

California Tahoe Conservancy  
Agenda Item 7a  
March 20, 2014

## **SEISMOGRAPHIC STATION LICENSE AGREEMENT**

**Summary:** Staff recommends authorization of a long-term license agreement with the University of Nevada, Reno, in support of the University's Seismological Laboratory Earthquake Research and Earthquake Early Warning Network.

**Location:** Approximately one mile northwest of North Tahoe High School and 1.2 miles southeast of Watson Lake, within the Conservancy-owned Dollar Property (Placer County APN 092-010-012) (Attachment 1).

**Fiscal Summary:** Minor incidental staff costs related to the preparation and processing of the agreement

**Recommended Action:** Adopt Resolution 14-03-01 (Attachment 2).

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### **Background**

For the past several years, the University of Nevada, Reno Seismological Laboratory (NSL) has been in the roll out phase of a modern broadband microwave communications system. The effort to replace older technologies has created a scalable broadband platform that can adapt data collection and delivery for any internet-connected device (e.g. seismographs, fire cameras, metrological sensors, data centers, GPS sensors, etc.). The system is designed to address monitoring for first responders in natural disasters (i.e., earthquakes, floods, and fires) and provide private broadband links to critical facilities that rely strictly on grid-power, the public internet, or the cellular network. In addition, the platform creates a managed communications infrastructure for multi-disciplinary remote network sensors in the Tahoe Basin and throughout Nevada and Eastern California.

NSL is upgrading the Lake Tahoe Basin seismic monitoring network to include additional broadband mountain top communication sites to accommodate new digital seismographs and a multi-hazard camera network. These high elevation links will

provide line-of-site to most Lake Tahoe Basin locations as well as sites to the east. When completed, fire personnel, emergency centers, and the public will have web-based access to real-time, time-lapse video of an unfolding situation and improved disaster response. As this system evolves, a more coordinated approach to emergency response and environmental data collection is anticipated.

Funding is in place for the basic communications backbone and seismographic station upgrades. If NSL obtains all approvals and access rights in a timely manner, the broadband wireless system, modern digital seismographs, and mountain top fire cameras could be in operation by mid-2014.

### **Project Description**

Staff recommends authorization to enter into a long-term license agreement with NSL for Placer County APN 092-010-012. The parcel was acquired in 1989 under the Conservancy's Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) Acquisition Program with Lake Tahoe Acquisitions Bond Act funds. As previously authorized on September 12, 2012 under Resolution 12-09-05, this parcel has been designated for transfer to the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). The proposed improvements are consistent with DPR's Burton Creek State Park General Plan objectives. The license agreement of up to 5 years with the option to renew at the end of the agreement term will provide NSL with access rights to install, operate, and maintain a seismographic station and fire camera to collect essential data for earthquake investigations and fire monitoring. Science education, public awareness, and public safety will also benefit from the collection of this data. As technology evolves, it is possible the station may be used for additional equipment and/or appropriate activities in the future.

The seismographic station includes an 18-foot triangle antenna mast with a solar panel (approximately 65 inches x 40 inches), antennae, equipment enclosures, a seismograph, and 32-foot connecting cable encased in a 3/4-inch flex conduit. The installation will consist of two areas, one with the antenna mast, solar panels, camera mount, including a 360-degree pan camera, and minor equipment enclosures and the second where the two-foot sensor vault will be buried approximately four feet into the ground with a two-foot concrete base. The entire license area shall not exceed an area larger than 8 feet x 32 feet. The seismographic station will be painted to meet Tahoe Regional Plan Agency (TRPA) requirements.

The proposed seismographic station and camera equipment will be delivered by hand cart and backpacks to the site from an existing access road on the property. Construction will be completed using various power and hand tools. Any maintenance

equipment required throughout the term of the license will be delivered in a similar manner.

### **Project Implementation**

If the Board approves this recommendation, staff intends to enter into the license agreement referenced above and take all necessary actions to implement the agreement in summer 2014. The agreement includes provisions relating to permitting, restoration, insurance, and indemnification. Consistent with the Board's direction under the Conservancy's Special Use Program, NSL will not be charged a fee for the use of Conservancy property associated with the seismographic station and fire camera because the Conservancy will benefit from the data collected.

