

California Tahoe Conservancy
Agenda Item 3a
September 18, 2025

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
June 12, 2025

June 12, 2025 (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 June 27, 2025.

Agenda Item 1. Roll Call

Chair Adam Acosta called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. The meeting took place in person at the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) in Sacramento, California.

Members Present:

Adam Acosta, Chair, Public Member
Tamara Wallace, Vice Chair, City of South Lake Tahoe (City)
Chris Calfee, CNRA
Cindy Gustafson, Placer County
Brooke Laine, El Dorado County
Jay Hansen, Public Member

Members Absent:

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

Matt Plunkett commented on an item not on the agenda. Mr. Plunkett commended the California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) on its conservation and restoration work. He then spoke about his concerns with the timing of the removal of dead trees and other fuels management activities on the Conservancy's open space lots. He asked that the Conservancy Board adopt a more collaborative approach for fuel reduction on these parcels by adjacent homeowners. He asked that homeowners be allowed to remove

dead material from the ground, as well as dead and low-hanging branches, leaving the removal of dead or small trees to the Conservancy. Finally, he commented on the value of chipping trees and branches to create mulch.

Julie Regan, Executive Director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), commented on an item not on the agenda. Ms. Regan spoke about the TRPA Governing Board's recent strategic planning session and how the TRPA's strategic priorities align with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan. Ms. Regan said that the four strategic priority areas that the TRPA Board is considering are restoration and resilience, lake clarity, housing, and transportation. She spoke about the TRPA's most recent Tahoe In Depth publication, specifically the section that tracks indicators of environmental health of the Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin), and acknowledged the essential role of partnerships in the Basin to make progress. She left copies of the paper for the Board members and members of the public.

Agenda Item 3. Consent Items

- a. Approval of March Minutes (action) (Resolution 25-06-01)**

Mr. Hansen moved for approval of Consent Items Resolution 25-06-01, and Ms. Laine seconded the motion. Resolution 25-06-01 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Agenda Item 4. Executive Director's Report (discussion only)

Jason Vasques, Executive Director, presented Item 4. Mr. Vasques first spoke about the success of the previous night's social reception at the Leland Stanford Mansion and thanked its host, the California Tahoe Alliance, which includes members such as the TRPA, League to Save Lake Tahoe, Tahoe Fund, Placer County, and local public utility districts.

Mr. Vasques spoke about Governor Gavin Newsom's Emergency Declaration, which provides a streamlining process for wildfire fuels management projects. He explained that the Conservancy is using this process for a 43-acre fuels reduction project in the Tahoe Keys area and plans to use it for a 600-acre project on the Conservancy's Dollar Property. He also said that the Conservancy expects to roll out its pilot Stewardship Program this summer in four neighborhoods, and will work with Tahoe Resource Conservation District (Tahoe RCD) as part of its Fire Adapted Community workshops to promote the pilot Stewardship Program with neighbors. Mr. Vasques also talked about how Assembly Bill 100 released \$23.5 million from Proposition 4, Climate Bond funding to the Conservancy. He explained that the Conservancy is also working on a pre-application process for these funds to help connect applicants with Conservancy staff and to get the right projects matched to the funds.

Mr. Vasques then updated the Board on the progress of the Upper Truckee Marsh South Project. He said the Conservancy expects demolition of the former motel buildings to

proceed in summer or fall, that bids had closed recently, and that Conservancy staff is in contact with the Department of General Services to move that contract forward. Additionally, he said that the property is currently being used for training for emergency services through an agreement between the Conservancy and the City. He spoke about the planning process for the future restoration work and the public outreach that the Conservancy had conducted. Included in this outreach was a two-month-long public survey which accumulated over 700 comments overwhelmingly in favor of full restoration with many ideas for access. He explained that the Conservancy had hosted two public walking tours of the site and met with different community-based organizations and held community workshops to increase outreach.

Mr. Vasques then introduced the Conservancy's new six seasonal forestry aides, the scientific aide, and the legal summer intern.

Mr. Vasques spoke about how the Budget had not yet been passed, but that the Conservancy's base funding is maintained and that he did not expect any surprises.

