

## ATTACHMENT 3.1

### LAKE TAHOE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Project: South Tahoe Environmental Education Program

Recommended Funding: \$99,000

Location: Various locations across the Lake Tahoe Basin.

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#### Overview

##### Background

The South Tahoe Environmental Education Coalition (STEEC) provides environmental education programming for all kindergarten (K) through 8th graders at Lake Tahoe Unified School District (LTUSD). STEEC is committed to providing equitable outdoor environmental education to all LTUSD students. Leveraging the capacity and expertise of fifteen local partner organizations (for-profit businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies), STEEC organizes the South Tahoe Environmental Education Program (Program) each academic year. The Program consists of environmental field trips and programming for 2,500 students during the academic year. The primary goals of the Program are to create a sense of social responsibility, awareness, community stewardship for all students, independent of financial resources or background. The Program prepares students for future endeavors in the environmental field.

##### Detailed Description

###### 1. Major Elements and/or Steps

The recommended grant provides programmatic support for the Program, which carries out life science, experiential education curriculum to all K-8 students. Funding supports staff time for a Program coordinator, transportation to field trip sites, and teaching materials for academic years 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26. In academic year 2022-23, grant funding supports only travel and materials and LTUSD will cover staff costs.

The Program provides a variety of experiential learning activities for LTUSD students. For example, the South Tahoe Public Utility District brings fifth graders on a tour of their water treatment facility and teaches them about water quality, contaminants, and recycling; the Tahoe Institute for Natural Sciences teaches K-5th graders about local birds and habitats; and Heavenly Ski Resort brings 8th graders on a snowshoe tour of the ski area to learn about snowmaking, avalanches, and winter animal migrations. All activities are free for students.

## 2. Overall Context and Benefits

This grant enables LTUSD to focus a portion of a staff person's time solely on developing and implementing the Program. Currently, LTUSD staff must develop and implement the Program alongside many other competing roles and priorities. In addition, this grant expands the Program's transportation budget so that all students can experience all the Program's off-site instructional sites.

The Program serves all LTUSD students, most of whom are underserved: 65 percent of LTUSD students are low-income and qualify for free- or reduced-price lunches, 43 percent are Hispanic, and 24 percent are English learners. Portions of the City of South Lake Tahoe are considered "disadvantaged communities" by state economic indicators. The Program is unique because it provides every student, regardless of economic, racial, or social circumstances, with an equal opportunity to experience and learn about Tahoe's environment and vast recreational resources.

Despite living amongst Tahoe's vast resources, many students in the Program have never been to a Tahoe beach, recreated on the snow, or experienced the biodiversity of a meadow or wetland. Because the Program exists for each grade throughout the seasons, students build understanding of Tahoe's environment over multiple years, helping create a culture of stewardship. In end-of-year Program surveys, students often note an increased appreciation for their local outdoors and interest in outdoor professions, many of which they experience for the first time on field trips.

## 3. Schedule

Grant funding supports the Program beginning in academic years 2022-23 through 2025-26. Due to timing of the proposed grant award, LTUSD and other funding sources will pay for staff salaries for the current academic year, 2022-23.

### Financing

The grant supports the annual programmatic costs of transporting students to field trip locations, salary for a coordinator to organize and implement field trips, and materials used in the classroom and in the field for experiential learning.

California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) funding leverages an additional \$70,140 of in-kind support and direct program funding from other grants, donors, and project partners.

Staff recommends the grant budget as shown below. The budget may be adjusted among line items, but total expenditures under this grant will not exceed \$99,000.

Category	Amount
Staff Salary (\$16,000 per year. Academic year 2022-23 provided by LTUSD)	\$48,000
Travel	\$48,000
Materials	\$3,000
Total	\$99,000

### Authority

#### Consistency with the Conservancy’s Strategic Plan

The recommended action is consistent with Strategic Plan Goal 3, to provide public access and outdoor recreation for all communities, because the Program provides outdoor environmental education to all K-8 students in LTUSD.

#### Consistency with the Conservancy’s Program Guidelines

The recommended action is consistent with the Conservancy’s Grant Guidelines, Funding Considerations 2, 3, 9, and 10 because: the recommended action uses cost-sharing to multiply the value of the Conservancy’s investment and accounts for climate change in planning and investment; the Program has demonstrated a track record of high-quality work and relevant experience; and strong community and stakeholder support exists for the Program.

### Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act

Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.), certain classes of activities are statutorily exempt from CEQA or are exempt because they have been determined by the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency to have no significant effect on the environment. Staff has evaluated this grant and has found it to be exempt under CEQA. The authorization of this grant qualifies for a categorical exemption under CEQA Guidelines section 15301 – Existing Facilities. Staff has prepared a notice of exemption (NOE) (see Attachment 3.3). If the Board approves this grant, staff will file the NOE with the State Clearinghouse pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, section 15062.

### List of Attachments

Attachment 3.2 – Resolution 22-09-05.3

Attachment 3.3 – Notice of Exemption

- Exhibit A – Location Map