### **Project Evaluation**

The requested special use meets the minimum requirements and is consistent with the Conservancy's adopted Special Use Guidelines. The long-term value and beneficial uses of this ESL parcel will not be adversely affected. The environment, including soil, wildlife, stream environment zones, and/or native vegetation, will not be unduly affected. This use complies with all environmental regulations. This use is consistent with the applicable regulatory requirements and NSL will obtain all necessary permits prior to installation of the station. The license agreement will contain other standard language requiring insurance and indemnification, as well as restoration to any damage to the Conservancy parcel.

Under the transfer to DPR, all license conditions will continue to be enforced by DPR. NSL will coordinate its activities, including construction, operation, and maintenance, so as not to interfere with any existing recreational use.

### **Consistency with the Conservancy's Enabling Legislation**

The recommended license is consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation. Specifically, Government Code section 66907.8 authorizes the Conservancy to lease, rent, sell, exchange, or otherwise transfer any interest in real property or interest therein to local public agencies, individuals, corporate entities, or partnerships for management purposes. Under Government Code section 66907.9, the Conservancy is authorized to initiate, negotiate, and participate in agreements for the management of land under its ownership or control with local public agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, individuals, corporate entities or partnerships, and to enter into any other agreements authorized by state or federal law.

## **Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

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. Pursuant to Public Resources Code sections 21001(f) and 21082, the Conservancy has also adopted regulations to implement, interpret, and make specific, the provisions of CEQA. Cal. Code Regs., title 14, § 12100 et seq. Staff has evaluated this project, and has found it to be exempt under CEQA. This project qualifies for a categorical exemption under State CEQA Guidelines, section 15306 (information collection), and the Conservancy's CEQA regulations, section 12102.6. A Notice of Exemption (NOE) has been drafted for the project (Attachment 3). If the Board approves the project, staff will file a Notice of Exemption (NOE) with the State Clearinghouse pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, section 15062.

