

STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

*California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection,
and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68)*

SNC ID Number: P68WIP001

Applicant: California Tahoe Conservancy

Project Title: TCSI Project Lead and Conservancy Engagement

SNC Subregions: Central, South Central

Counties: Alpine, Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Nevada, Yuba, Sierra, Butte

Funding Amount Requested: \$1,954,590

Funding Amount Recommended: \$1,954,590

Total Project Cost: \$2,754,590

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

The TCSI Project Lead and Conservancy Engagement project will allow the California Tahoe Conservancy to coordinate and advance specific priorities in the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative (TCSI) area. The TCSI is a 2.4-million-acre landscape where the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), California Tahoe Conservancy (CTC), and other partners are taking a focused, landscape-scale approach to implement the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP). This approach accelerates regional-scale forest and watershed restoration through ecologically based management actions while creating the opportunities to support a forest restoration economy and explore innovative process, investment, and governance tools. The TCSI area ranges across parts of eight counties and includes portions of the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, and Plumas, Tahoe, Humboldt-Toiyabe, and Eldorado national forests.

This project will take direct steps to advance TCSI priorities. The TCSI is currently facilitated and supported by minimal staff. However, with recent successes and increases in the pace of project implementation, TCSI is at a critical juncture and requires a strong management team to effectively leverage the momentum gained. California's increasingly devastating wildfires have created the political will to explore innovative and aggressive approaches to streamline and increase the scale of forest restoration. TCSI is poised to lead such efforts but must do so across several interdependent fronts, requiring management and coordination of multiple resources from multiple partner organizations. This project allows CTC to advance projects and strategies for overcoming landscape-scale hurdles and help manage the many facets of TCSI. Specific aspects of this effort to be funded by SNC are:

1. Develop and test protocol for using new technologies to streamline resource surveys to meet NEPA and CEQA requirements (cultural and archaeological, spotted owls).
2. Prepare landscape restoration guidelines to inform other landscape efforts.
3. Develop performance measures for a Sierra Nevada resilience dashboard.
4. Expand the CCI funded carbon modeling to include projects not funded by CCI, comprehensively quantifying TCSI's contribution to state greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. Test the outputs against California Air Resources Board (CARB) and other state methodologies to identify a common carbon accounting method that can be applied throughout the Sierra Nevada.
5. Expand the geographic scope of the Lake Tahoe West effort to model impacts to human health based on forest management scenarios and air quality to the entire TCSI landscape.
6. Model the hydrological effects of forest treatments on water availability and streamflow.
7. Conduct logistics analysis to help overcome constraints to transporting and processing forest restoration byproducts, including mapping out the location of supply sources, the possible road and rail transportation network, and existing processing and distribution facilities.
8. Coordinate deployment of California Conservation Corps (CCC) crews to support TCSI's projects and provide administrative, logistical, and contracting support to the Basin's Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team.

In addition to the clear multiple watershed and forest health benefits from implementation projects within the TCSI, this project will establish TCSI as a model for other regional efforts, with specific approaches to addressing hurdles faced for landscape-scale watershed restoration and forest health efforts.

This project both implements on-the-ground work and supports the overall goals of the TCSI, which is a model for a landscape-level approach to addressing forest and watershed health. The TCSI has recently secured \$27 million in California Climate Investment (CCI) grants to support forest health efforts over the next four years. These investments equate to roughly 21,138 acres of fuel reductions efforts, 8,111 acres of prescribed burns, and 164,330 (green) tons of biomass across land ownerships and jurisdictions. As a coordinator of the TCSI partnership, SNC has played an integral role in projects on the landscape, as well as educating other regions about the TCSI approach.

