

ATTACHMENT 3.5.a

Lake Tahoe Basin Wildfire Protection and Water Quality Enhancement Project

Grant Type: Planning

Grantee: Lake Valley Fire Protection District

Recommended Funding: \$850,000

Location: All private, local government, and California Tahoe Conservancy-owned parcels located in the Wildland-Urban Interface on the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin in Placer and El Dorado counties and the City of South Lake Tahoe. (Attachment 3.5b)

Project Description

Lake Valley Fire Protection Fire District (LVFPD), in partnership with North Tahoe Fire Protection District (NTFPD), submitted the Lake Tahoe Basin Wildfire Protection and Water Quality Enhancement Project (Project) for Proposition 1 funding. This Project involves preparation of a Program Timberland Environmental Impact Report (PTEIR). The California Board of Forestry established the PTEIR process to consider timber harvest programs as a whole, instead of examining related actions repetitively on a project-by-project basis.

The proposed PTEIR will address all California-side private, local government, and California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) parcels located in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) in one programmatic environmental analysis. The WUI, regardless of ownership, requires similar forest management treatments due to proximity to neighborhoods and potential environmental impacts. Evaluating these treatments and their impacts collectively provides the public with better understanding of the forest management impacts. The PTEIR will address the cumulative environmental consequences and efficiently propose standard mitigation protocols and operating procedures that will be relied upon in each subsequent Program Timber Harvest Plan (PTHP). A more limited and expedited review and approval process for the PTHPs is expected with the ability to tier to the PTEIR. In addition, the PTEIR will help inform forest

management activities to help create more resilient forests and to better protect water and wildlife resources.

The proposed funding would support all work necessary to develop a PTEIR to comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and State of California Forest Practice Rules (FPR) requirements. The Project includes review of existing data, completion of preliminary project design and site analysis, preparation of project area base maps, project administration, and all other procedures as required to complete the PTEIR for certification by the Director of CAL FIRE and responsible agencies.

LVFPD and NTFPD will collaborate with the National Forest Foundation's (NFF) Lake Tahoe West Collaborative Project as part of Project delivery to ensure landscape-scale restoration and fire protection planning that encompasses all land ownerships and resource values.

Background and Context

Wildfires have substantially increased in the Lake Tahoe Basin over the last decade, impacting communities, increasing carbon emissions, and changing forested landscapes for decades to come. In addition, drought, insects and disease, and climate change are drastically reducing forest health, creating favorable conditions for catastrophic fires. Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin) agencies have been working collaboratively to implement hazardous fuels projects and forest management activities to increase protection from wildfires around Basin communities. While the numbers of acres treated around the Basin has increased in the last decade, the time required to plan individual projects can slow progress. In addition, agencies have been implementing small-scale projects, which may reduce efficiencies and may not provide a holistic analysis of impacts across ownerships and ecosystems.

There are two key planning documents that guide hazardous fuels reduction and forest management activities within the WUI throughout the Basin. The Lake Tahoe Basin Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy (Strategy) was collaboratively developed by fifteen Basin agencies, including land managers, regulators, fire, and local jurisdictions from both California and Nevada. Updated in 2014, the Strategy identifies treatment areas basin-wide to protect Lake Tahoe communities and ecosystems. Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) are community-based plans that focus on projects within the WUI. The CWPPs were updated in 2015.

This Project will build off of these plans to analyze forest conditions, treatment areas and project impacts throughout the California side of the Basin. Local fire protection districts and local and state agencies will be able to tier fuels projects from the PTEIR, saving analysis and permit approval time.

Project Evaluation

The proposed PTEIR will cumulatively assess environmental effects of projects, solicit public input, and result in efficiently permitted projects. The impacts of recent record setting fires in California demonstrate the increased threat of wildland fuel hazards in and around communities. Without active management in the WUI, the risk of catastrophic wildfire will continue to increase in the years ahead. Once projects are implemented, benefits will be recognized in the primary focus area of Forest Health as well as the Ecosystem and Watershed Management focus area.

