

California Tahoe Conservancy
Agenda Item 3a
April 16, 2024

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
December 14, 2023

December 14, 2023 (9:30 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 January 4, 2024.

Agenda Item 1. Roll Call

Chair Adam Acosta called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. The meeting took place in person at the Lake Tahoe Community College in South Lake Tahoe.

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
Michele Perrault, California Department of Finance

Members Absent:

Tamara Wallace, Vice Chair, City of South Lake Tahoe (City)
Erick Walker, USDA Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (ex officio)

Others Present:

Jane Freeman, Deputy Director
Michael Steeves, General Counsel

Agenda Item 2. Consent Items

There were no comments on consent items.

Ms. Gustafson moved for approval of Resolution 23-12-01, and Ms. Laine seconded the motion. Resolution 23-12-01 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Agenda Item 3. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

There were no public comments.

Agenda Item 4. 2024-2029 Strategic Plan Development Update (discussion only)

Erin Ernst, Director of the Natural Resources Division and Strategic Plan Project Manager, presented Item 4. Crowe, LLC consultants, Tommy Abeyta and Wendy Pratt, presented a proposed strategic plan outline.

Mr. Hansen asked about the plan for future Board engagement. Ms. Ernst explained that further outline development will continue through January and February with the intent to get additional Board insight before the March Board meeting. In response to a clarifying question from Chair Acosta, Ms. Ernst confirmed that follow-up with individual Board members will occur prior to the next Board meeting, at which the strategic plan will be agendized. Ms. Perrault supported additional discussion during the March Board meeting in Sacramento given that other conservancies are working on strategic planning which may provide opportunities to leverage collaboration and outreach with those entities. Ms. Gustafson agreed with the suggestion of working with other conservancies to further efforts in the Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin).

Mr. Hansen highlighted the need for the strategic plan to be clear and easily understood, and asked that the focus areas appear alphabetically unless they are purposely ranked. Ms. Laine and Ms. Gustafson appreciated Crowe's work so far and offered wordsmithing feedback. Ms. Freeman highlighted that the Conservancy has been in conversations with some partners, including the Chairman of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, and is incorporating input from community-based organizations that the Conservancy is engaging with as part of its racial equity outreach. Ms. Freeman reiterated that the presented draft outline is a preliminary sample of the approach to the strategic plan.

Chair Acosta called for public comment. Melissa Sodersten of Tahoe Forests Matter commented to urge the Conservancy to focus on the lots that are close to homes instead of landscape-scale projects.

Agenda Item 5. Wetland Carbon and Greenhouse Gas Monitoring (discussion only)

Scott Carroll, Senior Environmental Planner (Specialist) with the Watershed Program, presented Item 5. Dr. Ben Sullivan from the University of Nevada, Reno spoke about the benefits of wetland restoration and soil carbon in sequestering greenhouse gases that impact climate change.

Ms. Gustafson asked about the characteristics of High Sierra wetlands compared with the wetlands of the foothills or Central Valley. Dr. Sullivan explained that the meadows here are unique and how they function in terms of carbon cycling is surprisingly different. Mr. Hansen appreciated the presentation and the importance of the work. Mr. Hansen asked what effective management methods the Conservancy could employ to increase soil carbon. Dr. Sullivan identified water impounding or decreased channelization to slow the flow of water and allow the water table to rise, like what the Conservancy completed in the Upper Truckee River Marsh Restoration. Mr. Hansen also

asked about the average tons per acre of carbon dioxide that could be sequestered per year; Dr. Sullivan did not recall the specific number. Mr. Hansen discussed the possibility of exploring state incentives to private landholders for sequestering carbon, as was done by the California Air Resources Board in the Yucatan Peninsula.

