



Board Meeting Minutes

June 5, 2025 – Northeast Subregion – Cedarville, CA

Modoc District Fairgrounds
Dance Hall
1 Center Street
Cedarville, CA 96104

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 Non-Voting Federal Liaisons, Chris Feutrier and Gabe Garcia.

3. Roll Call

Present:

- Nathan Voegeli
- John Brissenden
- Chris Feutrier
- Gabe Garcia
- Barnie Gyant
- Martin Huberty
- Clayton Jordan
- Jennifer Kreitz
- Ric Leutwyler
- Lisa Lien-Mager
- Shane Starr
- Doug Teeter

Absent:

- Bob Johnston
- Michele Perrault
- Victoria Rome
- Dennis Townsend

4. Approval of March 6, 2025, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)

Action

Boardmember Shane Starr moved and Boardmember Lisa Lien-Mager seconded the motion to approve the March 6, 2025, Meeting Minutes.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0, Abstain – 1 (Brissenden). The motion passed.

5. Board Chair's Report (INFORMATIONAL)

Board Chair Voegeli thanked Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) staff and the previous day's tour presenters, including the Fort Bidwell Indian Community, Modoc County Farm Bureau, Modoc County Resource Conservation District, Modoc National Forest, and Lomakatsi Restoration Project.

6. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)

a. Executive Officer Update

Executive Officer Angela Avery welcomed the SNC's three non-voting federal Liaisons who were absent at the March meeting and provided the Board with updates, including developments at the state level in supporting rapid fire risk reduction, Proposition 4 funding and its impacts to SNC's budget, Executive Order N-25-25 issued by Governor Gavin Newsom that fast-tracks certain critical projects protecting communities from wildfire, events at which SNC had a presence, and opportunities for SNC to improve pace and scale of landscape-level investment.

Boardmember Lien-Mager noted that since Executive Order N-25-25, departments and conservancies under the California Natural Resources Agency have increased support and technical assistance to applicants with qualifying projects. She also acknowledged the confidence within the administration and Department of Finance in conservancies to get dollars on the ground.

b. Administrative Update

Deputy Executive Officer Amy Lussier spoke to the Board on the May Revise and changes to SNC's budget, updates on the state's budget and how that may impact SNC's staff, and SNC's success in requesting an exclusion to the 7.95 percent permanent budget cut per Budget Letter 24-24.

c. Policy & Outreach Update

Policy & Outreach Division Chief Brittany Covich updated the Board on policy and communications, including the current legislative session and bills being tracked by SNC, state policy events that SNC has participated in, SNC's Sierra Spotlight, outreach SNC is doing to build relationships with the legislature, plans for future legislative field tours, and media displaying fire trends throughout the Sierra-Cascade Region.

Discussion among Boardmembers and staff centered around general problems state conservancies face, including consistent funding, sustained investment, and reporting systems currently being used.

7. SNC Governing Board Communication on Federal Participation (ACTION)

Executive Officer Avery provided the Board with information to take action to request staff develop a letter to federal leadership that communicates the value and importance of federal participation on SNC's Governing Board.

Discussion among Boardmembers and staff focused on future participation from SNC's federal partners, the desired content of this letter due to situational changes since this idea was brought up in March, and who the letter should be addressed to. Boardmembers and staff addressed recommended changes to this action item based on the discussion and determined the letter should be sent to the Bureau of Land Management Acting Director, the National Park Service Acting Director, and the United States Forest Service Chief Forester.

Action

Boardmember Jennifer Kreitz moved and Boardmember John Brissenden seconded the motion to adopt the staff recommendation. During discussion, Board Chair Voegeli proposed modifying the motion to direct the letter to the folks the Board discussed and to refocus the letter to use it as an educational opportunity to thank federal partners for continued commitment to having representatives on the Board.

Boardmember Kreitz moved and Boardmember Brissenden seconded the modified motion.

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

8. Proposition 68 Strategic Land Conservation Directed Grant Program Grant Award Recommendation (ACTION)

Field Operations & Grants Division Chief Andy 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. #1803-LC

Tahoe Forest Gateway – Zrelak Acquisition in the amount of \$545,000 to 40 Acre Conservation League (40 ACL) with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Discussion among Boardmembers and staff included location of new land parcels in relation to existing property, public land access, the type of traffic that crosses the railroad tracks and their relation to easements on the property, and current trail systems.

Public Comment

Jade Stevens of 40 Acre Conservation League thanked the Board for continued commitment to 40 ACL's work. Stevens acknowledged that this proposal is a step forward in 40 ACL's broader vision and gives the public enriching ways to experience the outdoors.

