California Tahoe Conservancy
Agenda Item 8
December 11, 2014

LAKE TAHOE WATER TRAIL

Summary: Staff recommends authorization to expend up to $50,000 on planning tasks related to the Lake Tahoe Water Trail.

Location: The Lake Tahoe Water Trail is a non-motorized boating route around Lake Tahoe (Attachment 1).

Fiscal Summary: Up to $50,000 from the Beverly Charter Trust Special Deposit Account

Recommended Action: Adopt Resolution 14-12-04 (Attachment 2).

Background

The Lake Tahoe Water Trail (LTWT) is the water route around Lake Tahoe for non-motorized water craft. Water trails around the country began to develop 20 years ago in recognition of increasing interest in sustainable, active recreation and paddling.

In the Tahoe Region, initial concept planning related to a water trail began with a group of interested recreation and business leaders in 2003. These leaders understood that promoting non-motorized boating access to our Region's primary asset is a strong way to meet our changing economic needs while protecting our environmental resources. Early efforts produced a loosely organized Lake Tahoe Water Trail Association (LTWTA), made up entirely of volunteers, who developed the LTWT concept and created informational resources such as a LTWT Map and Guide, and website. At that time they created the LTWT to be a means of promoting and organizing an outdoor recreation activity to improve access and safety, and consider corresponding lakeside public and private facility improvements.

Today, the LTWTA is a membership organization whose mission is to "develop a safe, fun, and sustainable Lake Tahoe Water Trail." The LTWTA has been active for 11 years, developing informational resources for paddlers, sponsoring special interpretive events,

collaborating with regional agencies and interest groups to solve conflicts, and creating a public identity around paddling.

California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) staff recognizes the potential of the LTWT to meet the agency interest of promoting recreational access to Lake Tahoe while protecting water quality and other environmental resources. The Conservancy began supporting the development and promotion of the LTWT as a member of the organizing LTWTA committee. Additionally, in 2009-2011, the Conservancy led a multi-agency planning effort to develop the Lake Tahoe Non-Motorized Boating Framework. The Framework is an assessment of paddler needs and a toolkit of improvements that can support a high quality lake access experience and reduce conflicts.

While the LTWTA has succeeded in establishing the benefits of a water trail at Lake Tahoe, the all-volunteer organizational model has fallen short of creating the type of lasting partnerships and leadership needed to realize the potential of the LTWT.

If authorized by the Board, staff intends to implement the project through a contract with Sierra Business Council (SBC) to address key water trail implementation features and to foster the creation of an organization capable of sustaining itself and securing ongoing improvements. The SBC is a private non-profit corporation focused on developing and promoting social, environmental, and economic capital in the Sierra Nevada region.

Description

SBC will leverage its expertise and partnerships to complete the specific tasks outlined below and to develop a sustainable organization capable of ongoing advocacy.

1. Wayfinding/Trailhead Signage: Identify public agency partners with shoreline access points suitable for installation of model wayfinding/trailhead signage. With input from potential partners, refine the signage model and use it to seek implementation funds for, at minimum, five permanent signs. Potential funders include private, non-profit, local and State sources. If outside funding is secured, final coordinated design, and purchase/installation of permanent signage shall proceed.

2. Outreach/Education: Build on the experience of the LTWTA and SBC to broaden the outreach and enrich the educational message related to water trail issues. SBC will rely on a variety of channels to attract constituents for outreach and

education including supporting the LTWT website, Facebook page and other social media formats, and using traditional print media and in-person contacts. Three sub-elements include:

a. Update the LTWT Map and Guide, Day Trip maps, and create and implement a revised marketing strategy for their distribution.
b. Implement the Lodge-to-Lodge Network (LTLN), a network of lakeside lodges accessible from the LTWT. The LTLN is part of the strategy to increase overnight access on the water trail and reduce unauthorized shoreline camping. This task requires completion of the lodge inventory, securing participation from a minimum of seven lodges, and developing promotional strategies and partnerships to assure its sustainability.
c. Promote the LTWT at community events and through participation in regional recreation planning efforts. Critical messages to address include: improving wayfinding and launching/landing information to increase access, reducing resource damage due to overnight water trail use (including unpermitted camping), protecting Tahoe yellow cress, appropriate paddling behavior in relationship to wildlife, and reducing conflicts between public and private use along the shoreline.