Mr. Hansen asked if the demolition on the Upper Truckee Marsh South site was on budget and what the overall budget and fund source will be for the restoration. Mr. Vasques said that there were seven bids for the demolition work, ranging in amounts from just below to about what was anticipated, and that the Conservancy will be fundraising for the restoration as well as possibly using some Proposition 4 funds. He said that he expected that project to be somewhere between \$15 million and \$20 million depending on the scope. Mr. Hansen asked if the project was anticipated to start and stop and Mr. Vasques responded that it was anticipated to keep moving forward as it is an agency priority.

Mr. Acosta asked for an update on the CalMatters article that had been discussed at the previous Board meeting. Mr. Vasques explained that the TRPA and Conservancy co-wrote an opinion piece that was submitted to CalMatters and other media sources but was not accepted. The TRPA and Conservancy will revise the article and release it with the Lake Clarity Report and the upcoming Lake Tahoe Summit.

Agenda Item 5. Chair's Report

Chair Acosta apologized for not being able to attend the reception the night before. He then explained that through the Operations Committee, he and Ms. Wallace had been working with Deputy Director Jane Freeman to assemble the Executive Director's Annual Performance Evaluation and will have an update on how to proceed at the next Board meeting.

Agenda Item 6. Forestry Program Update (discussion only)

Erin Ernst, Natural Resources Division Director, presented Item 6.

Ms. Ernst introduced three guest speakers: Forest Schafer, Deputy Director of the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force at CNRA, Lisa Lien-Mager, Deputy

Secretary for Forest and Wildfire Resilience at CNRA, and Chief Jay Manning from South Lake Tahoe Fire Rescue.

Ms. Gustafson asked how the Conservancy can better coordinate with private neighbors on treating Conservancy open space lots and where the Conservancy is on evaluating and treating those parcels. Ms. Ernst responded that the Conservancy intends to increase community engagement through the Racial Equity Action Plan and Goals. She also talked about working with the Fire Adapted Communities Program through Tahoe RCD and the Conservancy's pilot Stewardship Program.

Ms. Gustafson then encouraged the Conservancy to take the lead on working with other state agencies to address fuels projects along evacuation corridors and to prioritize those projects. Ms. Ernst added that there is currently coordination with the Caltrans Statewide Vegetation Management Coordinator. Mr. Calfee acknowledged Ms. Gustafson's comment and offered to help make connections within the State.

Mr. Hansen asked about technology and innovation being used by the Conservancy for fuels management. Ms. Ernst described BurnBot, a company that uses technology for pile burning and mastication, and mentioned that the Conservancy is working to contract with BurnBot for a project in the Tahoe Keys. She also explained that there may be opportunities to reenter areas that have already been treated and masticate the piles instead of pile burning. Mr. Hansen then asked how much money the Conservancy has put into these technologies and how much the Conservancy spends on treating its parcels. Ms. Ernst said that she did not have the contract amount or total cost numbers on hand, but that the Conservancy is happy to bring in new technology where it is a good fit. Mr. Vasques said he could look at the larger budget breakdown and could bring that back to the Board.

Mr. Hansen then asked whether the State is tracking methane and carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere through forest management practices. Mr. Vasques responded by discussing the Natural and Working Lands Initiative's nature-based solutions targets for managing natural and working lands to meet climate targets. He explained that they look at tradeoffs for different types of forestry treatments. Mr. Hansen reiterated that he hopes the Conservancy can move towards more innovative methods of fuels reduction.

Mr. Calfee commended Ms. Ernst for using the Secretarial Suspension process for streamlining fuel reduction projects and Mr. Schafer and Ms. Lien-Mager for their work on it.

Ms. Laine asked whether the Conservancy has built any relationships with the Firewise USA and Fire Adapted communities in the Basin and if the Conservancy should prioritize treating open space lots in those communities. Ms. Ernst responded that priority areas

were identified through the Community and Wildfire Protection Plan Update, which included a robust community engagement process.

Ms. Laine said that she was hearing frustration from these communities that they are cleaning their parcels annually, but government landholders in their communities were not treating their parcels.

Chair Acosta called for public comment.

Mr. Plunkett commented that the public is eager to help the Conservancy in treating its parcels.

Chair Acosta called for a five-minute break at 10:58 a.m.