Ecologically sound and science-based forest management will inform the planning strategies to return overgrown forests to the Basin's historical fire regime. Ultimately, implementation of the projects included in the PTEIR will restore forest health; bolster forest resiliency; improve upland forest habitat structure; restore early successional stages within stream environment zones; change vegetation conditions to modify fire behavior and reduce the potential for wildfire; and reduce forest densities, thus increasing surface water infiltration. These implementation methods and benefits are also consistent with the Conservancy's Forest Improvement Guidelines.

The Project supports goals identified in the Upper Truckee Watershed Restoration Strategy, including improvement of upland forest habitat structure and to reduce wildfire threat near residential areas.

Project Schedule

The three-year Project will commence upon receipt of funding. Conservancy staff will review and approve the work plan prepared by LVFPD and NTFFPD including project deliverables, timelines and the selection of a consultant tasked with project completion by 2019.

Project Budget

The recommended award represents an approximate \$350,000 reduction from the original funding request of \$1,206,240. LVFPD and NTFPD intend to work cooperatively with NFF to gain efficiencies, and to seek funding from other sources, such as the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act, to bridge the shortfall.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Planning Consultant Services	\$ 700,000
Project Management & Administration	\$ <u>150,000</u>
TOTAL	\$ 850,000

The budget for individual line items may vary from those shown above. However, total conservancy funding for Project implementation will not exceed \$850,000.

California Environmental Quality Act Compliance

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., title 14, § 15000 et seq.), certain classes of activities are statutorily exempt from CEQA or are exempt because they have been determined by the Secretary for Resources to have no significant effect on the environment. Staff has evaluated this planning project, and has found it to be exempt under CEQA. This project qualifies for a statutory exemption under section 15262 (feasibility and planning studies). A Notice of Exemption (NOE) has been prepared for the project (Attachment 3.5d). If the Board approves the grant funding, staff will file the NOE with the State Clearinghouse pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, section 15062.

List of Attachments:

Attachment 3.5b – Project Location Map
Attachment 3.5c – Resolution 16-03-03.5
Attachment 3.5d – Notice of Exemption

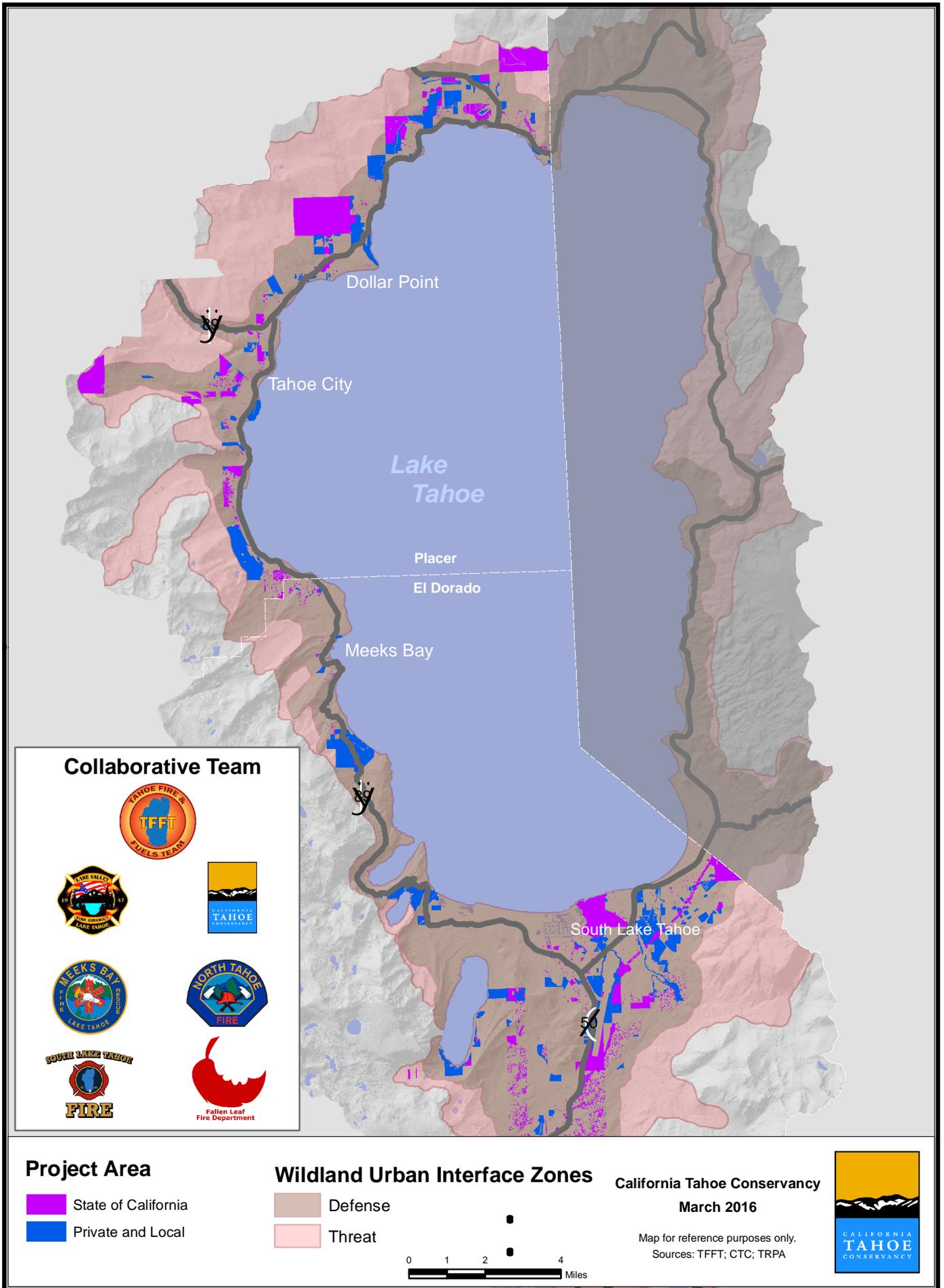
Staff Contact:

