

California Tahoe Conservancy
Agenda Item 2a
December 15, 2022

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
September 15, 2022

September 15, 2022 (9:30 a.m.) Board Meeting

Staff prepared the minutes from the same-day audio recording and transcription by Foothill Transcription Company, which were certified on September 23, 2022.

Agenda Item 1. Roll Call

Chair Sue Novasel called the meeting to order at 9:55 a.m. at The Landing Tahoe, South Lake Tahoe, California, with a Zoom Webinar option.

Members Present:

Sue Novasel, Chair, El Dorado County
Adam Acosta, Public Member
Bryan Cash, California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA)
Jay Hansen, Public Member
Gayle Miller, Department of Finance
Erick Walker, USDA Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (ex officio)

Members Absent:

Cindy Gustafson, Vice Chair, Placer County
Tamara Wallace, City of South Lake Tahoe

Others Present:

Jason Vasques, Executive Director
Jane Freeman, Deputy Director
Michael Steeves, General Counsel
Danae Aitchison, Deputy Attorney General

Agenda Item 2. Consent Items

- a. Approval of June 16 Minutes (action)**
- b. Approval June 23 Minutes (action)**

The Board considered the approvals of Item 2a and Item 2b.

Mr. Cash moved for approval of Item 2a and Mr. Hansen seconded the motion. Resolution 22-09-01 passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. Hansen moved for approval of Item 2b and Mr. Acosta seconded the motion. Resolution 22-09-02 passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Agenda Item 3. Executive Director's Report

Jason Vasques, Executive Director, presented Item 3. Mr. Vasques shared budget updates, including receipt of \$5 million in Wildfire and Forest Health funds, \$6.125 million in Nature-Based Solutions funds, and \$1 million for Americans With Disabilities (ADA) upgrades. In the next fiscal year, the Conservancy is looking for passage of \$4 million for Nature-Based Solutions and \$11 million for Wildfire Prevention Programs. Mr. Vasques provided personnel updates, including introducing Erin Ernst as Acting Landscape Forestry Supervisor. Then Mr. Vasques highlighted program updates. For forestry, the Conservancy is overseeing more than 350 acres of high-priority forest health treatments and prepping for an additional 500 acres for treatment. The Conservancy has provided grants focused on fire protection and wildfire resilience to help Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin) partners prioritize fuels treatments and post-Caldor fire restoration projects. Mr. Vasques acknowledged ongoing Upper Truckee Marsh work and related construction closures at Cove East. Lastly, Mr. Vasques thanked Ms. Jane Freeman for her leadership and dedication to the agency while taking on the role of Acting Executive Director, and presented Ms. Freeman a photo of Fallen Leaf Lake. Ms. Freeman thanked the Conservancy staff who stepped up to provide her support during her time as Acting Executive Director, and for the leadership of senior managers and other acting positions that worked together to keep the agency running smoothly during very challenging times. Chair Novasel echoed the gratitude and appreciation for Ms. Freeman's work.

Agenda Item 4. Chair's Report

Chair Novasel discussed the Tahoe Summit, specifically conversations regarding collaboration with Basin partner organizations. Chair Novasel hopes to continue to build collaborative relationships with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and other partners.

Agenda Item 5. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

Norma Santiago commented on behalf of the South Fork of the America River Collaborative regarding the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative's (TCSI) work and offered a local perspective in light of the upcoming Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force meeting. Mr. Dory Smith commented about homelessness at Trout Creek, increased

number of user trails, and fire concerns due to conifer encroachment in the meadow at Trout Creek.

Agenda Item 6. Exchange and Transfer of Conservancy Lands with City of South Lake Tahoe (action)

Aimee Rutledge, Acquisition Specialist, presented Item 6. Mr. Hansen asked about public access to the new parcels. Ms. Rutledge explained that there are existing user trails and informal public access on several of the parcels being acquired. Mr. Acosta and Ms. Miller asked about the limitations on uses for the lakefront parcels and any future environmental review. Ms. Rutledge explained that there would be a deed restriction on those parcels that requires the acquisition purposes of public access and open space be continued, and that any future projects would require environmental review. Mr. Vasques also explained that most of the lands are sensitive lands that cannot be developed, and the lakefront parcels, specifically, will not have development due to the deed restriction that keeps the purpose of the land consistent with the original acquisition purposes. Mr. Steeves added that even future projects that may be contemplated will need environmental analysis and would need to be consistent with the deed restriction and acquisition purposes. Chair Novasel commented in support of aligning land ownership and asked for additional clarification on the ownership structure of the lakefront parcels, and the Al Tahoe Historic Cemetery. Ms. Rutledge explained the ownership and confirmed that the deed restrictions would restrict potential future development to public recreation and open space preservation.

From the public, Ms. Kim DeYoung commented to ask that the Sierra Shores Homeowners Association be included in exchange conversations due to the issues previously raised regarding the Chimney Parcel.

There were no additional comments from the Board or the public on this item.

Mr. Hansen moved to approve Resolution 22-09-03 and Chair Novasel seconded the motion. Resolution 22-09-03 passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Agenda Item 7. Climate Resilience Dashboard Grant Award (action)

Erin Ernst, Acting Landscape Forestry Supervisor, presented Item 7.

Mr. Hansen asked about net-zero carbon efforts and whether the dashboard will integrate carbon sequestration data and information. Ms. Ernst clarified that such metrics have not been identified yet, but one of the grant tasks is to determine what metrics to apply and at what scale. Chair Novasel asked about the long-term maintenance of the dashboard to keep the information relevant through time. Ms. Ernst explained that Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) partners will be providing data updates, with TRPA taking lead. Mr. Vasques added that the dashboard will build on the existing EIP infrastructure for seamless integration into the Tahoe Info platform.

