Board Meeting AGENDA
September 6 – 7, 2017
Sierra County – North Central Subregion

SEPTEMBER 6, 2017

Board Tour 1:30 – 5:00 p.m.
Members of the Board and staff will participate in a field trip to explore issues and activities related to forest and watershed health in the North Central Subregion. Members of the public are invited to participate in the field tour but are responsible for their own transportation and lunch. The tour will start in the parking lot of the Calpine Community Center & Post Office, located at 103 County Road, Calpine, CA 96124.

Reception 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Following the Board tour, Boardmembers and staff will attend a reception open to the public. The reception and dinner will be held at Sierra County Supervisor Paul Roen’s home located at 6765 Road A23, Calpine, CA 96124. (Driving directions from Westside Road & Calpine Road in Calpine, travel 2.2 miles north on Westside/A23 to U-shaped driveway on left, follow signs to parking.)

SEPTEMBER 7, 2017

Board Meeting 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (End time is approximate.)
Sierraville School
305 Lincoln Street
Sierraville, CA 96126

I. Call to Order

II. Oath of Office for New Boardmember

III. Roll Call

IV. Approval of June 8, 2017, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)

V. Public Comments
Provide an opportunity for the public to comment on non-agenda items.

VI. Board Chair’s Report

VII. Executive Officer’s Report (INFORMATIONAL)
   a. Administrative Update
   b. Policy and Outreach Update
   c. Sierra Nevada 2017 Fire Season Update
   d. Tribal Forum Discussion Report
   e. Miscellaneous Updates
VIII. Consideration of The Nature Conservancy’s (TNC’s) Intent to Sell, with Reserved Conservation Easement, Fee Title to Rudnick Ranch, Kern County, Previously Acquired by TNC under SNC Agreement #434, awarded March 2011. (ACTION)
Staff will present a recommendation to authorize SNC to assess the proposed sale with reserved conservation easement of Rudnick Ranch and to authorize the transaction consistent with the terms of SNC Agreement #434.

IX. Proposition 84 Grant Award Report for French Meadows Project #914 (INFORMATIONAL)
Sierra Nevada Conservancy staff and Ed Smith, Forest Ecologist at The Nature Conservancy, will report to the Board on the awarding of a Proposition 84 grant under the Executive Officer’s delegated authority.

X. Modification of Delegated Authority to Expend Remaining Proposition 84 Funds (ACTION)
Staff will recommend modifications to the previously approved authority delegated to the Executive Officer to expend remaining Proposition 84 funds. Modifications include updated amounts available for grants and removing the geographic restriction of the authority. The Board may act upon the staff recommendation.

XI. Strategic Assessment/Plan Update (INFORMATIONAL)
Staff will provide a status report on the SNC’s Strategic Assessment progress.

XII. Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Update (INFORMATIONAL)
Staff will provide the Board with an update on the Sierra Nevada WIP.

XIII. Update on Efforts to Establish New Biomass/Wood Processing Infrastructure in the Sierra Nevada Region (INFORMATIONAL)
Conservancy and Watershed Research and Training Center staff will update the Board on the status of efforts to develop Biomass/Wood Processing Infrastructure in the Region.

XIV. Boardmembers’ Comments
Provide an opportunity for members of the Board to make comments on items not on the agenda.
XV. Public Comments
    Provide an opportunity for the public to comment on non-agenda items.

XVI. Adjournment
I. Call to Order
Board Chair John Brissenden called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

II. Oath of Office for New Boardmembers
Board Chair John Brissenden administered the oath of office to new Boardmember Supervisor Randy Fletcher, Central Subregion, Yuba County.

III. Roll Call

Absent: Elizabeth Cavasso

IV. Approval of March 2, 2017, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)
ACTION: Boardmember Jack Garamendi moved, and Boardmember Tom Wheeler seconded, a motion to approve the March 2, 2017, meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Public Comments
No public comment at this time.

VI. Board Chair’s Report
Board Chair John Brissenden complimented Boardmember Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez for helping staff make progress with Contracted Fiscal Services (CFS) and the Department of General Services. Brissenden also stated that he has met with Secretary John Laird who agrees that SNC’s staff is the most efficient and effective state agency to put projects on the ground effectively and quickly. Brissenden stated that Secretary Laird will reach out to CAL FIRE and State Water Resources Control Board Chair Felicia Marcus regarding additional opportunities to work with the SNC.

VII. Executive Officer’s Report (INFORMATIONAL)
Executive Officer Jim Branham thanked Boardmember Jacqueline Hernandez-Wong for her support with CFS. Hernandez-Wong stated Administrative Services Division Chief Amy Lussier has been doing the heavy lifting, but it is nice to hold her up. Branham also thanked all the Admin staff that has been dealing with a tough situation for a while, but there is vision of a brighter future. Branham acknowledged and commended Lussier for her efforts.
a. Administrative Update
Administrative Services Division Chief Amy Lussier provided the Board with an update on SNC’s recent administrative activities. Lussier noted that since the last time the Board was convened, SNC has had some success remedying the issues that SNC had been having with Contracted Fiscal Services (CFS). Lussier thanked Boardmember Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez for supporting SNC by attending meetings with the control agencies, and indicated that SNC will continue to look into taking on accounting internally as a cost-saving option. Lussier shared with the Board that SNC will be hiring a Retired Annuitant (RA) that has strong accounting experience and has worked at the Department of Finance. The RA will help identify what SNC needs to do to take on its own accounting. Branham noted that SNC has had conversations with the California Natural Resources Agency about SNC’s desire to take on accounting internally, and indicated that they are aware of the obstacles that SNC faces.

Lussier shared a current update on the SNC’s budget and outlined how new funding sources are being incorporated into the Conservancy’s budget.

Lussier also introduced SNC’s newest hire, Shannon Ciotti, who will replace Patrick Eidman as the SNC Grant Program Coordinator.

b. Policy and Outreach Update
Branham provided the Board with a brief update on policy and outreach efforts, directing Boardmembers to the information presented in the Board packet. Branham let the Board know a Parks Bond could be a viable opportunity for future SNC funding. There are two Parks Bond bills moving through the Legislature, SB 5 and AB 18, but Branham stated the Governor’s Office is expressing strong concerns about incurring more bond debt. Since the writing of the staff report, SB 5 has been amended to include line item allocation for the Conservancies, and SNC would receive $30 million. Branham stated that AB 18 proposes $50 million for the SNC, including an allocation for forest health projects specifically.

Boardmember Tom Wheeler asked if is there anything the county supervisors can do to help with the bills that were mentioned. Branham said SNC will follow up with Boardmembers on key message points for letters of support. SNC has also been working with RCRC and they have been very supportive.

Boardmember Terrence O’Brien asked that if the Governor is concerned about bond indebtedness, and whether an argument could be made about the downstream negative fiscal impacts resulting from more catastrophic fires. O’Brien continued by saying we are incurring debt now, and we may be able to save money in the long run, and letters of support from county supervisors could
help persuade the Governor’s office that these bond measures might be in the best financial interest of the state.

Boardmember Todd Ferrara stated that the Governor’s current proposal is a hybrid of what O’Brien discussed: the creation of a Natural Resources Parks and Restoration fund that the Secretary of California Natural Resources Agency would administer. It would not be a bond program but a general fund appropriation, and that the administration may see merit in not incurring new debt by addressing emerging threats immediately on the front line to save on future costs. Ferrara offered to provide a status update on the fund at the September Board meeting.

Branham responded to O’Brien that the message of investing to avoid disaster is part of the SNC’s communications efforts. He also noted as it relates to the general fund appropriation described by Ferrara that the Region has not fared well when funds are in a statewide pot.

Wong-Hernandez stated that tree mortality issue is an opportunity to help explain investments for the future, but these bills are much bigger than that and the bond indebtedness creates “sticker shock.”

Brissenden stated that SNC Board appointees should communicate with their appointing authorities as to the importance of SNC funding. Branham responded that there is a process that staff go through regarding pending legislation, and SNC’s role has been to communicate and share information with partners if there is a bond going forward and that Boardmembers are, in fact, able to communicate directly with those that appointed them.

Boardmember Doug Teeter said to add perspective on what is being paid for out of the general fund, the Williamson Act is not getting funding and the funding is coming from the counties and other programs. Since the counties are footing the bill, it is hard for him to support something coming out of the general fund when it seems the counties are the piggy bank for the state when it has budget problems.

Communications and Outreach Manager Brittany Covich shared an example of how SNC’s communications efforts are supporting new policies. Covich provided an overview of how the communications team has been supporting the Fire Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), an agreement that SNC became a signatory on in the fall of 2015, which is designed to increase the use of resource-beneficial fire to meet ecological and management objectives across California. Covich indicated that SNC sees the fire MOU as a key tool for increasing the pace and scale of restoration, and as an effort that is complimentary to the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP). Boardmembers and Covich had a discussion about communications hurdles and opportunities associated with the Fire MOU, and Branham highlighted a
Proposition 1 grant project that the Board recently approved in the Caples Creek watershed on the Eldorado National Forest that will provide opportunities to conduct outreach in support of the goals of the MOU.

c. Tribal Forum Discussion Report
Branham reported that it was the fourth Tribal Forum meeting in a series of meetings with tribes that are local to the area of the Board meeting.

Tribal Coordinator Julie Griffith-Flatter updated the Board on the tribal meeting that took place on June 7, 2017. Griffith-Flatter reported that there has been progress made on draft watershed assessments and they have been distributed to the tribes for review. The draft Prop 1 grant guidelines contain language that encourages more tribal participation with the grant development process and encourages applicants to interact with tribes early in the process. SNC is working with the governor’s Tribal Advisor on consultant communication policies that would be consistent through many state funding agencies. SNC now has contacts with each tribal chairman’s association in California.

Griffith-Flatter reported that there was an excellent discussion with the two tribes represented, with a note that hazard-tree removal is a key issue on tribal lands and that it is a priority for tribes and the tribal communities throughout the southern region. There also was discussion about abandoned mine land issues and the cultural monitoring aspect and safety training for cultural monitoring. A key point is the need for communication during the planning phase for all the programs and processes for federal land managers and state land managers.

Participants also discussed the lack of administrative capacity for tribes to administer grant projects. There is also an issue about federally recognized versus the non-federally recognized status and how that can hinder some tribes’ abilities to access funds. A suggestion to use cultural education as part of an effort to minimize impacts to tribal resources resulting from recreation and tourism was also discussed. SNC is researching a possible change in the definition of tribes in SNC, enabling legislation to what is generally accepted statewide as the California Native American tribe which recognizes the non-federally recognized tribes. Griffith-Flatter said there will be continued communications and outreach with the tribes.

O’Brien confirmed his belief that these meetings are valuable to the tribes and SNC. He has attended all the meetings, and found them all to be worthwhile and informative. It is important to continue the meetings and have a positive working relationship with all the tribes and that tribes’ input will enhance the work that SNC does.
Ferrara asked if SNC staff anticipates putting forward a legislative proposal that would change eligibility of the tribes. Branham replied that staff hasn’t submitted it as a legislative idea but is seriously contemplating it.

Boardmember Jeff Griffiths asked if staff is anticipating a tribal meeting in Inyo or Mono counties on the eastside, and when will it be? Griffith-Flatter replied that SNC has not determined when that will be and the next board meeting on the eastside is in Inyo County scheduled for late 2018.

d. Sustainable Funding Committee Report
Policy Coordinator Elizabeth Betancourt provided an update on the items in the Board report. The Sierra Consortium held a Sierra Day at the Capitol in May, and the SNC participated as an ex-officio member of the group. Boardmember Jack Garamendi was there. Participants heard presentations from a number of legislative and administrative leaders, including Assembly Member Eduardo Garcia (who is carrying AB 18), Catherine Freeman (chief consultant to the Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife), and Tina Canon-Leahy (legal counsel for the State Water Resources Control Board).

Betancourt also reported on SNC staff participation in the California Forest and Watershed Alliance (CAFWA). At CAFWA’s May meeting, there was some support for a state parks bond. While there was not a consensus amongst that group to support the parks bond collectively, individual organizational supporting has already happened. The Nature Conservancy has started working with Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) on the French Meadows project, looking at legislation to give the United States Forest Service (USFS) environmental programmatic planning up to 1,000,000 acres at a time.

