

California Tahoe Conservancy
Agenda Item 2a
June 17, 2021

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
March 18, 2021

March 18, 2021 (9:30 a.m.) Virtual Board Meeting

Staff prepared the minutes from the same-day audio recording and transcription by Foothill Transcription Company, which were certified on March 30, 2021.

Chair Sue Novasel welcomed everyone to the Board meeting and introduced Mr. Bill Jackson and Mr. Jay Hansen as new Board members. Chair Novasel acknowledged the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California (Washoe Tribe) as past, present, and future stewards of the Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin). Chair Novasel then summarized the virtual Board meeting etiquette and methods of providing public comment.

Agenda Item 1. Roll Call

Chair Novasel called the meeting to order with a 9:30 a.m. roll call through the Zoom Webinar platform, with a teleconference option.

Members Present:

Sue Novasel, Chair, El Dorado County
Cindy Gustafson, Vice Chair, Placer County
Tamara Wallace, City of South Lake Tahoe
Wade Crowfoot and Elizabeth Williamson, California Natural Resources Agency
Bill Jackson, USDA Forest Service (ex officio)
Gayle Miller, California Department of Finance
Adam Acosta, Public Member
Jay Hansen, Public Member

Members Absent:

None

Others Present:

Jane Freeman, Acting Executive Director
Dorian Fougères, Acting Deputy Director
Michael Steeves, Chief Counsel
Danae Aitchison, Deputy Attorney General

Agenda Item 2. Consent Items

a. Approval of Minutes (action)

The Board considered the minutes from the December 10, 2020 meeting.

b. Approval of Board Agenda (action)

The Board considered the agenda for the day's meeting.

c. Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act Round 16 California Regional Hazardous Fuel Reduction Projects (actions)

The Board considered authorizing expenditures for three Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act Round 16 California Regional Hazardous Fuel Reduction Projects, including: 1) the expenditure of up to \$929,500 to implement the Carnelian Canyon Fuel Hazard Reduction Project on Conservancy, local government, and private land, and the execution of agreements, including grants, as necessary for implementation (Resolution 21-03-03.1); 2) the expenditure of up to \$331,500 to implement the Dollar Southwest Fuel Hazard Reduction Project on Conservancy land, and the execution of agreements as necessary for implementation (Resolution 21-03-03.2); and 3) the expenditure of up to \$97,500 to implement the Tahoe Pines Fuel Hazard Reduction Project on Conservancy lands, and the execution of agreements as necessary for implementation (Resolution 21-03-03.3).

Vice Chair Gustafson moved to approve Item 2a and Mr. Hansen seconded the motion. Resolution 21-03-01 passed unanimously. Mr. Acosta and Ms. Gayle Miller were not present for this vote.

Mr. Hansen moved to approve Item 2b and Ms. Wallace seconded the motion. Resolution 21-03-02 passed unanimously. Mr. Acosta and Ms. Miller were not present for this vote.

Vice Chair Gustafson moved to approve Item 2c, Resolution 21-03-03.1 and Ms. Williamson seconded the motion. Resolution 21-03-03.1 passed unanimously. Mr. Acosta and Ms. Miller were not present for this vote.

Ms. Wallace moved to approve Item 2c, Resolution 21-03-03.2 and Ms. Williamson seconded the motion. Mr. Acosta and Ms. Miller were not present for this vote.

Mr. Hansen moved to approve Item 2c, Resolution 21-03-03.3 and Ms. Wallace seconded the motion. Resolution 21-03-03.3 passed unanimously. Mr. Acosta and Ms. Miller were not present for this vote.

Agenda Item 3. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

There were no comments from the public.

Agenda Item 4. Executive Director's Report

Ms. Freeman welcomed Mr. Jackson and Mr. Hansen to the Board, and thanked Ms. Suter for her years of service on the Board.

