

ATTACHMENT 2.1

LAKE TAHOE WATERMAN FOUNDATION

Project: Adaptive Paddling Program

Recommended Funding: \$84,000

Location: Patton Landing Beach in Carnelian Bay, California

Overview

Background

The Lake Tahoe Waterman Foundation (Waterman) seeks to make meaningful impacts in the lives of under-resourced youth, people confronting physical disabilities, and those facing mental health challenges through paddling experiences on Lake Tahoe. Waterman seeks to use the therapeutic and healing values of paddling Lake Tahoe to provide participants the strength to face their challenges, foster personal growth, and create lasting mental and physical health benefits.

Waterman is a 501(c)3 organization associated with Waterman's Landing, a paddle sports rental company and café located at Patton Landing Beach in Carnelian Bay. Patton Landing Beach is a California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) property and Waterman's Landing is a Conservancy concessionaire.

Waterman formed in 2010 and was initially focused on youth training programs. Over time, Waterman's mission expanded to focus on serving all people, including under-resourced youth and people with disabilities.

In recent years, Waterman has implemented pilot programs with two nonprofit partners, one focused on youth suffering from anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges. The second nonprofit works with veterans and first responders suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health and physical disabilities.

Waterman provides half-day, full-day, and week-long programs where participants are provided with adaptive kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding equipment, instruction, safety information, and guided paddling trips in Carnelian Bay. Waterman also teaches breathing techniques that promote comfort and confidence in the water. Some programs culminate in a 12-mile endurance paddle led by Waterman guides and staff.

Waterman seeks to expand the successful pilot programs by forming new partnerships with organizations that work with people with disabilities. In addition,

Waterman seeks to provide scholarships to local under-resourced youth and children with disabilities.

Staff evaluated Waterman's grant application based on the criteria described within the Conservancy's Grant Guidelines, which includes analysis of the project's consistency with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan. In addition, staff used the concepts of the California Outdoors for All Strategy when reviewing the application. Staff considered the number of participants from underserved groups, the extent to which the project reduces barriers for underserved people to access Lake Tahoe, and the extent to which the project provides long-term positive impacts on participants. At Lake Tahoe, underserved groups include people of color, people with physical disabilities, people with cognitive or emotional disabilities, low-income individuals or families, English language learners, and formerly incarcerated individuals.

Detailed Description

1. Major Elements and/or Steps

The grant will support four programs:

- Tahoe Watergrom Summer Camp Experience: Funding will support scholarships for local under-resourced youth aged 7–12 to participate in week-long summer day camps where youth learn paddle skills, environmental stewardship, and water safety. Waterman anticipates providing scholarships for 28 youth over the three-year grant period. To cultivate long-term positive impacts on participants, Waterman will invite some scholarship recipients to return to the program the following year. Waterman will work with schools in the Truckee-Tahoe Unified School District and local nonprofit partners to identify potential scholarship recipients.
- Youth Adaptive Paddle Experience: Funding will support coaching and adaptive equipment rentals for two-hour paddle experiences for youth aged 7–12 who face mental or physical health challenges. Waterman anticipates serving 96 youth over the three-year grant period. This program is intended to be accessed by groups that serve disabled youth who are looking for a shorter introduction to paddle sports and Lake Tahoe. Waterman will partner with organizations like High Fives Foundation, Achieve Tahoe, and The Courage Project to fill these programs.
- Private Adaptive Paddle Experience: Funding will support private coaching and adaptive equipment rentals for children with physical or mental health disabilities. Waterman will offer up to 20 total hours of private coaching and instruction for children and their families each year, for a total of 60 hours of instruction over the three-year grant term. This program will cater to each child's individual needs.
- Full-Day Adaptive Paddle Experience: Funding will support coaching and equipment rentals for full-day paddling experiences for people of all ages with physical or mental health disabilities. Waterman anticipates serving 54 people

over the three-year grant period. This program is designed to be accessed by large groups and organizations that work with people facing a variety of physical and mental health challenges. Waterman will partner with organizations like Operation Open Water, Wounded Warriors, and High Fives Foundation to fill these programs.

2. Overall Context and Benefits

Very few opportunities exist for people with disabilities to experience Lake Tahoe water activities. Funding will support Waterman in expanding their programs to serve more people with physical and mental health disabilities.

Similarly, for people without the economic means to afford expensive paddle sports, Waterman’s programs offer an opportunity for under-resourced youth to access these sports and the physical and personal growth opportunities they provide. This grant will support Waterman’s efforts to expand access to the Lake and build long-term partnerships with local schools and organizations that work with under-resourced youth.

This grant also provides an opportunity for equitable access using Conservancy land, further enhancing the public benefits that Patton Landing Beach already provides.

3. Schedule

The grant supports the programs described above each summer in 2024, 2025, and 2026.

Financing

The Conservancy will finance the recommended grant with General Fund monies for four programs over three years to support coaching services; kayak, stand-up paddleboard, outrigger canoe, and adaptive equipment rentals; and participant scholarships.

Conservancy funding leverages an additional \$25,000 of in-kind support from Waterman volunteers.

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 \$84,000.

Task	Amount
Tahoe Watergrom Summer Camp Experience	\$22,000
Youth Adaptive Paddle Experience	\$27,000
Private Adaptive Paddle Experience	\$7,000

Full-Day Adaptive Paddle Experience	\$28,000
Total	\$84,000

Authority

Consistency with the Conservancy’s Strategic Plan

The recommended action advances Strategic Plan Goal 1 to steward Conservancy lands because it communicates the value of Conservancy lands to younger generations and encourages citizen stewardship. The recommended action also supports Strategic Plan Goal 3 to provide public access and outdoor recreation for all communities because it supports free and low-cost outdoor programs for under-resourced youth and people with disabilities. The recommended action also supports Strategic Plan Goal 6 to promote racial equity and help make the Basin a safe and welcoming place for all because Waterman’s programs provide a safe and culturally inclusive environment for participants to recreate outdoors at Lake Tahoe.

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 2.3). 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 2.2 – Resolution 23-12-03
- Attachment 2.3 – Notice of Exemption
 - Exhibit A – Location Map