Branham described the first (and only) call had with the Board Committee on Sustainable Funding. Staff, with the committee, will continue the calls as needs dictate and will continue to track opportunities as they present, engaging the committee in conversations regarding the SNC’s goal of long-term, sustainable organizational funding.

e. Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Update
WIP Coordinator Mandy Vance reported to the Board that there is momentum with the Tahoe-Central Sierra Resilient Forest Initiative (TCSI) and there is cohesion with that group. The TCSI team developed a grant proposal for Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds (GGRF) from CAL FIRE for $12 million and were invited back to submit a grant application for $5 million. Vance stated that TCSI is developing resource conservation assessments under AB 2087, exploring the linkages between fish and wildlife habitat, carbon storage, greenhouse gas reduction, water, and fire to develop a holistic approach. In preliminary conversations with California Fish and Wildlife, they have shown a lot of enthusiasm.
Vance let the Board know that staff is working with key scientists from the research community in the Sierra Nevada region to design a forum to explore what resilience looks like on the Tahoe-Central Sierra Landscape. They want to identify desired conditions and the best path forward utilizing the tools that we have in place.

Vance updated the Board on the WIP assessments. Staff has been working on them for a while and the Board report is still current for Bureau of Land Management and National Parks Services assessments, but since the report, all the private land assessments from Sierra Coordinated Resources Management Council (SCRMC) have been received. Staff is reviewing those and determining how to include them in the Watershed Information Network (WIN). The USFS has completed its forest assessments under the WIP and Boardmember Barnie Gyant will share more information about that.

Vance wanted to recognize the efforts of Liz Berger, who is our WIP Liaison for the USFS. She has been helpful to get these assessments out to the forest level. Vance thanked Berger and the region for getting the assessments completed.

Vance informed the Board that SNC staff met with Eli Ilano of the USFS and identified seven watersheds in the Region, looking at tenure planning for trying to identify CEQA treatments to get them to resilience. Staff will continue to talk to them about those watersheds, specifically the North Yuba and the Upper Middle Fork of the American, and will keep the Board updated on those efforts.

Boardmember Barnie Gyant updated the Board that ten National Forest assessments are done. Gyant liked the process and had assessments completed across the whole region. He wanted to thank Vance, Branham, and the SNC staff. The assessments serve as a platform to tell the story of the restoration needs in the western region. The USFS Region 5 staff looked at NEPA decisions that were made and unable to implement. The assessments included vegetation treatment, meadows, aquatic organism passages, roads, and abandoned mines. There are $1.4 billion in projects within the assessments. Gyant referenced a map that was pulled out the Sierra National Forest and different activities that need to be completed in the region. The USFS is going to make a map for all of the units. The USFS Region 5 would need about $300 million more per year to continue on with restoration efforts. The assessments are going to be a great tool for USFS.

Boardmember Bob Johnston asked if the assessments are organized by forest or watershed. Gyant replied they are organized by both.

Ferrara commented that the CAL FIRE GGRF that Vance referenced had $25 million to allocate and the concept proposal package had 49 proposals received totaling $115 million. CAL FIRE only invited back 13 applications for full
proposals totaling $58 million. Full applications are due at the end of June and CAL FIRE will probably make awards in mid-summer.

Gyant reported that he and USFS Pacific South West Regional Forester Randy Moore met with Branham and Assistant Executive Officer Bob Kingman on June 5 to discuss TCSI. They are excited to provide focus and resources on a larger landscape. Gyant also updated the Board on storm damage from this winter. Gyant continued, USFS is trying to tell the story and hopefully get the funding needed to fix these issues.

Boardmember Woody Smeck appreciated the graphic and said it was a great way to communicate the complexity.

Wheeler asked if he could get the maps. Gyant will check into it, and will get them to Branham in a couple of weeks and he can distribute. There was further discussion regarding the funding needed to deal with road repairs and the challenge of securing such funding.

Branham assured the Board that the SNC will continue to serve the entire Region but the TCSI area provides a unique opportunity for doing business differently in terms of forest restoration. Branham also wanted to thank Gyant, Randy Moore, and Liz Berger for their continued support to move the WIP forward.

f. Miscellaneous Updates
Branham gave a thank you to everyone that participated in the field trip the day before, in particular the work that Sarah Campe did in organizing it. Kirkwood stated that it was one of the best board tours that has been offered in terms of content and debriefings that were kept online.

VIII. 2017-18/18-19 Proposition 1 Grant Guidelines (ACTION)
Assistant Executive Officer Bob Kingman provided a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the Final Draft Proposition 1 Grant Guidelines. Kingman reported that staff hosted three public workshops, and the thirty-day public review period is complete. SNC will administer $8 million for this round. Kingman highlighted guideline changes from the last round, including no special appropriation for tree mortality projects, tree mortality projects should include restoration efforts, meadow restoration will be considered as part of a larger forest health project, and pre-acquisition planning grants that support forest health will be considered.

Kingman also stated there will be new additional scoring criteria that includes demonstrable support and involvement by downstream beneficiaries and whether a project supports larger landscape-level restoration. He noted a minimum score of 80 out of 100 will be required for Board consideration.
Kingman noted pre-applications will be mandatory and must be submitted online. He complimented staff for building the online process. Kingman also noted staff will conduct a site visit for every Category 1 project after a pre-application is received.

Boardmember Bob Kirkwood suggested to include in any cover material that SNC programs must be carried out and be mindful of their positive implication of Regional and local economies. That is important to SNC and it was important when the legislation was passed.

No public comment.

**ACTION:** Boardmember Bob Kirkwood moved, Boardmember Tom Wheeler seconded, a motion for approval of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 1 FY 2017-18 / 2018-19 Grant Guidelines, and authorizes staff to implement the FY 2017-18 / 2018-19 Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program. The motion passed unanimously.

**IX. Strategic Assessment and Plan (ACTION)**

Policy and Outreach Division Chief Angela Avery began the update by reviewing the recommendations that staff were making to the Board and asking for a Board Committee to provide guidance throughout the new process.

Avery reminded the Board that the existing Strategic Action Plan (SAP) was developed in a two-phase process that first identified strategies to be implemented between 2016-2019, with an initial Action Plan identifying actions to be taken to achieve those strategies between January 2016 and June 2017.

Avery reported there have been significant changes in the Region since the SAP was approved in 2015. She highlighted massive tree mortality; years of drought followed by a recent, severe winter; and recognized the Tahoe-Central Sierra initiative area as a new focus under Watershed Improvement Program.

Boardmember Terry O’Brien recommended a text edit to one of the proposed actions in the 2017-2018 SAP and expressed concern about the SNC supporting the issue of Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) programs in the Region. O’Brien shared that CCAs were once contentious issues for utilities like PG&E, Southern California Edison, and local communities, though he also acknowledged that he was unaware of where the issue stands today.

The Board engaged in brief discussion regarding the CCA concept noting other locales which had utilized and approved the concept such that including the words in an SNC Action plan would not create a problem for our relationships with the utilities.
Avery suggested staff modify the language to make it clear that SNC is not advocating that communities adopt this as a model, but rather that SNC would support Sierra communities that make the choice to pursue CCAs in the future.

Boardmembers engaged in further discussion regarding investor-owned utilities not buying power from biomass facilities, therefore supporting the idea that biomass facilities be included in community choice selections – especially considering difficulty in getting contract extensions on biomass facilities and the need to move smaller biomass material to help the bigger problem. The Board also discussed the need for emphasis on the local and regional economic implications of all SNC programs.

Avery then presented a three-phase proposal to create a more current and thorough Strategic Plan. The first phase would develop a strategic assessment that incorporates out-of-region input and tries to forge new connections with urban leaders and businesses outside of the Sierra Nevada to obtain support for, and new perspective on, Sierra issues. SNC will utilize a new tool called WindTunneling – a web-based application designed to pull together collective intelligence and create the opportunity for collaborative, transparent discussion. SNC is considering using this tool with the California Water Action Collaborative (CWAC), a group of business leaders, environmentalists, and agriculture folks in California that advocate for watershed stewardship.

Avery explained that phase two would take place within the Region via meetings with a wide range of local stakeholders. The goal of phase two would be to understand what SNC is doing well, identify opportunities for improvement, and to better understand regional needs. Avery identified potential secondary goals of identifying new roles, activities, and divisions of labor within the Sierra Nevada and those working to protect the Region that complement each other and successfully move the Region toward resilience.

Avery explained that phase three would utilize the WindTunneling tool with the Board and staff to look at the results of our in- and extra-Regional outreach efforts in phase one and phase two with the goal of developing a new Strategic Plan and Action Plan for Board consideration in June 2018.

The Board supported the idea of creating a committee to provide guidance during the Strategic Assessment and Plan process and supported reaching out to the CWAC as a sample of business and urban thought leaders in phase one. They asked questions about the CWAC membership and made recommendations about businesses that staff might also reach out to in phase one. The Board also explored the WindTunneling tool itself, including getting clarification about costs and understanding how the tool is used.
ACTION: Boardmember Randy Fletcher moved, and Boardmember Bob Kirkwood seconded, a motion to approve the proposed revisions to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Strategic Action Plan, direct staff to implement approved actions through June 2018, and initiate a new strategic assessment and planning process as described in the staff report, culminating in a new Strategic Plan and Action Plan anticipated to be presented for Board review and approval in June 2018. The motion passed unanimously. Board Chair John Brissenden appointed a committee of Boardmembers Terry O'Brien and Doug Teeter to provide guidance to staff throughout the strategic planning process.

X. Tree Mortality and Forest Health and Resilience Discussion (INFORMATIONAL)
Executive Officer Jim Branham introduced staff members Nic Enstice and Sarah Campe for presentations on tree mortality, forest health and resilience, and an effort organizing in the Southern Sierra to address these and other issues.

Enstice began his presentation by highlighting the unprecedented, significant change going on in California forests. This decade, poor forest health across the region first resulted in a significant raise in larger and hotter fires. When combined with severe drought conditions, it resulted in optimal conditions for bark beetle activity. The end result is a significant change in the region’s forests, with no past precedent to inform management decisions. Enstice noted that the USFS Region 2 in Colorado and Wyoming has been dealing with bark beetle infestation for 20 years. As a result, there has been a lot of research completed on those forests that California might use as guidance, though he cautioned that those studies have to be put into appropriate context considering that the Region 2 ecosystem is composed of different forest types and the mortality there was occurring at a different elevation than what’s occurring in California.

Enstice described the various phases a tree goes through once beetles get into them and the fire risk associated with each phase. Enstice concluded that the science is not yet clear on the situation faced in southern Sierra forests and that a cautious approach is advised. He described anecdotal information on the implications of tree mortality on future fire behavior by highlighting two recent fires. These two fires suggest that there is an ongoing, and potential long-term, threat from drought- and beetle-impacted forests that the research has not caught up with due to the unprecedented and rapid changes in those forests.

Enstice stated that the science and research relevant to stopping the advance of the bark beetle in order to reduce forest impacts is clear and well understood. Enstice highlighted an SNC funded project – the Lily Gap project in the
Mokelumne watershed – as an example of how treatments can increase resilience to fire and insects.

Enstice emphasized that we need more information and research to understand the long-term impacts of such significant tree loss in Sierra Nevada forests, but that programs like the WIP can make a difference reducing additional loss. Enstice noted that prescribed fire is a key tool moving forward in high drought and bark beetle tree mortality areas as it reduces the fuel loads on the ground and may help restart the forest processes necessary for healthy regeneration.

Southern Sierra Area Representative Sarah Campe then presented an effort specific to the south Sierra – an area unlike the northern and central in that it is primarily managed by federal land management agencies.

The Southern Sierra Conservation Cooperative (SSCC) is primarily composed of federal land agencies: Yosemite and Sequoia/Kings Canyon national parks, and the Sierra, Sequoia, and Inyo national forests. The intent of the SSCC is to identify those questions that transcend jurisdictional boundaries and transcend the different mandates of those respective agencies. Additionally, the SSCC is trying to address questions in a way that both provides a strategy that managers can begin to work with immediately to help them grapple with what’s happening on the ground and to start the ground work for what could potentially be a longer-term shift in how we think about managing our lands under what are unprecedented conditions and more novel climate.

Campe described the first formal workshop in May 2017, funded by the USFS Regional Office. Participants updated a memorandum of understanding and started to identify the initiatives the group wanted to tackle. Campe briefly described each of the initiatives, as discussed in the staff report.

