



Board Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2025 – South Central Subregion – Murphys, CA

Board Meeting

Ironstone Vineyards
Alhambra Music Room
1894 Six Mile Rd.
Murphys, CA 95247

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.

2. Oath of Office for New Boardmembers

Board Chair Nathan Voegeli administered the Oath of Office for incoming Boardmembers Martin Huberty, Jennifer Kreitz, Ric Leutwyler, Shane Starr, and Doug Teeter.

3. Roll Call

Present:

- Nathan Voegeli
- Stephen Benson
- John Brissenden
- Barnie Gyant
- Martin Huberty
- Robert Johnston
- Jennifer Kreitz
- Ric Leutwyler
- Lisa Lien-Mager
- Victoria Rome
- Shane Starr
- Doug Teeter
- Dennis Townsend

Absent:

- Chris Feutrier
- Gabe Garcia
- Clayton Jordan

4. Approval of December 13, 2024 Meeting Minutes (ACTION)

Action

Boardmember Dennis Townsend moved and Boardmember Ric Leutwyler seconded the motion to approve the December 13, 2024, Meeting Minutes.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 11, Nay – 0, Abstain – 1. The motion passed.

5. Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Voegeli thanked Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) staff and presenters for the prior day's tour. Voegeli also acknowledged the absence of SNC's non-voting federally appointed Boardmembers.

Boardmember Johnston arrived during this item.

6. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)

a. Executive Officer Update

Executive Officer Angela Avery provided the Board with updates, including welcoming the five newly appointed Boardmembers, the importance of diversity on SNC's Governing Board, how critical federal partners are, internal staffing updates, the passage of the Climate Bond (Proposition 4) and the remaining funding from Proposition 68, SNC's priorities throughout the next fiscal year, the Executive Order issued by Governor Newsom requiring government workers return to the office four days a week, potential uncertainty related to changes within the federal government and potential impacts to SNC's Region and Governing Board, and SNC grants on federal lands.

The SNC attorney, Mary Akens, provided information on recently issued federal regulatory actions and federal and state executive orders that may impact the SNC.

Discussion among Boardmembers and staff focused on the ways uncertainty at the federal level may impact SNC's Region, the feasibility of offering remote participation

for SNC's Board meetings, and whether the Governing Board should submit a letter on the effects of recent federal government changes and the effects on SNC's Region.

b. Policy & Outreach Update

Policy & Outreach Division Chief Brittany Covich spoke to the Board on the current state legislative session, common themes of the 2025/26 legislative session, Nature-Based Solutions goals, SNC's recent communications projects, relationships between SNC and Department of Water Resources, and upcoming events and information-sharing opportunities.

Discussion among Boardmembers and staff focused on public education opportunities, a need for graphics that display fire history in watersheds, and how to frame the discussion around wildfire treatment and fire-prevention projects.

7. Annual Budget Report (INFORMATIONAL)

Deputy Executive Officer Amy Lussier provided an update on the state budget process, funds used by SNC, the Governor's Executive Order requiring staff to return to the office four days a week, grant funding appropriations updates, staffing, and funding goals.

Board & Technical Services Manager Amy Nelson provided information on SNC's operating budget, different types of funding, how the budget team works with other units to manage SNC's budget, past budget expenditures, and current and future budget projections.

Discussion among Boardmembers and staff included potential issues with federal reimbursements and how the Department of Finance is monitoring closely for any impacts to the state.

Boardmember Brissenden left during this item.

8. Regional Readiness for Landscape Investment (INFORMATIONAL)

Regional Scientist Sarah Campe provided the Board with information on the evolution of SNC's strategy for developing and funding landscape-scale work, the current status of the Regional Readiness for Landscape Investment, and coordination efforts between the SNC, CNRA, and the California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force.

Discussion among Boardmembers and staff included ways to increase the amount of investment-ready projects in local areas and the timeline for rolling out funding for these projects.

9. Grant 937A-LGPP Crystal Basin – Healthy Eldorado Landscape Partnership Pilot Project – Recreation Activities Amendment (ACTION)

Field Operations & Grants Division Chief Andy Fristensky provided the Board with information on the proposed amendment to the Crystal Basin – Healthy Eldorado Landscape Partnership Pilot Project.

