, home to an astounding variety of species, and a prized destination for visitors from world over.

In 2007, five well-respected organizations decided to join forces to launch the Northern Sierra Partnership (NSP). With development pressure rising and more land coming on the market than ever before, the partners needed a new strategy to accelerate conservation in the region. They hoped that by working together more closely, they might attract new allies and resources to the task.



©Laurel Johnson



©Dan Quinn

The intervening years have demonstrated the wisdom of that decision. NSP has fulfilled its mission well as the booster rocket for conservation in the northern Sierra. Working with public partners and local landowners, we have conserved over 40,000 acres, from the rocky crags of Castle Peak and the lush meadows of Martis Valley to the deep forests of Independence Lake and the rich wetlands of Sierra Valley. We have also put local people to work restoring forests, streams, and meadows, and helped to engage Sierra youth in the stewardship of their own environment.

Our campaign is off to a strong start but the work is not over. This booklet is written for you: to introduce you to our partnership and invite your active engagement. The Sierra Nevada belongs to all of us, and NSP will only succeed if we each do our part. Please join our campaign today.

Sincerely,

Jim Morgan
Chair, Northern Sierra Partnership
Chairman Emeritus, Applied Materials, Inc.

Lucy Blake
President, Northern Sierra Partnership

The Northern Sierra Partnership (NSP) is a collaborative initiative to:

Conserve the sweeping natural landscapes that define us as a region;

Restore the ecological vitality of our forests, meadows and rivers, and the landscape's resilience to natural disturbance like fire and flood;

Expand opportunities to enjoy our region's extraordinary natural assets through recreation, sustainable tourism, and environmental education;

Support the growth of vibrant rural communities that sustain—and are sustained by—the healthy natural landscapes that surround them.

NSP is a partnership of five organizations: Feather River Land Trust, Sierra Business Council, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, and Truckee Donner Land Trust. Community Initiatives, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, serves as our fiscal sponsor. All contributions to our campaign are tax-deductible.



White Rock Lake ©RichReidPhotography.com

The Sierra Nevada

The Sierra Nevada is the longest unbroken mountain range in North America, a 400-mile-long wonderland of granite peaks, deep forests, and sparkling lakes so lovely that John Muir called it the “Range of Light.” From this wild expanse flows the one resource our modern society cannot live without—water. A full 60% of the water that supports life in California begins as rain and snow falling on the Sierra. The Sierra also supports the greatest diversity of plant and animal communities in California, from Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep to the yellow-headed blackbirds of Sierra Valley.

But the Sierra Nevada plays a more intimate role in many of our lives as a treasured place to be with family and friends. Each of us has memories of waking to the sweet scent of Jeffrey pine, hiking past glistening lakes, eating lunch against a warm granite boulder, or skiing down dramatic Sierra crags. The Sierra Nevada is part of us. It speaks to who we are and what we hold most dear.

Most Americans think the Sierra Nevada is already protected in an unbroken sweep of public land. Unfortunately, nothing could be further from the truth.

Although the southern and central Sierra are largely conserved in a series of contiguous national parks, national forests and wilderness areas, that protection starts to peter out north of Carson Pass. Only 50% of the land over 3,000 feet in the northern Sierra is protected as part of the public domain, compared to 90% in the rest of the Sierra.

Most Americans think the Sierra Nevada is already protected in an unbroken sweep of public land. Unfortunately, nothing could be further from the truth.



Sierra Nevada crest ©TheNose/Flickr via Creative Commons

What explains this difference? The northern Sierra was the first stop for many emigrants coming west to start a new life in California. Settlers started claiming land in the northern Sierra at the time of the Gold Rush. After the Civil War, Congress accelerated land privatization by making large land grants to the Transcontinental Railroad. The specifics are staggering: Congress gave the railroad every other square mile of land for *twenty miles* on either side of the tracks over Donner Summit. This created a checkerboard pattern of public-private ownership that has been problematic for land managers ever since. As late as the 1970s, the Sierra checkerboard was so intact one could play chess on a map of the Tahoe National Forest!