Campe concluded that the conversations during the SSCC workshop showed that the participants agreed that in order for any of these efforts to move forward we need to have a better understanding of the tree mortality event. There is so much that we don’t understand and because more than 100 million trees have died, the nuances of such an event are really important for managers to understand. The USDA Climate Hub in partnership with the USFS Region 5 office, with support of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, National Forest Foundation, and CAL FIRE, will be holding a science and management workshop in late July. The workshop will pull together the scientists and kick off a state of knowledge assessment to ask questions of the scientists. The information that comes from that symposium will inform the efforts of the SSCC moving forward.
XI. Boardmembers’ Comments
Board Chair John Brissenden had a couple of announcements and invitations. Executive Officer Jim Branham and CA Tahoe Conservancy Executive Officer Patrick Wright have had conversations about the Tahoe Summit with Sean Elsbernd, the state director for Senator Dianne Feinstein, who will be hosting the Tahoe Summit on August 22. Sean has asked for agenda ideas and Branham and Wright are focusing on the Tahoe-Central for perhaps expanding the overview of the Tahoe Summit to include more of the Sierra. He asked Boardmembers, if they have thoughts on it to please pass those along to Branham. Brissenden commented that this has been a very engaged Board and commended the Board for their commitment.

XII. Public Comments
No public comments.

XIII. Adjournment
The Board meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m.
Current Status – Budget
The Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s (SNC) 2016-17 budget closed as anticipated, spending 99.9 percent of the total $4,385,000 that serves as SNC’s base funding. This amount is funded by the Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF). SNC will also be receiving reimbursements of $88,312 from the National Disaster Resilience Competition Grant and Stewardship Council Agreement.

Governor Brown signed the 2017-18 budget on June 27, 2017. Our base funding, which pays for operating expenses, was allocated at its regular amount. Effective July 1, 2017, all staff received a four percent salary increase and we anticipate receiving funding for this in early fall. This year’s budget also included the Federal Trust Fund allocation of $30,000. We have received a commitment from the USFS for $100,000 to support WIP, so we will be submitting a request to the Department of Finance (DoF) to increase our Federal Trust Fund authority (which should be a formality).

As for SNC’s grant program, we received Local Assistance appropriations of $285,000 for Prop 84 and $8,000,000 for Prop 1. Local Assistance funds will be awarded to grantees. We received Program Delivery appropriations of $28,000 for Prop 84 and $132,000 for Prop 1. Program Delivery funds will be spent on staff salaries and benefits. We also received our first appropriations of Planning and Monitoring funds, which included $30,000 for Prop 84 and $150,000 for Prop 1. Planning and monitoring funds will be spent on design, selection, implementation, monitoring, reporting, environmental reviews, and appraisals. Per section 79704 of the Water Code (Prop. 1) and section 75072 of the Public Resources Code (Prop. 84), we are authorized to spend up to 10 percent of the total amount we are allocated for both Prop 1 and Prop 84.

The current status of SNC’s 2017-18 budget can be viewed on page three of this report.

Current Status – Accounting
The SNC’s grantees and vendors are currently being paid in a timely manner. Contracted Fiscal Services (CFS) has closed the 2016-17 accounting books through month eleven. This is a significant improvement from previous years. At this rate, we have high hopes they will meet the state deadline of August 21. We will provide a verbal update on the status of the 2016-17 accounting books at the September meeting.

CFS continues to provide slow response time in answering questions and resolving issues for SNC. We had a meeting with the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and the other conservancies to identify alternatives to using CFS for accounting. No final decisions have been made but CNRA is working on a solution, with a goal of addressing it in the next fiscal year (2018-19). During this meeting, CNRA agreed that SNC was capable of taking on its own budgeting and worked with DoF to authorize this change. This will save SNC approximately $30,000 this year and in future years. At the time this report was written, SNC was working with CFS on this transition. We will provide a verbal update at the September meeting.
Current Status – Human Resources
Marji Feliz, one of SNC’s first employees, retired in July. Marji has filled a number of roles at the SNC over the years including the grants program and the Great Sierra River Cleanup, and her contributions are appreciated. Recently, she had been working in a part-time capacity on special projects, including the Strategic Plan.

We have hired Theresa Parsley, who was previously SNC’s Admin Chief, as a retired annuitant to coordinate the Strategic Planning work.

The current SNC Board and staff organizational charts can be viewed on page four and five of this report.

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.
# 2017-18 SNC Budget
## as of July 2017

### Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF) Support Budget

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Budget</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Personal Services</strong></td>
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<td>SALARIES &amp; WAGES AND BENEFITS</td>
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<td><strong>Operating Expenses &amp; Equipment</strong></td>
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### Support Budget

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## Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board
### May 2017

### Natural Resources Agency
- **John Laird**
  - Secretary
- **Todd Ferrara**
  - Designated Rep.

### Department of Finance
- **Michael Cohen**
  - Director
- **Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez**
  - Designated Rep.

### Governor's Appointments
- **Robert Kirkwood**
  - Public Member
- **Terrence O’Brien**
  - Public Member
  - Board Vice-Chair
- **Danny Wan**
  - Public Member

### Legislative Appointments
- **John Brissenden**
  - State Assembly Board Chair
- **Robert Johnston**
  - State Senate

### Non-Voting Liaison Advisor Appointments
- **Barnie Gyant**
  - US Forest Service
- **Woody Smeck**
  - US National Park Service
- **Este Stifel**
  - US Bureau of Land Mgmt.

### Local Government Appointments

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<tr>
<th>North Subregion</th>
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<th>Central Subregion</th>
<th>South Central Subregion</th>
<th>South Subregion</th>
<th>East Subregion</th>
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| **Elizabeth Cavasso**
  - Modoc County Supervisor | **Doug Teeter**
  - Butte County Supervisor | **Randy Fletcher**
  - Yuba County Supervisor | **Jack Garamendi**
  - Calaveras County Supervisor | **Tom Wheeler**
  - Madera County Supervisor | **Jeff Griffiths**
  - Inyo County Supervisor |
| **Mary Rickert**
  - Shasta County Supervisor Alternate Rep. | **Paul Roen**
  - Sierra County Supervisor Alternate Rep. | **Hank Weston**
  - Nevada County Supervisor Alternate Rep. | **Sherri Brennan**
  - Tuolumne County Supervisor Alternate Rep. | **Nathan Magsig**
  - Fresno County Supervisor Alternate Rep. | **Stacy Corless**
  - Mono County Supervisor Alternate Rep. |
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jim Branham</td>
<td>Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Kingman</td>
<td>Assistant Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amy Lussier</td>
<td>Division Chief, Administrative Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angela Avery</td>
<td>Division Chief, Policy and Outreach</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandy Vance</td>
<td>Watershed Improvement Program Coordinator</td>
<td>Located in Mariposa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy Fristensky</td>
<td>Mt. Lassen Area Manager</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Amanda Grant</td>
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<td>Nece Ervinke</td>
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Background
With each passing year the need to increase the amount of funding available to restore Sierra Nevada forests and watersheds to a state of resilience becomes more critical. Fire season started early this year with the Detwiler fire striking very close to home for employees of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Mariposa office. This fire emphasized the urgency and importance of the work that we do and the need for fresh, inventive ways to share information about current Sierra conditions and the need to manage Sierra forests to prevent future large, damaging wildfires and the damage they do in rural Sierra counties.

Under SNC Governing Board policy guidance, SNC staff tracks and pursues opportunities for increasing the amount of funding available to the SNC to put projects on the ground and develop communications materials with the goal of ensuring that key policy and decision-makers, urban beneficiaries, and the public understand the importance of the Sierra Nevada region and act to protect it.

Current Status

Legislation
Cap-and-Trade
In late June, the governor signed a new cap-and-trade bill which extends the cap-and-trade program through 2030. The good news is that the bill begins to recognize the importance of forested landscapes. Some of the highlights of AB 398 (E. Garcia) of particular interest to the SNC include the following:

- The Sierra, and the benefits from it, is mentioned in the introduction to the document and recognized throughout.
- The cap-and-trade program remains in place.
- Carbon offsets may still be purchased (in limited amounts), but at least 50 percent of them must be spent on projects within the state, and forests are a potential investment strategy.
- Forests are listed as a reasonable expenditure of the greenhouse gas reduction fund.
- Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) “replace[s] the moneys that would have otherwise been collected” through the State Responsibility Program: the program is suspended for the life of this section, or through December of 2030. Current, previously-collected SRA fees will be spent consistent with the subdivision establishing them.

Given increased access to the GGRF resources, as well as doing away with a funding pool that has not been spent to its full potential (SRA fees), this bill has the potential to significantly increase California’s investment in forested landscapes. Both bills were signed by the governor in late July.
Parks Bonds and Initiatives

Two parks bonds (AB 18, E. Garcia; SB 5, DeLeon) remain unmoved in their second houses. Both have been assigned to committee, but hearings have not been scheduled. Both of these measures are commonly referred to as "Parks Bonds," however they provide a wider range of funding for natural resources related issues. AB 18 has not been amended since our last report, but SB 5 includes new language that allocated 50 percent of CAL FIRE’s $50 million forest restoration and fuels management directly to the SNC for projects in the Sierra Nevada region.

At the time of writing this report, AB 18 (total of $3.1 billion) includes a total of $50 million for the SNC ($25 million in the conservancy allocation and $25 million from a pot shared with CAL FIRE for work that reduces fire risk), while SB 5 (total of $3.8 billion) provides $55 million for the SNC. ($30 million in the conservancy allocation and $25 million from a pot shared with CAL FIRE for work that reduces fire risk.) As a reminder, Proposition 84 (2006) provided $54 million to the SNC while Proposition 1 (2014) allocated $25 million.

Currently, two natural resources-related initiatives have been filed with the Secretary of State and are currently pending review by the Attorney General. The proponents of these initiatives are considering the legislature’s potential action on the park bonds described above as they consider whether to move forward. There is also some discussion of the two measures being merged at some point. At the time of the writing of this staff report, the ballot measures are as follows:

1. The "The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Natural Resources Protection and Park Improvement Act of 2018" was submitted by Joseph Caves of Conservation Strategies Group on July 3, 2017, and focuses on climate change and the need to manage water supply into the future. It includes consideration for public parks and open space.

   This initiative includes $200 million specifically for the SNC: $150 million for the protection and restoration of Sierra Nevada watersheds, including projects consistent with the objectives of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program, and $50 million for the protection and restoration of rivers, lakes, and natural lands; improvement of public recreation facilities; and for grants to local agencies and nonprofit organizations to increase community access to parks and recreational opportunities for underserved urban communities.

2. The "State Water Supply Infrastructure, Water Storage and Conveyance, Ecosystem and Watershed Protection and Restoration, and Drinking Water Protection Act of 2018" was submitted by Gerald Meral on July 14, 2017. It focuses on a number of ways of increasing California’s water supply, protecting environmental health and quality, and decreasing the effects of drought.
This initiative includes, in the definition section, the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program. It allocates $200 million to the SNC for a variety of projects and benefits, and allows for the SNC to grant funding to federal agencies. It also includes significant funding for:

- Safe drinking water, water recycling and desalination, water conservation, and flood preparedness
- Water data measurement and collection
- “[P]rotection and restoration of forests, meadows, wetlands, riparian habitat, coastal resources, and near-shore ocean habitat”
- For the Wildlife Conservation Board, to increase surface and groundwater supply from landscape management
- Central Valley fisheries restoration
- Surface and groundwater storage and sustainability

**Board Committee on Sustainable Funding**
The second meeting of the Board Committee on Sustainable Funding was held on August 7, 2017. Staff updated the Board on activities to date, including tracking legislation, reviewing and analyzing initiatives, and pursuing partner-based funding opportunities. Committee direction at the meeting included a request for the development of a cap-and-trade/GGRF memo outlining the legislative outcomes from this session and the potential opportunities that might come from that.

**Connecting with Downstream Beneficiaries**
The fourth meeting of the Sacramento Uplands/Lowlands group will be held in mid-August. A funding mechanism such as Joint Powers Authority (JPA) has been discussed as a way to cement the working relationship between members, but it’s more likely that the group will settle on an on-the-ground project to test the partnership. They will discuss a number of legislative proposals at their August meeting.

A meeting is scheduled on August 11 to continue conversations with representatives of the Yuba County Water Agency (YCWA), the Tahoe National Forest (TNF), and the SNC. A topic for discussion is the possible interest of watershed investment by YCWA. The Yuba River watershed has been selected as a pilot for the Forest Resilience Bond concept (discussed in more detail in Agenda item XII) and has been identified as a “WIP watershed” by TNF.