3. Framework Update: Reconvene participants in the Lake Tahoe Non-Motorized Boating Framework process in both 2015 and 2016 to produce a status update. This task furthers the leadership role of LTWTA in keeping the Framework relevant and the public agency partners committed to its implementation.

4. LTWT Sustainability: Use the partnerships developed through the tasks identified to create a distinct and sustainable program. This task involves the creation of an Oversight Committee of recreation and business leaders from around the Region capable of providing policy direction and funding support. Develop a business plan that demonstrates organizational sustainability with measurable annual objectives and a budget and funding plan.

Budget

Staff seeks authorization to expend up to $50,000 of Beverly Charter Trust funding to complete the activities identified below.

Wayfinding/Trailhead Signage	$ 10,000
Outreach/Education	15,000
Framework Update	10,000
LTWT Sustainability	15,000
Total	**$ 50,000**

Please note that costs for individual budget items may vary from those shown above, but total expenditures will not exceed $50,000.

Implementation

Conservancy staff has issued a competitive request for proposal for this activity. SBC was the only qualified bidder. If authorized to expend the funds, staff intends to enter into a standard contract with SBC with the following schedule:

Task 1: Wayfinding/Trailhead Signage	January – October, 2015
Task 2: Outreach/Education	January 2015 – June 2016
Task 3: Framework Update	March 2015 & March 2016
Task 4: LTWT Sustainability	June 2015 – June 2016

Evaluation

Authorization to fund the identified tasks meets the Conservancy's key Strategic Plan strategies including:

1) Strategy I.C, Coordinate Across State Agencies in Support of Other Basin-wide Collaborative Initiatives. Specifically, these tasks involve coordinating state agency efforts to protect Tahoe yellow cress, prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species, and increase public awareness of natural and recreational assets.
2) Strategy II.D, Improve … Public Access to Lake Tahoe. Specifically, these tasks improve and enhance the LTWT and help to achieve the related Strategic Plan performance target date of completing the water trail by December, 2016.

The activities address the primary objectives of the Conservancy's Public Recreation and Access Program, including: enhancing regional public access, providing interpretive opportunities, increasing non-motorized transportation and recreation access, and promoting stewardship.

Consistency with the Conservancy's Enabling Legislation

Authorization of funding for these activities is consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation. Specifically, Government Code section 66905.2 authorizes the Conservancy to protect the natural environment and preserve recreation opportunities. Additionally, Government Code section 66906.8 authorizes the Conservancy to select and hire private consultants or contractors to achieve these purposes.

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

The proposed action is not an activity which has the potential of causing either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonable foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Accordingly, the action is not a "project" within the meaning of CEQA, and thus does not fall within the purview of CEQA. No CEQA analysis is required. Should the planning activity related to the proposed action lead to a future project, future environmental analysis would occur.

List of Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Project Location Map
Attachment 2 – Resolution 14-12-04

Conservancy Staff Contact:

