

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is currently operating under its 2016-19 Strategic Action Plan (Plan) originally approved by the Board in December 2015 and extended through June 2018. At the June 2017 Board Meeting, the Board directed staff to conduct a strategic assessment and to update SNC's Strategic Plan (Plan) for implementation in June 2018. The Plan is being updated early in order to re-assess SNC focus to include contemporary issues such as uncharacteristically large wildfire, tree mortality, impacts of severe drought, and the Watershed Improvement Program and its focus on the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative Area, among other activities and statewide priorities. The Board also directed staff to seek out potential partners who have not participated in earlier planning efforts, and to gather and incorporate significant input from stakeholders who operate outside of the Region but who are beneficiaries of the ecosystem services emanating from the Region.

Current Status

At the June 2017 Board meeting, staff presented a proposal to build the planning project in three distinct but possibly overlapping phases, subsequently being referred to as "tracks."

Track 1: This track pursues input from stakeholders outside the region, whose concerns and recommendations are unlikely to have been incorporated into prior strategic plans. The SNC Staff is hopeful that outreach to this audience will provide new perspective and identify ways and opportunities to actively engage urban and other thought leaders in activities that protect the Sierra Nevada. Activities in this track are underway and will be completed in October 2017. Input gathered during this track may inform actions in tracks 2 and 3. A significant accomplishment in Track 1 has been the approval of SNC membership in the California Water Action Collaborative, which is made up of business, agricultural, and environmental members across the state. Staff will seek the members' voices as part of completing Track 1 objectives.

Track 2: This track pursues input from current Regional stakeholders and will seek their perspective on current needs of the Region and how the SNC is doing in identifying and meeting those needs. Input gathered during this track will inform actions in Track 3. Activities in this track are underway and will be completed in November 2017. The internal SNC coordination team has begun planning for the outreach portion of this track including meeting types (face-to-face, group, webinars, etc.) and schedule.

Track 3: This track provides the opportunity for SNC employees and Boardmembers to consider the input gathered in Tracks 1 and 2 in the development of specific strategies for inclusion in a new Strategic Plan. Issues, observations, and recommendations gathered in Tracks 1 and 2 will be shared with Track 3 participants. Activities in this track are expected to run from November 2017 through February 2018. A Board workshop will be conducted at the December Board Meeting in order to gather input from the full Board.

Once the three tracks of the assessment are completed, staff will review and analyze the input received in each track of the outreach, as well as other public comment, and will develop a draft Strategic Plan for Board review and input in March 2018. Staff will then develop actions that support implementation of the strategies and expect to bring a final Strategic Plan and an Action plan to the Board for final approval in June 2018.

Regular Board input on the planning and implementation of the Strategic Action Plan is being provided by a subcommittee of Boardmembers including Terrence O'Brien and Douglas Teeter. The Board subcommittee has provided initial guidance to staff and will be receiving project updates on a quarterly basis.

Next Steps

A master schedule has been completed that will guide the project to ensure completion of input-gathering through all three tracks prior to the March 2018 Board Meeting. The internal SNC coordination committee is building the outreach materials to be used in Tracks 1 and 2. Face-to-face meetings should commence and be completed in the fall. Staff will keep the Board subcommittee informed of major activities and seek out guidance as needed.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.