



# Donner Summit Historical Society

## 20 mile museum

### Signage Plan

“...inexpressibly comprehensive, grand, and picturesque. After congratulating ourselves upon the safe achievement of our morning feat, and breathing our mules a few minutes, we proceeded on our journey. A mile brought us to a small dimple on top of the mountain, in the centre of which is a miniature lake, surrounded by green grass.”

What I saw in California Edwin Bryant 1849 upon reaching Donner Summit

Donner Summit *is* grand and unique and the Donner Summit Historical Society has embarked on a project to highlight the history and beauty of the Summit.

The 20 mile museum will consist of interpretive signs placed on private commercial property and along Old Highway 40. Each sign will highlight the history of the location, display historical photographs and quotes, tell a good story, and list activities for that location.

The purpose of the project is to

- Share and explain Donner Summit history
- Share the beauty and activities of Donner Summit
- Encourage visitation
- Revitalize the Summit economy which has

been on a down hill slide for decades.

Initially the project will consist of 26 interpretive signs as delineated in the chart below. Most will be placed on private commercial property but some will need to be placed on County owned property along Old Highway 40 where there are turnouts or where there is currently parking.

The project will also include a booklet listing all of

Example of interpretive sign, this one explaining the Donner Summit Native American petroglyphs.



the signs along with additional locations and information. Eventually, over subsequent years, the project will grow to include a dozen or more additional signs.

The project has met with overwhelming community approval and support as can be seen on the next page. Each sign, for example, is sponsored by local businesses and individuals who are paying for the construction and placement of the signs.

Solid steel sign frames stand three feet off the ground and the stands slide into aluminum receptacles placed in cement. This enables the signs to be easily removed late each Fall so that there will be no interference with snow removal in places where that would be an issue. Each sign will be two feet square and all the designs are consistent in general design.



# Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass Red Mountain ●



## History

“The view from the look-out station is something grand.”  
August 8, 1889 Sacramento Daily Union

Fire! Fire at Cascade! Call Cisco.

Snowsheds solved one problem and opened up an industry of snow shovelers, maintenance workers, carpenters, line walkers and fire lookouts. 24 hours a day, high on Red Mountain, lookouts scanned the snowsheds from Donner Summit to Nyack looking for fires. Steam engines emitted sparks that lodged in the sun-dried pitch filled lumber. Fire could “spread with lightning like rapidity along the line of sheds, as if it were a train of powder. The long line of sheds acts as a huge chimney with a powerful draft, and not much time is required for a small blaze to develop into a fire of ugly proportions.” San Francisco Call, October 15, 1905

On spotting a fire, the lookouts called Cisco and Cisco telegraphed the fire trains which were always ready to go. Each had an engine, pumper, tender and tank cars and could direct three streams of water at once.

The views, at the lookout 2000 feet above you, are spectacular in every direction. Pictured here are the panorama of the snowsheds at the end of the 19th century (the black line is the snowsheds), the building at the top of Red Mountain circa 1910, the building today, and a close up of the snowsheds in modern times.



## A Good Story

The telephone was invented in 1876; within a year there was one on Red Mountain.

Red Mountain is named well. When you look at it from a distance, it's the red mountain top with the radio antennae. Sixty five million years ago Red Mountain was an island in the Pacific Ocean. Plate Tectonics put it where it is today.

## Things to do right here

- Indeed the 360 degree views from Red Mtn., 2000 feet above you here, are grand. The 3 mile hike is long and steeply uphill the whole way. The trail leaves from the back of Indian Springs Campground, just down the road from here on the right.
- Walk the old Highway 40 between the east and west bound freeway lanes along the river.
- Walk the old Lincoln Highway on the south side of the freeway and up the hill. The intersection there with the road going east-west, is the old Lincoln Highway (1913).