Ms. Freeman shared recent Conservancy accomplishments, including reaching a milestone in the Sugar Pine Village affordable housing project with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's (TRPA) authorization of the project. This authorization was the result of several years of work by the Conservancy and partners, including the California Department of General Services, the California Department of Housing and Community Development, the City of South Lake Tahoe, the TRPA, and Related California, the developer. The developer is now seeking over \$100 million in project funding and is hoping to break ground in spring 2022.

Ms. Freeman provided an overview of the Governor's 2021/2022 Fiscal Year budget, which includes climate and natural resource program funding and a billion-dollar proposal to address community wildfire protection and forest health. The forestry funding includes \$11 million for the Conservancy. This funding would provide the Conservancy support to plan and implement forest fuels projects on its land while staff continues to work with federal, local, and tribal partners to secure additional funding to implement the Basin's Forest Action Plan. The Governor also released the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, which points to regional approaches, such as Lake Tahoe's Forest Action Plan and the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative's recent release of the Framework for Resilience.

On the climate front, Ms. Freeman explained that the Conservancy, with the State of Nevada, TRPA, Tahoe Transportation District, and USDA Forest Service (USDA FS), is wrapping up climate adaptation planning and recently released the climate adaptation story map. Both the California State Senate and Assembly have introduced climate resilience bills this session, and both include some funding for the Conservancy and the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program. The Conservancy will be working with its California partners to develop a priorities list for climate adaptation and resilience projects for the Basin. The TRPA is finalizing its Greenhouse Gas Inventory Update that was funded by the Conservancy, which will provide a better understanding of potential carbon sequestration benefits from restoring the Basin's natural lands that will feed into the State's Natural and Working Lands Climate-Smart Strategy. Additionally, the University of California, Berkeley Center for Law, Energy and Environment finished its Conservancy grant deliverable to determine the feasibility and possible scope of a Tahoe Climate Center and conversations are underway for linking this work with an effort at the University of California, Los Angeles to develop a Fire Research Center.

Ms. Freeman thanked Acting Deputy Director Dorian Fougères for his service to the Conservancy. Ms. Freeman presented Mr. Fougères with a Tahoe license plate plaque to honor his service and dedication to the Basin and the State of California and a Superior Accomplishment Award for his tenure as Acting Deputy Director.

Mr. Fougères thanked Ms. Freeman and the Board.

Chair Novasel acknowledged that Secretary Wade Crowfoot joined the meeting and replaced Ms. Williamson as the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) board member, and Mr. Acosta joined the meeting.

Agenda Item 5. Chair's Report

Chair Novasel presented Item 5. She thanked Ms. Suter for her dedicated work on the Board and the Conservancy. Chair Novasel said she is looking forward to honoring Ms. Suter at a future board meeting.

Agenda Item 6. Community and Climate Resilience Update and Panel Discussion (discussion)

Kevin Prior, the Conservancy's Director of the Land Division, presented Item 6, and Forest Schafer, the Conservancy's Acting Director of Natural Resources, facilitated the panel discussion. The panelists consisted of: Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, CNRA; Louise Bedsworth, Executive Director, Strategic Growth Council (SGC); Sherry Hazelhurst,

Director of State and Private Forestry, USDA FS, Pacific Southwest Region; and Nui-Tara Key, Deputy Director for Climate Resilience, Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

Mr. Prior introduced the topics of discussion, including several new state initiatives and mandates centered on building community and climate resilience, and summarized the Conservancy's work in these areas. Mr. Schafer introduced the panelists and reviewed the panelist questions, which focused on regional integration, sustainable communities, the role of the Conservancy and the State in promoting racial equity and environmental justice, and how best to align the State's work with the work of California's Native American tribes, including the Washoe Tribe. Each panelist provided opening remarks.

Mr. Crowfoot began by thanking the Ms. Freeman and the Conservancy for all its work while navigating the pandemic, thanking Mr. Fougères for his service, and welcoming Mr. Hansen to the Board. Mr. Crowfoot provided broad context on the role the Basin plays as a unique microcosm of the State, which often requires more creativity to bring diverse stakeholders together. Mr. Crowfoot emphasized the need to bridge the goals of climate resilience, sustainable communities, racial equity, and advancing tribal relations without a siloed approach.