Darryl Lucien of 40 ACL emphasized the importance of easements on the land and communication that has occurred between 40 ACL and Union Pacific Railroad, and work that has been done to accommodate neighbors in the community.

Action

Boardmember Martin Huberty moved and Boardmember Doug Teeter seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to authorize the executive officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Tahoe Forest Gateway – Zrelak Acquisition (#1803-LC) project, authorize a grant award in the amount of \$545,000 to the 40 ACL, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

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

9. Proposition 68 Grant Program Approval (ACTION)

Field Operations & Grants Division Chief Fristensky provided the Board with information so it may take action to authorize the allocation of remaining Proposition

68 local assistance funds (no less than \$4.1 million) and approve updates to the Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access Grant Guidelines and Guideline Companion Document for the next grant cycle.

Discussion among Boardmembers and staff included clarification of the eligibility criteria that determines which projects qualify for the grant program.

Action

Boardmember Teeter moved and Boardmember Brissenden seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to:

- a. Approve the updated *Sierra Nevada Conservancy Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access Directed Grant Program Guidelines*;
- b. Approve the *FY 2025 – 2027 Grant Guideline Companion Document to the Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access Directed Grant Program Guidelines*, and;
- c. Contingent on FY 2025-2026 budget appropriations, authorize staff to implement the program with Proposition 68 funds appropriated to the SNC in the Budget Act of 2025.

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

10. Proposition 4 Grant Program Approval (ACTION)

Field Operations & Grants Division Chief Fristensky provided the Board with information so it may take action to authorize and allocate Proposition 4 local assistance funds (up to \$10 million) and approve updates to the Wildfire and Forest Resilience 2025 Directed Grant Program Guidelines for the next grant cycle.

Discussion among Boardmembers and staff included whether project timelines can further be streamlined, how the grant program timeline was developed, the importance of being responsible with public dollars, and marketing and communications requirements within the program.

Action

Boardmember Brissenden moved and Boardmember Teeter seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to approve the updated Wildfire and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program Guidelines for \$10 million of Proposition 4 funding appropriated to the SNC in 2024-25, and authorize staff to implement the program.

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

11. State Water Project Headwaters Investment Pilot (ACTION)

Policy & Outreach Division Chief Covich provided the Board with information to consider and act on a delegation of authority for the executive officer to administer a grant in support of a California Department of Water Resources' State Water Project headwaters investment pilot.

Covich shared a letter from Andrew Schwartz, Climate Advisor at Department of Water Resources (DWR), that thanked the Board for considering this project and the importance of the Upper Feather River watershed to the State Water Project; provided background on how this investment pilot came to be; and explained SNC's essential role in developing this investment.

Comments from Boardmembers included support for giving the executive officer the discretion and authority to approve projects under this agreement – given the relatively small grant amount and the need for timeliness – and the hope that this will lead to more funding in the future.

Action

Boardmember Teeter moved and Boardmember Shane Starr seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to:

1. Authorize the SNC executive officer to accept the funds from DWR; and
2. Delegate authority to the executive officer to approve and execute grants and/or contracts consistent with the project objectives and qualifying for an Exemption from CEQA for expenditure of DWR funds; and
3. Report all new grants approved to the Board.

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

12. Action Plan Update (INFORMATIONAL)

Deputy Executive Officer Lussier, Policy & Outreach Division Chief Covich, and Field Operations & Grants Division Chief Fristensky updated the Board on SNC's 2024-2025 Action Plan. This included a brief background on the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan and an overview of the actions achieved from July 2024 to June 2025. Lussier also provided an update on the 2025-2026 Action Plan development and potential changes to the planning process.

Discussion among Boardmembers and staff included support for streamlined reporting and Action Plan processes.

13. Boardmember Comments

Board Chair Voegeli thanked 40 ACL for coming to Modoc County and Boardmember Starr for assisting with the planning of the meeting.

Boardmember Brissenden acknowledged the passing of former Board Chair BJ Kirwan.

Boardmember Huberty thanked SNC for its support in the Forest & Fire Film Festival & Forum on May 31 in Calaveras County.

Boardmember Starr thanked SNC staff for organizing the meeting and expressed appreciation for the Modoc community.

14. Public Comments

Laurel Harkness, Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition, shared that her organization was awarded a grant that will be invested across the Siskiyou-Modoc community through August of 2026, and the different streams of work that are being supported by the project.

15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

Additional Board Materials

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