

**Background**

On June 5, 2018, California voters passed Proposition 68, the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for all Act of 2018. Section 80135(c) of Proposition 68 allocates \$25,000,000 to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) to implement the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP), and explicitly states that SNC may allocate funds to the California Tahoe Conservancy (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 Tahoe Central Sierra Initiative (TCSI) is a showcase pilot effort of the WIP which is being 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.

The CTC 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.

**Current Status**

Staff is proposing a Proposition 68 grant to the California Tahoe Conservancy in the amount of \$1,954,590 to support the TCSI Project Lead and Conservancy Engagement Project as described in the [Project Details and the Notice of Exemption](#). This grant will help implement actions to increase the pace and scale of forest and watershed restoration in the TCSI landscape and will develop approaches which can be replicated elsewhere. Funding will help define forest resilience in the TCSI landscape, will identify performance measures and on-the-ground management activities that promote forest resilience, and will develop recommendations for more efficient environmental planning. As part of the TCSI collaboration, this effort will also increase capacity to plan and manage more forest health projects to achieve landscape-scale resilience.

In further support of the project, 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.

The proposed project directly supports SNC's Healthy Watersheds and Forests Regional goal and Action Plan by providing resources to support the TCSI.

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

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

### **Next Steps**

Upon approval by the Board, SNC staff will file a Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse to satisfy CEQA requirements and execute a grant agreement with CTC to implement the project.

### **Recommendation**

**Staff recommends the Board:**

**(a) authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the *TCSI/Project Lead and Conservancy Engagement Project (P68WIP001)*; and**

**(b) authorize a grant award to the California Tahoe Conservancy for the *TCSI/Project Lead and Conservancy Engagement Project* as described in Exhibit A in the amount of \$1,954,590 and further authorize staff to enter into the necessary agreements to move forward with this project.**