Mr. Hansen also asked how the Conservancy is supporting Dr. Sullivan's work. Dr. Sullivan identified opportunities such as being able to share with the Board and to study the Tahoe Keys, in addition to an upcoming California Climate Change Action grant. Dr. Sullivan also mentioned upcoming funding from the Sierra Meadows Partnership and California Department of Fish and Game. Mr. Hansen reiterated his support for this type of research. Ms. Gustafson asked about the Pomin Field restoration on the north shore. Ms. Freeman explained that the Conservancy has been in conversations with the California Department of Parks and Recreation and other partners regarding restoration opportunities of Polaris Creek and the adjacent ball fields.

There were no public comments on this item.

Agenda Item 6. Climate Resilience Dashboard Grant Update (discussion only)

Whitney Brennan, Landscape Resilience Program Supervisor, presented Item 6. Devin Middlebrook from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) provided an update to the Board.

Mr. Hansen commented in support of the dashboard and asked about the timeline. Mr. Middlebrook explained that it is estimated to be out the first quarter of next year. Ms. Gustafson also spoke in support of the project and would like to see it during the March meeting if available.

There were no public comments on this item.

Agenda Item 7. Public Access and Recreation for All Grants (action)

Kevin Prior, Director of the Land Division presented Item 7.

Ms. Perrault asked about the timeline for the Tahoe Rim Trail Association (TRTA) installing the signs. Mr. Prior explained that the extended timeframe is to account for design, production, and limited installation opportunities due to weather conditions. Ms. Laine asked whether this group of grants expended the full General Fund budget and wondered how we could support longer-term efforts by the grantee groups. Mr. Prior explained that the grant application process includes significant coordination with staff and the grantee to ensure a reasonable funding timeframe that allows the grantees to plan long term. Ms. Laine supported the grants. Mr. Hansen asked which employees served on the grant application team. The team comprised employees from multiple levels within the organization with diverse backgrounds, including some

employees who lead racial equity and community engagement efforts at the Conservancy.

Mr. Hansen and Chair Acosta asked about overarching budget and funding processes. Mr. Prior explained the Conservancy must encumber current General Fund appropriation by the end of June 2024. Mr. Acosta asked about funding programs focusing on helping formerly incarcerated persons re-enter communities. Mr. Prior explained that the Conservancy has done some outreach but have not yet been successful and is looking for better ways to integrate with re-entry programs.

Ms. Gustafson asked why there are fewer participants per dollar with the Environmental Travelling Companions (ETC) grant than the other grants and whether participants can do the longer-term program offered by the ETC. Mr. Prior responded that Conservancy staff considered the deliverables, administrative costs, and impacts to youth through this program, and the ETC's long history of success in providing this program, including through Coastal Conservancy grants, in deciding whether to recommend the grant. Also, since this grant supports participants from outside the Basin and the program is longer term, the costs are greater.

Mr. Calfee appreciated staff's work on developing the recommendations and the inclusion of the Outdoors for All Strategy.

Chair Acosta called for public comment. Morgan Steele from the TRTA provided context to the earlier Board questions by explaining that the grant is multi-year allowing the TRTA to operate sustainably. The TRTA has conducted significant research into trailheads, how to make them welcoming and helpful for trail users, and how to provide a cohesive message that is accessible and in other languages. Ms. Steele thanked the Board and the Conservancy for the grant and support for its programs.

Lianne Nall from the Tahoe Cross Country Ski Education Association thanked the Board for considering the grant. She described the staff and kids involved in their bilingual program. Justin Broglio with the Waterman Foundation thanked the Conservancy for its support that will allow them to engage in new levels of outreach to benefit more people physically and emotionally by spending time on the water and paddling in the program.

The Board voted on each resolution separately.

Ms. Laine moved for approval of Resolution 23-12-02, and Chair Acosta seconded. Resolution 23-12-02 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Ms. Perrault moved for approval of Resolution 23-12-03, and Ms. Gustafson seconded. Resolution 23-12-03 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Ms. Gustafson moved for approval of Resolution 23-12-04, and Ms. Laine seconded. Resolution 23-12-04 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Hansen moved for approval of Resolution 23-12-05, and Ms. Laine seconded. Resolution 23-12-05 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Agenda Item 8. Dennis T. Machida Greenway Grant (action)

Scott Cecchi, Associate Environmental Planner presented Item 8.