**Meetings and Tours Update**
The Mokelumne Watershed tour, aimed at bringing the Bay Area Caucus into the watershed that is source to much of their water, is currently being rescheduled for later this year (from a previously-identified date in late July).
The Sierra Water Work Group, an informal group of Integrated Regional Watershed Management (IRWM) planning areas throughout the Sierra and southern Cascades, got together in late July to discuss how to better advocate for California’s headwaters. The SNC sponsored the event. Participants included Placer County Water Agency, the Association of California Water Agencies, Sierra Nevada Alliance, Sierra Business Council, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Water Resources, and tribal representatives. Over a day and a half, participants deliberated the information and policy gaps preventing Sierra interests from making progress in the California legislature. Much of this discussion centered on consistent messaging and outreach, and more diverse partnerships. The take-away from this event is a list of actions the group will engage in over the next two years, including broadening the interest group invested in the health of California’s headwaters, writing up a one-page description of the benefits California’s headwaters bring to the state as a whole, and better defining rural regions’ needs around the definition for disadvantaged communities and how to better incorporate tribal needs into IRWM planning.

National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDRC)
The SNC staff is busy supporting the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) in completing environmental reviews required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the NDRC Forest and Watershed Health Program. HCD, as the fiscal sponsor for the grant, is the lead agency/responsible entity for these reviews, but SNC is providing assistance in responding to public comments received during the public review period following HCD’s notice of intent to adopt the Rim Recovery and Rim Reforestation Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) initially prepared by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The Center for Biological Diversity, the Sierra Club California, and the John Muir Project submitted comments to HCD opposing the adoption of the EISs on procedural grounds and urging HCD to withdraw from the NDRC grant. Local stakeholders remain supportive of the project and continue to be actively engaged. SNC and USFS staff hosted public meetings in Sonora and Groveland in June, and received positive feedback from attendees. Given the delays associated with responding to public comments and completing environmental reviews, it is likely that forest and watershed health work in the Rim Fire burn scar will not commence until 2018.

At the time of this writing, HCD and the Department of General Services are reviewing the Request for Proposals for Phase 1 of the Biomass Utilization Facility program funded by the NDRC grant. The selected consultant will conduct a detailed biomass feedstock analysis and feasibility study to assist in selecting a location, technology, and design for the facility to be built in Phase 2. SNC staff estimates that a consultant will be under contract by the end of September or early October and that Phase 1 will take 9 to 12 months to complete.

In addition to opposing the NDRC grant activities, the Sierra Club California has also launched a new campaign focusing on biomass energy in the state. Executive Officer
Jim Branham met with Kathryn Phillips, Director of Sierra Club California, to discuss the campaign in July. Previously, both the national and state chapters of the Sierra Club had remained mostly neutral on forest-based biomass projects. Now, however, Sierra Club California is concerned with the potential impacts to forests and wildlife habitat as well as the emission of greenhouse gasses and other air pollutants from bioenergy facilities.

The SNC and other state agencies remain supportive of the operation of existing biomass energy facilities and the development of small-scale biomass facilities as an alternative to the air quality emissions from piling and burning woody biomass removed during forest health projects, a source of renewable energy that can reliably meet peak energy demand, and to support economic growth in the Sierra Nevada.

**Great Sierra River Cleanup and Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week**
This year marks the ninth year of the [Great Sierra River Cleanup](#) (GSRC) – an annual volunteer event that the SNC coordinates in conjunction with California Coastal Cleanup Day to encourage stewardship of California’s waterways from the source to the sea. This year’s GSRC will be held on Saturday, September 16, and on that day SNC will be supporting the work of numerous partners throughout the Region as they host cleanup events for volunteers in their communities. In past years, three to four thousand volunteers have turned out for the event, and we anticipate a similar number of volunteers again this year.

The GSRC also kicks off [Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week](#) which was designated by the legislature in 2015 to highlight the benefits the Region provides to the state and recognize the challenges the Region is facing. This year, staff is working with members of the legislature to develop a series of short promotional videos that highlight how the Sierra connects everyone in California, from north to south, and rural to urban areas. These videos will be released throughout Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week on SNC’s social media platforms and the series will be posted on our YouTube channel.

**Next Steps**
Staff will continue to identify, track, and pursue policy and outreach opportunities in support of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement program and SNC mission and goals.

**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.
Background
Despite a significant amount of precipitation in the Sierra Nevada this past winter, over five years of extreme drought has elevated the fire danger throughout the Sierra Nevada to critical levels. To date, more than 162,000 acres have burned along the west slope of the Sierra Nevada, primarily in the lower elevations due to the late spring snow in higher, mixed conifer elevations. The current fire season has seen the fifth highest number of acres burned this decade, with the bulk of the fire season still ahead of us. (We are currently at 1.3 million acres for the decade, a record high. See Attachment A.)

Several fires occurred early in the season that are worth noting:

- The lightning-caused Schaeffer Fire started in late June in the Sequoia National Forest and provided an opportunity to share information consistent with the Fire Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Schaeffer Fire was initially managed for resource benefit, and burned just over 16,000 acres through the 2002 McNally Fire footprint.
- The Wall Fire in early July burned over 6,000 acres across the foothills of Butte County near the town of Bangor. Forty-one homes were lost and 57 other structures were damaged.
- The Minerva Fire burned approximately 4,300 acres along the south edge of the town of Quincy, placing the town at risk as the direction of the fire changed. SNC staff living in Quincy were placed on voluntary evacuation notice when the fire made a run near town.
- In late July, lightning strikes started approximately 60 fires across the Modoc National Forest. The Modoc Complex fires are now 100 percent contained but burned just over 83,000 acres collectively.
- At the time of this report, the South Fork Fire near Wawona had reached 900 acres in less than 24 hours, with reports of extreme group torching in heavy tree-mortality areas.

The largest fire of the year to date, the Detwiler fire burned nearly 82,000 acres, and, though contained, continues to have resources working the firelines to ensure they hold. The fire started in the Hunters Valley area of Mariposa County, near Lake McClure, at 3:53 p.m. on Sunday, July 16, 2017. It resulted in the evacuation of SNC’s Mariposa office and three employees from their homes. Given its impact on the SNC, additional details of the fire are provided below:

When reported, it was 10-15 acres in heavy brush. Evacuations began at 4:30 p.m. in Hunters Valley. By 8:00 p.m., it was at 2,000 acres with 0 percent containment. By 7:30 a.m. Monday, July 17, the fire was at 7,100 acres with mandatory evacuations north on Highway 49 from Pendola Gardens Road to the top of Bagby grade. By 7:00 p.m. that evening, the fire was at 11,200 acres with 0 percent containment.

Late Tuesday morning, July 18, the first staff member from the Mariposa Office was forced to leave their home. By midday, the entire town of Mariposa had the electricity cut off and was evacuated, closing the SNC Mariposa office and resulting in most staff vacating their homes. By 8:30 that evening, the fire had reached 25,000 acres.
with extended evacuations from the town of Mariposa to the east, the unincorporated area of Bridgeport to the south, Catheys Valley to the west, and Coulterville, Dogtown, and Greely Hill to the north. On that same day, Governor Brown issued an emergency proclamation for Mariposa County due to the effects of the Detwiler Fire, citing damage to power, water, and communication infrastructure, and threatening homes and businesses.

By Wednesday, July 19, the fire had nearly doubled in size with evacuations expanding on all sides. By the evening of July 20, the fire was at 74,000 acres with 58 residences destroyed. Evacuations were estimated to range between four and five thousand people. Smoke from the Detwiler fire was visible via satellite from Mariposa County to the southwest corner of Idaho. Air quality was at its worst in Mariposa, Merced, and Madera counties, as well as Yosemite National Park, on Wednesday and Thursday, July 19 and 20. The Park remained open, though issued air quality alerts, particularly targeted to those visitors with respiratory issues. Highway 140 from Merced to Mariposa was closed at Hornitos Road, and Highway 49 to Mariposa was closed at Coulterville to the north and nearly to Bootjack to the south, cutting off access to the Tunnel Rock entrance to Yosemite. Visitors could still enter the park via Highway 41 from Oakhurst, and 120 through Groveland. There was no reported reduction in visitation, though the park received innumerable phone calls requesting information on current conditions.

At 7:21 p.m., on Friday, July 21, evacuation orders were lifted for residents in the town of Mariposa and several other locations, though not all, allowing all SNC staff to return to their homes and the office to reopen on Monday, July 25. Fortunately, no SNC staff lost property as a result of this fire.

As of July 28, the fire has burned 81,650 acres (see attached map – Attachment B), with 131 structures destroyed, 63 of which were homes. Incident reports cite a total of 4,467 personnel fighting this fire, including a total of 114 fire crews, along with hundreds of engines, dozers, water tenders, and aircraft drawn from city, county, state, and federal cooperators all over California, as well as out of state.

**Current Status**
At the time of this writing, a number of weeks remain in the Sierra Nevada fire season. State, federal, and local agencies stand ready to address fire activity that may occur in the Region and SNC remains hopeful that additional fire activity will not have severe impacts on the landscape and communities.

**Next Steps**
The SNC will continue its efforts to implement the Watershed Improvement Program and the Tahoe Central Sierra Initiative in order to increase the pace and scale of restoration to minimize the occurrence of large severe wildfires.

**Recommendation**
This in 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.
Total Acres Burned - West Slope Of The Sierra Region By Decade

As of August 15, 2017

Linear trendline indicating the average movement of acreage burned across the decades

Agenda Item VIIc
Attachment A
Agenda Item VIIc
Detwiler Fire Map
Attachment B
Agenda Item VIIc

Sierra Nevada
2017 Fire Season Update

Detwiler Fire
July 2017, Mariposa County
Detwiler Fire by the Numbers

- 81,826 acres
- 63 residences, 67 minor structures
- 5,000 individuals evacuated
- 4,467 personnel, 3,400 firefighters, 478 fire engines, 114 crews, 87 bulldozers, and 61 water tenders at the height of the fire fighting this fire
July 18, 2017
July 19, 2017
July 19, 2017
Questions
Or
Comments?
Background
The fourth of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC) regional Tribal Forums was held in June at the United States Forest Service District Office in Prather. Two tribes were represented at the meeting, Dunlap Band of Mono Indians and North Fork Indian Rancheria. Numerous areas of common interest were covered in the discussion, including fire and tree mortality and consequences for human safety and resources, burned areas, abandoned mine lands and cultural monitoring and remediation, tribal partnerships, state contracting, and cultural education and tourism. Recommended actions from the meeting were:

- Continue to seek opportunities for intertribal approaches for project administration and development. SNC can assist in the facilitation of tribal partnerships through the Proposition 1 grant program project development phase and through on-going developments under the Watershed Improvement Program.
- Continue education/outreach efforts: consider more SNC presentations during tribal convenings.
- Request change in SNC enabling legislation to include definition of California Native American Tribe in order to include non-federally recognized tribes.
- Include tribes in SNC Strategic Plan Update process.

Developments on follow-up actions from previous forums:

- Project Leads in each SNC Subregion are working with potential applicants on the development of projects under SNC’s Prop 1 grant round. Language within the Grant Guidelines encourages applicants, with the assistance of Project Leads when needed, to work with tribes whose ancestral homelands may be affected by the project, or who may be able to partner for a more successful outcome.
- SNC is considering proposed legislation for modification of the definition of “Tribal Organization” found within PRC 33302(h) to include non-federally recognized tribes for SNC grants and support.

Current Status
At this writing, the fifth of the series of Tribal Forums is scheduled to take place Wednesday, September 6, prior to the Board tour. (Information from the Tribal Forum will be provided to the Board during the meeting.)

Next Steps
SNC staff will continue to work towards stronger relationships with the California Native American Tribes within our Region. The next Tribal Forum will be held in December.

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.
Background

Per the Project Summary:
This project will acquire approximately 15,000 acres of the Rudnick Ranch in the southern Sierra Nevada range. The ranch supports chaparral, grasslands, oak woodlands, and riparian communities in the Middle Kern – Upper Tehachapi – Grapevine watershed. Protection of the ranch eliminates the threat of multiple subdivisions and associated water use safeguarding local aquifers and allowing natural ground water recharge and runoff processes to continue. Caliente Creek follows the Southern property boundary for approximately 4.3 miles and conservation of the ranch will protect large areas of the creek’s watershed and floodplain. Over six miles of Walker Basin Creek occur on the ranch with a majority supporting perennial flow. The goal is to continue operations as a working ranch ensuring grazing is carried out in a sustainable manner that maintains the important resources. Living resources include a broad matrix of plant and animal species located in the several habitat types found on the ranch.