In the 1980s, conservationists started working with the Forest Service to reduce the fragmentation of public lands across the northern Sierra. In the decade that followed, community leaders in Truckee and Quincy organized land trusts and began working with local landowners to conserve important natural areas.

In 2007, five organizations that had been driving conservation progress in the region joined forces to launch the Northern Sierra Partnership. Here is our story.

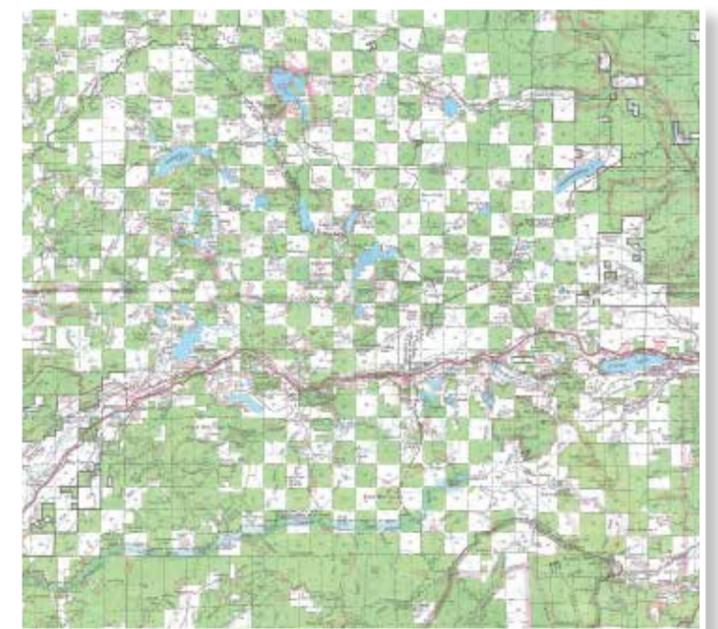
A full 60% of the water that supports life in California begins as rain and snow falling on the Sierra.



Sierra Valley wetlands ©Treve Johnson



Black bear and cub ©California Department of Fish & Wildlife



Sierra Nevada checkerboard, 1974 ©U.S. Forest Service

Why Invest in Our Campaign?

Now Is the Time

Every landscape has its moment, when people who care either step forward to take action, or stand by and witness the destruction of places they treasure. Now is just such a moment for the northern Sierra. With more land coming onto the market than ever before and development pressures rising, the Sierra Nevada is at a crossroads. Either we act now or spend the rest of our lives knowing we missed our chance.

Clear Priorities and a Plan

The northern Sierra Nevada is a big region, encompassing over 5 million acres. Within the region, NSP has targeted six landscapes as priorities for investment based on their outstanding ecological, scenic or recreational values, and their role in maintaining functioning natural systems. One is the Little Truckee River watershed, home to the Independence Lake Preserve.



Waddle Ranch ©ElizabethCarmel.com

Waddle Ranch Preserve Greater Truckee Landscape

As ecological constraints started limiting construction within the Tahoe Basin, builders began eyeing beautiful Martis Valley for the next generation of resort developments. A legal showdown between environmentalists and developers created an opening to protect Martis Valley north of Highway 267. In 2007, The Trust for Public Land and the Truckee Donner Land Trust, working together as part of the newly launched Northern Sierra Partnership, acquired 1,462-acre Waddle Ranch, conserving a critical wildlife corridor between Mt. Rose Wilderness and Martis Valley, and establishing a wonderful new preserve for hiking, biking and other public uses.

Independence Lake Preserve Little Truckee River Watershed

Independence Lake resembles Donner Lake as it must have been over a century ago. Nestled in a forested bowl below the Sierra crest, the lake is home to one of only two remaining wild populations of Lahontan cutthroat trout in the world, fish that have lived in the Sierra since the glaciers disappeared 10,000 years ago. The Nature Conservancy, with support from NSP, acquired the property around the lake in 2010 and opened it to the public for kayaking, fishing, hiking and other enjoyment. The acquisition was part of a multi-year strategy to conserve the whole Little Truckee River watershed, a primary source of drinking water for northern Nevada and one of the most outstanding natural areas in the northern Sierra.