This sign sponsored by Sugar Bowl



Historical pictures courtesy of Ite Norm Saylor Collection at the Donner Summit Historical Society  
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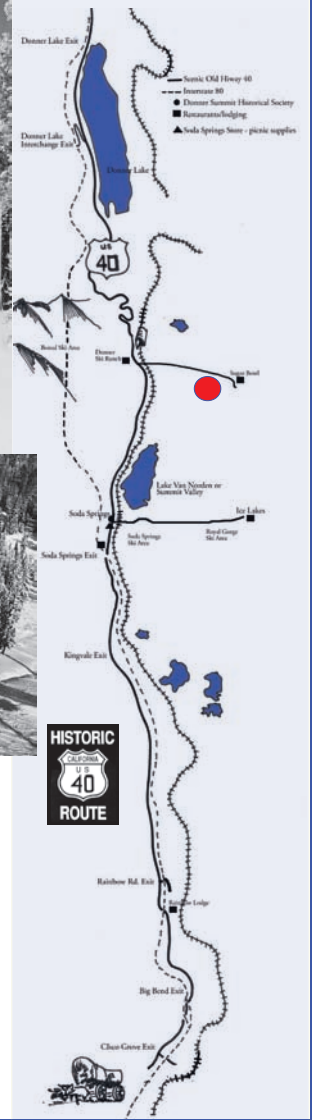


# Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass Sugar Bowl ●

## History

When Bill Klein, who would transform skiing himself, invited Hannes Schroll to Donner Summit from Yosemite in 1937, the ski industry was about to change. Hannes was a daredevil champion skier whose yodels as he tore down mountains could be heard for long distances. He was enthusiastic when he saw the Sugar Bowl. "We have to develop this," he said. The "Sugar Bowl" is perfect for skiing.

His family money disappeared just as he was talking to his mother about sending it from Austria so he could buy the land. It was the Anschluss and Hitler had taken charge of Austria and Hannes' money. Hannes turned to his Yosemite friends and they in turn turned to their friends and Sugar Bowl, the first California ski area built as a destination resort, was built. It included the first chairlift in the state and the second in the nation. The single seater (as opposed to the quads of today) ran to the top of Mt. Disney (3200 feet) in 6 minutes (today's quad takes 3 minutes). There was a lodge designed by a famous architect, rope tows, a skating rink, and ski touring. Skiers arrived by train and were transported to the Bowl first by horse drawn and then by tractor drawn sleighs.



## A Good Story

Hannes Schroll was larger than life. At the 1936 Mt. Rainier Olympic Trials, "I heard a yell high above me...like an eagle swooping down on a rabbit [it was] Hannes Schroll... yodeling at the top of his lungs! He jumped the first terrace like a deer going over a rail fence. Then he jumped another and landed on one ski. His body was leaning over like an open jack-knife, and he was swinging his ski poles to keep from somersaulting. He must have skidded a quarter mile on that one ski, whooping and yelling all the time. As he passed me, his hat sailed through the air, and he whooped even louder he was that glad to get both his skis back on the snow. Before he stopped, he [d] passed No. 41, who had taken off ten minutes before." *Rotarian* 2/1936

Walt Disney was an initial investor in Sugar Bowl. One day his daughter wanted to ski. Hannes took her up Mt. Disney, put her on his shoulders, and skied all the way down.



## Things to do right here

Take the road into the Sugar Bowl where the sign says Judah Lodge. Come in for refreshment at the bar or have a meal in the historic Judah Lodge at Sugar Bowl (built in 1939). The food is great and the historical pictures are interesting. Find out about the lodge, William Wilson Wurster the architect, and how the wagon trains climbed over Donner Summit on Roller Pass.

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This sign sponsored by Sugar Bowl



Above, the Sugar Bowl Sign. Below, left to right: Tunnel 6, Ice Lakes, Petroglyphs, Snowsheds

### Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass Tunnel 6 ●

**History**  
The tunnel was built in 1937 by the Donner Summit Historical Society. It was the first tunnel built in the area. The tunnel was built to provide a direct route to the Sugar Bowl ski area. The tunnel was built by the Donner Summit Historical Society. It was the first tunnel built in the area. The tunnel was built to provide a direct route to the Sugar Bowl ski area.

