



## Board Meeting Minutes

March 2, 2023 — Sacramento, CA

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### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m.

### 2. Oath of Office for New Boardmembers

Board Chair Terry O'Brien provided the Oath of Office to North Subregion representative, Siskiyou County Supervisor Ed Valenzuela, Central Subregion representative, Placer County Supervisor Cindy Gustafson, East Subregion representative, Inyo County Supervisor Jeff Griffiths, and the California Department of Finance designee, Matt Almy.

### 3. Roll Call

Present:

- Terry O'Brien
- Matt Almy
- Heather Bernikoff
- John Brissenden
- Jeff Griffiths
- Cindy Gustafson
- Bob Johnston (present after roll call)
- Jessica Morse
- Brian Oneto
- Phillip Peters
- Ed Valenzuela
- Alan Olson
- Christopher Heppe (present after roll call)

Absent:

- Susana Reyes
- Dwight Ceresola
- Jim Richardson

#### **4. Approval of December 9, 2022, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)**

##### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

##### **Action**

Boardmember Heather Bernikoff moved and Boardmember John Brissenden seconded a motion to approve the December 9, 2022, Meeting Minutes.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 10, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

#### **5. Board Chair's Report**

Board Chair Terry O'Brien thanked staff who worked on the previous day's Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Summit. O'Brien noted being grateful for a season with an abundance of snow and rain.

#### **6. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**

##### **a. Executive Officer Update**

Executive Officer Angela Avery welcomed the Board and acknowledged the hard work by Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) staff and the tremendous effort put in by the speakers to attend the Summit and travel given the adverse road conditions.

Avery provided a brief legislative update noting that there is current legislation, Senate Bill 841 (SB 841), being developed that would again expand the boundary of the SNC. On the budget, Avery discussed the budget shortfall, related spending and trigger cuts, and the climate dollars that, at this time, remain committed despite the cuts. Avery also noted a potential resources bond in the coming years that the SNC will follow closely.

Avery also advised the Board that the SNC is beginning the process of developing a new Strategic Plan for 2024 – 2028 and is updating the current Action Plan. The Action Plan will be in front of the Board at the June 2023 Board meeting, and the new Strategic Plan will be brought forward to the Board for approval June 2024, which is the 20-year anniversary of the SNC.

Avery provided an update on the Landscape Grant Pilot Program, telling the Board that SNC will bring to the June Board meeting a recommendation for moving forward. Avery reiterated the steps the SNC is taking to pool and distribute funds for the pilot and announced funding from CAL FIRE and the U.S. Forest Service, along with the proposed action on the agenda to allow the SNC to contribute its own funds to this program.

Through the process, 18 potential partnerships were identified, and phase one eligibility review and additional screening narrowed the pool to four final partnerships: Amador Calaveras Consensus group, the Burney–Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed, the Eastern Sierra Climate Communities Resilience Project, and the Healthy El Dorado Landscape Partnership.

The Board engaged in discussion about the partnerships and other investments. The Board also commended staff and the work that the SNC is doing through this program, which is preventing “random acts of conservation” and attempting to eliminate some of the bureaucracy that can often occur.

Boardmember Bob Johnston arrived at 9:30 a.m.

b. Administrative Update

Deputy Executive Officer, Administration, Amy Lussier reviewed the Administrative Staff Report provided in the Board materials, which included a high-level budget overview and authority for three new positions upon passage of the 2023-24 budget. Lussier explained there will be effects from the projected General Fund shortfall and those will be seen in the May Revision. Boardmember Phillip Peters asked if the new tax filing deadline will affect the May Revision numbers, and Boardmember Matt Almy responded that despite the extended deadline, things will indeed be clearer in the May budget revision.

Lussier reported on Human Resources issues, noting the SNC’s three new employees and the departure of Matthew Daley. Lussier also noted how telework has made SNC recruitment more difficult – the Auburn location is not as much of a draw as it has been historically, and higher salaries at other departments make those positions increasingly feasible due to telework opportunities.

Boardmember Christopher Heppe arrived at 9:45 a.m.

c. Policy & Outreach Update

Policy & Outreach Division Chief Brittany Covich provided thanks to all who contributed to the Sierra Nevada Watershed Summit, which took place the day before, March 1, 2023.

Covich provided supplemental updates to the Policy & Outreach Update staff report provided in the Board materials.