Ms. Bedsworth echoed Mr. Crowfoot's comments and discussed bringing more investments to affordable housing that is located near jobs, services, schools, and transportation options, even in rural communities. Ms. Bedsworth also discussed coupling infill development with conservation to meet both housing and environmental goals together, in addition to focusing on community investment, capacity building, and integrating racial equity into programs and policies.

Ms. Hazelhurst provided an overview of current USDA FS activities in California, including improving forest and grasslands through shared stewardship with partners and volunteers, fire suppression, expanding green operations, and improving access to all visitors.

Ms. Key discussed the OPR's work on resilience and adaptation, and the importance of implementing regional solutions and integrating equity into climate adaptation work due to the exacerbated impacts of climate change on existing inequities.

Mr. Schafer opened the discussion to questions from the Board. Mr. Schafer also announced that Mr. Crowfoot left the Board meeting and Ms. Williamson is now representing CNRA on the Conservancy Board. Mr. Schafer introduced panelist Ms. Jessica Morse as Deputy Secretary for Forest Resources Management with CNRA.

Mr. Hansen asked how the Conservancy is working to provide housing given the intersection of wildfires, the housing crisis, and climate change. Mr. Prior responded that the Conservancy has identified several lands to help with the affordable housing crisis with a focus on redevelopment of town centers and has undertaken projects such as the Sugar Pine Village Project. Chair Novasel also added that there have been many studies on housing issues throughout the Basin, though it is difficult with so many jurisdictions to figure out funding. Chair Novasel expressed interest in working together to move forward with some new projects, using the Sugar Pine Village Project as a blueprint. Ms. Bedsworth also expressed enthusiasm for the Conservancy's work and was eager to pool multiple resources together to assist with housing production.

Mr. Hansen also asked the panel about the work of the USDA FS in partnering with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and tribal partners. Ms. Hazelhurst explained that the USDA FS and CAL FIRE are working together to provide more training opportunities to community members, partners, and others for prescribed burning, in addition to reevaluating certain elements of certification programs that may be unnecessarily limiting projects and personnel. Mr. Jackson highlighted the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team's efforts to increase pace and scale of fuels reduction in the Basin, and the existing relationship with the Washoe Tribe with which the USDA FS, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) recently entered a stewardship agreement for the M'áyala Wáta (Meeks Meadow) Restoration Project. Ms. Morse discussed the crucial role of holistic, collaborative efforts for wildfire prevention across jurisdictional bounds, including key partnerships with the USDA FS and tribes. Ms. Morse added that the Governor's proposed budget is increasing fire reliance funding to \$1 billion, including \$20 million for grants to tribes.

Vice Chair Gustafson asked the panel about innovative use of forestry products with the influx of forest material. Ms. Morse discussed innovative technology to turn forest waste into jet fuel, diesel replacements, or other wood products that could replace steel. Ms. Morse also discussed a proposal for the Climate Catalyst Fund, which would provide low-interest loans in the forestry sector. Ms. Key also highlighted OPR's Just Transition work, which tackles the intersection of climate mitigation and the need to find economic opportunities addressing these urgent needs. Ms. Hazelhurst discussed the federal efforts, including recognizing biomass as a renewable resource and wood innovation grants. Ms. Bedsworth and Ms. Key emphasized finding a regional, non-siloed solution.

Chair Novasel stated that local pressure has been growing with millions of new visitors to the Basin, especially with increased visitation in our recreational areas. Mr. Jackson agreed and commented on the heightened stress on local communities that requires state-wide support to manage sustainable recreation and tourism.

Mr. Schafer acknowledged that Ms. Miller joined the meeting as California Department of Finance representative for the Conservancy Board.