**Things to do right here**  
Visit the Pacific Crest National Monument. The tunnel was built in 1937 by the Donner Summit Historical Society. It was the first tunnel built in the area. The tunnel was built to provide a direct route to the Sugar Bowl ski area.

### Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass Ice Lakes ●

**History**  
The Ice Lakes are a series of lakes located in the Sugar Bowl area. They were formed by glacial activity. The lakes are a popular destination for hikers and skiers. The lakes are a popular destination for hikers and skiers.

**A Good Story**  
The Ice Lakes are a series of lakes located in the Sugar Bowl area. They were formed by glacial activity. The lakes are a popular destination for hikers and skiers. The lakes are a popular destination for hikers and skiers.

**Things to do right here**  
Visit the Ice Lakes. The lakes are a popular destination for hikers and skiers. The lakes are a popular destination for hikers and skiers.

### Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass Petroglyphs ●

**History**  
Petroglyphs are ancient rock art created by scratching designs into a rock surface. They are found in the Sugar Bowl area. Petroglyphs are ancient rock art created by scratching designs into a rock surface. They are found in the Sugar Bowl area.

**Things to do right here**  
Visit the Petroglyphs. Petroglyphs are ancient rock art created by scratching designs into a rock surface. They are found in the Sugar Bowl area.

### Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass The Snowsheds ●

**History**  
The Snowsheds are a series of sheds located in the Sugar Bowl area. They were built to store snowshoes. The sheds are a popular destination for hikers and skiers. The sheds are a popular destination for hikers and skiers.

**A Good Story**  
The Snowsheds are a series of sheds located in the Sugar Bowl area. They were built to store snowshoes. The sheds are a popular destination for hikers and skiers. The sheds are a popular destination for hikers and skiers.



On page one you see a typical sign in its metal stand. Left, typical side view of a steel stand. Right, typical rear view of a steel stand. Each sign is two feet square and the center of each sign sits 32" off the ground. Each sign slides into an aluminum sleeve set flush with the ground surface and in cement for easy removal. On page two and page three are two of the 26 initial signs, Sugar Bowl and Red Mountain. At the bottom of page three are smaller versions of four more.



### Interpretive Signs, 2010

		<u>County right of way</u>	<u>Private property</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Location</u>
Red Mountain	NV	39° 19.355/120° 33.746			Eagle Lakes exit
Meadow Lake turn off	NV	39° 19.355/120° 33.746			Eagle Lakes exit
Lincoln Highway view from 40	PC	39° 18.235/120° 31.290 or 39° 18.256/120° 31.416			Old 40/nr. Big Bend further along 40 towards overpass
Big Bend	PC		39° 18.397/120° 31.061	USFS	Ranger Station
Rainbow Lodge/Tavern	PC		39° 18.609/120° 30.559		Rainbow Lodge
Donner Summit Lodge	NV		39° 19.513/120° 23.363		Donner Summit Lodge
Pahatsi Rd wagon train route	PC	39° 18.697/120° 22.904 or 39° 18.767/120° 22.879			corner Pahatsi/S.S. Rd. near current Trails West marker
Ice Lakes	PC		39° 17.685/120° 22.977		Ice Lakes Lodge
Original Soda Springs Store	NV		39° 19.451/120° 23.026		Soda Springs Store
Soda Springs Hotel Hotel	NV		39 19.408/120 22.768		Soda Springs  (Donner Summit Hist. Society)
Soda Springs Ski Area	NV		39° 19.276/120° 22.755 or 39° 19.286/120° 22.786		Soda Springs Ski Area (walk up to lodge)
Summit Valley overlook	NV		39° 19.002/120° 21.054		across hiway from CTL
Clair Tappaan & Cal/Heidelman (2)	NV		39 19.012/120 21.006		top of new loading area to the left back from cars
Hutchinson Lodge	NV		39 19.056/120 212.159		path start at right
Sugar Bowl	PC		39° 18.794/120° 20.381	prking structure	Sugar Bowl
Roller Pass	PC		yes		Sugar Bowl