Independence Lake
©RichReidPhotography.com



Lahontan cutthroat trout
©Cynthia Tapley/TNC

Highlights of NSP achievements, 2007–2014



Why Invest in Our Campaign?

Getting Results through Collaboration

NSP is a rare and innovative partnership of five separate non-profit organizations working together to do what none could do alone. In 2013, Stanford University's Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society profiled NSP as an exciting example of a "collective impact" initiative. Working together, our partners operate at a scale not possible for individual organizations and the results speak for themselves.

Leverage

Every funder in America—whether individual donor, foundation or public agency—wants to see their dollars used to leverage as much other funding as possible. Who wouldn't? But, for all of the talk, few initiatives can boast the results NSP has achieved. For every private dollar we've raised, we've raised two dollars from public agencies. In a time of fiscal austerity, these numbers are surprising. But it is precisely when funds are scarce that partnerships make dollars and sense.

Royal Gorge Northern Sierra Crest

Raise \$10 million in private contributions in five months? Imagine our anxiety when we committed to such a monumental task. But that's exactly what our partners—the Truckee Donner Land Trust and The Trust for Public Land—did in August 2012. Five months later, thanks to a well-organized grassroots campaign and the generosity of many, we purchased the property on time and on budget, with funding in hand for its long-term restoration and stewardship. Here's the lesson: Many well-coordinated hands make for lighter work. Together we can accomplish astonishing things.



Youth skiing ©Mark Nadell/MacBeth Graphics



Pearce family ©Susy Pearce

Pearce Ranch Feather River Headwater Valleys

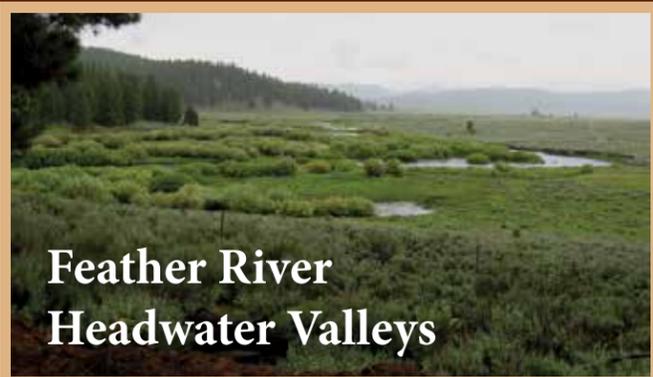
NSP works with private ranchers to conserve large open landscapes for agriculture and for wildlife. In 2010, the Feather River Land Trust purchased a conservation easement on the Pearce Ranch, the oldest family-owned cattle ranch in Plumas County. The easement protects the watershed, restricts future development, and keeps the land in Pearce family ownership. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy funded the easement, with additional funding from NSP and individual donors. This easement is typical of our private-public approach to project finance.

Highlights of NSP achievements, 2007–2014



The Northern Sierra Nevada

NSP is working in six priority landscapes across the northern Sierra Nevada to conserve and steward our region's remarkable natural assets.



Feather River Headwater Valleys

Clover Valley ©Feather River Land Trust

- Working family ranches surrounded by public lands
- A primary source of drinking water for California



