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LAND TRUST

NEWS

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Waddle Ranch Purchase Secures Heart of the Martis Valley 1,462-acre property is safe in public hands thanks to landmark agreement and statewide fundraising effort

TRUCKEE, CA -- The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and Truckee Donner Land Trust (TDLT) announced today the permanent protection of the 1,462-acre Waddle Ranch, located north of Highway 267 in Martis Valley. A landmark conservation agreement in May of 2006 brought the ranch's protection within reach. TPL and TDLT worked with a variety of public and private partners to assemble the \$23.5 million needed to acquire the property. A \$2.5 million private capital campaign closed the gap this month, and the purchase was completed on October 29.

"Thanks to the vision and leadership of thousands of individuals and dozens of public agencies and nonprofits over the past decade, TPL and TDLT are thrilled to announce the protection of Waddle Ranch, the long sought-after cornerstone of the conservation vision for Martis Valley," said David Sutton, Sierra Program Director of The Trust for Public Land-California. "Waddle Ranch itself will protect outstanding wildlife habitat, while providing the public with many new miles of hiking, biking and cross country skiing trails. Its conservation is also a huge step toward protecting the entire Martis Valley north of Highway 267."

Waddle Ranch is directly adjacent to the Martis Creek Lake National Recreation Area. It has been privately owned since the 1850s, used for grazing cattle and harvesting timber. It remains the most biologically diverse property in the Martis Valley, providing habitat for deer, birds, mountain lion, black bear, and other wildlife.

“Martis Valley has been the epicenter of battles over land use for years,” said Perry Norris, Executive Director of TDLT. “With the acquisition and protection of Waddle Ranch, there is now peace in the Valley. It's a great thing to see local governments, developers and environmental groups working hand in hand.”

The property has been closed to the public for 50 years. Today, Norris and Sutton proudly removed the “No Trespassing” sign that has been posted there, and invited the community to discover Martis Valley’s newest public resource. The land already contains a trail system, which visitors can follow through mountain meadows and old growth pine to Dry Lake. It also links with the Tahoe National Forest, Martis Creek Lake National Recreation Area, and in time to Mount Rose Wilderness Area.

Waddle Ranch was purchased by the Pritzker Family in 1971. “We evaluated numerous development alternatives over the past 10 years and believe that the sale to TPL and TDLT is the best outcome for all parties. We are thrilled that this beautiful land will be preserved for the public,” said Penny Pritzker.

Mark Solit, the Pritzker Family’s San Francisco representative, said: “It has been a real pleasure to work with TPL and TDLT over the past few years on this important transaction for the Truckee/Tahoe area. This is a great example of how ownership and preservation interests can work together for the public benefit.”

The total purchase price for Waddle Ranch was \$23.5 million, which TPL and TDLT secured from a variety of public and private sources. Public funders included Placer County, the California Wildlife Conservation Board, Truckee Tahoe Airport District, and California’s Sierra Nevada Cascade Grant Program, administered by the California Resources Agency.

“We are pleased that the purchase of the Waddle Ranch has been finalized,” said Placer County Supervisor Bruce Kranz, whose Fifth District encompasses part of the land. “We realized the importance of protecting this tract of land and ensuring it is accessible to the public for recreational activities.”

“The Martis Valley is a region of statewide significance,” said California’s Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman. “With the purchase of Waddle Ranch, an environmentally and recreationally important property will be protected for this generation and future generations to enjoy.”

“Waddle Ranch is important for its biodiversity and its location, adjacent to existing public lands,” said John Donnelly, Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board. “This property was a priority for the Wildlife Conservation Board, and we were glad to work with state and local partners to ensure its protection.”

“Truckee Tahoe Airport District is proud to have been an instrumental player in preserving this open space for generations to come,” said Kathleen Eagan, Board President.

TPL and TDLT conducted an eight month private capital campaign to supplement the public funds. The Waddle Ranch campaign received an early boost thanks to a leadership gift of \$500,000 from the Morgan Family Foundation.

“The protection of Waddle Ranch is the culmination of six years of work by a coalition of private and public partners. I hope this can serve as a precedent throughout the Sierra Nevada,” said Becky Morgan, a former State Senator and President of the Morgan Family Foundation.

The support of local groups, including the Sierra Business Council, Sierra Watch, and the Mountain Area Preservation Fund was also critical to the protection of Waddle Ranch.

The Trust for Public Land is a national nonprofit land conservation organization dedicated to conserving land for people. TPL has protected more land in the Sierra Nevada than any other nonprofit organization; to date, TPL has helped protect more than 60,000 acres, with a fair market value in excess of \$80 million. Nationwide, TPL has protected more than 2 million acres. For more information, please visit www.tpl.org.

The Truckee Donner Land Trust is a nonprofit organization that works to preserve and protect important historic, recreational and scenic open spaces in the greater Truckee region. TDLT was founded in 1990 when the picturesque and historical Coldstream Valley next to Donner Lake was about to be lost to logging. A small group of passionate hikers joined together, raised \$150,000, and purchased 160 acres in the Valley. Since then, TDLT has protected over 11,000 acres. For more information, please visit <http://www.tdlandtrust.org>.

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