



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **CAL FIRE Awards \$27.5 Million to Reduce Wildfire Risks Grants Fund Tahoe-Central Sierra Forest Health Projects**

**(AUBURN, Calif.)** – Today, [CAL FIRE awarded four grants](#) totaling \$27.5 million to fund high-priority forest health projects designed to combat climate change and reduce the risk of wildfires.

Awarded to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, California Tahoe Conservancy, National Forest Foundation, and American River Conservancy, the grants fund forest health projects in Placer, Nevada, Sierra, and El Dorado counties. The grants provide significant investment in the 2.4-million-acre [Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative](#) area where state, federal, environmental, industry and research representatives are working together to restore the resilience of forests and watersheds. The U.S. Forest Service Tahoe National Forest, Eldorado National Forest and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit serve as the critical federal counterparts in this work.

“With much of the state battling large, damaging wildfires, it’s more important than ever to make long-term investments that reduce wildfire risk and protect carbon storage,” says Jim Branham, Executive Officer of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. “These grants show a real commitment on behalf of the state of California to improving forest health and carbon sequestration in the Sierra Nevada.”

The grants, funded by [CAL FIRE’s California Climate Investments Forest Health Grant Program](#), use proceeds from California’s cap-and-trade program to combat climate change. Through the California Climate Investments Grant Program, CAL FIRE and other state agencies are investing in projects that directly reduce greenhouse gases while providing a wide range of additional benefits – such as prevention and reduction of wildfires -- for California communities.

“Healthy forests are one of our best climate regulators,” says Mary Mitsos, president and CEO of the National Forest Foundation. “However, the forests surrounding the

greater Tahoe area, like much of the Sierra Nevada region, need significant restoration if they are going to withstand wildfires, insects and disease and continue to provide the myriad benefits we rely on them to provide.”

The four grants awarded fund projects that are part of an all-lands regional restoration program and will be implemented by a collaborative of national forests, state agencies, nonprofits, and private land owners. The USDA Forest Service manages a large portion of the landscape within the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative area and will complete much of the work. The lands draw visitors from around the world and restoring their resilience will ensure that they continue to be an asset for the public.

“By protecting and restoring the health of our headwaters, we are also protecting the many benefits that flow from them,” says Alan Ehrgott, Executive Director for the American River Conservancy. “This work is important both to those of us that live and work in the headwaters, and to the state as a whole.”

Today also marks the one-year anniversary of the creation of the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative. The partnership was launched at the 2017 Tahoe Summit, and to date has secured nearly \$32.5 million in grant funds and \$3.5 million in investments from water agencies and beverage companies to restore forest and watershed resilience.

“We are thrilled that our efforts to coordinate federal, state and private projects across a 2.4-million-acre landscape are paying off,” said Patrick Wright, Executive Director of the California Tahoe Conservancy. “These large-scale efforts are essential to effectively manage our forests in the face of rising temperatures and increasing megafires.”

In addition to the grants awarded within the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative area, several grants were also awarded for similar work throughout the Sierra Nevada region. Information about the focus of each of the grants awarded and the dollar amounts awarded is available on CAL FIRE’s website:

[http://www.fire.ca.gov/grants/downloads/ForestHealth/17-18\\_CCI\\_FH\\_Grant\\_Awardees\\_Web.pdf](http://www.fire.ca.gov/grants/downloads/ForestHealth/17-18_CCI_FH_Grant_Awardees_Web.pdf)

### **About the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative**

Building upon several large-scale collaborative efforts in the region, the Tahoe Central Sierra Initiative is developing a comprehensive restoration strategy for more than 2.4 million acres of federal, state, local, and private land. The primary goal of Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative is to improve the health and resiliency of the forest ecosystems and communities in the TCSI landscape, thereby ensuring that the wide variety of benefits that the region provides continue into the future. The TCSI is focused on the landscape of the Lake Tahoe Basin and the American, Bear, Carson, Truckee and Yuba watersheds, which are crucial for downstream communities, agricultural interests, recreationalists and the environment.

The TCSI is led by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the California Tahoe Conservancy, in partnership with the USDA Forest Service Region 5, USDA Forest

Service Pacific Southwest Research Station, The Nature Conservancy, National Forest Foundation, University of California, Natural Reserve System-Sagehen Creek Field Station, and the California Forestry Association, with additional partners becoming engaged as the effort gains momentum.

Additional information about the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative can be found at [www.restorethesierra.org/tahoesierra](http://www.restorethesierra.org/tahoesierra).

A short video about the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative is available at <https://spark.adobe.com/video/owEW1iS0nq3zr>.

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