In the application to the SNC, TNC described its intent to place a conservation easement on the property and sell the property to a conservation buyer. Agreement #434 allows for future sale of the property in Clause D.2. as follows:
The Property (including any portion of it or interest in it) may not be sold or transferred without the written approval of the SNC, provided that (a) such approval shall not be unreasonably withheld as long as the Grantee and the transferee provide reasonable assurance that the Property will continue to be operated and maintained for the purposes for which the grant was awarded; and (b) any such approval shall be accompanied by an agreement between the SNC and the transferee sufficient to protect public interest in the Property.

A 2010 appraisal, reviewed and approved by California Department of General Services, valued the property at $12,150,000. TNC purchased Rudnick Ranch in September 2011 for $11,208,750. Funds used for the purchase were sourced from:
The Nature Conservancy used additional funds over the purchase price to cover expenses and fees related to the acquisition.

**Current Status**
In February 2017, TNC expressed to the funding partners its interest in marketing the property to transfer fee title ownership, with a reserved conservation easement in place, to a conservation buyer.

The Nature Conservancy developed a draft conservation easement to “preserve, protect, identify, monitor, enhance, and restore in perpetuity the Conservation Values.” The easement provides for comprehensive protections to conservation values on the property, identifies the SNC role as a funder for the easement, and maintains the SNC’s and other funder’s rights to enforce terms of the easement.

The Nature Conservancy commissioned a new appraisal of the property in March 2017. The appraisal includes three valuation scenarios: (1) the property without conservation restrictions, (2) the property considering the current grant agreement deed restrictions, and (3) the property with the full conservation easement in place. The appraisal results in values between $15,100,000 (without a conservation easement) and $7,520,000 (with the conservation easement in place). Any proceeds from sale of the property would be returned to granting agencies based upon a split proportional to the amounts provided by each of the funders and any limitations or requirements on the different funding sources. All partners will review and approve an estimated accounting of funds to be returned prior to completion of sale.

The SNC is in close communication with the other state funding partners (including the California Natural Resources Agency) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to ensure that any move forward with a cohesive approach towards potential sale of the
property is subject to a conservation easement that is satisfactory to all funders, to ensure that public resources and interests remain protected. The conservation easement and appraisal are currently undergoing internal reviews by funding agencies, and the appraisal is in review by California Department of General Services (DGS), Real Estate Services.

**Next Steps**
Staff will continue to coordinate with all funding partners to develop a unified approach towards the potential sale of the property, with assurances that public values are protected. This includes:

- receipt of a positive appraisal review from DGS Real Estate Services
- agreement by all funders with the language contained in the draft conservation easement
- agreement by all funders with the TNC financial accounting of proceeds and the proposed methodology for splitting among the funders any proceeds realized from the property sale

**Recommendation**
Staff recommends that the Board authorize the Executive Officer to take all steps necessary to assess the proposed sale and proposed conservation easement and to execute the documents necessary to proceed with sale of the underlying fee title to the Property, subject to a reserved conservation easement, provided all parties determine there is reasonable assurance that the property will continue to be operated and maintained for the purposes for which the grant was awarded and public funds, interests, and conservation values are appropriately protected.
Kern County Map

Maps courtesy of Schenberger, Taylor, McCormick & Jecker, Inc.
Background
The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) was allocated $54 million in bond funds through Proposition 84, passed by voters in 2006. Since 2007, the SNC has conducted multiple Proposition 84 grant rounds and funded over 300 successful projects throughout the Sierra Nevada Region. In December 2016, the SNC Board unanimously passed a motion delegating authority to the Executive Officer to approve and execute grants using any remaining Proposition 84 funds, under specified criteria. The Board required all grants awarded under authority delegated to the Executive Officer be reported at the next scheduled meeting. The first such grant award has been made to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for the French Meadows Watershed Resilience Project.

In September 2016, TNC, American River Conservancy (ARC), Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), Sierra Nevada Research Institute, and United States Forest Service (USFS) signed a memorandum of understanding to collaboratively plan and implement the French Meadows Watershed Resilience Project. SNC and Placer County joined these partners and each organization individually committed to an innovative, collaborative, all-lands approach to forest restoration and fuels reduction in the headwaters of the American River on the Tahoe National Forest in the northern Sierra Nevada.

The ecological health of the Middle Fork American River watershed has been degraded by overgrown forests, high-intensity wildfires, and land management practices during the last several decades. The French Meadows Projects area includes approximately 26,000 acres. Within the headwaters area, the USFS is the federal land manager responsible for approximately 16,000 acres in the project area. ARC acquired approximately 10,115 acres of land in the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the American River in August 2015, and intends to manage the land to protect and restore ecological values and for public recreation consistent with these values. PCWA owns and operates French Meadows Reservoir, located approximately 20 miles northeast of Foresthill, for public water supply, hydroelectric power generation, and recreation. In August 2016, SNC executed a SNC Proposition 1 Grant (#841) with ARC for forest thinning on 330 acres within the project area.

Current Status
On July 17, 2017, under authority delegated by the Board, the SNC Executive Officer authorized Grant Agreement No. 914 to TNC for the French Meadows Project in the amount of $100,000. This grant contributes to the completion of NEPA and CEQA for the Project. Specifically, this grant will pay for a NEPA/CEQA consultant to manage all the necessary environmental and archaeological studies and prepare the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA). This is part of the innovative approach being taken by the project in that the contracts for preparing the environmental documents are being managed by TNC and funded by a variety of partners. Staff believes that this represents an opportunity to explore new ways of doing business that will result in increasing the pace and scale of restoration activities.
Next Steps
SNC staff will continue to work with The Nature Conservancy and other partners to implement the grant project. Work supported by this grant is expected to be completed by June 30, 2018.

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

Proposition 84 Grant Award Report for French Meadows Project #914

Presented by:
Ed Smith, Forest Ecologist
The Nature Conservancy
Project Partners

- American River Conservancy
- USFS, Tahoe National Forest
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy
- Placer County Water Agency
- Placer County
- UC Merced, Sierra Nevada Research Institute
- The Nature Conservancy
Use of Proposition 84 Grant Funds from SNC

1. Production of Environmental Assessment by NEPA / CEQA Coordinator
   a) Draft EA
   b) Final EA

2. Public Involvement Strategy:
   a) Address Issues raised in scoping
   b) Field Tours for Interested Parties

3. Implementation Plan and Budget
   a) Work plan
   b) Timeline
   c) Budget
Questions?

Thank You!
Background
In December 2016, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Governing Board unanimously passed a motion delegating authority to the Executive Officer to approve and execute grants using any remaining Proposition 84 funds contingent upon the following criteria: 1) Align with all Proposition 84 requirements; 2) Meet the goals and objectives of the WIP; 3) Contribute to innovative development and planning of projects that increase the pace and scale of watershed restoration or use of forest products in the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative Area; and, 4) Be reported at regularly scheduled Board meetings. Based on information available at the time of the authorization, approximately $175,000 remained available for grants under this delegated authority. To date, one grant has been awarded for $100,000 under this authority (see Agenda Item IX).

Current Status
The end of fiscal year 2016-17 brought the closeout of 74 Proposition 84 projects. Of the 74 projects, 55 closed below their budgeted amounts, so now there is a total of $250,000 that is available to spend on local assistance.

Since there are more funds remaining than first known, and since there are eligible opportunities for innovation throughout the SNC region, staff is now recommending that the existing delegated authority be modified to include the entire SNC jurisdiction. All other requirements of the Executive Officer’s delegated authority would remain unchanged.

Next Steps
If authorized, staff will continue to work with partners in the region to identify high-quality projects that meet the requirements listed above and will report to the Board on all grants awarded.

Recommendation
Staff recommends approving the modification to existing authority delegated to the Executive Officer to include the entire SNC jurisdiction for consideration of awarding grants of remaining Proposition 84 funds, consistent with all other remaining criteria.
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.
Background
For more than six years, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) has been actively involved in issues relating to forest and community health. The Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI) was adopted by the SNC Governing Board in 2011 and was endorsed by all 22 Sierra counties, as well as numerous other groups and organizations. It called for parties to work together in a collaborative manner to restore forests to ecological health and improve local communities’ social and economic well-being.

As a part of SNFCI’s ongoing work, the SNFCI Regional Coordinating Council (SNFCI Council) continues to represent a wide range of diverse perspectives unified by the common goals of increasing the pace and scale of restoration of the Sierra Nevada’s forests and building healthier ecosystems, economies, and communities in the Sierra Nevada Region. Various forest collaboratives also continue their work to carry out this same mission on the ground in specific watersheds and communities.

In March 2015, the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) was launched in partnership with the United States Forest Service (USFS) Region 5. The WIP is a coordinated, integrated, collaborative program to restore the health of California’s primary watershed through increased investment and needed policy changes. In July 2015, SNC staff and representatives from USFS Region 5 met with Secretary John Laird and California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) staff, resulting in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that commits the CNRA and USFS Region 5 to a cooperative state/federal collaboration to support the WIP. The SNC is designated as the lead state agency for coordination and implementation of the WIP, and hosts an annual WIP Summit with key partners for discussions around current issues and strategies for more effectively implementing the WIP.

Boardmembers Bob Kirkwood and Randy Fletcher serve as the Board committee providing oversight and guidance for the WIP effort, and are SNFCI Council members.

Current Status
Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative (TCSI)
Due to the number of innovative efforts and partnerships underway in the Central Sierra/Tahoe region, SNC has identified the Tahoe-Central Sierra area as a large pilot landscape, with a variety of specific “game-changer” demonstration opportunities in particular watersheds. SNC continues to co-lead and coordinate with the California Tahoe Conservancy working closely with USFS Region 5, the Eldorado and Tahoe national forests, and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. A number of other agency and organization partners are actively engaged, including The Nature Conservancy, the National Forest Foundation, Sagehen Experimental Forest, CAL FIRE, the California Forestry Association, and the University of California. The group is currently pursuing potential funding opportunities and developing a communications plan for the TCSI, with the goal of significantly increasing the pace and scale of restoration activities on the landscape. The effort will also include additional assessment and scientific research to
better inform land management decisions to protect and enhance the many benefits that the landscape provides. Additionally, there are a number of potential opportunities for innovative, watershed-based demonstrations of “new ways to do business” that are at various stages of development, planning, and implementation.

**Annual Tahoe Summit**

The Annual Tahoe Summit, co-hosted by Senators Dianne Feinstein and Dean Heller, will be held in the Tahoe Basin on August 22 and presents an opportunity to highlight the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative. Staff has been working with TCSI partners to develop materials and messaging for distribution during the Summit.

A Memorandum of Understanding among the partners that captures the intent and commitment of the group to the TCSI was signed prior to the Summit (a copy of this MOU has been included with the Board materials. (Attachment A) A verbal update on the outcomes of the Summit will be provided at the Board meeting.

**WIP Pilot Watersheds**

The SNC staff has continued to help develop WIP Pilot Watersheds, which are designed to explore innovative utilization of existing tools and/or testing of new approaches to significantly increase the pace and scale of watershed restoration, with a focus on opportunities in the area of investment, governance, and policy/process improvement. The support of one such effort, the French Meadows Project in the Middle Fork of the American River, is described in Agenda Item IX.

Another area of particular interest is the North Yuba River watershed in the Tahoe National Forest. SNC staff is organizing a meeting in August between the Yuba County Water Agency, the Tahoe National Forest, and SNC to discuss collaborative restoration opportunities in the North Yuba watershed. One of the innovative opportunities there is the piloting of the Forest Resilience Bond (FRB), which would invest private capital in restoration projects that protect forest health and mitigate wildfire and drought damage risk. If successful, this approach will serve as a new public-private partnership model to enhance climate resilience. SNC staff has been working in close partnership with Blue Forest Conservation (BFC), USFS Region 5, and the Tahoe National Forest in developing this pilot. An MOU between BFC and the USFS Washington Office is currently being finalized.

Blue Forest Conservation is also in discussion with the Sierra National Forest regarding another promising pilot project in the landscape covered by the Dinkey Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act (CFLRA) group, and meeting with the Stanislaus National Forest to evaluate FRB opportunities there.

The TCSI landscape will be the initial geographic focus area for the rollout of the Watershed Information Network, and associated Resilience Dashboard, both of which are described in greater detail later in this report. Lessons learned on this landscape will
be used to refine these tools before they are expanded to other parts of the Sierra Nevada region.

