

California Tahoe Conservancy
Agenda Item 4
September 18, 2025

Executive Director's Report

The California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) and our partners have had a busy summer. U.S. Senator Adam Schiff hosted the 29th Annual Lake Tahoe Summit, which honored the legacy of Senator Dianne Feinstein. The Conservancy's typically productive field season was punctuated by the start of work to demolish the vacant motel and restaurant buildings at the Upper Truckee Marsh South property. While the Conservancy—along with Tahoe Resource Conservation District (Tahoe RCD) crews and our contractors—have advanced forestry and restoration efforts on the ground, our staff has continued planning and coordination for upcoming important projects described further below.

Jason Vasques, Executive Director
California Tahoe Conservancy

Program Updates

1. Land Management

Land Management Projects

The Land Management Program is implementing small-scale restoration and management projects on Conservancy land with Tahoe RCD crews.

Upper Truckee Marsh South Motel Demolition and Site Stabilization

Staff continues to work with the Department of General Services (DGS) and the demolition contractor, Clauss Construction, to demolish the former Motel 6 and restaurant buildings and parking lot on the Upper Truckee Marsh South property. Work began in July and the Conservancy anticipates demolition and site stabilization will finish by mid-October.

Facilities Management

The Conservancy expects to close the entrance gates to Van Sickle Bi-State Park and Tahoe Pines for the winter on October 31. Additionally, the Conservancy ended the annual seasonal dog closure at the Upper Truckee Marsh on August 1.

2. Tahoe Livable Communities

Property Acquisitions

Staff continues to work on identifying and completing property acquisitions. In July, staff completed the acquisition of the Van Sickle Bi-State Park entrance parcel and the associated coverage that the Board approved in March 2025. In addition, staff continues to explore acquisition opportunities, ordering appraisals, completing internal program reviews, lining up funding, preparing Board approvals, and working with the DGS to meet state acquisition requirements.

Land Bank

The Conservancy banks and transfers development rights and land coverage for affordable housing, town center, and other infill projects in the City of South Lake Tahoe (City), and El Dorado and Placer Counties. Staff continues to assist project applicants by facilitating the sale of coverage and development rights to help them meet Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) permit requirements.

3. Recreation and Public Access

Accessibility Improvements at North Shore Beaches

Staff continues planning lakefront accessibility improvements at Patton Landing Beach (Carnelian Bay) and North Tahoe Beach (Kings Beach). Staff expects construction for both projects will happen in 2026 and 2027.

Land Management Strategy

In August, staff selected Ascent Environmental to assist with the next phase of the Conservancy's Land Management Strategy planning effort. This next phase includes an internal visioning process to define the goals, objectives, and guiding principles of the Land Management Strategy; develop a community engagement plan; build upon previous work developing a sequenced process for completing the Land Management Strategy; and conduct technical studies to support rulemaking and land use planning. The next phase will take approximately 18 months to complete.

Tahoe for All Grant Program

In September, staff is partnering with other state conservancies and organizations to promote the program and attract applicants from across California. Staff is also recruiting an Advisory Committee to help review applications. Staff expects to present recommended grant awards to the Board at its March 2026 meeting.

Lily Avenue Access to Lake Tahoe

Following discussions with south shore accessibility advocates, staff worked with the City and TRPA to implement a small project at Barton Beach and Lily Avenue to improve access for people with mobility challenges. The project was completed in June.

Van Sickle Bi-State Park Safety and Equitable Access Improvements

Staff, in coordination with the DGS, has begun planning the Van Sickle Bi-State Park Safety and Equitable Access Improvements Project. The Project is a coordinated effort with the State of Nevada to improve public safety and accessibility, enhance the visitor experience, encourage non-motorized access to the park, reduce carbon emissions, and protect water quality and meadow habitat. To achieve these goals, staff is planning several improvements on the California side of the park, including a new paved and accessible shared-use path through the park, interpretive elements, picnic areas, and storm water improvements. Staff will present a project update to the Board in December 2025, and anticipates implementation happening in 2028 or 2029.

4. Community Forestry

Community Protection Projects

Staff continues to administer contracts to implement wildfire risk reduction projects on open space lots in neighborhoods. Projects include thinning both Conservancy parcels and adjacent USDA Forest Service properties under a Good Neighbor Authority Agreement. These multi-ownership projects are occurring on the west shore in both Placer and El Dorado Counties and on the south shore in El Dorado County and the City.

Using New Tools and Funding

The Governor's Emergency Proclamation to expedite critical fuels reduction projects provided the Conservancy an opportunity to fast track the 43-acre Tahoe Keys Large Acreage Project via the new secretarial suspension process. The Conservancy, the City, and South Lake Tahoe Fire Rescue had previously identified the project as a high priority. Operations began in early September and staff expects to complete the project this fall. The secretarial suspension process allowed the Conservancy to implement this project a year ahead of schedule. Project funding comes from the Conservancy's early action funding from Proposition 4, the Climate Bond.

