

**ROUNDTABLE: LISTING SUMMIT TUNNEL ON
NATIONAL REGISTRY OF HISTORIC PLACES
PART 2 TRANSCRIPT**

MODERATOR: Thank you, Alan, and I appreciate every time you're here, Alan, because it's makes me feel like, wow [unintelligible] bringing this, we've got the best in the country that know this information. So, if you guys have things to say, please do. I just thought I'd try to fill in some of the gaps. Since I'm sitting next to Phil and you work within the community, one of those things that Alan mentioned, the grassroots, it's also with people in Truckee or the area. So we want to know, what have they done in the past and what are your feelings about something like what's happened?

PHIL SEXTON: Well, the Truckee community was newly incorporated into a city in the 1990s. And Truckee has now become Lake Tahoe north because Lake Tahoe has priced itself out of affordability for a lot of people and Truckee is not technically in Tahoe basin but it's 10 minutes away. So it markets itself as Lake Tahoe north. And it has changed in the time that I've lived in the area, from a lumbering and commodity community, to a very tourism-oriented community. So their Chamber of Commerce and numerous historic groups such as the Tahoe-Donner Historic Society and the Donner Summit Historical Society, go over a lot of things, and in fact in June there is a thing called the Marche Owl Historic hike. Marche was the first director of the Donner Summit Historical Society. In the Fall, on Labor Day weekend, they have for many years done what they call Donner Party Night weekend, where there's hikes in all directions and for many different lengths of Donner Pass, [unintelligible] Pass which are just south of it, and a whole lot of educational things. The issue that I have [unintelligible] those things is that they're more interested in telling you a good story than being factual or accurate. But that's common in tourism. Tourism is about leaving bucks at the stores and heads on beds, and things like that. But there is the enthusiasm there, so if we can demonstrate that the activities that we do benefit the business community up there, all the better. Now as for Donner, the businesses at Donner Pass area in particular, which are some small stores, Sugar Bowl ski area, Soda Springs ski area, and [unintelligible] Lodge, some outfitter guides, some snow removal services, some real estate [unintelligible]--they are very fractured. They can't really, they haven't had some sort of unifying leadership to let them all agree on a course of action to go on. And some are very pro-development in terms of slicking off the land and building

home sites. And some of them are, "Leave me alone." And some of them are preservation related. They need a little bit more, perhaps, nurturing and understanding that the rising [unintelligible]. When I lived up there, I was a neutral observer because I worked for a very political agency and I didn't want to get aligned with one group or the other. And it's fascinating just to listen to different sides and nod, and never respond. But again, I think if there's some unifying nature, and perhaps historic designation, a statement of common purpose, would lead everybody in that same direction. I think there's really, actually, great opportunities. And again, I think that with the new freedoms and legislation that State Parks has, and the connection with the intellectual resources that they possess, I think there's some really amazing perks and opportunities [unintelligible]. Oh, one other thing too, I think you had mentioned earlier is really playing up the railroad as very important. I have found on the Internet, and I couldn't find it again and I got this years ago, but at some point some group had proposed National Historic Trail Designation for the abandoned portions of the original line. And if Union-Pacific, or perhaps other [unintelligible], utterly hated that idea because they wrongly felt that it would impede their abilities to do their jobs. And the National Designation does not obviate any landowner's rights, it just doesn't. But that's not commonly known, it has to be explained. In Union-Pacific's case, I believe that they would absolutely insist on continuing to have a right of way along the old road bed for their trucks. They use it to access a certain part of the track, and so I think that if you keep that in mind and if you help them understand that nothing would preclude that absolute need, I think you'd be a lot more successful.

MODERATOR: I'm going to try another question. And I've thought of Alan [unintelligible], [unintelligible] as of I think it was last Fall 2018, was the Transcontinental Railroad [unintelligible]. There's legislation that there are areas along this whole stretch that could be qualified for funding either from the National Parks Service or other agencies, as long as the railroad is now running. There is a question of whether or not that [unintelligible], keeping it from being included [unintelligible]. Does either of you know about [unintelligible] our communities [unintelligible]? So just saying that, there are things in the works related to the Transcontinental Railroad anniversary, [unintelligible].

ALAN SPEARS: Yeah, in the account of overall legislation, the conversations like this that might start with the railroad company, in the 20 years I've been doing this we rarely get an enthusiastic "yes" at the first conversation. And so, I think what you're looking to

do is to develop a way to develop a partnership with people at the railroad companies so that they understand you're not asking for everything but you're inviting them to have an opportunity to support historic preservation in a time where most federal land management agencies and most companies are desperate for ways to connect to more diverse and inclusive audiences. And we want to do that for politics, and do that for the economics, and we want to do it just to be on the right side of history. So now's really an opportune moment to make an approach like that. But what I can tell you about legislation and working with Congress is that there are very innovative and clever ways to draft boundaries for parks and national monuments. There are very clever ways to create heritage areas. There are very clever ways to create language within bills that allow people to opt in. But maybe before we get to the legislative thing, it goes back to the grassroots that you were talking about, which is the ability to sit in a conversation with people and nod. It's an incredibly important tool and tactic for grassroots organizing and being able to impact outreach to the communities and the one way that things tend to fail at the federal preservation level is to waltz into a community with a big poster about what you're going to do for them without having gotten sufficient input about what people are interested in. And so, we do surges with our military all the time, we've done them in Iraq and Afghanistan, and one of the things that this community of activists and the interested parties composed to figure out how to do a surge in that community in Truckee and in the other places out there, to plant them in the community for a while, hear from them, do community outreach forums and charrettes, things that Forest Service and Parks Service folks are past experts at doing, and learn. And so, it is repeating this process here with people that we might describe as the nontraditional constituents, or the non-aware, non-users, the non-supporters, who can be an enthusiastic supporter of this if only we give them time and opportunity. So that's kind of about the legislation, but it's also about the, how do you see the ground before you get to the introduction of a Bill.

**BARBARA
WYATT:**

Something that I want to mention about the National Historic Landmark designation is, you do not move forward with the nomination if the owners are not comfortable with it. So there would be no nomination going forward if the railroad is not on board, which is another reason that the earlier that they're at this table and if they are convinced that this is something that's a win for them, [unintelligible]. It's better... the success is better guaranteed and it's certainly the only way for National Historic Landmark designation going forward. The other,

another thing that I would like to say about National Register listing is that would be a segue for the site to become part of the travel itinerary of the National Parks Service and part of the Teaching with Historic Places. I recently learned that Teaching with Historic Places, that's one of our websites, is the third most consulted website of Parks Services sites. You may have different information, this is nothing I calculated, but I heard this in the presentation. But it comes after Yosemite, Yellowstone are the most consulted sites, but think about it. All the teachers in America may be exposing their children to some of America's greatest sites. Let's get this site in that too. So when something becomes a National Historic Landmark, it's also listed in the National Register. So these programs work together in that sense. The other thing I think, what's been said about Truckee by both of you, and getting that town energized about what's going on is make it a Certified Local Government, if it is, if it's a CLG, then they get maybe it's a mainstream community [unintelligible] and this is just preservation jargon, but these are designations that communities have that inspire them to celebrate their--the history and the historic sites within that community and within this broader area. Truckee would certainly be a springboard for the Summit Tunnel and the other railroad associate sites. So, the National Trust invited me and others to participate in an AAPI session meeting last Fall. The NAPC, National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, is enthusiastic about an AAPI session. At their meeting next summer, which will be in Tacoma [unintelligible], that will be a great place to showcase these sites as well. And so, I think energizing every local government's important. And we really should work with local communities, it could be supporters and beneficiaries, designations and visitors.