

### **Background**

At the December 2018 Board Meeting, the Board approved the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Proposition 68 Grant Program Guidelines to fund no less than \$1 million for projects that "support innovative, collaborative efforts to enhance, promote, and develop sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities and increased access to public lands in the Sierra Nevada Region." Distribution of these funds are to be consistent with SNC Strategic Plan's Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Regional Goal and should accomplish its identified strategies across a defined geographic region. The Vibrant Recreation and Tourism program is a directed grant program. Concept proposals are accepted on a continuous basis and projects are developed in conjunction with SNC.

In 2014, the Eastern Sierra Recreation Collaborative was formed to help guide and inform the Inyo National Forest's update of their Forest Management Plan. Over the next three years, the Collaborative was successful in establishing "Sustainable Recreation" as one of three primary focus areas in the Plan. A direct outcome of these forest management planning efforts also resulted in the formation of the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership (ESSRP). The ESSRP is a public partnership between local government agencies and the U.S. Forest Service and was formalized in 2018. The stated goal of the ESSRP is to "...design, plan, implement, and report out projects to improve and maintain recreational opportunities as well as restore ecosystems to their natural resiliency and functions." The intent of the ESSRP is to build enhanced working relationships between partners who are working on a common landscape. The ESSRP is responsible for identifying specific on-the ground projects and outcomes that will meet the definition and ongoing demands of sustainable recreation as defined in the new Inyo National Forest Draft Management Plan. The ESSRP is intended to be scalable and additive as more public partners come forward.

### **Current Status**

The Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML), submitted proposal RT001 for the *Eastern Sierra Office of Sustainable Recreation and Tourism* to the Vibrant Recreation and Tourism program on behalf of the ESSRP. The TOML requests \$618,750 to support the work and project development of the Eastern Sierra Office of Sustainable Recreation and Tourism (Office). This Office will provide coordination, technical support, and capacity to the ESSRP for the collaborative development of sustainable recreation and tourism projects and programs throughout the Eastern Sierra. The Office will provide much needed capacity to partners through technical assistance for project planning and development, identification and pursuit of appropriate funding opportunities, and the development of an Eastern Sierra climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation strategy related to the region's recreation and tourism economy that will help inform future investment in sustainable recreation and tourism projects. Finally, the Office will develop a focused regional identity and media products to tell the story of sustainable recreation and tourism in the Eastern Sierra to its broad visitor audience.

CEQA Compliance: This project is Statutorily Exempt under Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies as well as Categorical Exempt under Class 6, 15306 Information Collection

- To access the complete proposal, [click here](#).
- To access the Exhibit A Project Details and the Notice of Exemption, [click here](#).

### **Next Steps**

Upon approval by the Board, staff will file the Notice of Exemption, prepare a grant agreement, and continue partnering with the Town of Mammoth Lakes and the ESSRP to implement the project.

### **Recommendation**

**Staff recommends the Board:**

**(a) authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the *Eastern Sierra Office of Sustainable Recreation and Tourism* project (RT001); and**

**(b) authorize a grant award to the Town of Mammoth Lakes for the *Eastern Sierra Office of Sustainable Recreation and Tourism* project (RT001) as described in Exhibit A in the amount of \$618,750 and further authorize staff to enter into the necessary agreements to move forward with this project.**