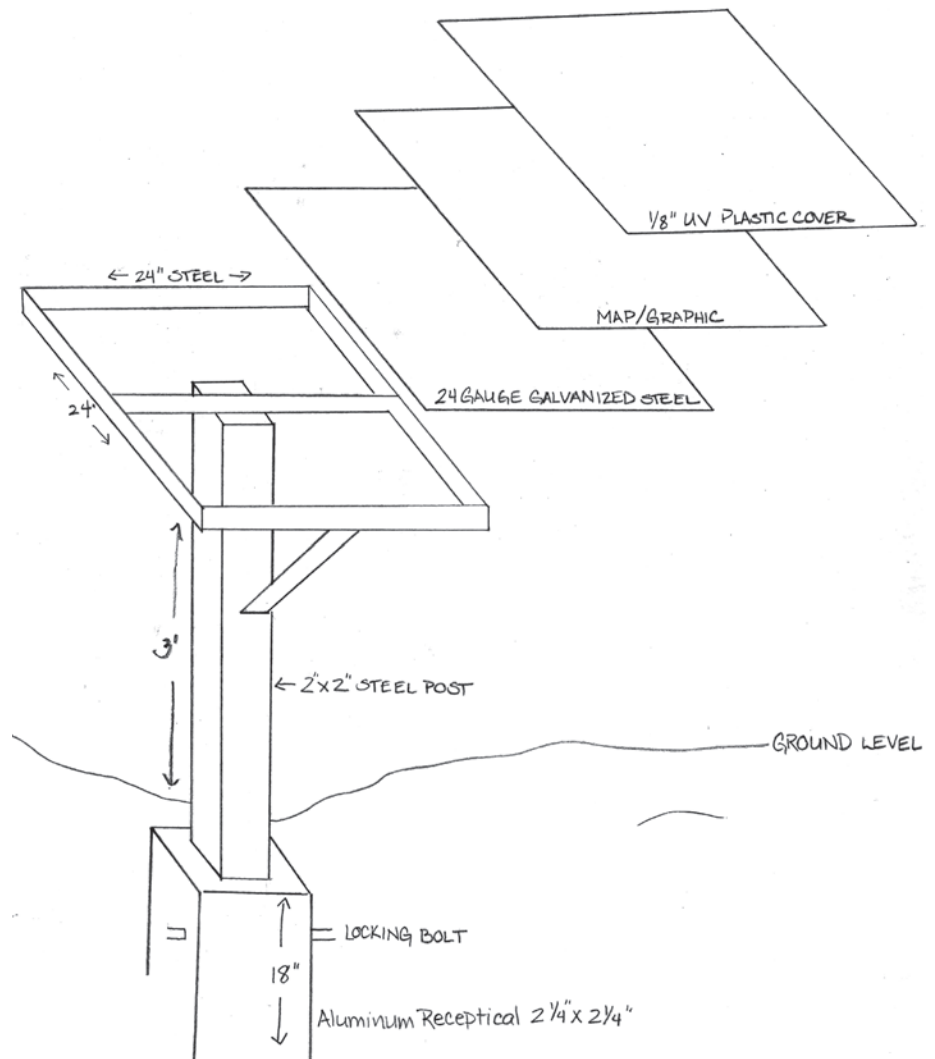
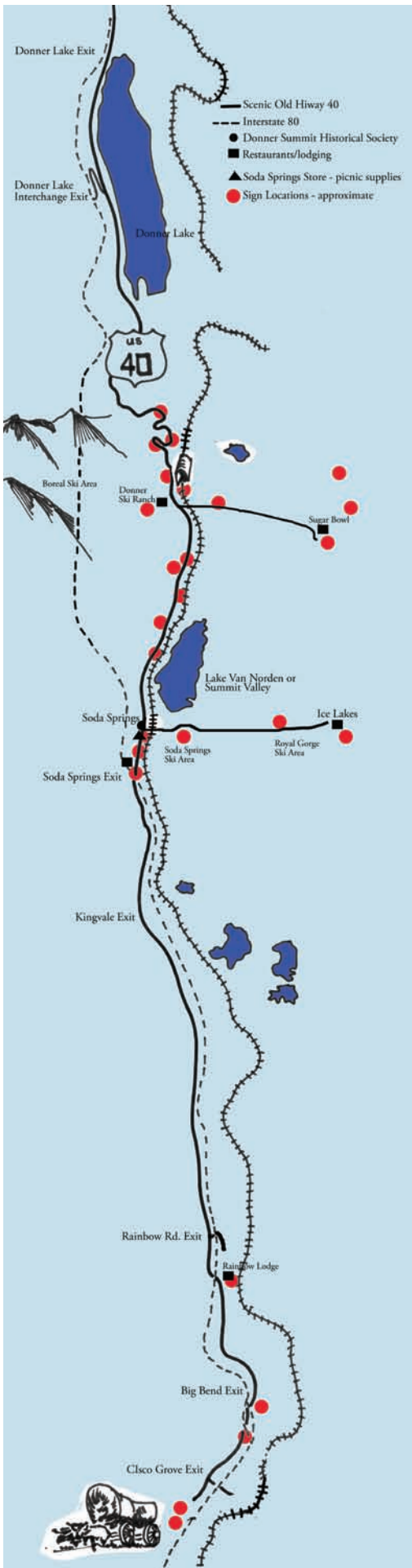
		<u>County right of way</u>	<u>Private property</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Location</u>
Norden Station	NV	39° 19.036/120° 21.347			across from old Norden store
Charlie Chaplin's "Gold Rush" Mt. Lincoln	PC		yes		Sugar Bowl
Magic Carpet	PC	39° 18.793/120° 20.345		prkgn structure	Sugar Bowl
Lodge at Sugar Bowl	PC		yes		Lodge at Sugar Bowl
Donner Ski Ranch	NV			across from Donner Ski Ranch	Donner Ski Ranch
Sugar Bowl Academy building	NV	39° 18.997/120° 19.543			Sugar Bowl Academy
Tunnel 6 – first transc. RR tunnel	NV			old railroad bed in front of tunnel?? or 39° 19.019/120° 19.794 (turn out prior to tunnel on road to Sugar Bowl)	
Donner Lake overlook		39° 19.045/120° 19.463 or 39° 19.134/120° 19.115			1st turnout below Sugar Bowl Academy on Old 40, just over Summit Rainbow Bridge parking north end
Rainbow Bridge		39° 19.134/120° 19.150			across 40 from Rainbow Bridge parking
Transcontinental Railroad	NV		39° 19.117/120° 19.114		Rainbow Bridge Parking so. end facing Rainbow Bridge
China Wall		39° 19.052/120° 19.226			turnout prior to climbing parking area
Central Pacific Snowsheds	NV	39° 19.123/120° 18.968			turnout below Rainbow Bridge
<b>Miscellaneous:</b>					
curve below Rainbow Bridge		39° 19.056/120° 19.230			(petroglyph site - China Wall sign?)
turnout below the climbing wall - small souvenir stand at Cisco		39° 19.127/120° 18.971			(good snowshed view)
		39° 18.666/120° 32.471			(possible Forest Gift Shop sign)
Sugar Bowl prkg structure west end		39° 18.796/120° 20.413			

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## 20 Mile Museum Supporting organizations/businesses



# Sign Stand Design



The above diagram shows the design of the stands.

Each stand is made out of hard steel with the center of sign 36" off the ground. The signs are at 45 degree angles to the ground. A 24 gauge galvanized steel sheet sits on the frame, made of 1" square steel 1/8" wall tubing, with the sign and UV plastic cover sitting on top. The post is 2" X 2" 1/4" wall square steel tubing.

The aluminum receptacle sits below ground level so the sign can be removed in winter and so it does not affect snow removal machines. A locking bolt will secure the sign. Receptacles will be plugged when the signs are removed.