Ms. Laine is excited that this project will allow the public to bike from the South Tahoe “Y” to Stateline, and acknowledged this honor for Dennis Machida, the former Conservancy Executive Director, who would appreciate the Conservancy continuing the vision. Mr. Hansen asked about the source of the funding and percentage of the total budget that this grant comprised. Mr. Prior explained that this grant is funded with Climate Package from General Fund monies. This is a one-time appropriation of \$6 million that the Conservancy must encumber by June 30, 2024. Mr. Hansen also asked who would build the trail and wanted to look at the possibility of the City constructing it. Mr. Prior did not know since this grant is for the planning and feasibility of the project. Jason Burke, Complete Streets Program Manager for the City, explained that this grant would support planning, then the City would pursue funding for implementation, environmental review, and the move toward shovel-ready status. Through previous agreements, the City maintains other sections of the Greenway built on Conservancy land.

There were no public comments.

Mr. Hansen moved for approval of resolution 23-12-06, and Ms. Laine seconded. Resolution 23-12-06 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Agenda Item 9. County Service Area #5 Erosion Control Project – Phase 3 Long-Term License Agreement (action)

Mark Sedlock, Associate Environmental Planner presented Item 9.

Ms. Laine asked if there are any publicly owned storm water systems other than what Mr. Sedlock presented. Mr. Sedlock explained that in previous phases of the project there were water quality basins and drainage improvements, and this phase will continue with similar types of improvements. Ms. Laine recognized the cooperation between El Dorado County and Placer County over the last several decades, especially given the difficult border.

Chair Acosta called for public comment. Dan Kikkert from El Dorado County thanked the Conservancy for its support and ongoing coordination to work on these water quality projects.

Mr. Hansen moved for approval of Resolution 23-12-07, and Ms. Laine seconded. Resolution 23-12-07 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Agenda Item 10. Executive Director's Report

Jane Freeman, Deputy Director, provided the report. Ms. Freeman highlighted the completion of a successful field season working with Tahoe Resource Conservation District (Tahoe RCD) on several projects and gave a special thanks to Evan Osgood and Derek Friend of Tahoe RCD for their leadership. Ms. Freeman also noted the Conservancy, TRPA, and other partners are exploring starting a Biomass Working Group to address the use of biomass in the Basin and study potential options. Ms. Freeman also provided staffing updates, including Ms. Ernst's new role as Natural Resources Division Director, and Sandra Meyle, the new front desk office technician. Staff played two videos: a staff highlight video featuring Kevin Prior, and an Outside Lake Tahoe TV-produced video featuring Milan Yeates, Community Forestry Supervisor, as part of an ongoing joint effort with Tahoe RCD and the Lake Valley Fire Protection District to educate the community about defensible space, home hardening, and fuels projects.

Agenda Item 11. Chair's Report

Chair Acosta had nothing to report.

Agenda Item 12. Board Member Comment

Mr. Hansen commented in favor of the Biomass Working Group and spoke about recent partner meetings on the topic. Ms. Gustafson mentioned the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Board meeting held the week prior during which biomass was also discussed. Ms. Gustafson highlighted the work toward facilities on the north shore, and the possible use of biomass technologies for transportation. Ms. Laine discussed an El Dorado County meeting on the Hazardous Vegetation and Defensible Space ordinance. Ms. Laine confirmed that the ordinance did not have authority over state or federal agencies but noted that during the meeting there was concern about Conservancy parcels. Ms. Laine encouraged the Conservancy's ongoing partnership and coordination with the community and County.

Agenda Item 13. Adjourn

Chair Acosta adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

California Tahoe Conservancy
Resolution 24-04-01
Adopted: April 16, 2024

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the December 14, 2023 meeting of the California Tahoe Conservancy adopted on April 16, 2024.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 16th day of April, 2024.

Jason Vasques
Executive Director