

## ATTACHMENT 4.1

### TAHOE RIM TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Project: Inclusivity and Accessibility on the Tahoe Rim Trail System

Recommended Funding: \$100,000

Location: Multiple locations on the Tahoe Rim Trail system within Placer and El Dorado counties.

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#### Overview

##### Background

The Tahoe Rim Trail Association (TRTA) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to maintain and enhance the Tahoe Rim Trail system, inspire stewardship, and preserve access to the natural beauty of the Lake Tahoe region. The TRTA focuses on tackling the language, cultural, awareness, financial, logistical, and other barriers to outdoor engagement. Over 500,000 people use the Tahoe Rim Trail system annually, many of whom are from international and affluent user groups. Local underserved and underrepresented populations often do not have the same opportunity to access the trail system. To increase equitable access and inspire environmental stewardship, the TRTA is improving the trail system's accessibility to diverse user groups through culturally inclusive resources and place-based educational programming.

##### Detailed Description

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

The TRTA seeks to expand free outdoor programming to connect local underserved youth and families to the outdoors, translate trail resources, and create trailside stories that represent the area's diverse communities and build cultural understanding.

The recommended grant funding expands the TRTA's Youth Backcountry Camp Program, which provides free four-day backpacking experiences on the Tahoe Rim Trail system to underserved youth participants. The program focuses on providing outdoor experiences and teaching environmental stewardship to youth who face barriers to accessing the outdoors. The program primarily operates through twelve partner groups, such as the Boys and Girls Clubs, Family Resource Center, and SOS Outreach. These groups represent underserved and underrepresented communities who face challenges getting outdoors due to race/ethnicity, culture, language barriers, family structure, financial situation, or mental or physical health conditions and abilities.

Funding also expands the Youth Stewardship Education Program, which provides free, stewardship-learning opportunities to local underserved youth. The TRTA has developed a Leave No Trace education curriculum for elementary-aged youth that is used for

workshops for clubs, sports teams, and other partner groups in the Tahoe area. The TRTA also hosts trail work service-learning days for youth participants to engage in conservation practices through the maintenance and repair of heavily used and impacted trails while learning about natural science concepts and Leave No Trace ethics.

Finally, to create inclusive resources and experiences that appropriately reflect the diversity of Tahoe area communities, the TRTA will create bi-lingual (English and Spanish) trail brochures and maps that will be accessible at trailhead kiosks and online. The TRTA will also create trail walk stories about the natural and cultural history of the area. Stories will include cultural history and tales provided by the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California to connect families to the history of the area's ancestral lands.

## 2. Overall Context and Benefits

California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) funding helps the TRTA expand the Youth Backcountry Camp Program to serve over 600 participants, including approximately 360 underserved youth who will participate at no cost. The 2022 program currently serves more than 200 youth on over 20 backpacking experiences, with over 65 percent attending for little to no cost. Seventy-five percent of past participants report an increase in social-emotional skills, wilderness skills, and a connection to nature. Support from the Conservancy allows the TRTA to sustain the new expansion over several years to get hundreds more underserved youth connected to the natural world and themselves.

In addition, the TRTA will use grant funding to expand the Youth Stewardship Education Program to serve over 200 youth annually (the program currently serves approximately 80 youth annually). The program focuses on providing free one-day, stewardship-learning experiences for underserved local youth and will result in certifying more than 90 youth in Leave No Trace ethics. This expansion increases stewardship education opportunities for underserved and underrepresented youth to give them more knowledge, inspiration, and opportunity to participate in sustainable recreation practices.

The TRTA will produce translated trail brochures and maps to ensure that the large local population of Spanish-speaking residents has access to important safety and educational information on the trail. The TRTA will also develop dual-language story walks on family-friendly areas of trails, proximal to residential areas, to engage youth and adults in the culturally relevant stories of the area. In addition to self-assisted educational walks, the TRTA will host free interpretive hikes for local and regional underserved groups to make place-based education more accessible for families, Spanish-speaking groups, and people with disabilities.

## 3. Schedule

The TRTA will implement the programs and activities described above between January 2023 and June 2026. TRTA staff plans the Youth Backcountry Camp Program and Youth Stewardship Education Program during the winter and spring and implements the programs in the summer and fall. The TRTA will translate materials and maps beginning in January 2023 and produce story walks year-round, annually.

**Financing**

The grant supports personnel costs for program development, field instruction, program marketing, and translation services to implement the programs and activities described above.

Conservancy funding leverages an additional \$430,000 from other private and public grant sources, as well as significant funding from membership fees, program fees, and donations.

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 \$100,000.

Category	Amount
Youth Backcountry Camp Program	\$79,000
Youth Stewardship Education Program	\$16,000
Inclusive Education and Outreach	\$5,000
Total	\$100,000

**Authority**

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

The recommended action supports Strategic Plan Goal 3, to Provide Public Access and Outdoor Recreation for All Communities. With messaging that everyone can understand at trailheads, and outdoor programs that create accessibility for diverse groups, the TRTA’s programs will reach historically underrepresented audiences, thereby increasing environmental awareness and access at Tahoe.

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

The recommended action is consistent with the Conservancy’s Grant Guidelines, Funding Considerations 1, 6, 8, and 9 because: the recommended action generates multiple benefits by providing direct access to the outdoors and promotes innovation and transformative change; the TRTA plans for and describes the long-term sustainability of the programs; and TRTA’s programs have demonstrated a track record of high-quality work and relevant experience.

## 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 4.3). 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 4.2 – Resolution 22-09-05.4

Attachment 4.3 – Notice of Exemption

- Exhibit A – Location Map