The proposed amendment allows \$1,591,541 of SNC funds to shift from project planning to project implementation that occurs within the existing recreation infrastructure and amenities around Wrights Lake.

Discussion among Boardmembers and staff included the timeline of the project, funding for the project, and the shift from planning to implementation.

Action

Boardmember Martin Huberty moved and Boardmember Townsend seconded the motion to authorize the executive officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Crystal Basin – Healthy Eldorado Landscape Partnership Pilot Project – Recreation Activities (937A-LGPP) amendment, approve the revised project per the Exhibit A, and authorize staff to amend the grant agreement with the GBI.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 12, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

10. California Forest Residual Aggregation for Market Enhancement (CAL FRAME) Update (INFORMATIONAL)

Kerri Timmer of Placer County, Christiana Darlington of CLERE Inc, and Regine Miller of Headwaters Environmental provided an update on the CAL FRAME pilot program, which included information on the Placer County Air Pollution Control District study on the Mosquito Fire; ways to solve the challenges sustainable biomass markets face; CAL FRAME's role in solving these challenges; North East California, Tahoe Central Sierra, and South Central Sierra case studies and common findings from these studies; and future funding opportunities.

Discussion among Boardmembers and staff included sustainable business practices for biomass-based products, increasing biomass utilization, biomass transportation options, and potential marketing plans for wood-utilization products.

Public Comment

Renee Orth, Tuolumne County resident, expressed concerns that there may be a strong incentive to prevent the kind of burning that is necessary for the health of forests once business models are centered around biomass utilization.

Tuolumne County Supervisor Jaron Brandon expressed appreciation for this presentation and provided many utilization ideas for biomass.

11. Proposition 68 Forest and Watershed Health Directed Grant Program Grant Award Recommendation (ACTION)

Field Operations & Grants Division Chief Fristensky provided the Board with information to make determinations under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and award a grant to the following project:

a. #1800

Tahoe Forest Gateway – Forest Health, Phase Two project in Placer County in the amount of \$ 2,299,993 to 40 Acre Conservation League with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Discussion among Boardmembers, SNC staff, and 40 Acre Conservation League staff focused on the costs and plans for maintenance of the land, how generated revenue will be used, which entities had been consulted for this project, and partners 40 Acre Conservation League will work with on the project.

Public Comment

Jade Stevens, president of 40 Acre Conservation League, thanked the Board for its support, discussion, and consideration regarding this project. Stevens emphasized that this project will serve as a gateway to the wilderness area of the Tahoe National Forest for many Californians.

Action

Boardmember Doug Teeter moved and Boardmember Townsend seconded the motion to authorize the executive officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Tahoe Forest

Gateway – Forest Health, Phase Two (#1800) project, authorize a grant award in the amount of \$2,299,993 to 40 Acre Conservation League, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 12, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

12. Boardmember Comments

Boardmember Teeter expressed excitement for returning to the Board.

Boardmember Huberty thanked attendees for coming to Murphys for the meeting.

Board Chair Voegeli thanked those who attended the meeting and expressed happiness to see all the questions and engagement. Board Chair Voegeli also congratulated longtime SNC employee Tristyn Armstrong on her retirement. Armstrong served SNC for over 16 years and directly supported the Governing Board for many of those years.

13. Public Comments

Christopher Buttner, Murphys resident, spoke on concerns regarding the electric vehicle charging station and Tesla Supercharger located in Meadowmont Center in Arnold, CA.

Renee Orth, Tuolumne County resident, voiced her concerns regarding the Golden State Natural Resources wood pellet project and the impact the project has on the environment.

Joel Metzger, general manager of Utica Water and Power Authority, noted the interest he has seen within the water industry to work with organizations like SNC to prevent wildfires and increase forest resilience.

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Additional Board Materials

- Executive Officer Authorized Grant Agreement Amendments and Grant Awards
- Key Meetings and Presentations
- Letters of Support
- Sierra Spotlight