

ATTACHMENT 3.1

Golden Gate Bird Alliance

Program: Birding for Everyone Fellowship

Recommended Funding: \$30,000

Location: Various locations across the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin)

Overview

Background

The Golden Gate Bird Alliance (GGBA), founded in 1917, works to inspire people to protect San Francisco Bay Area birds and our shared natural environment through educational programs and conservation and restoration of wildlife habitats. The GGBA hosts over 200 volunteer-led bird walks annually and works with seven schools throughout Oakland, Richmond, and San Francisco to implement its Eco-Education program, serving over 400 students per year. The GGBA's work connects people of all ages and backgrounds with the natural world, and educates and engages Bay Area residents in the protection of their shared, local environment and has served over 20,000 students and family members since 1999.

The GGBA developed the Birding for Everyone Fellowship (Fellowship) to empower the next generation of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) conservation leaders by building skills, confidence, and a sense of belonging in outdoor and conservation spaces. Each year, the Fellowship provides ten individuals from underrepresented communities with a full year of free birding and ecology classes. Instruction is led by educators from GGBA and the California Academy of Sciences. The program serves BIPOC and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and plus (LGBTQ+) adults from historically underserved communities and adults with disabilities in the Bay Area. The GGBA specifically selects Fellows because they face systemic barriers to accessing outdoor spaces, environmental education, and leadership opportunities in conservation. Many come from low-income households with limited access to nature and are disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation.

A cornerstone of the Fellowship is a multi-day immersive trip to the Sierra Nevada, which will be relocated to the Basin for the summers of 2026, 2027, and 2028 using Tahoe for All funds.

Detailed Description

Major Elements

The recommended grant award supports staff time and subcontracted labor to implement three multi-day immersive birding experiences in the Basin for three different cohorts, and

supplies and travel costs associated with those trips. The grant will support the immersive Basin birding trips for three years, serving 30 fellows. The Basin birding trips are the culmination of a year of birding and ecology classes and function as an extended retreat, celebrating and practicing skills learned throughout the year.

Each Basin birding trip will be an extended weekend trip (Friday through Monday). During each trip, the GGBA will offer a series of immersive outdoor activities in and around the Basin. The core of the experience will be birding field trips, guided by GGBA guides, some of whom are past Fellowship graduates. Fellows will learn to identify bird species unique to montane ecosystems—species they do not encounter in the Bay Area—while building confidence in field skills such as observation, use of optics, and group leadership. Birding field trips are paired with team-building activities such as kayaking, swimming, and shoreline exploration on Lake Tahoe. These activities foster trust, collaboration, and a shared sense of accomplishment. Together, these activities provide an enjoyable, restorative outdoor experience while strengthening ecological knowledge, leadership skills, and cohort cohesion.

Overall Context and Benefits

The GGBA Fellowship program provides meaningful and direct benefits by addressing financial, social, and cultural barriers to outdoor recreation and environmental education. Participants gain hands-on birding and ecology skills, increased confidence navigating outdoor and birding spaces, and access to mentorship and professional networks that support continued engagement in conservation and related careers. These benefits are delivered through structured classes, field experiences, and a fully subsidized multi-day birding trip to the Basin, ensuring equitable access regardless of income.

Schedule

The grant supports the Basin birding trips for three summers (2026, 2027, and 2028).

Financing

This grant is funded by Lake Tahoe License Plate funds. The majority of the recommended grant supports staff time for project implementation, and travel and transportation costs for the Basin birding trips. The grant will also support supplies for the Basin birding trips, and subcontracted costs of hiring local guides.

The GGBA received grant funding from the National Audubon Society to support this program in 2025 and has applied for renewed funding in 2026. The Fellowship program also receives ongoing financial support from GGBA donors.

The GGBA's funding request reflects costs related only to program activities that occur in the Basin, and transportation to and from the Basin. Conservancy funding will not otherwise be used for program elements that occur outside of the Basin.

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 \$30,000.

Task	Amount
Labor (staff time and benefits)	\$14,520
Equipment/Supplies	\$580
Travel (transportation, lodging, and meals)	\$10,800
Indirect	\$4,100
Conservancy Total	\$30,000