Sierra Valley

Sierra Valley ©Jim Gaither

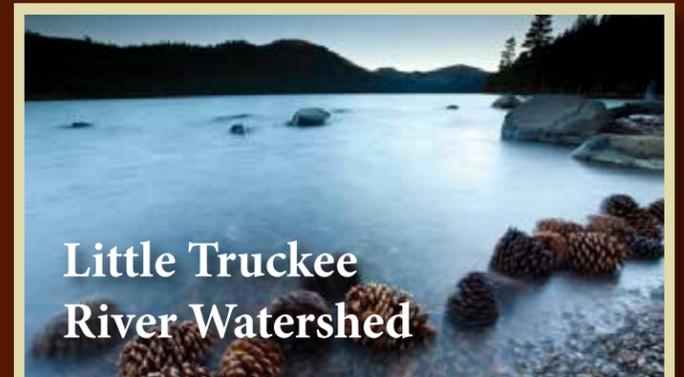
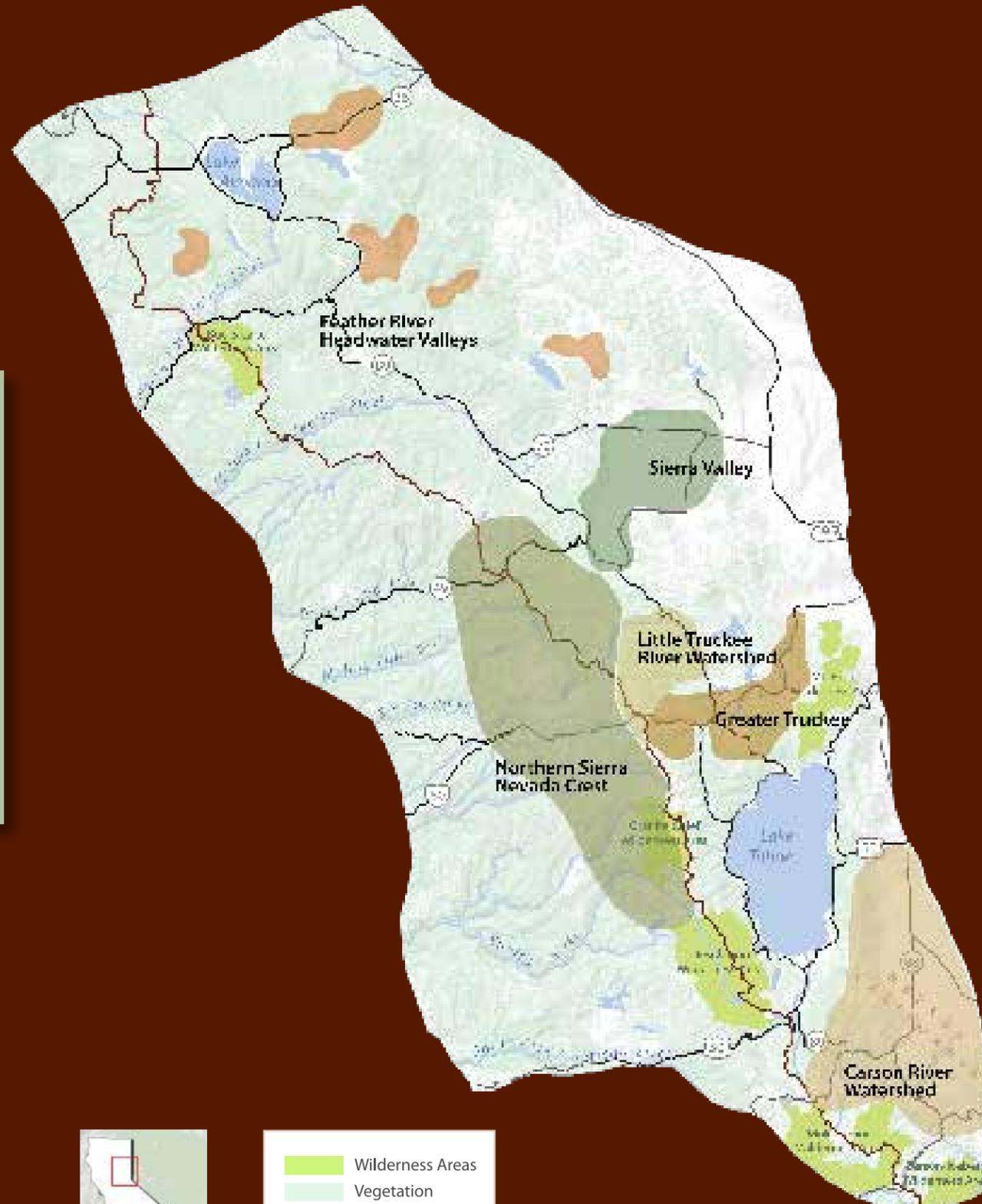
- Supports the greatest diversity and abundance of birds in the Sierra Nevada
- An ecologically rich landscape of large working ranches



