

California Tahoe Conservancy
Agenda Item 2a
December 14, 2023

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
September 20-21, 2023

September 20, 2023 (9:30 a.m.) – September 21, 2023 (8:30 a.m.) Board Meeting

Staff drafted the minutes from the same-day audio recording and transcription, which Foothill Transcription Company prepared and then certified on October 6, 2023.

Agenda Item 1. Roll Call

Vice Chair Tamara Wallace called the meeting to order at 9:44 a.m. The meeting was held in person at the North Tahoe Events Center, Kings Beach.

Members Present:

Adam Acosta, Chair, Public Member
Chris Calfee, California Natural Resources Agency
Cindy Gustafson, Placer County
Jay Hansen, Public Member
Brooke Laine, El Dorado County
Tamara Wallace, Vice Chair, City of South Lake Tahoe

Members Absent:

Michele Perrault, California Department of Finance
Erick Walker, USDA Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (ex officio)

Others Present:

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

Agenda Item 2. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda

Vice Chair Wallace asked if there were any public comments on items not on the agenda.

Ms. Lynn Mercerau provided handouts to Board members and commented on the recent flooding in Trout Creek and the impact on her home. She described how Trout Creek and Barton Meadow have changed since 1981, including the silt in Trout Creek

and increased beaver activity and willows. She stated that she believes that the flooding was exacerbated by the Upper Truckee Marsh Restoration Project. She requested that the California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) commit to working with impacted individuals on El Dorado Avenue and to mitigating flooding problems.

Mr. Damien Sowers commented on his ongoing lawsuit against the Conservancy. He asked that the Board review his timeline of flood dynamics in the Upper Truckee Marsh and his video report. He then asked the Board to consider settling instead of continuing with litigation, to avoid damaging the reputation of the Conservancy and support for future environmental restoration projects.

Agenda Item 3. Closed Session

The Board held closed session to confer with and receive advice from legal counsel regarding pending litigation pursuant to Government Code section 11126(e)(2)(A). The pending litigation is *Sowers v. California Tahoe Conservancy*, El Dorado County Superior Court, Case No. 23CV1008.

(Chair Adam Acosta arrived during closed session at 10:10 a.m.)

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

Agenda Item 4. Strategic Plan Workshop (discussion only)

Erin Ernst, Strategic Plan Project Manager and Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative Coordinator, presented Item 4.

Ms. Ernst explained the Strategic Plan Workshop (Workshop) agenda and goals. Ms. Ernst spoke about the local drivers and introduced the Strategic Plan consultant, Crowe LLP. Jason Vasques spoke about Strategic Plan drivers coming down from the state administration.

The Board Meeting recessed for lunch at 11:54 a.m. and resumed at 12:55 p.m.

Kevin Prior, Director of the Land Division, Milan Yeates, Community Forestry Program Supervisor, and Stuart Roll, Watershed Program Supervisor, presented on the Conservancy's work through their respective programs.

Mr. Hansen asked if the Conservancy has ever monitored carbon dioxide or particulates emissions from pile burning activities. Mr. Roll and Mr. Yeates explained that partners have collected such data, with some collection supported by Conservancy grants, but that the Conservancy itself has not monitored its own pile burn emissions.

Ms. Ernst reiterated the discussion questions to be explored in the Workshop and introduced Tommy Abeyta from Crowe LLP to lead the Workshop discussions.

Before the groups broke out, Chair Acosta asked for any additional public comments on Agenda Item 4. There were no public comments.

Mr. Abeyta facilitated the Workshop. The breakout group discussions were not recorded.

When the breakout groups finished, Mr. Abeyta and Ms. Ernst spoke of the development of the Strategic Plan moving forward including opportunities for continued discussion and then added that the intended target for adopting the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan is the June 2024 Board Meeting.

Chair Acosta recessed the meeting at 3:42 p.m. to resume the following day, September 21, 2023, at 8:30 a.m.