Covich provided a brief legislative update noting bills that the SNC is monitoring, such as SB 39 (Laird), SB 841 (Dahle), and Assembly Bill (AB) 338 (Aguiar-Curry). Covich mentioned her team is also watching a handful of bills impacting grant program administration. Boardmembers engaged in dialogue about the bills that

were presented and the potential opportunities for communicating with policymakers about the impacts of those bills on the SNC's Region.

Covich provided a brief project video providing an example of videos that have been circulated through the SNC's social media channels.

Boardmember Jeff Griffiths left the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

## **7. Strategic Land Conservation Board Forum (INFORMATIONAL)**

Avery introduced the three panel members who provided presentations to the Board.

Panel Member #1: Bridget Fithian, Sierra Foothill Conservancy/California Council of Land Trusts – Fithian provided the Board with a PowerPoint presentation sharing successful land conservation projects and talking about the ongoing management of projects after they are conserved. Fithian provided an overview of the Land Trust sector, which is made up of the State and National Associations of Land Trusts.

Panel Member #2: Sarah Clark, Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP, whose primary practice areas are with land trusts – Clark presented on conservation easements and provided a brief background of the Williamson Act. Clark also addressed the combination of using the Williamson Act and a Conservation Easement.

Panel Member #3: Michael Delbar, California Rangeland Trust – Delbar provided a PowerPoint presentation to the Board with an overview of California Rangeland Trust and a brief background of the organization.

Panel Member #4: Kevin Cann, presenting on the Mariposa Creek Parkway – unable to attend due to road conditions.

Boardmembers engaged in conversation about the presentations provided.

### **Public Comment**

Aaron Albaugh, Lassen County Supervisor and former SNC Boardmember, asked the Board and panel members how the county can act to protect itself.

Boardmember Heather Bernikoff asked if the SNC has been using Williamson Act information as an educational opportunity/tool. Bernikoff asked about the potential for using additional information as part of the SNC's messaging. Avery suggested it may be included in Guidelines if we get additional funding. Bernikoff also asked about messaging and including additional information to legislatures.

**8. Strategic Land Conservation and Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Directed Grant Programs Grant Cycle Recommendations (ACTION)**

Executive Officer Angela Avery and Field Operations & Grants Division Chief Andy Fristensky provided the Board with a brief overview of the Directed Grant Cycle Recommendations staff report provided in the March meeting materials.

Boardmembers engaged in conversation to clarify the recommendation.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Action**

Boardmember Heather Bernikoff moved and Boardmember Cindy Gustafson seconded a motion to:

- Approve a shift of \$2 million from the FY 2022-23 Nature-Based Solutions appropriation to the Landscape Grant Pilot Program.
- Approve an expedited process through modifications to the existing grant guidelines to the SNC's previously approved Strategic Lands Conservation and Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Directed grant programs, applying this same process to any Nature-based Solutions and Conservancy Purposes funding the SNC may receive in FY 2023-24.
- Redistribute any remaining funds from FY 2021-23 and any future FY 2023-24 Nature-Based Solutions and Conservancy Purposes funds to award under the Strategic Land Conservation and Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Directed grant programs without percentage limits between the two programs, and direct staff to take the necessary actions for its successful implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 9, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

**9. 2022 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program Award Recommendation (ACTION)**

Field Operations Manager Luke Hunt provided the Board with a PowerPoint presentation that included brief program background followed by a review of the project summary and staff recommendation for each grant. Staff recommended 15 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program projects totaling \$24,382,507.

a. #1368

Alder Creek Sequoia Resilience Project in Tulare County in the amount of \$2,711,500 to Save the Redwoods League and adopt a Project Specific Analysis (PSA)/Addendum to the California Vegetation Treatment Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Report, authorize the Executive Officer to execute the

PSA/Addendum, adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, adopt Findings and a Statement of Overriding Considerations, authorize staff or SNC's delegate to submit completed data to the Board of Forestry, and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Determination as Lead Agency and a Notice of Exemption for a related but independent slope-stabilization project.

Boardmembers engaged in discussions regarding the grant.

### **Public Comment**

Tim Bordon, Sequoia Stewardship and Restoration Manager of the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, addressed the Board to answer Boardmember questions and concerns voiced by members of the public.

Bordon addressed the Board to thank them for the work on this project. Bordon told the Board the benefits of giant sequoia and stated that they are currently in an existential crisis because of recent fire mortality. Bordon shared several of the benefits of the project and stated that the Save the Redwoods League plans to eventually transfer the property to Giant Sequoia National Monument after the completion of the grant work.

Aaron Albaugh, Lassen County Supervisor, addressed the Board to ask a question concerning cost per acre. Hunt addressed Supervisor Albaugh's concerns by stating that this is in an area with no wood-industry infrastructure.