5. Landscape Resilience

Environmental Compliance and Wildlife Protections

New mapping and data collection technologies are improving coordination and efficiency among Conservancy programs. Wildlife and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff have developed an ArcGIS Field Maps application to coordinate and track wildlife surveys prior to the implementation of forestry and restoration projects. The implementation of this application facilitates compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and helps protect wildlife resources during critical forestry and restoration work.

Cross-Program Coordination

Landscape Resilience staff is facilitating cross-program input for recent land acquisitions and design for new projects. Recently, staff led a meeting with multiple

programs to ensure that new trail and recreational improvements planned as part of the Van Sickle Bi-State Park Safety and Equitable Access Improvements Project integrated forest resilience, wildlife habitat, and tribal engagement priorities into the design process.

6. Watershed Restoration and Water Quality

Upper Truckee Marsh South Project Planning and Engagement

The Conservancy continues planning and developing this project, following extensive public outreach this past spring. Results from the public online survey and outreach events demonstrated significant interest in the project and provided insights into the public's ideas and priorities for the area. Staff and consultants are currently developing concepts for potential restoration and public access project features and conducting initial feasibility analysis.

This fall and winter, the Conservancy will conduct another round of public and partner engagement. Staff will present project concepts and alternatives at community workshops and other events. The public will have another opportunity to engage with the Conservancy and provide comments on the potential project elements. Staff will also continue close coordination with partners, including the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, during this process. The project concepts will include various options to restore wetlands and enhance public access in the southern portion of the Upper Truckee Marsh.

Elks Club Parking Improvements

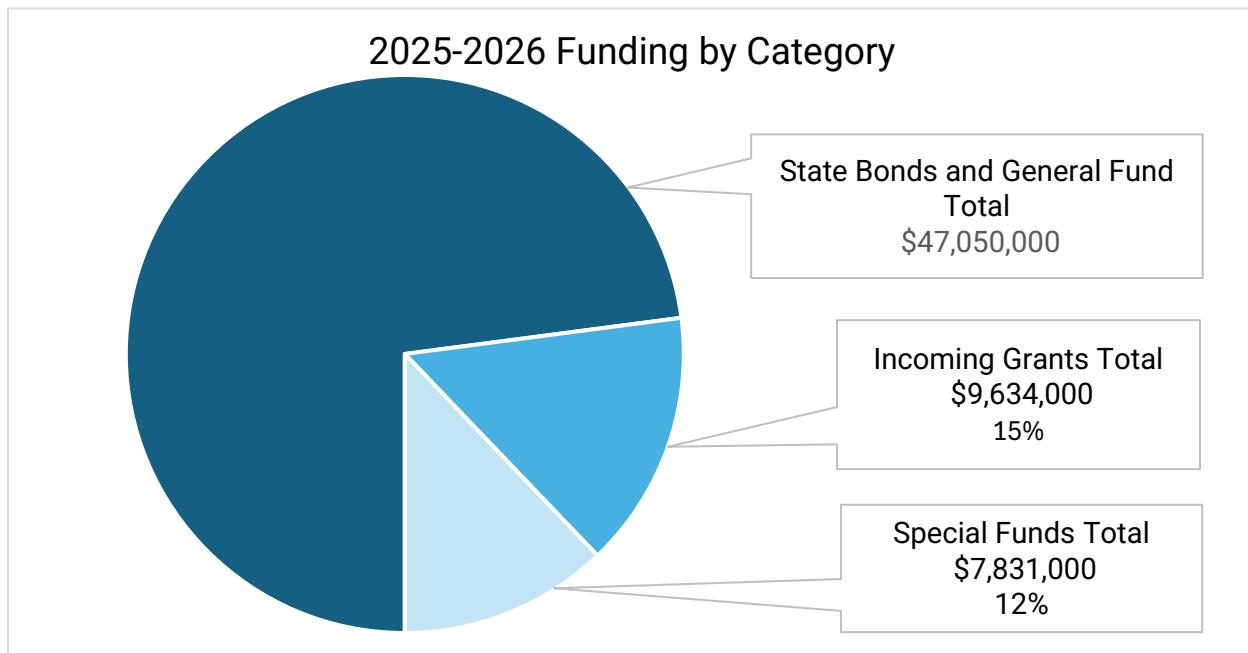
In July, the Conservancy started constructing an upgraded parking lot on its Elks Club property along the Upper Truckee River. The new parking lot will meet requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act so that everyone can enjoy this property. Storm water improvements will keep pollutants from entering the Upper Truckee River and Lake Tahoe. The Conservancy closed the parking lot to the public during construction but maintained public access to the river and certain trails in the area. Staff anticipates the construction contractor will complete all work in September, with the new parking lot facilities opening to the public this fall.