Northern Sierra Nevada Crest

Sierra Buttes from Upper Sardine Lake ©RichReidPhotography.com

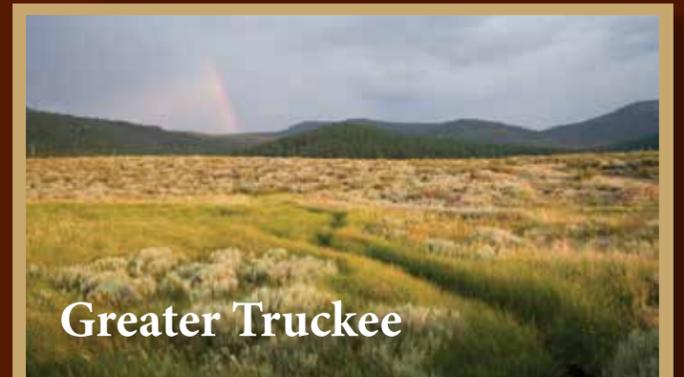
- A primary source of drinking water for California and Nevada
- Outstanding scenic and recreational values, e.g., Pacific Crest Trail, Western States Trail



Little Truckee River Watershed

Independence Lake ©Ian Shive

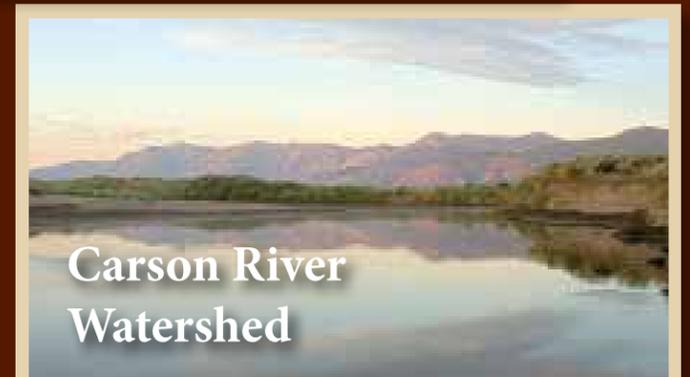
- A primary source of drinking water for northern Nevada
- Rich in biological diversity, including ancient fish like Lahontan cutthroat trout



Greater Truckee

Martis Valley ©ElizabethCarmel.com

- A fast-growing community with outstanding natural values
- Protect treasured open spaces that define community



Carson River Watershed

Kirman Field, Carson Valley ©Tom Torell

- Important wet meadows and wetlands in Carson Valley
- Conserve high-quality habitat and open spaces

Our Strategic Initiatives

In addition to conserving high priority landscapes across the region, NSP invests in projects to enhance natural systems and communities in the northern Sierra. We have four initiatives.



Eagle Falls and Emerald Bay ©ElizabethCarmel.com

Sierra Headwaters Restoration Initiative

The northern Sierra Nevada provides a wealth of public benefits: clean water, carbon storage, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation. NSP invests in research, policy work, and on-the-ground projects to restore our forests, meadows, rivers and streams, enhancing their ecological health, their resilience to disturbance like fire, flood, and climate change, and their long-term productivity.



Student at Heart K Ranch ©Adrienne Stenson

Learning Landscapes Initiative

The Feather River Land Trust's Learning Landscapes Initiative is working to give all K-12 students in the Upper Feather River watershed a chance to be engaged in high quality outdoor learning and the stewardship of their local environment. NSP helps to secure and equip land for use as "outdoor classrooms," fund teacher workshops and curriculum planning sessions, and otherwise support this award-winning program.



Hiker in Martis Valley ©ElizabethCarmel.com

Recreation and Sustainable Tourism Initiative

The northern Sierra is one of the premier destinations for outdoor enthusiasts in America, drawing visitors from world over. NSP invests in trails, trailheads, interpretive signage, regional marketing and other projects that will expand opportunities for visitors, enhance the quality of life for residents, and create new opportunities for local businesses.