### **Action**

After review and consideration of the CalVTP PEIR, the PSA/Addendum, the MMRP, and the Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations, Boardmember Jessica Morse moved and Boardmember Heather Bernikoff seconded a motion to:

1. Find that all of the effects of the proposed project (a) have been covered in the CalVTP PEIR, and (b) all applicable Standard Project Requirements and mitigation measures identified in the CalVTP PEIR will be implemented. The proposed project is within the scope of the CalVTP PEIR. No additional CEQA documentation is required.
2. Find that the proposed project revisions will not result in substantial changes in the project, no substantial changes in circumstances have occurred, and no new information of substantial importance has been identified. The proposed project revisions will not result in any new or substantially more severe significant impacts. None of the conditions described in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR have occurred; therefore, an Addendum is adopted to address the proposed project revisions presented in the PEIR;

3. Adopt the Addendum to address the proposed project revisions presented in the PEIR;
4. Authorize the Executive Officer to execute the PSA/Addendum;
5. Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program;
6. Adopt the Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations;
7. Authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Determination as Lead Agency for the for the Alder Creek Sequoia Resilience Project (1368);
8. Authorize staff or the SNC's delegate to submit completed data to the Board of Forestry;
9. Authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the slope-stabilization activities to protect the Stagg Tree.
10. Authorize a grant award in the amount of \$2,711,500 to the Save the Redwoods League, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

b. #1507

'Inimim Forest Restoration Project – Phase Three in Nevada County in the amount of \$1,200,000 to Yuba Watershed Institute and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Boardmember Christopher Heppe commented on how the area needs help. Boardmember Brian Oneto asked if the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is involved in the project and Heppe answered in the affirmative.

**Public Comment**

Aaron Albaugh, Lassen County Supervisor, addressed the Board to clarify price per acre of treatment on BLM lands. Luke Hunt clarified the costs.

**Action**

Boardmember Cindy Gustafson moved and Boardmember Jessica Morse seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the 'Inimim Forest Restoration Project – Phase Three (1507), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$1,200,000 to the Yuba Watershed Institute, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

c. #1512

South Yuba Rim Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project in Nevada County in the amount of \$214,666 to Nevada County and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Action**

Boardmember Brian Oneto moved and Boardmember Phillip Peters seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the South Yuba Rim Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project (1512), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$214,666 to the County of Nevada, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

d. #1514

McKays Strategic Fuelbreak in Calaveras County in the amount of \$2,147,934 to Calaveras County Office of Emergency Services and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Board Chair Terry O'Brien asked for clarification around the benefits of this project and asked about county support. Boardmember Brian Oneto spoke in support of the project.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Action**

Boardmember Brian Oneto moved and Boardmember Cindy Gustafson seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the McKays Strategic Fuelbreak project (1514), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$2,147,934 to the Calaveras County Office of Emergency Services and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

e. #1517

Deer Creek Hazardous Fuels Treatment Project – Nevada City in Nevada County in the amount of \$111,665 to The City of Nevada City and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.



**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Action**

Boardmember Phillip Peters moved and Boardmember Cindy Gustafson seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Deer Creek Hazardous Fuels Treatment Project – Nevada City (1517), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$111,665 to The City of Nevada City, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

f. #1522

Giant Sequoia Resilience Coordination Project in Tulare and Fresno counties in the amount of \$652,076 to Plumas Corporation and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Board Chair Terry O'Brien was pleased to see two projects from the Southern part of the SNC Region. O'Brien stated that given the 20 percent loss of the giant sequoias to fire over the last decade he is supportive of this project.

United States Forest Service (USFS) representative Boardmember Alan Olson spoke in support of this project and informed the Board that the USFS has contributed \$20 million to other groves to complement this geographic conservation effort on top of the roughly \$6 million it contributed last fiscal year.

