

STATUS OF PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS IN PLACER COUNTY

Earlier this year, California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) staff reported to the Conservancy Board (Board) on the status of projects and partnerships with the City of South Lake Tahoe (January) and El Dorado County (September). The purpose of this update is to inform the Board on projects and partnerships in Placer County.

Overview

The Conservancy has awarded over \$62 million in grants (Attachment 1) to support Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) projects in Placer County. In addition, Conservancy lands have played an important role in supporting these projects and helping partners achieve multiple project benefits. Conservancy staff is coordinating with partners to resolve ongoing issues, and staff looks forward to continuing productive relationships to pursue future opportunities.

Conservancy Direct Projects

The Conservancy, with assistance from its various partners, has completed several direct EIP projects in Placer County. The Conservancy has opened for public access and/or improved many north shore beaches, including Carnelian East and West, Sandy Beach, North Tahoe Beach, Secline Beach, and the Kings Beach Plaza and collaborated with partners to manage them. The Conservancy constructed the Eagle Rock Trail in 2011, which provides unparalleled and easy access to panoramic views of Lake Tahoe. Finally, the Conservancy's Lower Blackwood Creek and Snow Creek restoration projects that improve ecosystems and water quality in Placer County.

Placer County

The Conservancy has awarded almost \$38 million in grant funding to Placer County for 34 erosion control, stream environment zone (SEZ), and recreation and access projects. Placer County completed a comprehensive watershed effort in the Lake Forest area to improve water quality and restore sensitive meadow ecosystems, and recently completed the Dollar Creek Shared-Use Trail that extends the non-motorized trail system in the north Lake Tahoe region by over two miles. Placer County implemented numerous improvements in the Kings Beach area, some of which involved Conservancy financial support and land use rights. Placer County recently completed the Kings

Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project, which revitalized the downtown portion of Kings Beach through construction of water quality improvements, sidewalks, bus stops, roundabouts, and a center turn lane.

Tahoe City Public Utility District (TCPUD)

The Conservancy has awarded almost \$13.5 million in grant funding to TCPUD for 16 EIP projects on the north and west shores of Lake Tahoe. With Conservancy support, TCPUD redeveloped Commons Beach, transforming the Tahoe City lakefront by revamping the beach, parking lot, and multiple public access routes to Lake Tahoe. The Conservancy also invested substantially in the Lakeside Bike Trail, the one mile premier lakefront trail of the north shore, which links the west shore and Truckee River trails to northern bike trail segments that now connects to the Dollar Creek Shared-Use Trail. In 2016, TCPUD completed the Homewood Bike Trail, creating a continuous bike trail network from Tahoe City to Tahoma.

North Tahoe Public Utility District (NTPUD)

The Conservancy has awarded over \$10 million in grant funding to NTPUD for a total of ten EIP projects, and for many years contracted with NTPUD, at a cost of \$120,000 annually, to operate the Conservancy's north shore beaches. With Conservancy financial support, NTPUD acquired lands for, designed, and constructed the lakefront Tahoe Vista Recreation Area, the Conservancy's largest public access and recreation program investment. The Conservancy also funded NTPUD's land acquisitions and planning activities for the North Lake Tahoe Bike Trail.

California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)

The Conservancy's partnership with DPR expanded in 2014 when DPR agreed to take over managing many of the Conservancy's north shore beaches from NTPUD for the same amount. Because DPR has a strong presence at their north shore parks, DPR management of the Conservancy's recreation sites provides management efficiencies, unifies the State presence, and provides consistent law enforcement services. In addition, the Conservancy awarded almost \$150,000 to DPR in support of their Antone Meadows Dam Removal Project.

North Lake Tahoe Resort Association (NLTRA)

NLTRA is the thread that links many of these important endeavors in Placer County. They promote tourism and benefit businesses through efforts that enhance the economic, environmental, recreational, and cultural climate of the area. NLTRA provides not only the link to the local business community, they also partner with project implementers to develop and fund infrastructure, transportation, and strategic planning projects to improve the quality of life in the north Lake Tahoe area.