Chair Acosta reconvened the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

Agenda Item 7. Recreation and Public Access Program Update (discussion only)

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

Mr. Prior introduced guest speaker Gloria Sandoval, Deputy Secretary for Access at CNRA.

Mr. Hansen commented that public access to beaches is a challenge in Tahoe.

Mr. Hansen asked if there would be parking included in the Upper Truckee Marsh South Project and emphasized its need. Mr. Prior responded that it is too early in project development to answer that, but the Conservancy is aware of parking needs at its recreation sites and is gathering information on how people use the site currently through public outreach. He also added that the Recreation and Infrastructure Group within the Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Council is updating their thresholds to understand what is needed for a sustainable recreation site.

Ms. Gustafson agreed, referencing the TRPA's work on transportation and thanking Ms. Laine for her efforts on the Emerald Bay Parking Program that is being piloted this summer. She reiterated the need for collaboration around parking in the Basin with growing populations and rising temperatures in the foothills of both California and Nevada.

Agenda Item 8. Dennis T. Machida Memorial Greenway Johnson Meadow License Agreement and Easements (action) (Resolution 25-06-02)

Chris Mertens, Recreation and Public Access Program Supervisor, presented Item 8.

Ms. Wallace asked if the property along Barbara Avenue had recently been annexed into the City from El Dorado County. Ms. Laine responded that it had been.

Chair Acosta called for public comment.

Donaldo Palaroan, P.E. Senior Civil Engineer with El Dorado County, commented that Barbara Avenue and all areas to the east near the Caltrans Snow Storage Yard are now part of the City. He also gave some background history of the area, the development of the Johnson Meadow Greenway Connector Project, and its relationship to other segments of the Dennis T. Machida Memorial Greenway.

Mr. Hansen asked if the proposed bridge would be elevated. Mr. Palaroan said yes, and that the boardwalk would be elevated to span the floodplain to allow year-round use.

Mr. Hansen moved for approval of Resolution 25-06-02, and Ms. Wallace seconded. Resolution 25-06-02 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Agenda Item 9. Program Authorization (action) (Resolution 25-06-03)

Brent Coe, Director of IT and Administration, presented Item 9.

Mr. Hansen asked if the Land Management expenditures are mostly for parcel management and fuel reduction. Mr. Vasques answered that it does not include fuels reduction because that falls under the Forestry Authorization, but it does include things like removing hardscape and other management activities. Mr. Hansen asked if the Board would have the opportunity to see the entire Conservancy budget.

Mr. Vasques explained that the Executive Director's Report describes the general health of the Conservancy budget, including some of the agency's funding sources, and that the Program Authorization is one part of the Conservancy's general operations that those funding sources go towards.

Mr. Hansen asked what percentage of the budget falls within the Program Authorization. Mr. Vasques said that the Program Authorization amounts to just under one quarter of the total. Mr. Hansen commented that it didn't seem like the Board was voting on very much of the budget. Mr. Vasques explained that the Board does not vote on spending on salaries and that individual projects and grants come back for Board approval individually. Mr. Hansen asked if the Board has authority to look at things like rent for the building and staff salaries. Mr. Vasques explained that those numbers can be shared with the Board, but that staff has the discretionary action to expend those. He explained that expenditures have not been broken down in that amount of detail for the Board, but that is something that can be presented.

Chair Acosta asked for clarification on the Budget Act getting passed through the legislature and the appropriations to the Conservancy. Mr. Vasques explained the process.

Chair Acosta called for public comment. There were no public comments.

Mr. Hansen moved for approval of Resolution 25-06-03, and Ms. Wallace seconded. Resolution 25-06-03 passed unanimously by voice vote.

Agenda Item 10. Board Member Comment

Mr. Vasques thanked the Board for their deep engagement.

Mr. Hansen thanked everyone for traveling to Sacramento for the meeting.

Agenda Item 11. Adjourn

Chair Acosta adjourned the meeting at 12:18 p.m.

California Tahoe Conservancy
Resolution 25-09-01
Adopted: September 18, 2025

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the June 12, 2025 meeting of the California Tahoe Conservancy adopted on September 18, 2025.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 18th day of September, 2025.

Jason Vasques
Executive Director