### **List of Attachments:**

Attachment 1 – Location Map

Attachment 2 – Resolution 14-03-01

Attachment 3 – CEQA Notice of Exemption

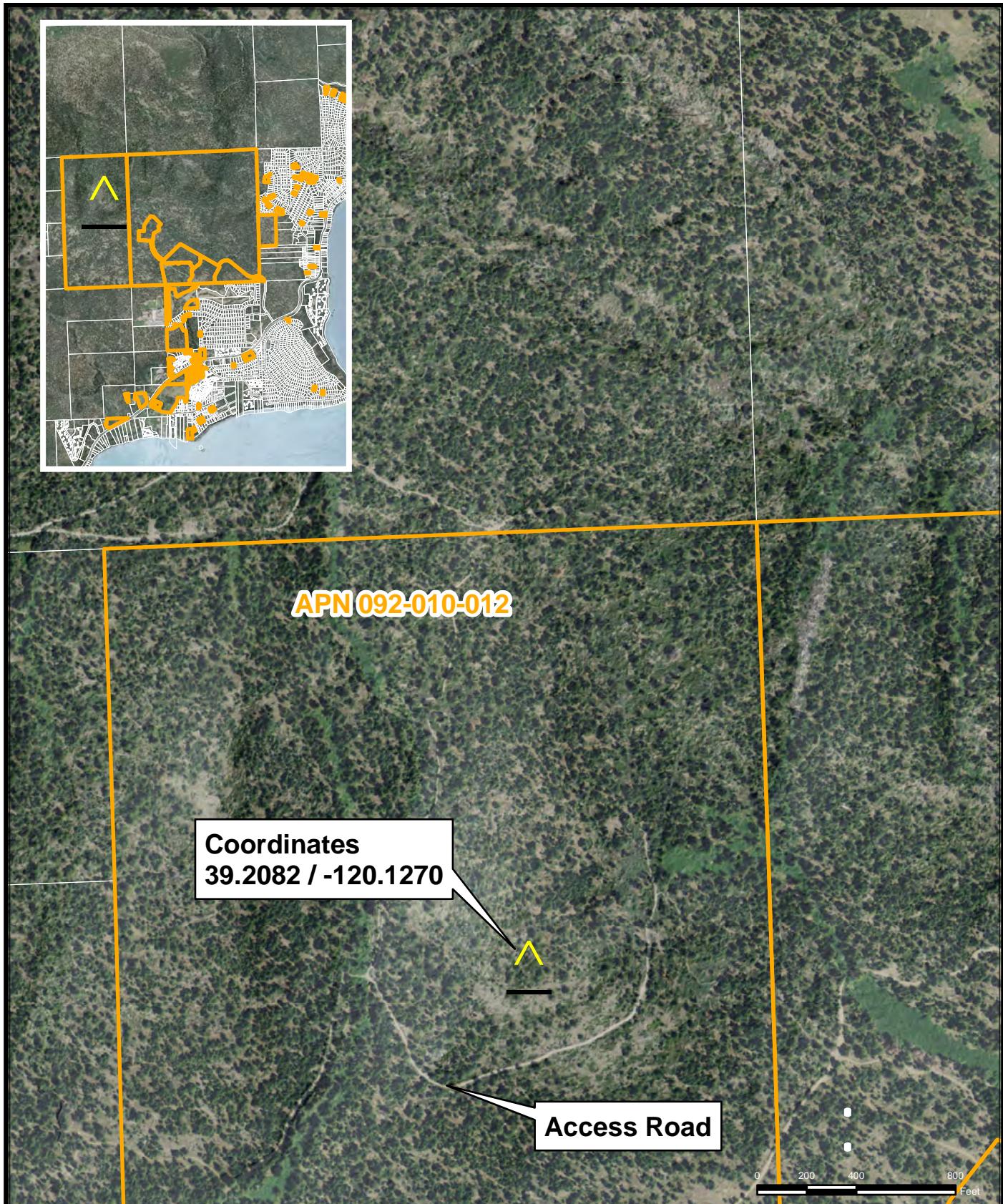
### **Conservancy Staff Contact:**

Sue Ewbank

Phone: (530) 543-6025

[sue.ewbank@tahoe.ca.gov](mailto:sue.ewbank@tahoe.ca.gov)

ATTACHMENT 1  
Seismographic Station License Agreement



**Potential Seismographic Station Site**



**Conservancy-owned Parcels**

California Tahoe Conservancy  
March 2014

Map for reference purposes only.

Sources: NAIP 2012 Imagery; TRPA; USGS



## **ATTACHMENT 2**

California Tahoe Conservancy  
Resolution  
14-03-01  
Adopted: March 20, 2014

### **SEISMOGRAPHIC STATION LICENSE AGREEMENT**

Staff recommends the California Tahoe Conservancy make the following finding based on the accompanying staff report pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.:

"The California Tahoe Conservancy has evaluated the proposed license activities and determined them to be categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Conservancy hereby directs staff to file a Notice of Exemption for this project with the State Clearinghouse."

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Government Code sections 66907.8 and 66907.9.:

"The California Tahoe Conservancy hereby authorizes staff to enter into a license agreement with University of Nevada, Reno over Placer County Assessor Parcel Number 092-010-12 in support of the University of Nevada Reno, Seismological Laboratory Earthquake Research and Earthquake Early Warning Network, 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 20<sup>th</sup> day of March 2014.

In WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 20<sup>th</sup> day of March 2014.

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Patrick Wright  
Executive Director

## **ATTACHMENT 3**

### **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

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**Project Title:**

Seismographic Station License Agreement

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**Project Location – Specific:**

Placer County APN: 092-010-012

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**Project Location – City:**

Unincorporated

**Project Location – County:**

Placer

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**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:**

This project will provide the University of Nevada, Reno Seismological Laboratory with access rights to install, operate, and maintain a seismographic station to collect essential data for earthquake investigations.

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**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:**

California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy meeting of 3/20/2014) (Agenda Item7a)

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**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:**

California Tahoe Conservancy

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**Exempt Status:**

- Ministerial (§ 21080 (b)(1); § 15268)
- Declared Emergency (§ 21080 (b)(3); § 15269 (a))
- Emergency Project (§ 21080 (b)(4); § 15269 (b)(c))
- Categorical Exemption Class 6, § 15306, “Information Collection” (See also Cal. Code Regs., title 14, § 12102.6)

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**Reasons Why Project is Exempt:**

This project consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource.

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**Contact Person:**

Sue Ewbank

**Telephone Number:**

(530) 543-6025

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**Date Received for Filing:**

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Patrick Wright  
Executive Director