The California Tahoe Conservancy is a state agency established in 1984 to restore and sustain a balance between the natural and the human environment and between public and private uses at Lake Tahoe. The CTC mission is to lead California's efforts to restore and enhance the extraordinary natural and recreational resources of the Lake Tahoe Basin. Over the past 35 years, CTC established itself as a highly effective leader in the Basin, protecting thousands of acres of land and supporting hundreds of site improvement projects, playing a major role in the restoration of significant wetland areas

and the reduction of fuel hazards within the Basin. As co-organizer of the TCSI (with SNC), the CTC is already coordinating the successful and often showcased partnership between local, state, federal, and private stakeholders. Landowners and partners within the TCSI look to CTC for leadership. The SNC and CTC have enjoyed a long and productive partnership with the TCSI and a host of other collaborative efforts. In 2018, the SNC and CTC entered into a Joint Powers Agreement which allows both conservancies to pool resources to partner on projects that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

The TCSI is currently led by the CTC and SNC, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service Region 5, Tahoe National Forest, Eldorado National Forest, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, National Forest Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, California Forestry Association, USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station, University of California-Natural Reserve System, and Sagehen Creek Field Station. Additional partners are becoming engaged as the effort gains momentum. For this specific effort the CTC is contributing \$50,000 from a US Forest Service grant and is in process of securing \$750,000 in CAL FIRE Forest Health Program funds. As part of the TCSI collaboration, this effort will increase capacity to plan and manage more forest health projects to achieve landscape-scale resilience.

Section 80135(c) of Proposition 68 allocates \$25,000,000 to the SNC to implement the Sierra Nevada WIP, and explicitly states that SNC may allocate funds to the CTC. The SNC Strategic Plan establishes the WIP as the SNC’s overarching initiative, providing a holistic approach to watershed and community health and resilience. The TCSI is a showcase pilot effort of the WIP, and this project implements actions to increase the pace and scale of forest and watershed restoration in the TCSI landscape, developing approaches which can be replicated elsewhere. The project directly follows SNC’s Action Plan, as providing resources to support the TCSI, defining resilience and identifying performance measures and on-the-ground management activities that promote forest resilience, and developing recommendations for more efficient environmental planning based on the TCSI experience are specifically identified as actions to further SNC’s Healthy Watersheds and Forests goal.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Progress Reports	Every 6 months until project completion
Leadership and Coordination of TCIS partnership steering committee and sub groups. <i>Deliverables</i> include team and work group meetings, action items developed through those meetings, priority identification and strategies to address and fund those priorities.	Ongoing through January 2022
Management, coordination, and oversight of CCI funded and other TCSI project implementation. <i>Deliverables</i> include the implementation of on-the-ground projects through appropriate project partners.	Ongoing through January 2022

<p>Develop and test protocol for using new technologies to streamline resource surveys to meet NEPA and CEQA requirements. <i>Deliverables</i> include testing protocol for cultural and archaeological resources for French Meadows and Lake Tahoe West, completing resources surveys for Lake Tahoe West, developing a LiDAR based habitat suitability map for spotted owls and protocol for streamlined spotted owl surveys</p>	Ongoing, reporting by January 2022
<p>Prepare landscape restoration guidelines to inform other landscape efforts. <i>Deliverables</i> include guidelines for landscape scale restoration that describes conducting landscape-scale assessment, landscape-scale and project-level planning guidance, and permitting and implementation lessons learned.</p>	Reporting by January 2022
<p>Develop performance measures for a Sierra Nevada resilience dashboard. <i>Deliverables</i> include the performance measures applied at landscape and sub-watershed level, a science and stakeholder workshop, and performance measures integrated with the dashboard.</p>	Ongoing, reporting by January 2022
<p>Expand the CCI-funded carbon modeling to include projects not funded by CCI. Test the outputs against California Air Resources Board (CARB) and other state methodologies to identify a common carbon accounting method that can be applied throughout the Sierra Nevada. <i>Deliverables</i> include the carbon accounting method.</p>	Ongoing, reporting by January 2022
<p>Model forest management air quality impacts on human health. <i>Deliverables</i> include model results.</p>	Reporting by January 2022
<p>Model the hydrological effects of forest treatments on water availability and streamflow. <i>Deliverables</i> include reporting on the results of the modeling.</p>	Reporting by January 2022
<p>Conduct logistics analysis to help overcome constraints to transporting and processing forest restoration byproducts. <i>Deliverables</i> include a report outlining barriers to cost effectively transporting wood product materials to various destinations and an opportunities analysis for where and how to improve the distribution network.</p>	Reporting by January 2022
<p>Coordinate deployment of CCC crews to support TCSI's projects and provide administrative, logistical and contracting support to the Basin's Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team. <i>Deliverables</i> include projects implemented with CCC and Fire and Fuels.</p>	Ongoing through January 2022
Final Report to SNC	January 2022
Estimated Project Completion Date	January 2022