While the TCSI watershed demonstration projects will receive staff and financial support from SNC, efforts will continue at the Regional level to pursue WIP objectives that will benefit the entire Region. This includes increased investment, policy, and process improvements, and increased infrastructure. The SNC will continue to fund projects and work with partners throughout the Region to further the purposes of WIP.

**Watershed Information Network**

The staff has been working on the Watershed Information Network (WIN) for the Sierra Nevada WIP. The WIN will provide an online environment to document resources, partners, successes, failures, lessons learned, needs, opportunities, and existing WIP-related efforts. It will offer opportunities to test new ways of integrating the three pillars of the WIP (investment, policy, and infrastructure) in order to restore Sierra Nevada forests to a state of health and resilience.

In March, the SNC launched the initial phase of the WIN, which provides the information and background that set the stage for later phases, and for telling the story of the overall Region. The first phase of the WIN is an enhanced [Restore the Sierra website](#) with new maps (presented in story map format) and messaging about topics such as the shifting baseline conditions in the Sierra and the need for adaptive management. Another in-progress product associated with this phase is a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map portal, which will provide a user-friendly way to display data to the public.

To date, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) has received sixteen Sierra Nevada watershed reports from the Sierra Coordinated Resource Management Council (SCRMC) and participating California Resource Conservation Districts. In addition, the SNC has received similar reports from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and geospatial data from the USFS Region 5. The raw material in the original SCRMC reports has been synthesized and added to the Watershed Information Network (WIN), while the data and trends identified in the reports are being analyzed to identify and map patterns, issues, and projects wherever possible. Much like the SCRMC reports, the BLM documents will be summarized and added to the WIN.

Further, the SNC is working with the USFS Region 5 to analyze and communicate data and maps from the USFS WIP Planned Treatment Summary Dataset, and hoping to complete most of the analysis and map production by the middle of August 2017. In order to meet this deadline, the USFS is first creating custom datasets from the USFS WIP Planned Treatment Summary Dataset, and then using these datasets to create new maps. It is the hope of the SNC and USFS that these maps be disseminated to stakeholders, policy makers, and the public through the SNC’s WIN.
At the same time, the SNC is developing four online mapping applications to aggregate the best available and live data as it relates to the Sierra Nevada Region. These maps will be publically available and provide viewers with an understanding of the issues that face the region. The four maps will be organized by theme, which include fire, carbon, water, and habitat.

A key component of the WIN will be the development of a resilience dashboard that will chart progress toward desired future conditions in the Sierra. The staff is in the process of considering the appropriate metrics for such a tool and plans to meet with a variety of partners who have embarked on the development of similar assessments so that we build upon existing efforts rather than re-create a wheel.

**Funding Efforts**
The SNC staff continues to monitor funding being invested throughout the Sierra Nevada Region, and are developing reports to show where funders are investing their resources on this landscape. These reports will be shared with the SNC Board once they are completed.

The SNC has partnered with the Tahoe Conservancy and USFS Region 5 to apply for approximately five million dollars in landscape-scale restoration funds from the Green House Gas Funds Grant Program administered by CAL FIRE. This funding would complete work on the Tahoe National Forest, the Eldorado National Forest, and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. At the time of drafting this report, CAL FIRE was still evaluating these grant applications, but anticipated announcement of funding decisions in several weeks. An update on status will be provided to the SNC Board at this meeting.

The WIP funding team supports the efforts of the WIP partners by helping them obtain funding for their projects other than (or in addition to) SNC grant funds. The team provides a variety of direct services to these partners, including:

- Timely and user-friendly information about grant opportunities, through regular grant research memos distributed with partners through the website, newsletters, grant notices, and social media.
- Grant writing workshops, organized by and facilitated by SNC staff, designed to build capacity of local partners to successfully apply for funding for their projects.

Recently, SNC also enhanced area staff’s ability to search for funding sources on behalf of area partners by training them on ECivis, an online searchable grants resource designed to help partners at the local level.

**Next Steps**
The SNC hopes to leverage the momentum from the Tahoe Summit to continue to work to develop and implement funding, demonstration projects, and a communications strategy for the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative as the landscape for the initial WIP Pilot Watershed efforts. SNC staff will also continue to collaborate on the Forest Resilience Bond (FRB)
effort in various coordination, development, and support roles as the Yuba Project is further refined and implemented, and other potential pilot FRB sites are identified.

The SNC staff will continue the development of the Resilience Dashboard and the Watershed Improvement Network (WIN). As the final components of the WIP assessments are completed, they will be integrated into the WIN, as well as WIP messaging designed to more clearly quantify watershed restoration needs in the Sierra Nevada.

The SNC staff also will continue to work in a variety of active roles in several task forces and teams to move WIP objectives forward, including but not limited to the Governor’s Tree Mortality Task Force; the Forest Climate Action Team, a team working on the implementation of the Prescribed Fire Memorandum of Understanding; and the Sierra LiDAR Cooperative Discussion Group. Staff will also further its work in the four key areas of Policy, Funding, Communications, and Restoration Implementation. Staff will provide regular updates to the Board as to progress in the development and implementation of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program.

**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.
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY, SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY, CALIFORNIA TAHOE CONSERVANCY, NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION, CALIFORNIA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION, USDA FOREST SERVICE PACIFIC SOUTHWEST RESEARCH STATION

And the
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, NATURAL RESERVE SYSTEM, including the SAGEHEN CREEK FIELD STATION

And the
USDA FOREST SERVICE REGION 5, including the TAHOE NATIONAL FOREST, ELDORADO NATIONAL FOREST, LAKE TAHOE BASIN MANAGEMENT UNIT

Regarding the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative

This MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU), regarding the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative ("TCSI"), is hereby made and entered by and between The Nature Conservancy ("TNC"); the Sierra Nevada Conservancy ("SNC"); the California Tahoe Conservancy ("CTC"); the National Forest Foundation ("NFF"); California Forestry Association ("CFA"); the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station ("PSW"); the University of California Natural Reserve System ("UC"), including the Sagehen Creek Field Station ("SCFS"); and the United States Department of Agriculture Region 5 Forest Service ("RSUSFS"), including the Tahoe National Forest ("TNF"), the Eldorado National Forest ("ENF"), and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit ("LTBMU"); (hereinafter collectively referred to as the "TCSI Partners").

Whereas, the TCSI Partners believe that cooperating under the auspices of a formal Memorandum of Understanding will help clarify mutual commitments and empower each Partner individually, making their mutual efforts more effective through synergy. The TCSI landscape is comprised of the Lake Tahoe Basin and watersheds of the American, Bear, Carson, Truckee, and Yuba rivers. Lands managed by the USFS or other TCSI Partners and lands included in multi-party collaborative efforts will serve as the focus area for this effort.

Whereas, many watersheds of the Sierra Nevada, comprised of forests, meadows, lakes, and streams, are currently overgrown and unhealthy due to fire suppression, drought, increased temperatures, and other factors. These conditions are contributing to massive and intense wildfires, widespread insect outbreaks, and other forms of ecosystem degradation. They are resulting in unacceptable impacts to the iconic forest landscapes and local communities of the Lake Tahoe Basin and central Sierra Nevada, and pose risks both to nature (wildlife habitat) and people (health and safety, water, carbon, recreation). The scope of the problem requires a
landscape-scale solution. The science is clear that without a significant effort to restore the health and resilience of these watersheds, they will remain at severe risk. Taking the necessary actions now gives us the best opportunity to reduce the likelihood of such events and protect the many benefits that we receive from healthy watersheds.

Whereas, landscape-scale restoration in the Tahoe-Central Sierra region can and should be accelerated in an ecologically sustainable, resilient manner that is economically and socially viable. This includes implementation of projects that have been identified and planned, assessment, identification of priority treatment areas, and ongoing aggressive implementation of restoration at an accelerated rate over the next ten years and beyond.

Whereas, the Tahoe-Central Sierra is an excellent place to develop a solution, for several reasons. First, the landscape has significant biodiversity. Second, it is an iconic landscape that many Californians know and love. Third, to date it has largely escaped the insect and disease epidemic that has ravaged forests in the southern and central Sierra, and provides an opportunity to get ahead of that problem through proactive, ecologically based management. Fourth, there are a number of established large-landscape collaborative efforts already in place in this area with the goal of restoring forest and watershed health. Finally, there are a number of innovative and large-scale pilot projects within the landscape that have the potential to be game changers with respect to increasing the pace and scale of forest and watershed restoration.

Whereas, healthy, functioning watersheds of the Tahoe-Central Sierra are crucial life support systems for local communities, downstream communities, agricultural interests, and the environment. They provide flows critical to the health of creeks and streams, and to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, California’s water hub, as well as to Reno and northern Nevada. The forests here contain large amounts of carbon, provide significant fish and wildlife habitat, and are a recreational playground for visitors year-round. The landscape’s proximity to urban areas provides the opportunity to demonstrate clear links between upstream and downstream watershed health, and also allows ease of access for key stakeholders and decision makers to see the benefits and impacts of restoration firsthand. This regional geographic and social diversity provides the opportunity to create a communication network of how to share successes, needs, and lessons learned with the rest of the Sierra Nevada, the state of California, and beyond.

Whereas, building upon several large-scale regional efforts, the TCSI Partners are leading the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative (TCSI) to accelerate implementation of watershed-scale (tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of acres) forest health improvement projects, and the development of wood products and biomass utilization infrastructure to support a forest restoration economy, while providing the opportunity to explore innovative process, investment, and governance tools.

Whereas, there is a land management network of many local, state, federal, tribal, and private partners investing significant conservation, financial, and other resources into this landscape. Many of these efforts provide opportunities to identify new ways of doing business, given that our current processes are not resulting in an appropriate pace and scale of needed restoration. Because of the existing suite of projects and distinctive characteristics of the landscape, unique breakthroughs are possible here, including: establishing economic value for long-term carbon and water benefits; private sector investment to support restoration activities and build
infrastructure for biomass utilization and/or wood products; unique partnerships and roles, including environmental review processes; larger-scale use of prescribed and managed fire for ecological restoration; and establishing and implementing large-landscape cross-boundary management strategies.

Whereas, local agencies, conservation organizations, the wood products industry, recreational organizations, and other potential partners will be key to successful implementation. This initiative is intended to work with various existing efforts; support additional activity; and explore creative and innovative ways to increase the pace and scale of restoration, including the integration of private sector industries associated with restoration activities. As such, the structure will remain flexible and the effort is designed to be opportunistic in order to explore new ways of doing business, and new partners may be added at any time.

This document aims to describe the intentions of the TCSI Partners as they work together towards restoration actions that are appropriate to the Tahoe-Central Sierra region.

Now therefore, the TCSI Partners agree to work together towards restoration actions that are appropriate to the Tahoe-Central Sierra region.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOU is to document the cooperation between the TCSI Partners and provide a framework to enable further cooperation and coordination on the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative, with respect to lands delineated on the attached map. The TCSI Partners will work together to improve the health and resiliency of the forest ecosystems and communities in the Central Sierra and Lake Tahoe Basin by:

A. Supporting and implementing ecologically based forest restoration projects, based on the best available science including GTR-220 and GTR-237, including, for example, mechanical thinning, controlled burning, and managed wildfire, to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire and promote healthier, more resilient forest conditions;

B. Supporting, developing, and implementing science-based large-landscape restoration projects with integrated design, implementation, and monitoring;

C. Integrating research and monitoring into activities to guide creation of fire- and climate-resilient forests and fire-adapted communities across ownerships, and to inform future landscape management and policies;

D. Supporting the development of biomass and wood utilization facilities to make economic use of the solid wood and wood byproducts of ecologically based forest restoration;

E. Accelerating planning, permitting, and implementation of high-priority projects;

F. Increasing and leveraging federal, state, local, and private funding;

G. Obtaining private investment in headwaters restoration to yield an improvement in ecological services; and

H. Developing a strong relationship between this landscape and nearby areas that benefit from the ecological and economic benefits that originate in the TCSI landscape so that
downstream decision-makers and stakeholders can see firsthand the benefit of restoration activities in their upstream headwaters.

While this MOU does not provide the authority to obligate funds, the TCSI Partners may develop specific agreements to address funding and resource sharing as appropriate and feasible on a case-by-case basis.