Chair Acosta reconvened the Board Meeting at 8:38 a.m. on Thursday September 21, 2023. The meeting was held in person at the North Tahoe Events Center, Kings Beach.

Agenda Item 5. Roll Call

Members Present:

Adam Acosta, Chair, Public Member
Chris Calfee, California Natural Resources Agency
Cindy Gustafson, Placer County
Jay Hansen, Public Member
Brooke Laine, El Dorado County
Tamara Wallace, Vice Chair, City of South Lake Tahoe

Members Absent:

Michele Perrault, California Department of Finance
Erick Walker, USDA Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (ex officio)

Others Present:

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

Agenda Item 6. Consent Items

a. Approval of June Minutes (action)

There were no Board or public comments on the consent item.

Vice Chair Wallace moved for approval of Item 6 and Ms. Laine seconded the motion. Resolution 23-09-01 passed unanimously by voice vote. Mr. Hansen had not yet arrived and did not vote on this item.

Agenda Item 7. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda.

There were no public comments on items not on the agenda.

Agenda Item 8. Chair's Report

Chair Acosta announced that the Operations Committee would be scheduling the yearly Personnel Evaluation of the Conservancy's Executive Director for closed session during the December Board Meeting.

Agenda Item 9. Executive Director's Report

Jason Vasques, Executive Director, presented Item 9.

Mr. Vasques commented on the successful restoration of the endangered Tahoe Yellow Cress back to the lakeshore ecosystem. He stated that the Conservancy is involved every year with the Tahoe Yellow Cress Adaptive Management Working Group's annual lakewide monitoring surveys, which would continue through September.

Mr. Vasques noted that the invasive New Zealand mudsnail had been discovered in Lake Tahoe for the first time. He explained that because the species proliferates, many Basin partners are quickly gathering information and discussing the best management options going forward.

Chair Acosta asked where else the New Zealand mudsnail has been found. Mr. Vasques explained that it is very widespread and in at least 22 other states.

Mr. Vasques spoke of the employee spotlight videos that the Conservancy has been making, and then showed the most recent one about Matt Whalen, Accounting and Budget Supervisor.

Mr. Vasques announced employee promotions, employee hires, and Shawn Butler's retirement, recognizing him for his contributions to the Conservancy. Nick Meyer, Land Management Program Supervisor, also spoke about his time working with Mr. Butler at the Conservancy and presented him with a Tahoe Plate plaque. Mr. Butler thanked Mr. Meyer and the Conservancy for the recognition. Chair Acosta also thanked Mr. Butler for his time and dedication to the Conservancy on behalf of the Board.

Agenda Item 10. Proposed Regulations on the Use of Conservancy Land (action)

Casey Strong, Staff Attorney, presented Item 10.

Ms. Gustafson and Ms. Strong discussed the need for posted signage to allow law enforcement personnel to enforce the proposed regulations regarding overnight parking violations. Ms. Strong added that the proposed regulations would require the Conservancy to post signs as notice to the public as well.

Ms. Laine asked why the authorizations within the regulations were granted only to the executive officer and not also a designee. Ms. Strong and Mr. Vasques explained that the Conservancy is aware of that limitation in the definition of “Executive Officer” and that designee was added to individual regulations where the designation of that specific authority was appropriate.

Chair Acosta called for public comment. There were no public comments and no further comments from the Board.

Ms. Gustafson moved for approval of Item 10 and Vice Chair Wallace seconded the motion. Resolution 23-09-02 passed unanimously by voice vote. Mr. Hansen had not yet arrived and did not vote on this item.

The Board recessed from 9:06 a.m. to 9:19 am.

(Mr. Hansen arrived at 9:26 a.m.)

Agenda Item 11. Conservancy Board Community Engagement Training (discussion only)

Dr. Tamu Green, Chief Executive Officer, and Fabián Pérez-Gove of the Equity and Wellness Institute (EqWI) presented Item 11.