Mr. Fougères asked about potential ways to leverage state lands in a way that links transportation, housing, land use, and vulnerable communities.

Ms. Morse and Ms. Bedsworth discussed breaking down silos and recognizing that ecosystems include people. They emphasized that agencies should ensure systems are holistically designed to achieve resiliency across all functions. For example, agencies can funnel state and federal funds to local fire resilience efforts and hire a tribal workforce to implement vegetation management.

Mr. Schafer opened the discussion to questions from the public.

Ms. Norma Santiago, with the South Fork of the American River Collaborative, thanked the panelists for the discussion and expressed interest in additional coordination throughout the State to rebuild biomass and wood utilization infrastructure.

Ms. Hazelhurst responded that there is a group that meets regularly to connect those working on this issue, and CAL FIRE and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation have new programs with shared stewardship aiming to match the collaboratives with state and federal entities.

Ms. Laura Patten, with the League to Save Lake Tahoe, commented in support of the Conservancy's collaborative work with partners on state climate initiatives.

Mr. Steve Byrne, with the Conservancy, asked the panelists whether there is new funding from the recently passed stimulus bill that could help toward climate and community resilience goals.

Ms. Key and Ms. Morse discussed using the State's Adaptation Strategy and being intentional to understand the local, regional, and state priorities so that we can work together toward the same outcomes.

Mr. Prior asked the panelists what type of work they are doing to quantify environmental benefits of walkable, bikeable communities, specifically with respect to climate adaptation and vehicle miles traveled, and how might agencies use that data in our work. Ms. Bedsworth and Ms. Hazelhurst discussed current research and partnerships that translate to technical assistance and capacity-building work, and current metrics for valuing ecosystem services. Ms. Key discussed OPR's Adaptation Program and work at SGC toward local community capacity building and developing vulnerability assessments to bring community information into state decision-making.

Ms. Freeman thanked the panelists and provided summary remarks.

Agenda Item 7. Senate Bill 630 Aquatic Invasive Plant Control Grant Award (action)

Mr. Robert Larsen, Environmental Program Manager with the CNRA, presented Item 7.

There were no questions or comments from the Board or the public.

Ms. Miller motioned to approve Item 7 and Mr. Hansen seconded the motion. Resolution 21-03-04 passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 8. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

There were no comments from the public.

Agenda Item 9. Board Member Comment

Ms. Miller offered her support for previous agenda items, thanked Conservancy staff for continuing to serve the Basin, and thanked Mr. Fougères for his service.

Mr. Jackson thanked Mr. Fougères for his help, collaboration, and cooperation, and wished him well.

Ms. Wallace wished Mr. Fougères good luck and thanked Ms. Suter for her many years with the Conservancy.

Vice Chair Gustafson, Ms. Williamson, and Mr. Acosta thanked Mr. Fougères for his work, congratulated Ms. Suter for her service, and welcomed Mr. Jackson and Mr. Hansen.

Mr. Hansen acknowledged Ms. Suter's legacy and said he looks forward to working with the Board.

Agenda Item 10. Closed Session

Chair Novasel called for public comment on Item 10. There was no public comment.

The Board held closed session to confer regarding pending litigation pursuant to Government Code section 11126(e)(2)(A). The pending litigation is Tahoe Regional Planning Agency v. Mountain Addiction, LLC, et al., U.S. District Court, Eastern District of California, Case No. 2:20-cv-00945-TLN-KJN.

The Board also met in closed session to confer regarding personnel matters pursuant to Government Code section 11126(a).

Following completion of closed session, the Board reconvened in open session. Chair Novasel announced there was no action to report from closed session.

Agenda Item 11. Adjourn

Chair Novasel adjourned the meeting at 1:54 p.m.

California Tahoe Conservancy
Resolution 21-06-01
Adopted: June 17, 2021

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the March 18, 2021 meeting of the California Tahoe Conservancy adopted on June 17, 2021.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 17th day of June, 2021.

Jane Freeman
Acting Executive Director