Milan Yeates

530-543-6058

milan.yeates@tahoe.ca.gov

Lake Tahoe Basin Wildfire Protection and Water Quality Enhancement Project



Collaborative Team



Project Area

- State of California
- Private and Local

Wildland Urban Interface Zones

- Defense
- Threat

California Tahoe Conservancy

March 2016

Map for reference purposes only.
Sources: TFFT; CTC; TRPA



ATTACHMENT 3.5c

California Tahoe Conservancy

Resolution

16-03-03.5

Adopted: March 17, 2016

**LAKE TAHOE BASIN WILDFIRE PROTECTION
AND WATER QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT**

Staff recommends that the California Tahoe Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Government Code section 66907.7:

"The California Tahoe Conservancy hereby authorizes the award of a planning grant in the amount of \$850,000 to the Lake Valley Fire Protection District for the Lake Tahoe Basin Wildfire Protection and Water Quality Enhancement Project and authorizes staff to take all other necessary steps consistent with the accompanying staff recommendation."

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution duly and regularly adopted by the California Tahoe Conservancy at a meeting thereof held on the 17th day of March, 2016.

In WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 17th day of March, 2016.

Patrick Wright
Executive Director

ATTACHMENT 3.5d

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Office of Planning and Research
1400 10th Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: California Tahoe Conservancy
1061 Third Street
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

Project Title:

Lake Tahoe Basin Wildfire Protection and Water Quality Enhancement Project Planning Grant Authorization

Project Location – Specific:

All private, local government, and California Tahoe Conservancy-owned parcels located in the Wildland-Urban Interface on the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin, as shown on the attached map.

Project Location – City:

The City of South Lake Tahoe and lands within the unincorporated area of the Lake Tahoe Basin portion of El Dorado and Placer counties

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Authorization of a grant to prepare a Program Timberland Environmental Impact Report (PTEIR) for Wildland-Urban Interface treatments for forest restoration and fire protection purposes.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project:

California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy Board meeting of March 17, 2016, Agenda Item 8a)

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: California Tahoe Conservancy

Exempt Status:

- Ministerial (Sec. 15073)
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 15071 (a))
- Emergency Project (Sec. 15071 (b) and (c))
- Statutory Exemption, section 15262 (planning and feasibility studies)

Reasons Why Project is Exempt:

Action involves planning and feasibility studies for preparation of a PTEIR.

Contact Person

Milan Yeates

Area Code Telephone

(530) 543-6058

Date Received for Filing:

Patrick Wright
Executive Director

ATTACHMENT A

Lake Tahoe Basin Wildfire Protection and Water Quality Enhancement Project