II. STATEMENT OF MUTUAL BENEFIT AND INTERESTS:

The Tahoe National Forest (TNF), Eldorado National Forest (ENF), and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) manage National Forest System (NFS) lands in the Tahoe-Central Sierra where the TCSI Partners are considering ecologically based, landscape-scale restoration. The U.S. Forest Service is interested in working with stakeholders to increase the pace and scale of restoration on NFS lands. Management of NFS lands would be consistent with land and resource management plans and policy.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a private, nonprofit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia and is devoted to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. TNC has significant scientific and management expertise through the dedicated efforts of its diverse staff, including more than 600 scientists, located in all 50 U.S. states and more than 35 countries. In particular, within its North America Region, TNC is deeply involved in numerous collaborative forest restoration projects, fire learning projects, and many other direct partnership efforts to expand conservation of National Forest System lands and other lands and waters.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is a California state agency created by bi-partisan legislation (AB 2600) and signed into law in 2004. Sierra Nevada Conservancy initiates, encourages, and supports efforts that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region, its communities, and the citizens of California. The TCSI is a specific focus area under the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP). The SNC, in partnership with United States Forest Service Region 5, initiated the WIP as a coordinated, integrated, collaborative program to restore the health of California’s primary watershed through increased investment and needed policy changes.

The California Tahoe Conservancy (CTC) is a state agency within the Natural Resources Agency of the state of California. State law established the CTC in 1984 for the purpose of protecting and restoring Lake Tahoe’s natural environment; acquiring, restoring, and managing lands; preserving the scenic beauty and recreational opportunities of the region; and providing public access. The CTC is involved in numerous restoration efforts in the Lake Tahoe Basin, including the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program which is a collaborative long-term strategy that employs landscape-scale restoration efforts. The restoration goals and Lake Tahoe Basin focal areas of TCSI are key elements for restoration and the ongoing protection of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The National Forest Foundation’s (NFF) mission is engaging Americans in promoting the health and public enjoyment of the National Forests. NFF launched the Tahoe Headwaters Treasured Landscape in 2016 to support investments in the Tahoe National Forest and Lake
Tahoe Basin Management Unit. This partnership works closely with local partners for healthy forests, sustainable recreation, and water protection. NFF’s particular interest in TCSI is to help in coordinating the numerous collaborative efforts and projects occurring in the area and share tools and strategies to achieve mutual goals.

The California Forestry Association (Calforests) is the statewide trade association that consists of forest owners, forest products producers, and forestry professionals committed to sustainable forestry and responsible stewardship of our renewable natural resources through environmentally sound policies and conservation practices. The forest sector is a significant contributor to our state’s environmental and economic well-being. Calforests is very interested in landscape-scale restoration to improve forest health.

The Pacific Southwest Research Station (PSW) is a research station within the USDA Forest Service and is interested in working with land managers and stakeholders to provide science to support management decisions for restoring forests to a resilient condition. PSW has conducted and continues to conduct extensive research in the Tahoe-Central Sierra and is eager to share and assist with the application of findings from that research.

The University of California, Natural Reserve System (UCNRS) is a network of protected natural areas throughout California. Its 39 sites include more than 756,000 acres, making it the largest university-administered reserve system in the world. Most major state ecosystems are represented, from coastal tidepools to inland deserts, and lush wetlands to Sierra Nevada forests. The UCNRS reserves also serve as a gateway to more than a million acres of public lands. Founded in 1965, the mission of the Natural Reserve System is to contribute to the understanding and wise stewardship of the Earth and its natural systems by supporting university-level teaching, research, and public service at protected natural areas throughout California.

UCNRS plays a significant role in major research projects that are of national and global significance. By providing protected, landscape-scale locales, as well as support facilities dedicated to research, these sites attract specialists in a wide diversity of fields ranging from ecology, engineering, and marine biology to computer science, geology, and forestry.

The Sagehen Creek Field Station (SCFS) is a UCNRS field station that is managed by the University of California, Berkeley (UCB), and located about eight miles due North of Truckee, California. Sagehen operates on USFS lands as a permittee executed in 1951 embedded within the USFS Sagehen Experimental Forest (SEF). The SEF is cooperatively and collaboratively managed by UCB, USFS Pacific Southwest Research Station, and the USFS Tahoe National Forest. Sagehen has a rich research history in many areas related to ecosystem function and a key member of the Collaborative Sagehen Forest Project. SCFS’s particular interest in the TCSI is seeing how holistic management approaches can be implemented at much larger scales and the effects these landscape-scale restoration projects have on forest health and water quality.

It is the desire and intention of the TCSI Partners to communicate and cooperate fully with each other in exploring, planning, and implementing opportunities to improve the resiliency of the Tahoe-Central Sierra. To this end, they desire and intend to share their respective
personnel and other resources as authorized, in matters relating to the management and conservation of watershed resources in the Tahoe-Central Sierra landscape.

In consideration of the above premises, the TCSI Partners agree as follows:

III. AGREEMENT

A. GUIDING PRINCIPLES.

a. In concert with existing efforts, the TCSI Partners will establish a regional, science-based, restoration planning and implementation framework to improve forest health, protect health and human safety, protect/increase carbon storage, conserve biodiversity, address the major threats to the region’s forests and watersheds (including drought, climate change, uncharacteristic fire, and invasive pests), and protect the drinking water supplies of millions of downstream users; and

b. The TCSI Partners agree to use the concepts and approaches of ecologically based, landscape-scale restoration. Recent publications, including as described in An ecosystem management strategy for Sierran mixed-conifer forests (GTRs 220 and 237) (North et al. 2009, 2012), and Restoring fire-prone Inland Pacific landscapes: seven core principles (Hessburg et al. 2015) provide suitable approaches that can be used in the context of the Tahoe-Central Sierra landscape.

B. STRATEGIES.

a. The TCSI Partners will establish long-term restoration strategies to ensure that the pace and scale of restoration is significantly increased using a comprehensive, science-based approach, including but not limited to:

i. Identifying and supporting the restoration projects required to increase resilience on the landscape;

ii. Identifying the costs associated with achieving a resilient landscape and seek and leverage federal, state, local and private funds to conduct the necessary work;

iii. Utilizing ecologically based approaches for prioritizing watershed conservation and restoration that will address the multiple benefits that healthy forests and watersheds provide, including biodiversity, water, and carbon;

iv. Identifying and working to resolve policy impediments to increase resilience on the landscape, including using new tools available to streamline and increase efficiency;

v. Developing a collaborative communications strategy that will share and amplify messages about successes, needs, lessons learned, and opportunities to duplicate innovative pilot approaches in other locations;

vi. Addressing and helping to coordinate implementation of several state and federal planning priorities in the central Sierra, including the California governor’s state of emergency proclamation on tree mortality, the California Water Action Plan, the forthcoming California Forest Carbon Plan, the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program, the USFS’s National Cohesive Strategy and Region 5
Ecological Restoration Leadership Intent (March 2011), and the forthcoming 2018 Strategic Fire Plan for California;

vii. Engaging and proactively seeking support from additional partners to collaboratively discuss, evaluate, and implement innovative landscape-scale planning, project preparation and implementation, administration, science integration, monitoring, and adaptive management strategies;

viii. Supporting regional biomass and wood products utilization, including the preservation of existing and establishment of new solid wood and biomass processing facilities, to improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and offset forest restoration costs;

ix. Developing subsequent plans, including master and supplemental agreements, contracts, and other instruments that support the increase in pace and scale of landscape restoration;

x. Collaborating on technical, scientific, and financial matters necessary to support watershed management that meets the interests of all parties to this agreement. This may include coordinating and sharing information regarding science, economics, policy, and related issues.

C. PRINCIPAL CONTACTS. Individuals listed below are authorized to act in their respective areas for matters relating to this agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Nature Conservancy Program Contact</th>
<th>The Nature Conservancy Administrative Contact</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>David Edelson</td>
<td>Amy Parks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sierra Nevada Conservancy Program Contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>California Tahoe Conservancy</td>
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<td>Administrative Contact</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(530) 543-6016</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:jason.vasques@tahoe.ca.gov">jason.vasques@tahoe.ca.gov</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax (530) 542-5567</td>
<td>Fax (530) 542-5591</td>
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| National Forest Foundation                      | National Forest Foundation                       |
| Program Contact                                  | Administrative Contact                           |
| Kim Carr                                         | Sheree Bombard                                   |
| 3079 Harrison Ave, #18                           | National Forest Foundation                       |
| South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150                      | Bldg 27, Ste 3, Fort Missoula Rd                 |
| (530) 902-6416                                   | Missoula, MT 59804                               |
| kcarr@nationalforests.org                       | (406) 542.2805                                   |
|                                                | sbombard@nationalforests.org                    |

| California Forestry Association                 | California Forestry Association                 |
| Program Contact                                  | Administrative Contact                           |
| Steven Brink                                     | Rich Gordon                                      |
| 1215 K St., #1830, Sacramento, CA 95814         | 1215 K St., #1830, Sacramento, CA 95814          |
| (916) 208-2425                                   | (916) 842-3447                                   |
| steveb@calforests.org                           | richg@calforests.org                             |
| Fax (916) 444-0170                              |                                                |

<p>| USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest            | USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest            |
| Research Station Program Contact                 | Research Station Administrative Contact          |
| Pat Manley                                       | Jennifer Jones                                   |
| 2480 Carson Road                                 | 800 Buchanan Street                              |
| Placerville, CA 95667                            | Albany, CA 94710                                 |
| (530) 621-6882                                   | (510) 883-8843                                   |
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>University of California, Natural Reserve System Program Contact</strong></th>
<th><strong>University of California, Natural Reserve System Administrative Contact</strong></th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Sagehen Creek Field Station Program Contact</strong></th>
<th><strong>Sagehen Creek Field Station Administrative Contact</strong></th>
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<td>Jeff Brown PO Box 939, Truckee, CA 96160 <a href="mailto:sagehen@berkeley.edu">sagehen@berkeley.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Region 5 U.S. Forest Service Program Contact</strong></th>
<th><strong>Region 5 U.S. Forest Service Administrative Contact</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liz Berger 650 Capitol Mall, Suite 8-200 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 498-5901 <a href="mailto:eaberger@fs.fed.us">eaberger@fs.fed.us</a> Fax (916) 498-6675</td>
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<th><strong>Tahoe National Forest Program Contact</strong></th>
<th><strong>Tahoe National Forest Administrative Contact</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>David Fournier 631 Coyote Street Nevada City, CA 95959 (530) 478-6238 <a href="mailto:dfournier@fs.fed.us">dfournier@fs.fed.us</a> Fax (530) 647-6109</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
D. NOTICES. Any communications affecting the operations covered by this agreement given by the TCSI Partners is sufficient only if in writing and delivered in person, mailed, or transmitted electronically by e-mail to the Program Contacts designated herein. Notices are effective when delivered in accordance with this provision, or on the effective date of the notice, whichever is later.

E. ASSURANCE REGARDING FELONY CONVICTION OR TAX DELINQUENT STATUS FOR CORPORATE ENTITIES. This agreement is subject to the provisions contained in the Department of Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012, P.L. No. 112-74, Division E, Section 433 and 434 regarding corporate felony convictions and corporate federal tax delinquencies. Accordingly, by entering into this agreement, the TCSI Partners acknowledge, as individuals, that they: 1) do not have tax delinquency, meaning that they are not subject to any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, and (2) have not been convicted (or had an officer or agent acting on its behalf convicted) of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within 24 months preceding the agreement, unless a suspending and debarring official of the USDA has considered suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government. If the TCSI Partners fail to comply with these provisions, the U.S. Forest Service will annul this agreement and may recover any funds the affected parties have expended in violation of sections 433 and 434.

F. PARTICIPATION IN SIMILAR ACTIVITIES. This MOU in no way restricts any of the TCSI Partners from participating in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organizations, and individuals.
G. **ENDORSEMENT.** Any of the TCSI Partners’ contributions made under this MOU do not by direct reference or implication convey U.S. Forest Service endorsement of the TCSI Partners’ products or activities.

H. **NONBINDING AGREEMENT.** This MOU creates no right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity. The TCSI Partners shall manage their respective resources and activities in a separate, coordinated, and mutually beneficial manner to meet the purposes of this MOU. Nothing in this MOU authorizes any of the TCSI Partners to obligate or transfer anything of value.

Specific, prospective projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, property, and/or anything of value to a party requires the execution of separate agreements and are contingent upon numerous factors, including, as applicable, but not limited to: agency availability of appropriated funds and other resources, cooperator availability of funds and other resources, agency and cooperator administrative and legal requirements (including agency authorization by statute), etc. This MOU neither provides, nor meets these criteria. If the TCSI Partners elect to enter into an obligation agreement that involves the transfer of funds, services, property, and/or anything of value to a party, then the applicable criteria must be met. Additionally, under a prospective agreement, each party operates under its own laws, regulations, and/or policies, and any Forest Service obligation is subject to the availability of appropriated fund and other resources. The negotiation, execution, and administration of these prospective agreements must comply with all applicable law.

