

## **WASHOE TRIBAL LIAISON GRANT**

**Recommended Action:** Adopt Resolution 24-06-03 (Attachment 1) authorizing a grant of up to \$220,000 to the League to Save Lake Tahoe (League) to support the Washoe Tribal Liaison position.

**Executive Summary:** This recommended action supports the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California (Washoe Tribe) by partially funding a Washoe Tribal Liaison position for the Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin). This position will help ensure the best interests of the Washoe Tribe and its members are being met with other governments and organizations throughout the Basin and help restore Tribal stewardship in the Basin.

The Washoe Tribal Liaison will improve how Basin agencies and organizations incorporate Tribal knowledge, science, practices, and culture into their programs and projects. The position will also provide community outreach about the Washoe Tribe's role and interests in the Basin, and represent the Tribe or act as a liaison to various boards and committees, and other environmental, conservation, and restoration efforts.

The California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) will provide this grant to the League, and the League will then provide a grant to the Washoe Tribe. The recommended action advances the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Goal 2 (Restore the Resilience of Basin Forests and Watersheds) and Goal 6, Strategy C (Engage the community and collaborate with partners to identify actions that better meet the needs of Native American tribes). The Washoe Tribal Liaison position will facilitate more meaningful Tribal participation in Basin land management actions, strengthening efforts to restore ecological resilience across the Basin.

**Location:** This position will represent the Washoe Tribe in the Basin.

**Fiscal Summary:** The Conservancy will award up to \$220,000 of General Fund appropriated for nature-based solutions.

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### **Overview**

## History

Daᶯaw (Lake Tahoe) is the homeland of the Waší-šiw (Washoe people). The Waší-šiw are the ancestral stewards of the land in and around the Basin. European colonists, however, did not recognize the rights of indigenous people, including the Waší-šiw, and indigenous people were forcefully relocated, enslaved, stolen from their families to be assimilated, or directly killed as part of a state-funded bounty program. The Waší-šiw once occupied 8.3 million acres with Lake Tahoe at the center of their territory. Today, as a sovereign nation, the Washoe Tribe holds title to only one percent of their original lands, with only 30 acres in the Basin. These traumatic events still have impacts today and at times affect the perceptions of Tribal Members when working with people from outside of the Tribal Community. The policies that were created, the destruction and development of natural landscapes, and efforts to eradicate indigenous peoples are an important, but often ignored, part of the history of the United States.

The Washoe Tribe continues to advocate for the protection and preservation of Waší-šiw ᶯítdeᶯ (the Washoe People's homelands). As their creation story outlines, "our land will take care of us and in return we will care for the land." The Tribe has outlined steps Basin agencies can take to support indigenous people. One of these steps is to engage in meaningful partnerships—respectful, reciprocal, consistent, and ongoing consultation and communication with the Tribe.

On June 18, 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-15-19, in which he acknowledges and apologizes on behalf of the State of California for the historical "violence, exploitation, dispossession, and the attempted destruction of tribal communities," which dislocated California Native Americans from their ancestral lands and sacred practices. The destructive impacts of this forceful separation persist today, and meaningful, reparative action from the State can begin to address these wrongs in an effort to heal its relationship with California Native Americans. Additionally, in 2020 Governor Newsom released a Statement of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands requiring state entities to seek opportunities to support California tribes' co-management of and access to their ancestral lands.

The California Natural Resources Agency is committed to early, often, and meaningful consultations with California Native American tribes, with the goal of collaborative partnership and meaningful inclusion of tribal governments' priorities and interests throughout the Agency's work. The Conservancy's jurisdiction is entirely within the homeland of the Waší-šiw, and staff is increasing coordination with the Washoe Tribe to facilitate more opportunities for meaningful Tribal participation in Basin land management actions. In the past, state agencies often focused on completing the minimum of formal consultations required by state law. The Conservancy has worked to shift more to substantial collaboration and has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) by and between the Tribe and the Conservancy to establish and maintain a formalized government-to-government relationship. The Conservancy also has provided several grants to the Tribe to increase capacity and stewardship.

