

California Tahoe Conservancy  
Agenda Item 8  
December 12, 2013

**PARTNERSHIPS**

**Summary:** Discussion only, no action will be taken on Items 8a - b

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**List of Items**

Item 8a – Tahoe Resource Conservation District

Item 8b – Tahoe-Baikal Institute

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**TAHOE RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP**

The Conservancy and the Tahoe Resource Conservation District (Tahoe RCD) have had a successful contractual working relationship for many years, dating back to 1986. Originally the Tahoe RCD provided pre-acquisition eligibility inspection services to the Conservancy which evolved into a much larger scope including several different services totaling more than \$1 million, which were renewed annually until 2010.

The current relationship between the Conservancy and Tahoe RCD is governed by a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) which was approved by both the Conservancy and Tahoe RCD Boards in September 2010. A description of the JPA can be found at the end of this staff update.

Not long after the Conservancy and Tahoe RCD entered into the JPA, staff developed a name and logo to formalize and solidify the partnership, known as the Tahoe Conservation Partnership.

Pursuant to the JPA, the Tahoe RCD provides a variety of services, directed primarily toward land management and project implementation. For example, Tahoe RCD currently provides seasonal work crews for the Conservancy's Land Management and Forest Enhancement Programs for property management, restoration, fuel hazard reduction, and forest habitat enhancement work on Conservancy property. Under the Land Management Program, the Tahoe RCD provides one lot inspector who performs inspections on Conservancy land to identify property management issues and one land steward who educates the public on appropriate uses and resource protection in the Upper Truckee Marsh. The Tahoe RCD also provides other specialized staff expertise in the areas of watershed restoration, project monitoring, forestry, and other program support.

Additionally, the Tahoe RCD can provide supplemental specialized staff expertise in areas of funding acquisition and project implementation. As a primarily grant-funded

organization, Tahoe RCD has a history of identifying and securing federal, State, local and private funding. Tahoe RCD coordinates project implementation within the multi-jurisdictional framework of the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP). Specifically, this has included private consultant services for the development of environmental documentation for portions of the Upper Truckee River restoration and aquatic invasive species control, erosion control and storm water monitoring, and invasive species management.

### ***Tahoe Resource Conservation District Background***

The Tahoe RCD is one of over 100 Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) that have been established in California, pursuant to authority set forth in State law (Public Resources Code section 9000 et seq.). It is one of the very few California RCDs carrying out non-agricultural programs, focused primarily on environmental restoration in urbanized areas. RCD's are legal subdivisions of the State, and, as such, are not-for-profit entities.

For the purposes of contracting with State agencies only, RCDs are considered agencies of the State (Public Resources Code section 9003). The Tahoe RCD was created by State legislation in 1974 (Public Resources Code section 9951). The jurisdictional boundary of the Tahoe RCD is similar to that of the Conservancy; however, the Tahoe RCD jurisdiction also includes a portion of Placer County within the Truckee River watershed outside of the Tahoe Basin. Through partnerships with other RCDs, Tahoe RCD has provided services in Douglas and Washoe Counties of Nevada, as well as Sierra and Nevada Counties in California. For more information on the Tahoe RCD visit: <http://tahoercd.org>

### ***Joint Powers Agreements***

A Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) is a formal agreement between or among public entities that have agreed to combine their powers and resources to work towards common goals. A JPA is a formal, legal agreement between two or more public entities that share a common power and want to jointly implement programs and projects, build facilities, or deliver services. All JPAs are unique; there is no set formula for how public entities should exercise their joint powers. The agreement may be a short-term, long-term, or perpetual service agreement. JPAs allow entities to share resources and combine services, thus saving the member agencies, and the taxpayers, both time and money.

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Agenda Item 8b  
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**TAHOE-BAIKAL INSTITUTE**

The Tahoe-Baikal Institute (TBI) has maintained close coordination with the California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) since its inception.

This summer TBI ran three interconnected exchange programs: a condensed Summer Environmental Exchange program, American alumni research projects at Baikal, and Russian alumni internships at the Tahoe Resource Conservation District. TBI also facilitated, in association with the U.S. Forest Service, the integration of Project Water Education for Teachers and Project Learning Tree materials into the Mongolian Ministry of Education's environmental curricula.

TBI's traditional programming model is shifting to better accommodate contemporary economic, academic, and environmental concerns. TBI desires more field experience and projects with consequential deliverables, both for its students and its partner organizations. TBI leaders (headed by Chairman S. Geoffrey Schladow of the Tahoe Environmental Resource Center) and Conservancy senior staff are in the initial phases of expanded project planning for the 2014 field season. Conservancy staff identified an opportunity to alleviate budgetary and staffing constraints on specific monitoring, restoration, and conservation projects by partnering with TBI.

The Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between the Natural Resources Agency and TBI, drafted in the early 1990s, are being updated to more clearly define the TBI-Conservancy relationship in order to facilitate coordination in the future.

Today's geopolitical and economic realities are requiring the organization to re-examine its operations. Recent years have seen the loss of funding for an Executive Director position, commensurate with a steep decline in overall funds. TBI's future is in question. Operation under an umbrella organization is being considered.

TBI anticipates updating the Conservancy Board at a later date regarding these items:

1. Summer 2014 project parameters and impacts for both organizations
2. TBI's fiscal status
3. MOU review between TBI and the Conservancy

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