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Leadership and direction of TCSI partnership, including coordination of projects funded through other sources.	\$ 504,590
NEPA, CEQA, and permitting protocols	\$ 350,000
Landscape-scale restoration guidelines	\$ 50,000
Resilience Dashboard	\$ 150,000
Carbon accounting	\$ 100,000
Forest treatments air quality impacts modeling	\$ 150,000
Forest treatments water resources impacts modeling	\$ 350,000
Analysis of forest restoration bioproduct use limitations	\$ 150,000
CCC and Fire & Fuels work crew coordination	\$ 150,000
Administrative:	
Administrative Costs	\$ 0
TOTAL:	\$1,954,590

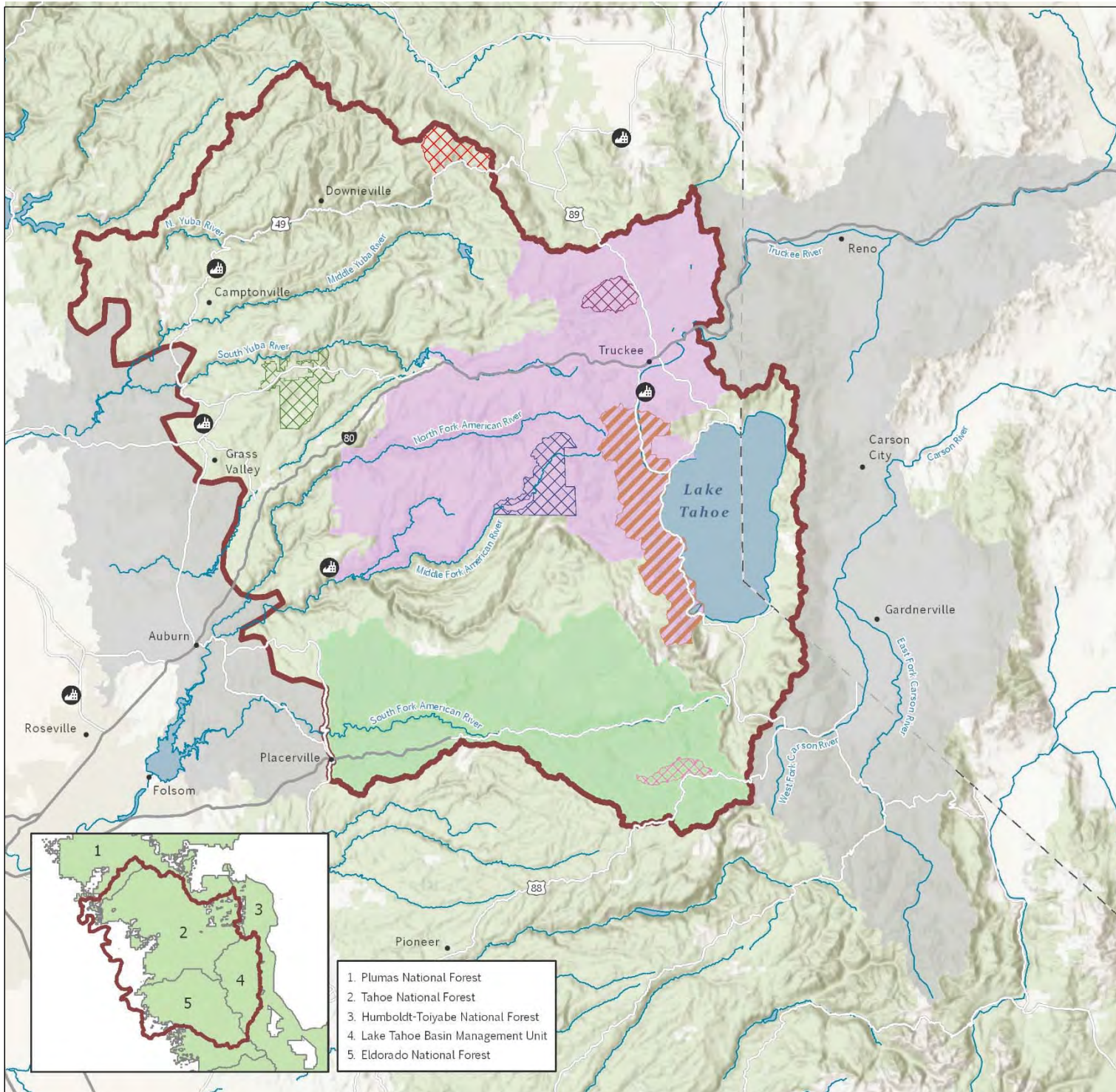
PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

