

2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

At the March 16 California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) Board (Board) meeting, staff provided an overview of 2024-2029 Strategic Plan (Plan) development efforts and identified the process considerations and priorities for the Plan. The new Plan will focus on refining the existing 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, which already serves as a strong foundation for the Conservancy's work.

The purpose of this update is to share how the Conservancy has progressed in developing the Plan. The two staff working groups, the "Process Workgroup" and the "Review Workgroup," have identified process steps and an initial set of recommendations for refinement to consider moving forward. Conservancy executives are meeting with Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin) partners to determine aligned focus areas of interest. Fiscal, legal, and administrative staff are supporting the consultant contracting process. Below is a more detailed accounting on this progress.

Plan Consultant: The Conservancy received five responsive proposals for the Plan consultant contract. Staff from the Process Workgroup evaluated the responsive proposals, and based on those evaluations, the Conservancy awarded the contract to Crowe LLP. The consultant will take a lead role engaging the Board and drafting Plan content. The consultant will also support Conservancy staff in working internally and with external partners throughout the process. One of the consultant's first tasks will be to schedule individual meetings with Board members.

Milestones: The Process Workgroup identified a set of milestones to develop the Plan. These milestones identify critical deliverables and steps in the process, key contributors, and timeframes. Some of the larger milestones include initial work to execute the consultant contract, engaging internal and external stakeholders, creating a strategic plan content outline, presenting a draft strategic plan to the Board, and presenting a final strategic plan to the Board. This work is already informing staff and external engagement activities and the critical points for feedback. The milestones will guide staff and consultant efforts and may be adjusted with consultant feedback.

External engagement: Conservancy staff and executives are already engaging with Basin partners on Plan development. In April, the Conservancy held a coordination meeting with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California (Tribe). During this meeting, the Tribe expressed an interest in reviewing draft Plan documents and meeting with the Conservancy one-on-one to share input on the Plan.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) will also update its strategic plan this year. The Conservancy and TRPA discussed their respective strategic plan updates and confirmed that recreation and access, restoration and resilience, and Tahoe communities are areas where the agencies have mutual interests and can coordinate efforts. Both agencies identified key staff for each focus area and are meeting to determine the agencies' respective roles and opportunities for alignment. The Conservancy is engaging directly with other Basin partners to identify mutual interests and roles for further coordination and Plan development and has reached out to several California Natural Resource Agency (CNRA) deputy secretaries to discuss engaging with them around state priorities.

Review Recommendations: The Review Workgroup conducted a thorough review of the current strategic plan sections, including Goals and Strategies, Conservancy Roles, Mandates and Drivers, Guiding Principles, Financial Sustainability Principles, and Performance Measures. The workgroup developed a detailed list of recommendations to consider for the Plan. Some of the main recommendations include:

- Emphasize partnerships,
- Keep the goals and strategies format,
- Incorporate climate change adaptation as an overarching driver and guiding principle,
- Include a focus on tribal engagement and co-management,
- Integrate the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program more clearly and explicitly,
- Incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion more broadly,
- Place a greater emphasis on the Conservancy's role as an implementer, and
- Streamline and simplify the Plan and remove unnecessary granular detail.

Updated Mandates and Priorities: The Conservancy is evaluating how to better incorporate state mandates and priorities into the Plan. The current strategic plan addresses the state mandates and priorities through a detailed list of orders, bills, bonds, plans, and initiatives that the Conservancy intends to meet. During the Review Workgroup's evaluation of the current strategic plan, it identified that the list of mandates is too specific, that some of the items listed have become out of date, and that the list does not provide the Conservancy the flexibility to incorporate and reference new priorities that have arisen.

Instead, the Review Workgroup recommends focusing on higher-level CNRA initiatives. Some of these initiatives include Building Climate Resilience, Protecting Biodiversity, Outdoors for All, Restoring Forest Health for Wildfire and Climate Resilience, and Strengthening Tribal Partnerships. This will allow the Conservancy to tier its work from these CNRA initiatives, while leaving room to incorporate new priorities that arise during the lifetime of the Plan. The Conservancy will also review initiatives from other agencies outside of CNRA and reference those relevant to its work. Like the current plan, the

Conservancy will include updated priorities from the Sierra Nevada region and from within the Basin.

Next Steps: The immediate next steps include completing the consultant contract and working with the consultant to finalize a workplan that includes internal, external, and Board outreach timing and strategy. The Board can anticipate one-on-one meetings with the consultant to occur this summer. The Conservancy looks forward to working with the consultant to build on staff efforts. The Planning Workgroup and Review Workgroup have been meeting weekly to make progress in their respective tasks. Staff engagement continues to be a high priority for this strategic planning process. Thus far, engagement with staff has included surveys, monthly updates at all-staff meetings, and participation in the workgroups. In addition, the Conservancy is exploring opportunities for more transparency with staff, as well as gathering further input from staff as the Plan develops. In coordination with the contractor, the Conservancy plans to facilitate expanded staff engagement throughout the rest of the strategic planning process. Conservancy executives and staff will continue to direct engagement with Basin partners.

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