Boardmembers Heather Bernikoff and Bob Johnston both spoke in support of this project.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Action**

Boardmember Bob Johnston moved and Boardmember Heather Bernikoff seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Giant Sequoia Resilience Coordination Project (1522), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$652,076 to the Plumas Corporation, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

g. #1532

Reds Meadow Two - ESCCRP in Mono and Madera counties in the amount of \$3,885,401 to the Whitebark Institute of Interdisciplinary Environmental Sciences and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Boardmember Heather Bernikoff pointed out the opportunity for tribal community involvement for the burning portions of this project. Luke Hunt responded stating tribal involvement includes elders cutting cord wood from the project. Hunt will follow-up with Bernikoff with tribal involvement in relation to burns. Andy Fristensky provided details about a western tribe possibly becoming involved. Bernikoff encouraged the partners at the Whitebark Institute to continue to develop these relationships.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Action**

Boardmember Bob Johnston moved and Boardmember Jessica Morse seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Reds Meadow Two – ESCCRP project (1532), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$3,885,401 to the Whitebark Institute of Interdisciplinary Environmental Sciences, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

h. #1536

Medicine Lake Volcano Forest and Fire Restoration in Siskiyou County in the amount of \$2,812,106 to Pit Resource Conservation District and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

**Public Comment**

Aaron Albaugh, Lassen County Supervisor, spoke in support of this project.

**Action**

Boardmember Heather Bernikoff moved and Boardmember Cindy Gustafson seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Medicine Lake Volcano Forest and Fire Restoration project (1536), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$2,812,106 to the Pit Resource Conservation District, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

i. #1548

West Lassen Headwaters Landscape Restoration Project in Tehama and Plumas counties in the amount of \$1,538,957 to Sierra Institute for Community and Environment and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Boardmember Heather Bernikoff spoke in support of the project and noted that it provides meaningful interaction and engagement with tribal communities.

Executive Officer Angela Avery offered a message on behalf of Jonathan Kusel and his team from the Sierra Institute, stating their appreciation for the Board's consideration for the project.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Action**

Boardmember Brian Oneto moved and Boardmember Heather Bernikoff seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the West Lassen Headwaters Landscape Restoration Project (1548), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$1,538,957 to the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

j. #1549

Marian Creek Fire Recovery Project in Plumas County in the amount of \$1,859,996 to Feather River Resource Conservation District and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Boardmember Bob Johnston asked for clarification – do we have a policy about subsidies of logging corporations to assist clearing the land after a burn? Luke Hunt responded that this is an “all hands on deck” response to remove the hazard trees and restore and protect the watershed to support the community as a whole.

Boardmember Jessica Morse provided context for those listening who are unfamiliar with the State Water Project – this project is taking a whole watershed approach because this area needs to recover into forested land as soon as possible. Board Chair O'Brien asked about timber coming off the land and Hunt answered that none of the timber coming out of this project is merchantable. The goal is to remove all of the hazard trees to make sure the area is a safer place to plant.

**Public Comment**

Michael Hall, District Manager of the Feather River Resource Conservation District, spoke to address the Board concerns and questions around this project.

**Action**

Boardmember Jessica Morse moved and Boardmember Phillip Peters seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Marian Creek Fire Recovery Project (1549), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$1,859,996 to the Feather River Resource Conservation District, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

k. #1551

Improving Landscape and Watershed Health Through Restoring Fire Regimes in Lassen Volcanic National Park – Phase Three in Shasta County in the amount of \$894,137 to Sierra Institute for Community and Environment and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Boardmember Brian Oneto asked about crosscut sawyers and the effectiveness of a crosscut saw versus a chainsaw. Field Operations & Grants Division Chief Andy Fristensky advised, due to the wilderness area and the Federal Act that does not allow mechanical tools like chainsaws in the area, the project would be in violation of the Wilderness Act if mechanical tools were used. Luke Hunt advised that the details and efficiency of the crew have been evaluated and they are very skilled in this line of work.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Action**

Boardmember Jessica Morse moved and Boardmember Bob Johnston seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Improving Landscape and Watershed Health Through Restoring Fire Regimes in Lassen Volcanic National Park - Phase Three project (1551), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$894,137 to the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 7, Nay – 1. The motion passed.

l. #1553

Sierra at Tahoe – Caldor Recovery – Phase Two in El Dorado County in the amount of \$1,027,805 to El Dorado Resource Conservation District and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Action**

Boardmember Cindy Gustafson moved and Boardmember Jessica Morse seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Sierra at Tahoe – Caldor Recovery Phase Two (1553), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$1,027,805 to the El Dorado Resource Conservation District, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

m. #1555

Improving Forest Resilience on Modoc National Forest in Modoc County in the amount of \$1,573,364 to California Deer Association and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Boardmember Brian Oneto spoke in support of all projects that enable prescribed fire on the landscape. Boardmember Heather Bernikoff told the Board she appreciates the tribal engagement aspect. Board Chair Terry O'Brien acknowledged and supported the geographic diversity of the projects.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Action**