Budget, Accounting, and Administration

The Conservancy has a variety of funding sources appropriated for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. The funding sources available fall into three major categories: state bonds and general fund, incoming grants, and special funds.

Funding Source	Amount
State Bonds and General Fund	
General Fund*	\$19,932,000
Proposition 68*	\$2,394,000
Proposition 4 - Wildfire*	\$23,674,000
Proposition 50*	\$750,000
Proposition 84	\$300,000
State Bonds and General Fund Total	\$47,050,000
Incoming Grants	
Federal Reimbursement*	\$2,918,000
State Reimbursement*	\$6,716,000
Incoming Grants Total	\$9,634,000
Special Funds	
Environmental License Plate Fund	\$4,946,000
Habitat Conservation Fund	\$500,000
Lake Tahoe Conservancy Account	\$1,170,000
Tahoe Conservancy Fund	\$708,000
Senate Bill 630*	\$507,000
Special Funds Total	\$7,831,000
Total Funding Appropriated	\$64,515,000

*Amounts shown may be used over multiple budget years.

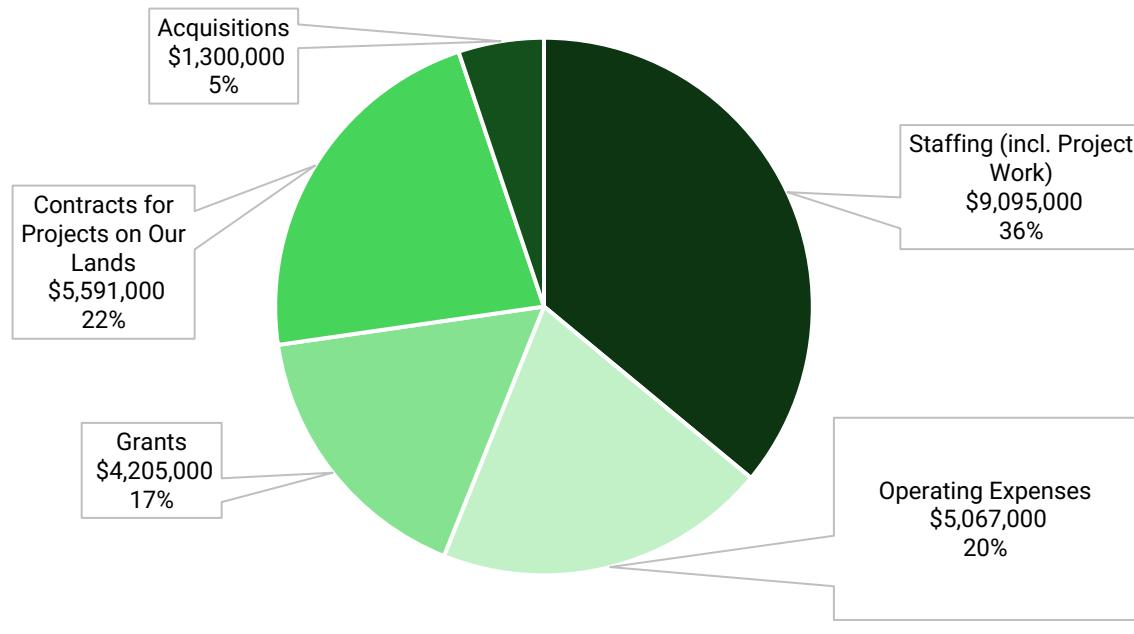


In fiscal year 2025-2026, the Conservancy estimates its spending as listed below. The Conservancy will continue to adjust these projections based on pending final Legislative as it conducts its operations and reacts to opportunities and necessities as the fiscal year unfolds.

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Spending Category	Amount
Staffing (including Project Work)	\$9,095,000
Operating Expenses	\$5,067,000
Grants	\$4,205,000
Contracts for Projects on Our Lands	\$5,591,000
Acquisitions	\$1,300,000
 Total	 \$25,258,000

2025-2026 Spending by Category



The following tables list anticipated expenditures, for projects and grants, for each of the Conservancy's four main program areas, broken down by major funding source.

Community Forestry and Landscape Resilience

Funding Source	Amount
State Bonds and General Fund	\$4,000,000
Incoming Grants	\$1,700,000
Special Funds	\$ -

Recreation and Access

Funding Source	Amount
State Bonds and General Fund	\$1,705,000
Incoming Grants	\$ -
Special Funds	\$255,000

Land Management

Funding Source	Amount
State Bonds and General Fund	\$1,750,000
Incoming Grants	\$ -
Special Funds	\$225,100

Watershed

Funding Source	Amount
State Bonds and General Fund	\$1,200,000
Incoming Grants	\$ -
Special Funds	\$360,000