Dr. Green and Mr. Pérez-Gove conducted training to help the Board understand how institutions can meaningfully address inequities with a focus on community engagement. The training is part of the Conservancy’s commitment to embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of its work. EqWI designed this training around identifying and addressing implicit bias attitudes and behaviors to create more inclusive and equitable spaces.

There were no public comments.

Agenda Item 12. Site Tour (discussion only)

The Board members were invited to tour a few Conservancy properties and regionally significant recreation sites in the north shore area. The tour highlighted regional recreation, active transportation, and restoration priorities and provide an opportunity to discuss land management goals and challenges on Conservancy properties. Tour stops

included North Tahoe Beach, North Tahoe Regional Park, Patton Landing Beach, and Carnelian Creek. The Board left for the tour at 11:15 a.m.

a. North Tahoe Beach, Kings Beach

Mr. Prior led the tour of North Tahoe Beach.

Mr. Hansen, Mr. Prior, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Gustafson, and Mr. Vasques discussed the challenges of parking, micro-transit in the Basin, and mass transit from outside the Basin. Chair Acosta asked if there are EV stations in the parking lot. Mr. Prior responded that there are none at North Tahoe Beach, but that there are a few in the vicinity. Ms. Gustafson and Kelsey Lemming, Associate Environmental Planner/Lot Inspector, explained some of the site history and its acquisition. Scott Cecchi, Associate Environmental Planner, spoke about the storm water improvement best management practices in use at the site.

b. North Tahoe Regional Park

Chris Mertens, Recreation and Public Access Program Supervisor, led the tour of North Tahoe Regional Park.

Brad Johnson (General Manager of the North Tahoe Public Utility District), Stephanie Holloway (Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Placer County – Tahoe), Andy Fisher (Placer County Parks Administrator), Casey Lyons (Placer County Senior Supervising Parks and Grounds Worker), Rebecca Taber (Deputy Director for the Placer County Department of Public Works in the Tahoe Engineering Division), and Kansas McGahan (Senior Engineer for the Placer County Department of Public Works in the Tahoe Engineering Division) presented on their respective entities involvement in the North Tahoe Regional Park and the North Tahoe Shared-Use Trail Network.

Mr. Hansen and Mr. Johnson discussed the possibility of overnight parking at the site and other ways the North Tahoe Regional Park may grow to support various types of recreational activities. Mr. Cecchi, Ms. Taber, Ms. McGahan, Ms. Fisher, Ms. Holloway, and Mr. Johnson discussed the timing and funding of the project and prioritization of additional segment implementation. Ms. Strong asked for clarification on the map.

c. Patton Landing Beach

Mr. Meyer led the tour of Patton Landing Beach.

Mr. Hansen and Mr. Meyer discussed the relationship with the concessionaire. Mr. Cecchi and Mr. Mertens spoke about potential grants that would likely be presented to the Board in December to implement some of the Americans with Disabilities Act improvements. Mr. Vasques spoke about the nonprofit run by the concessionaire, which helps create access to Lake Tahoe recreation for people with disabilities. He also highlighted that the public-private partnership with them could be a useful model to reach shared goals.

d. Carnelian Creek

Stuart Roll led the tour of Carnelian Creek.

Mr. Cecchi, Mr. Roll, and Jane Freeman, Deputy Director, discussed the industrial history of the property and previous and potential future restoration projects and improvements. Ms. Aitchinson and Mr. Roll discussed the wildlife crossings on the site that were an element of the previous restoration.

Agenda Item 13. Adjourn

Chair Acosta adjourned the meeting in the field at 1:35 p.m.

California Tahoe Conservancy
Resolution 23-12-01
Adopted: December 14, 2023

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the September 20-21, 2023 meeting of the California Tahoe Conservancy adopted on December 14, 2023.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 14th day of December, 2023.

Jason Vasques
Executive Director