Nothing in this MOU is intended to alter, limit, or expand the agencies’ statutory and regulatory authority.

This MOU does not commit any TCSI Partner to a particular project and merely establishes a framework for cooperation among entities with an interest in improving the ecological health of the Tahoe-Central Sierra region; as such, this MOU alone does not create any physical impacts on the environment and does not therefore trigger any of the TCSI partners’ obligations under either the National Environmental Policy Act or the California Environmental Quality Act.

I. **USE OF U.S. FOREST SERVICE INSIGNIA.** In order for any cooperator to use the U.S. Forest Service insignia on any published media, such as a Web page, printed publication, or audiovisual production, permission must be granted from the U.S. Forest Service’s Office of Communications. A written request must be submitted and approval granted in writing by the Office of Communications (Washington Office) prior to use of the insignia.

J. **MEMBERS OF U.S. CONGRESS.** Pursuant to 41 U.S.C. 22, no U.S. member of, or U.S. delegate to, Congress shall be admitted to any share or part of this agreement, or benefits that may arise therefrom, either directly or indirectly.
K. **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.** Public access to MOU or agreement records must be provided to the extent that the records are subject to disclosure pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, but such requirement shall not be interpreted to mean that any party to this agreement must otherwise make any of its internal records open to the public.

L. **TEXT MESSAGING WHILE DRIVING.** In accordance with Executive Order (EO) 13513, “Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging While Driving,” any and all text messaging by federal employees is banned: a) while driving a government owned vehicle (GOV) or driving a privately owned vehicle (POV) while on official government business; or b) using any electronic equipment supplied by the government when driving any vehicle at any time. All cooperators, their employees, volunteers, and contractors are encouraged to adopt and enforce policies that ban text messaging when driving company owned, leased or rented vehicles, POVs, or GOVs when driving while on official Government business or when performing any work for or on behalf of the Government.

M. **PUBLIC NOTICES.** It is the U.S. Forest Service’s policy to inform the public as fully as possible of its programs and activities. TCSI Partners are encouraged to give public notice of the receipt of this agreement and, from time to time, to announce progress and accomplishments. Press releases or other public notices should include a statement substantially as follows:

"The Pacific Southwest Region of the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture,....."

Cooperators may call on the U.S. Forest Service’s Office of Communication for advice regarding public notices. Cooperators are requested to provide copies of notices or announcements to the U.S. Forest Service Program Contact and to The U.S. Forest Service’s Office of Communications as far in advance of release as possible.

N. **U.S. FOREST SERVICE ACKNOWLEDGED IN PUBLICATIONS, AUDIOVISUALS, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA.** TCSI Partners shall acknowledge U.S. Forest Service support in any publications, audiovisuals, and electronic media developed as a result of this MOU.

O. **NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT – PRINTED, ELECTRONIC, OR AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL.** TCSI Partners shall include the following statement, in full, in any printed, audiovisual material, or electronic media for public distribution developed or printed with any Federal funding.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
If the material is too small to permit the full statement to be included, the material must, at minimum, include the following statement, in print size no smaller than the text:

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider."

P. TERMINATION. Any of the TCSI partners, in writing, may terminate this MOU in whole, or in part, at any time before the date of expiration.

Q. DEPARTMENT AND SUSPENSION. TCSI Partners shall immediately inform the U.S. Forest Service if they or any of their principals are presently excluded, debarred, or suspended from entering into covered transactions with the federal government according to the terms of 2 CFR Part 180. Additionally, should cooperators or any of their principals receive a transmittal letter or other official Federal notice of debarment or suspension, then they shall notify the U.S. Forest Service without undue delay. This applies whether the exclusion, debarment, or suspension is voluntary or involuntary.

R. MODIFICATIONS. Modifications within the scope of this MOU must be made by mutual consent of the TCSI Partners, by the issuance of a written modification signed and dated by all properly authorized, signatory officials, prior to any changes being performed. Requests for modification should be made, in writing, at least 30 days prior to implementation of the requested change.

S. EXECUTION IN COUNTERPARTS: This MOU may be executed in counterparts, each of which when so executed shall be deemed to be an original. Such counterparts shall, together, constitute one instrument.

T. COMMENCEMENT/EXPIRATION DATE. This MOU is executed and is effective through August 6, 2022, at which time it will expire unless it is extended or modified by written agreement of all the TCSI Partners.

U. AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES. By signature below, each TCSI Partner certifies that the individuals listed in this document as representatives of the individual TCSI Partners are authorized to act in their respective areas for matters related to this MOU.

Signature pages follow.
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 Collaborative Project
- National Forest Foundation Treasured Landscape
- South Fork American River Cohesive Strategy
- Area of Interest

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

The Sierra Nevada region has a long history of providing wood and wood products for a multitude of uses. The amount of wood produced from the region has also varied dramatically over the years reflecting changes in economic, environmental, and social policy. Many of the communities throughout the region were built around and have depended upon forest management and the production of forest products.

At the same time, aggressive fire suppression, lack of restoration resources, and conflict over forest management have resulted in an overall decrease in forest health due primarily to overgrown forests. Total forest biomass is accumulating at a dramatic rate and creating unnatural conditions susceptible to disease, drought, large damaging wildfires, and massive emissions of stored carbon.

With decreased amounts of forest material being removed from the landscape, the wood processing infrastructure has decreased. In the early 1990s, approximately 66 biomass power plants were operating in California, producing about 950 MW of renewable energy, and 117 sawmills were operating in the state. Approximately 300,000 acres of private and public forestland were treated each year to sustain those facilities. The Forest Service estimates that it needs to treat approximately 500,000 acres/year for the next 15-20 years to keep up with the growth and biomass accumulation. Today, there are 22 biomass power plants operating producing about 557 MW of renewable energy (about 2.96 percent of total California energy budget) and 27 sawmills operating.

The presence of wood and biomass facilities is essential to restoring the health and resilience of Sierra forests. When material removed as a part of restoration activities has value, it reduces the cost of restoration operations, allowing for more area to be treated. The activity associated with restoration and wood and biomass utilization likewise creates jobs and contributes positively to local economies. Without this infrastructure there are adverse environmental implications, as alternatives such as pile burning produce air pollution and release greenhouse gas emissions.

Communities throughout the region are forming collaborative biomass utilization groups to address the threats of increased fire danger, preserve valuable recreation assets, and maintain economic viability. With broad acceptance of the need to maintain existing facilities and establish new wood-processing capacity in the region as a means to help restore forest health, the SNC has been engaged in and supporting several efforts. SNC provides support through technical assistance, grants, and meeting facilitation. SNC staff also participates in state-sponsored working groups (Tree Mortality Task Force, SB 859, and Bioenergy) to assist in developing new markets for biomass and other wood products.

The attached map (Attachment A) illustrates the geographic distribution of idle, operating, and proposed biomass energy facilities; and the locations of existing wood processing facilities that produce dimensional lumber, mulch products, animal bedding, biochar, and other products.
Current Status
Challenges persist related to the economics of producing energy from woody biomass. Prices of natural gas and other subsidized sources like wind and solar make it difficult for biomass energy production to compete. Creative solutions to level the playing field or mandate biomass usage have been employed and remain necessary.

Efforts to sustain existing biomass energy infrastructure that services the region have realized some recent success with the signing of SB 859, which dictated that 125 MW of electricity generated from biomass harvested primarily from high fire hazard areas, be purchased by the major investor-owned energy companies through five-year contracts. Attached map (Attachment A) details locations.

In addition, in 2012 the legislature passed SB 1122 which designated up to 50 MW of energy be purchased from small scale (less than 3 MW) biomass facilities generating power using byproducts of sustainable forest management. No contracts have yet been executed for this energy due to the high costs and permitting challenges facing project developers, but several community-based efforts are approaching completion (see attached map – Attachment A).

Other innovative approaches to facilitate new production or re-fire idle plants has also gained some traction. Placer County is close to implementing a Community Choice Aggregation to become the energy provider for most of the county and intends to purchase some of its energy from biomass generation. The idled Loyalton biomass plant in Sierra County intends to restart operation by selling energy to buyers specifically interested in purchasing renewable power. The Loyalton facility is also marketing industrial campus opportunities to attract other wood processing businesses that can benefit from co-locating and obtaining more economical power.

State and Regional partners recently commissioned detailed research on opportunities to develop markets and new products using dead trees as the result of the tree mortality crisis (Dead Tree Utilization Assessment, the Beck Group, December 2016). To address the immediate needs related to clearing dead trees, the most effective options identify exporting logs to Japan and Asia for energy production. Several other opportunities are identified ranging from small-scale firewood operations to domestic energy production. Looking beyond the immediate emergency of removing dead trees, the National Forest Foundation sponsored in-depth research resulting in the California Assessment of Wood Business Innovation Opportunities and Markets which identifies several longer-term investment and development opportunities to produce high-value forest products ranging from fuel to mass timber structural products. Much attention has been focused recently on the opportunities to expand usage, and possible manufacturing, of advanced wood products like Cross Laminated Timber (CLT). Large CLT panels are manufactured by gluing and pressing together several layers of milled boards (typically 2” by 6”). The large panels are then used to construct walls, floors, and ceilings in buildings up to eight stories tall. Benefits of using CLT include high resistance to fires and earthquakes, good
insulation properties, long-term storage of carbon, and reduced time and costs for construction. The potential market for this type of product in California is huge and is expected to grow rapidly after building code updates are finalized.

**Next Steps**
Staff will continue to participate and engage with established bioenergy and wood utilization workgroups. Staff will also facilitate training and education sessions for local building and planning officials to explore options for permitting use of advanced wood products in new construction projects.

It is important to note that while there is a high degree of support for biomass utilization among a wide range of stakeholders, there remains some groups who oppose such efforts. SNC and its partners will continue to meet with these groups and will continue to provide information as to the environmental and economic benefits of the utilization of biomass and wood products produced in an ecologically sound manner.

Board members are encouraged to participate in free tours given by biomass plant operators throughout the region on October 18, 2017, to celebrate National Bioenergy Day. Tours will provide first-hand look at how biomass energy is produced.

**Recommendation**
This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Board members are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.
WOOD PRODUCTS PRIMARY PROCESSING & BIOMASS ENERGY FACILITIES

Primary Wood Processing Facilities

- Open
- Closed or Idle

Biomass Power Plants

- Operational and/or Purchasing Fuel
- Idle
- Active Project or Proposal

Note:
Icons may not represent the actual precise locations due to design considerations.

This project is a collaboration between USDA Forest Service Region 5 State and Private Forestry Program and UC Berkeley Woody Biomass Utilization Group.
For more information, please contact Larry Swan (USFS RS Wood Utilization and Biomass Specialist) | Office: (707) 562.8917 | Email: lwswan@fs.fed.us | Updated by meghanwoode@fs.fed.us
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Agenda Item XIII

Update on Efforts to Establish New Biomass/Wood Processing Infrastructure in the Sierra Nevada Region

Biomass Facilities in California Power and Wood Products

State of Biomass Power Projects FY 2017 – 2019

Presented by: Bob Kingman and Angie Lottes
Operating and Active Development Plants
Idle Plants
Operational, Developing, Idle, and Proposed Plants
Sawmills and Other Processing Plants
## Effect of BioRAM on Landscape

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<td>60%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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| BioRAM 2 Facility                        |       |       |       |       |       |                                      |
| Wheelabrator                             | 190,640 | 190,640 | 190,640 | 190,640 | 190,640 | 953,200                             |
| HHZ minimum requirements                 | 80%    | 80%    | 80%    | 80%    | 80%    |                                      |

| Total BDT/Yr, BioRAM 1 and 2 Contracts   | 682,740 | 781,160 | 978,000 | 978,000 | 978,000 | 4,397,900                           |
| Total Est Treated Ac @ 12.5 BDT biomass/ac| 54,619  | 62,493  | 78,240  | 78,240  | 78,240  | 351,832                             |

www.SIERRANEVADA.ca.gov
BioMAT Pricing

Note that direction, or lack of, price change depends on the number of offers accepted during the previous program period. Program period is 1 month until first project strikes at price.
BioMAT Projects with Funds for Construction
Questions / Comments

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