



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
North Central Region
1701 Nimbus Road, Suite A
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
www.wildlife.ca.gov

EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



March 5, 2015

Mr. John Svahn
Stewardship Director
Truckee Donner Land Trust
P.O. Box 8816
Truckee, CA 96162

Subject: Letter of Support for Van Norden Meadow Management Action

Dear Mr. Svahn,

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has supported and been involved in Truckee Donner Land Trust's acquisition of Van Norden Meadow. We understand that an existing dam at the west end of the meadow is out of compliance and after a thorough evaluation by Balance Hydrologics, Inc., the best and safest option will be to notch the dam and retain 5 acre feet of water in the lake. This dam does not meet specifications to hold back the current amount of water, or withstand breach during a storm event, and the risk of failure could mean loss of life or property downstream.

Although this represents a decrease in standing water at the lake, CDFW feels that the proposed restoration of this high mountain meadow will provide more benefits to wildlife and the ecosystem than any other options. Additionally, lowering the water pressure on the dam serves as a safety measure that provides flood protection for homeowners and users downstream in case of a failure.

The current condition in the meadow provides more standing water for recreation and CDFW understands there has been concern expressed by some users regarding potential impacts to white pelicans. Some users believe that reducing the water will prevent pelicans from wanting to use the area and force them to find other foraging and resting areas. CDFW does not believe that a reduction in the lake size will be detrimental to the species and is supportive of restoration that will make the meadow more usable to a variety of native bird species, including willow flycatcher. Returning a large portion of the meadow its natural habitat and hydrologic condition, while improving public safety is a great plan for this property and CDFW supports this management action. Before taking this action you shall notify in writing the CDFW's Habitat Conservation Unit regarding the proposed activities and need for a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement, and any federal agencies if warranted.

Should you have any questions please contact Environmental Scientist, Sara Holm at (530) 346-6305 or sara.holm@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Tina Bartlett
Regional Manager

Conserving California's Wildlife Since 1870

Mr. John Svahn, Stewardship Director
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Ec: Canh Nguyen
Garry Kelley