Ongoing Challenges

The benefits of Conservancy investments in Placer County could not be achieved without a strong local commitment to ongoing management of Conservancy funded projects and acquisitions. These local investments in Conservancy funded projects and acquisitions not only provide a significant local share for EIP projects, but are vital to fulfill Conservancy grant conditions that require recipients to operate and maintain the projects for 20 years. Conservancy staff continues to work closely with all of its partners to ensure that they fulfill these requirements.

The Conservancy is also working with Placer County and NTPUD to explore potential options to reduce management costs, avoid duplication of services, and improve public use and enjoyment of adjacent State and locally-owned parcels in the Kings Beach area. For example, NTPUD is interested in acquiring or developing use agreements with the Conservancy and/or U.S. Forest Service to expand its regional park, and all the agencies are interested in reducing the management costs associated with adjacent ownerships of several lakefront parks, including Secline, Moon Dunes, and Sandy Beaches. These discussions are also intended to help address several unresolved issues related to the ongoing management and use of State and local lands in this area. For example, these issues include Placer County's unapproved use of a Conservancy beachfront parcel for a storm water project, and NTPUD's plans for several parcels acquired with Conservancy funding that may no longer be needed for the North Lake Tahoe Bike Trail.

Future Projects and Coordination

The Conservancy recently awarded Proposition 1 grants for a variety of multiple benefit projects in Placer County (listed below). The majority of these awards are for planning grants for local partners to launch long-delayed major restoration efforts, and to fulfill the goals of the recently adopted Placer County Tahoe Basin Area Plan.

Conservancy Proposition 1 grants in Placer County:

- Antone Meadows Dam Removal and Restoration Project, DPR: This planning grant will support DPR in evaluating SEZ restoration opportunities at Burton Creek and the Antone Meadows Dam site area.
- Griff Creek Corridor and Public Access Project, Placer County: This grant will support Placer County in acquiring and restoring two environmentally sensitive parcels adjacent to Griff Creek and the Kings Beach Commercial Core Improvement Project.
- Polaris Creek and Wetland Restoration Feasibility Study, Tahoe Resource Conservation District (Tahoe RCD): Tahoe RCD, in collaboration with TCPUD, DPR, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Placer County, will

explore opportunities and constraints associated with relocating Pomin Park to less environmentally sensitive land and restoring Polaris Creek and the adjacent wetland complex, which are currently impacted by the Park.

- Tahoe City Caltrans Maintenance Yard Relocation and Restoration Project, Tahoe Transportation District (TTD): TTD staff will work with Caltrans and Placer County to evaluate the feasibility of relocating the Tahoe City Caltrans Maintenance Yard, which is currently located on sensitive land adjacent to the Truckee River, to a more environmentally appropriate site.
- Lake Tahoe West Restoration Partnership, National Forest Foundation: Conservancy grant funding supports the development of a multi-jurisdictional, landscape-scale strategy to restore and protect ecosystems on the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin, from Emerald Bay to Dollar Point.

In addition to Proposition 1 funded projects, the Conservancy and its partners are working closely on several other efforts. For example, the Conservancy funded an almost \$600,000 contract with DPR for planning of the Kings Beach State Recreation Area General Plan Revision and Kings Beach Pier Rebuild Project. In June 2017, the Board authorized the sale and transfer of six existing residential units of use and ten tourist accommodation units to Placer County for the Tahoe City Lodge Project. Staff is working with Placer County to finalize the purchase agreement for this transaction, which will be subject to future review and approval by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. Finally, the Conservancy and its partners will consider new opportunities and approaches to facilitate projects and promote cooperative and efficient land management.

The Conservancy is dedicated to maintaining and continuing these partnerships to benefit the public and the environment. These partnerships make it possible to implement additional EIP projects that serve residents and visitors to the west and north shores of Lake Tahoe for years to come.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1 – Total Conservancy Grant Awards by Grantee

Attachment 2 – Signature Projects Photographs

Attachment 3 – Future Projects Photographs

Conservancy Staff Contact

Scott Cecchi

scott.cecchi@tahoe.ca.gov