

Summary of Consultant Activities - June 2023
Sustainable Community Advocates
Steve Teshara, Principal

- Continue to attend meetings of the new TRPA Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) Communications and Funding Committee of the Tahoe Interagency Executives Steering Committee (TIE-SC) representing the Tahoe Basin Fire Chiefs.
- As a leading member of the Lake Tahoe Partnership, continue to advocate for the proposed ten-year extension of the authorizations in the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (LTRA). In mid-May, the bi-partisan legislation to do so was reported favorably out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee. This action means the bill is cleared and ready for Senate floor action. The Partnership is now working to promote action by the House Natural Resources Committee to advance the bill in the House.
- Also, continue advocacy for Tahoe's requested FY federal 2024 appropriations requests, consistent with the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP).
- Continue to participate in meetings related to potential federal legislation intended to "modernize" the existing 1980 federal Burton-Santini Lake Tahoe land acquisition bill to update its provisions to address contemporary USFS land management needs.
- Provide summary orientation for Chief Chad Stephen as he prepared to attend his first meeting (June 14) of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Advisory Planning Commission (APC) as the Basin Chief's primary representative.
- Continue to participate in planning meetings for the 2023 Lake Tahoe Summit, scheduled for Wednesday, August 9 at the Kings Beach State Recreation Area. California U.S. Senator Alex Padilla is this year's host. Email Basin Chiefs a "save the date" notice with additional details to follow.
- Detailed telephone conversation with Robert Wandel of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management seeking to understand the "new" (aka now being enforced) NEPA Section 106 compliance requirements affecting SNPLMA funds including those for fuels reduction and forest health projects. Section 106 specifies the need for federal agencies to analyze the potential for disturbance/impacts on historic and/or cultural resources when federal funds are used for a project, including if the funds are provided to a non-federal partner. Mr. Wandel will be at Tahoe July 26th and is willing to meet in person with interested TFFT leaders to further discuss.

- Continue to track California Senate Bill (SB) 470 (Senator Marie Alvarado-Gil, (D-District 4), as now substantially amended and now titled: *Urban Water Community Drought Relief program: Small Community Drought Relief program: high fire hazard and very high fire severity zones*. As amended this bill passed the State Senate May 25th. It is now pending before the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee with a hearing scheduled for July 11th.

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- Continue to attend meetings of the new TRPA Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) Communications and Funding Committee of the Tahoe Interagency Executives Steering Committee (TIE-SC) representing the Tahoe Basin Fire Chiefs. July meeting dates were July 5th and July 19th.
- Attend (virtually) July 6 Tahoe Interagency Executives Committee Steering Committee (TIE-SC) meeting. Agenda Items included: 1) Destination Stewardship Plan launch; 2) Planning Update/Discussion, 2023 Lake Tahoe Summit; 3) EIP Accomplishments and Summit Key Messages; 4) EIP Communications Priorities and Strategies.
- Continue to attend Summit Planning meetings and coordinate related activities. Secure annual commitment for Basin Chiefs to receive VIP seating at the Summit and parking passes for official vehicles.
- Attend (in person) July 26 TRPA Governing Board meeting for agenda item VII.A.: Briefing on Forest Health Program and Emergency Response Coordination (Informational only). Participants in the briefing included Chief Scott Lindgren (TFFT MAC Chair and Chief, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District), El Dorado County Sheriff's OES representative Greg Almos and representatives from Cal Fire, and Placer County OES.

Federal Legislative Advocacy

- As a leading member of the Lake Tahoe Partnership, continue to advocate for the proposed ten-year extension of the authorizations in the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (LTRA). In mid-May, the bi-partisan legislation to do so was reported favorably out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee. This action means the bill is cleared and ready for Senate floor action. The Partnership continues to promote favorable action by the House Natural Resources Committee to advance the bill in the House.
- Also, continue advocacy for Tahoe's requested FY federal 2024 appropriations requests, consistent with the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP). We anticipate impacts (likely reduction in LTRA funding levels based on a reduction in the "top line" number for Interior) as an outcome of the "agreement" between the House and White House on "debt reduction" and because of a

“fierce debate” over social issues that has crept into the House Appropriations Committee this budget cycle.

- As of this writing, Senate and House appropriators have released their Interior Department spending numbers, but the process of negotiating and finalizing appropriated amounts are far from over and we anticipate a Continuing Resolution (CR) will be needed before or by the September 30, 2023 end of the current federal fiscal year.
- We continue to highlight our concern over the “top line” amount of federal funding available to improve water infrastructure for fire suppression at Lake Tahoe. The following statement has been excerpted from the draft House Report for the Department of Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill:

“Lake Tahoe Basin State Fire Capacity Grants - The Committee recognizes the Forest Service’s efforts to create fire-resilient communities utilizing active fuel reduction treatments and collaboration with municipal water and fire agencies to improve critical infrastructure and expand wildfire response capabilities in the Lake Tahoe Basin and urges the Forest Service to support the implementation of Public Law 106-506, as amended. To support these implementation efforts, the Committee provides up to \$10,000,000 for projects to improve critical infrastructure and expand wildfire response capabilities in the Lake Tahoe Basin.”

- Continue to participate in meetings related to potential federal legislation intended to “modernize” the existing 1980 federal Burton-Santini Lake Tahoe land acquisition bill to update its provisions to address contemporary USFS land management needs.

Other

- Secure invitation for Meeks Bay/North Tahoe Fire representative(s) to participate in the Pre-Summit August 8th educational field tour for Congressional staff members.
- Continue to track California Senate Bill (SB) 470 (Senator Marie Alvarado-Gil, (D-District 4), as now substantially amended and now titled: *Urban Water Community Drought Relief program: Small Community Drought Relief program: high fire hazard and very high fire severity zones*. As amended, this bill passed the State Senate May 25th. Following a July hearing by the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee on a vote of 14-0-1, the bill was “read a second time and amended, and re-referred to the Committee on Appropriations.”