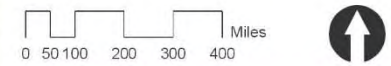
- Acres of Land Improved or Restored
- Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments

Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative

A Collaborative Approach
To Achieve Resilience

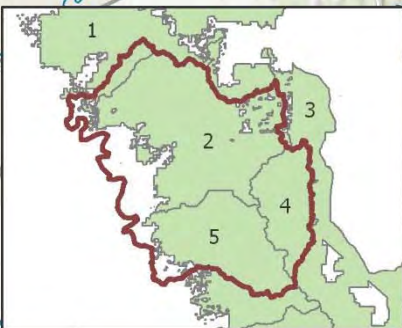


- Place
- Existing or Proposed Biomass Utilization Site
- Highway
- Freeway
- River
- Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative
- North Yuba Forest Resilience Project
- Western Nevada County Defensible Space Project
- French Meadows Project
- Caples Ecological Restoration Project
- Sagehen Experimental Forest Project
- Lake Tahoe West Restoration Partnership
- National Forest Foundation Treasured Landscape
- South Fork American River Cohesive Strategy
- Area of Interest



Projection: WGS 1984 Web Mercator Auxiliary Sphere
Sources: Esri, USGS, NGA, NASA, CIGAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodatasbyresen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy makes no representations or warranties regarding the accuracy of data or maps. The agency shall not be liable under any circumstances for any direct, special, incidental, or consequential damages with respect to any claim by any user or third party on account of, or arising from, the use of data or maps.



1. Plumas National Forest
2. Tahoe National Forest
3. Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
4. Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
5. Eldorado National Forest



CEQA Documentation

SNC #: P68WIP001

Project Title: TCSI Project Lead and Conservancy Engagement

Applicant: California Tahoe Conservancy

CEQA Compliance:

The project is Statutorily Exempt under Section 15262. Feasibility and Planning Studies and Categorically Exempt under Class 6 Section 15306. Information Collection.

- **Notice of Exemption:** See Below

Notice of Exemption

Form D

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

County Clerk
County of _____

(Address)

Project Title: TCSI Project Lead and Conservancy Engagement (SNC #P68WIP001)

Project Location - Specific:

The TCSI area ranges across parts of eight counties and includes portions of the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, and Plumas, Tahoe, Humboldt-Toiyabe, and Eldorado National Forests

Project Location – City: NA Project Location – County: Alpine, Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Nevada, Yuba, Sierra, Butte

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide funding in the amount of \$1,954,590 to the California Tahoe Conservancy advance projects and strategies for overcoming landscape-scale hurdles and help manage the many facets of TCSI. The project includes partner coordination, hydrologic modeling, logistics and CEQA analyses, and development of performance measures and landscape restoration guidelines.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: California Tahoe Conservancy

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15306, "Information Collection"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: Section 15262, "Feasibility and Planning Studies"

Reasons why project is exempt:

This is a planning project involving partner coordination, modeling, and guidance documents; it does not involve physical alterations to the environment. The completion of these analyses will not have a legally binding effect on future activities.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Shannon Ciotti Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4689

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Title: _____

- Signed by Lead Agency
 - Signed by Applicant
- Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Revised 2005