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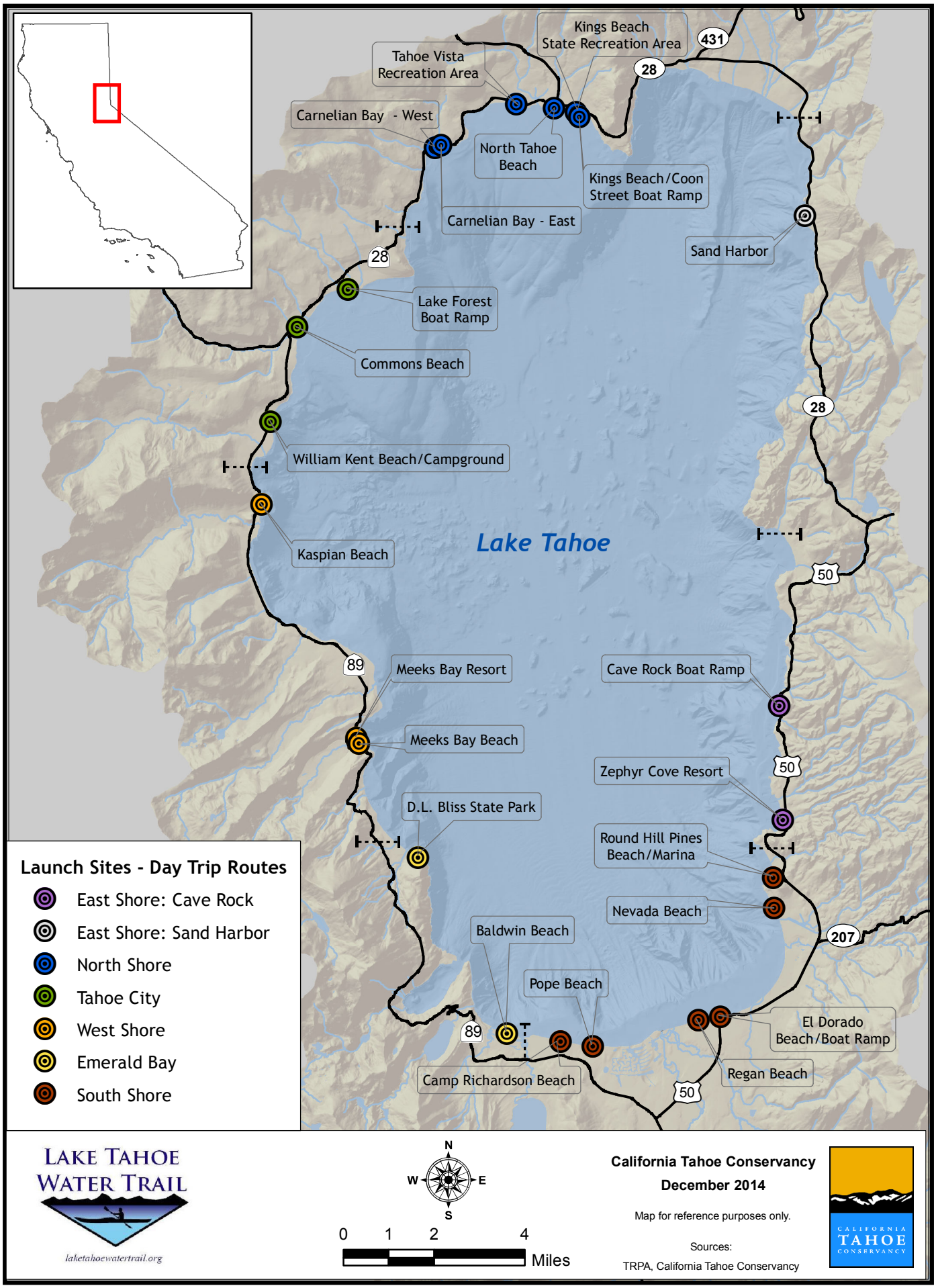
ATTACHMENT 1

Lake Tahoe Water Trail



ATTACHMENT 2

California Tahoe Conservancy
Resolution 14-12-04
Adopted: December 11, 2014

LAKE TAHOE WATER TRAIL

Staff recommends that the California Tahoe Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Government Code sections 66905.2 and 66906.8:

"The California Tahoe Conservancy hereby authorizes the expenditure of up to $50,000 on planning activities to support the Lake Tahoe Water Trail and authorizes staff to take all other necessary steps consistent with the accompanying staff report necessary to implement the project."

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 11th day of December 2014.

In WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 11th day of December, 2014.

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Patrick Wright
Executive Director