To date, consistent and meaningful Tribal participation in Basin land management efforts has been difficult to achieve. Some of this has been due to the lack of Tribal capacity to attend all the committee, workgroup, and board meetings scheduled throughout the Basin. To rectify this deficiency, the Washoe Tribe seeks to fund this Tribal Liaison position with financial support from partners. The Tribe will receive funding for the Tribal Liaison position from the Conservancy, the League, and the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation. The latter will include philanthropic funding from multiple partners. Combined, Basin partners expect to contribute funding to support the Tribal Liaison position for two to three years. The Tribe recognizes the need for funding in the long term and is working to secure other funding sources to continue supporting the position after exhausting grant funds.

### **Detailed Description of Recommended Action**

#### **1. Major Elements and/or Steps of the Recommended Action**

The Conservancy will provide a grant to the League, and the League will provide a grant to the Washoe Tribe to support the Tribal Liaison position.

The Tribal Liaison will represent the Washoe Tribe or act as a contact to various boards and committees, and at conferences, hearings, meetings, and other events. The Tribal Liaison will coordinate review of planning documents and consultation requests with the Tribal Administrator. This position will provide community outreach to educate the general public, government agencies, and other organizations about the original inhabitants of the Basin. The Tribal Liaison will assist with design, development, implementation, and management activities for outreach, education, and natural resource efforts. The Tribal Liaison will also work with and seek advice and recommendations from Tribal departments, including the Tribal Historic Preservation Office and the Washoe Cultural Resources Advisory Committee.

#### **2. Overall Context and Benefits**

The Washoe Tribal Liaison position will help ensure meaningful Tribal participation in Basin land management actions, ensure Tribal expertise is incorporated into restoring ecological resilience, and further Tribal stewardship of their ancestral lands. As the original stewards of the Basin, the Wašičiw were the first ecologists, biologists, hydrologists, botanists, and land managers. By restoring Tribal stewardship and incorporating their traditional ecological knowledge into land management, Basin partners will develop better projects in their efforts to restore ecological resilience across the landscape, and will help achieve federal and state climate, biodiversity, and Pathways to 30x30 goals. This action will meet goals set in the Conservancy's strategic plan, and forward Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-15-19 and his 2020 Statement of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands.

### 3. Schedule for the Recommended Action

The Washoe Tribe and the League have begun working with partners to secure funding. After execution of this grant to the League in summer 2024, the League will provide a grant to the Tribe. Funding will be available through December 31, 2027.

#### **Financing**

Upon approval, the Conservancy will award up to \$220,000 of General Fund appropriated for nature-based solutions.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Anticipated Leveraged Funds</b>
Task 1 Grant Management	\$20,000	
Task 2 Tribal Liaison Support	\$200,000	\$210,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$220,000</b>	

#### **Authority**

##### **Consistency with the Conservancy's Enabling Legislation**

Implementation of this grant is consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation. Specifically, Government Code section 66907.7 authorizes the Conservancy to award grants to local public agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, federally recognized Indian tribes, the Tahoe Transportation District, and nonprofit organizations for purposes consistent with its mission.

##### **Consistency with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan**

The recommended action is consistent with Strategic Plan Goal 2 (Restore the Resilience of Basin Forests and Watersheds), and Goal 6, strategy C (Engage the community and collaborate with partners to identify actions that better meet the needs of Native American tribes).

##### **Consistency with the Conservancy's Program Guidelines**

There are no Conservancy program guidelines for Washoe Tribe support. However, the Conservancy is committed to working with the Tribe as stewards of the lands the Conservancy manages. In 2016, the Tribe and Conservancy signed an MOU. The MOU recognizes shared interests in protecting social, biological, and cultural resources at Lake Tahoe, and formalizes coordination practices between the Tribe and Conservancy. The MOU also encourages ongoing coordination efforts between the two governmental entities.

##### **Consistency with External Authorities**

The recommended action is consistent with Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-15-19 and his 2020 Statement of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands requiring state entities to seek opportunities to support California tribes' co-management of and access to their ancestral lands.

The recommended action is consistent with the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program because it furthers the Washoe Tribe's involvement in the environmental stewardship of the Basin.

### **Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act**

The recommended action does not have the potential to result in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. The activities, therefore, are not a "project" within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA guidelines, section 15378, and CEQA does not apply.

### **List of Attachments**

Attachment 1 – Resolution 24-06-03

### **Conservancy Staff Contact**

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