Boardmember Heather Bernikoff moved and Boardmember Brian Oneto seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Improving Forest Resilience on Modoc National Forest (1555), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$1,573,364 to the California Deer Association, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

n. #1562

Sequoia National Forest Wildfire and Forest Hazard Mitigation Project in Tulare County in the amount of \$2,500,000 to Tulare County and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Action**

Boardmember Phillip Peters moved and Boardmember Heather Bernikoff seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Sequoia National Forest Wildfire and Forest Hazard Mitigation Project (1562), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$2,500,000 to Tulare County, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

*\*Boardmember Jessica Morse was absent from this vote.*

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 7, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

o. #1571

Reducing Wildfire Risks on Inyo Craters Landscape in Mono County in the amount of \$1,252,900 to California Deer Association and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Action**

Boardmember Brian Oneto moved and Boardmember Cindy Gustafson seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Reducing Wildfire Risks on Inyo Craters Landscape project (1571), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$1,252,900 to the California Deer Association, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

*\*Boardmember Jessica Morse was absent from this vote.*

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 7, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

**10. Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Directed Grant Award Recommendations (ACTION)**

Field Operations & Grants Division Chief Andy Fristensky provided the Board with a PowerPoint presentation that included a brief program background followed by a review of the project summary and staff recommendation for grant #1453-RT. Staff recommended one Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Directed Grant Program project for a total of \$468,192.

a. #1453-RT

Euer Valley Restoration Project – Phase One in Nevada County in the amount of \$468,192 to Truckee River Watershed Council. The Board may concur with the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) and authorize the filing of a

CEQA Notice of Determination as a responsible agency under CEQA for the project activities analyzed within the IS/MND.

Boardmember Bob Johnston spoke in support of the project.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Action**

After having reviewed and considered the information within the Negative Declaration and, concur with the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, Boardmember Bob Johnston moved and Boardmember Cindy Gustafson seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Determination as a Responsible Agency for the Euer Valley Restoration Project – Phase One (1453-RT), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$468,192 to the Truckee River Watershed Council, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

*\*Boardmember Jessica Morse was absent from this vote.*

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 7, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

**11. Strategic Land Conservation Directed Grant Award Recommendations (ACTION)**

Field Operation & Grants Division Chief Andy Fristensky provided the Board with a PowerPoint presentation that included a brief program background followed by a review of the project summary and staff recommendation for each grant. Staff recommended two Strategic Land Conservation Directed Grant Program projects for a total of \$2,205,650.

a. **#1431-LC**

Veater Ranch Conservation Easement Development Project in Madera County in the amount of \$102,350 to Sierra Foothill Conservancy and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Boardmember Heather Bernikoff spoke in support of the project.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Action**

Boardmember Heather Bernikoff moved and Boardmember Phillip Peters seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the

Veater Ranch Conservation Easement Development Project (1431-LC), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$102,350 to the Sierra Foothill Conservancy, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 7, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

b. #1449-LC

Upper Sacramento River Headwaters Acquisition in Siskiyou County in the amount of \$2,103,300 to Siskiyou Land Trust and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Board Chair Terry O'Brian asked for confirmation of Boardmember Ed Valenzuela's support for this project, and he verified his support.

**Public Comment**

Kathleen Hitt, Executive Director of the Siskiyou Land Trust, submitted a written public comment in support of the Upper Sacramento River Headwaters Acquisition in Siskiyou County. A copy of the letter was provided to the Board and copies were made available for members of the public.

Kathleen Hitt spoke to the Board in favor of the grant. Hitt also addressed the Board to tell them about the expanded tribal relationships that were created.

Boardmember Brian Oneto asked about the high price per acre, which was addressed by stating that it is the location, view, and access to recreation that drives the price of this property. Hitt also said that the public benefit is huge because of the amount of water and wet meadow added to the headwaters for both Shasta and Sacramento rivers, it will protect rare plants, and it will provide future educational opportunities.

Boardmembers engaged in conversation with Hitt regarding property taxes, watershed, and zoning.

**Action**

Boardmember Heather Bernikoff moved and Boardmember Jessica Morse seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Upper Sacramento River Headwaters Acquisition Project (1449-LC), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$2,103,300 to the Siskiyou Land Trust, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0. The motion passed.

Matt Almy departed at 3:19 p.m. – after the final vote.



**12. Boardmembers' Comments**

Boardmember Bob Johnston told the Board that while it is a lot of work to read through the packet, he is excited about the work being done and Board Chair Terry O'Brien echoed his words.

**13. Public Comments**

No public comment.

**14. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.