Haying at Heart K Ranch ©Feather River Land Trust

Land Use Initiative

Rural sprawl fragments the land with new roads, buildings and infrastructure, destroying habitat, disrupting wildlife movement, diminishing water quality, and punching holes in the large landscapes so essential to maintaining healthy natural systems. With support from NSP, the Sierra Business Council works with local communities to design policies that discourage rural sprawl and protect large, open landscapes for wildlife and for agriculture.

NSP's five partner organizations bring a wealth of experience to our campaign.



The mission of the Feather River Land Trust is to conserve the lands and waters of the Feather River region and steward their ecological, cultural and educational values for current and future generations.



Sierra Business Council is a sustainable community network fostering thriving communities in the Sierra Nevada through on-the-ground projects and policies that promote, develop and amplify the region's social, environmental and economic capital.



The Nature Conservancy is a leading conservation organization working around the world to protect the lands and waters on which all life depends.



The Trust for Public Land is a national, non-profit, land conservation organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, community gardens, historic sites, rural lands, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come.



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. The Land Trust works with landowners, federal, state and local governments, and the public-at-large to create win-win situations for private and public interests.

Stepping up for the Sierra



Hikers along Anderson Ridge on the Pacific Crest Trail ©Geoff Griffin

The Northern Sierra Partnership has created a way for all of us to pool our funds and direct them to the most worthy projects. It has been inspiring for me to be a part of this incredibly successful campaign. Let's keep going!

Dr. George Sardina, Laughlin, NV

The Partnership combines the scientific and real estate savvy of the national/state conservation groups, the boots-on-the-ground land management knowledge of the local land trusts, and the passionate commitment of individual donors who love the Sierra and want to see it protected. I'm proud to support their work.

Susan McClatchy, Carmichael, CA

This unique partnership has been extremely effective at raising state and private funds, and working with landowners and public agencies, to conserve lands across the northern Sierra. We consider them an indispensable partner.

Randy Moore, Regional Forester, Region 5, U.S. Forest Service

NSP is helping to conserve Sierra Valley and other parts of the northern Sierra, for ranching and for wildlife. I'm amazed at how much progress has been made in such a short time. We give what we can and wish we could do more. Keep it up!

Linda Sanford, Rancher, Sierraville, CA



Carson Valley ©The Nature Conservancy



Lacey Meadows ©ElizabethCarmel.com

How You Can Help

The Northern Sierra Partnership is evolving into one of the great conservation success stories of the American West but our work is far from over. After reading this booklet, we hope you are inspired to join with us to conserve the magnificent Sierra Nevada while we still have the chance. This is a rare opportunity to leave a truly enduring legacy, one that will be remembered forever.

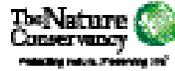
Here's how you can get started:

- Come on a field tour and get a first-hand look at our work
- Host an event to let your friends know about our campaign for the northern Sierra
- Call our office to schedule a personal briefing
- Support the NSP campaign with your own tax-deductible gift, either to NSP or one of our partner organizations

The Northern Sierra Partnership is a fiscally sponsored project of Community Initiatives (CI) whose federal tax identification number is: 94-3255070. All contributions are tax-deductible. To support our campaign, please make your check payable to *Community Initiatives/NSP* and mail it to:

Northern Sierra Partnership
564A Santa Rita Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Gifts of stock and multi-year pledges are welcome. Please call our office at 650/323-2050 to explore how you might help.



Sierra Valley wetlands ©Andy Wright/Lighthawk Photo

Praise for the Northern Sierra Partnership

The Northern Sierra Partnership is making great strides in protecting the biodiversity and iconic beauty of the Sierra Nevada region. Their work is strengthening the quality of life of the area's residents and visitors for generations to come.

Carol Larson, President, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

NSP has been a terrific partner for our agency. They have a clear plan, move quickly, and consistently bring other financial resources to the table. The collaborative nature by which the NSP operates is the principle reason for the amazing progress we're making together in the northern Sierra.

John Donnelly, Executive Director, California Wildlife Conservation Board