Chair Novasel called for public comments. Devin Middlebrook, Sustainability Program manager at TRPA, thanked the Board for considering this item and provided additional detail on the dashboard purpose and development. Mr. Middlebrook shared that the TRPA collected carbon sequestration data using a previous Conservancy grant that will be used for possibly developing a carbon sequestration metric for the dashboard.

Mr. Hansen moved to approve Resolution 22-09-04 and Mr. Acosta seconded the motion. Resolution 22-09-04 passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Agenda Item 8. Public Access and Recreation for All Grants (action)

Chris Mertens, Senior Policy Analyst and North Tahoe Liaison, presented Item 8. Mr. Walker spoke in favor of these grants to support organizations that expand diversity and inclusivity. Mr. Walker noted we are fostering the conservation ethic in a broader community and bringing their voices through these activities.

Chair Novasel, Mr. Acosta, and Mr. Hansen expressed excitement for the grants and underscored the importance of the access programs. Mr. Acosta asked about plans to maintain long-term funding support for this type of activity and whether there was an opportunity to partner with the Tahoe Fund or other similar entities. Mr. Vasques emphasized that access is a high priority for the Conservancy and that it will be key that the Legislature understands the importance of these programs, with the hope for line items to support such work. Mr. Mertens also noted that most Conservancy funding comes from bonds, which cannot be used to support programs like these, and that having General Fund dollars increases opportunities for this type of programmatic funding. Mr. Acosta and Mr. Hansen encouraged diverse groups and looking outside the Basin for future grants. Mr. Mertens anticipates that future grant applicants will include groups that serve a wide range of individuals, such as veterans and formerly incarcerated people.

From the public, Ed Moser spoke in support of the item in building up younger generations to explore Tahoe and understand educational and employment opportunities here. Peter Mayfield, Executive Director of Gateway Mountain Center, thanked the Board for considering the grant and explained that his therapeutic program is the only nature-based therapy program certified by Medi-Cal and that there are opportunities to work with county probation offices and treatment centers to serve those individuals. Mr. Mayfield also suggested engaging the transitional-aged youth he works with to serve in an advisory role to the Conservancy to provide civic engagement opportunities and feedback from those participating in the access grant programs. Julia Kasetta from the Tahoe Rim Trail Association also thanked the Board for consideration and expressed excitement as they expand youth programs to provide more opportunities to kids from outside the Basin.

Alissa Zertuche from the Lake Tahoe Unified School District spoke about the impact these programs have on the youth, particularly learning about the diverse environmental career opportunities. Amy Berry, CEO of the Tahoe Fund, provided some highlights and accomplishments over the years of the partnership between the Conservancy and the Tahoe Fund, and recent collaboration on public access and recreation for all grants. Sarah Ottley, Co-Director of Adventure Risk Challenge (ARC), thanked the Board and expressed excitement for the level of Board support. Ms. Ottley also explained that several of the high schools that ARC works with are outside of the Basin in Merced and Fresno counties.

There were no additional comments from the Board or the public. The Board voted on each resolution separately.

Mr. Cash motioned to approve Resolution 22-09-05.1 and Mr. Acosta seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. Acosta motioned to approve Resolution 22-09-05.2 and Mr. Hansen seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. Acosta motioned to approve Resolution 22-09-05.3 and Mr. Hansen seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. Acosta motioned to approve Resolution 22-09-05.4 and Mr. Hansen seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Agenda Item 9. Racial Equity Strategic Plan Amendment (action)

Forest Schafer, Director of the Natural Resources Division, presented Item 9.

Mr. Acosta noted he supports the Conservancy's work to address racial inequity. Mr. Acosta asked for clarification on how the Conservancy's enabling legislation intersects with the proposal, and what steps are needed to address enabling legislation shortcomings. Mr. Vasques discussed opportunities for improving the enabling legislation, including ways to help address racial equity, which he plans to bring to the Board in the future. Mr. Schafer and Mr. Vasques clarified that the concept of this item is to lead with racial equity to effectuate and achieve more equitable outcomes for all people and to integrate this inclusivity work holistically.

There were no public comments on item 9.

Mr. Hansen motioned to approve Resolution 22-09-06 and Mr. Acosta seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Agenda Item 10. Board Member Comment

Mr. Hansen welcomed Mr. Vasques as the new Executive Director. He also raised the possibility of working with educational entities to fund programs for wildfire-related careers, and discussed the opportunity for the Conservancy to better understand and track its carbon footprint and funding opportunities for that work. Mr. Acosta thanked Ms. Freeman for her work, congratulated Mr. Vasques on his new role, and thanked the Conservancy staff for its work and leadership, particularly on the recreation, access, and equity efforts. Mr. Walker provided an update about the Mosquito Fire and Chair Novasel acknowledged the urgency of the fire situation in Placer County. Ms. Miller also thanked Ms. Freeman for her work for the region, welcomed Mr. Vasques, and thanked Mr. Steeves for his commitment to and understanding of the issues within the region.

Agenda Item 11. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

Julie Regan, Deputy Director at the TRPA, spoke in favor of the increased collaborative relationship and opportunities to work together. She also congratulated Mr. Vasques on becoming the new Executive Director and thanked Ms. Freeman for her work.

Mr. Dory Smith commented on the importance of fire breaks, defensible space funding, increased campers due to the bicycle trail to Meyers, and homeless camps at Trout Creek.

There were no additional public comments.

Agenda Item 12. Adjourn

Chair Novasel adjourned the meeting at 12:24 p.m.

California Tahoe Conservancy
Resolution 22-12-01
Adopted: December 15, 2022

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the September 15, 2022, meeting of the California Tahoe Conservancy adopted on December 15, 2022.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 15th day of December, 2022.

Jason Vasques
Executive Director