



## **DECISION PAPER**

**DATE October 14, 2020**

### **TITLE:**

Euer Valley Restoration Phase 1 (Coyote Crossing) Reserve Replacement Funds Project & Grant Award

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

#### **By Motion:**

The board of directors authorizes the expenditure of budgeted 2020 Replacement Reserve Funds- Euer Valley Restoration Phase 1 (Coyote Crossing) Soft Costs in the amount of \$150,000.

The board of directors by memorandum of understanding acknowledges the Truckee River Watershed Council as partner, and co-lead for the purposes of applying for, accepting and facilitating the \$589,835.80 State Water Resources Control Board for the 2020 Clean Water Act grant awarded to Truckee River Watershed Council and Tahoe Donner for the Euer Valley Restoration Phase 1 project.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Coyote Crossing and the West Euer Valley trail are located in the Prosser Creek basin, the third largest sub-watershed in the Middle Truckee watershed. Prosser Creek drains into the main stem of the Truckee River, listed as an impaired waterbody on the 303(d) list due to suspended sediment.

There has been some 150 years of significant anthropogenic disturbance to the canyon, which has affected hydrologic and geomorphic function of the watershed. The project area was historically used for grazing and timber harvest with associated road development. These historic uses resulted in degradation of creek banks, resulting in incision and constriction of surface water flows to the single thread channel along with increased sediment erosion and transport.

In the last 50 years, recreation has become the dominant land use in the area including the installation of a trail and culvert crossing across the meadow. Unfortunately, the site has not reached an equilibrium state and those modern land uses have exacerbated the continuing degradation and erosion of the site.

As part of the Trails Master Plan (2013), the Coyote Crossing (west most crossing over Prosser Creek) and West Euer Valley trail were identified as high priority to address the legacy issues among many others including but not limited to the Nature Loop and Alder Creek trail. The Coyote Crossing and West Euer Valley trail were not included in the initial five-year implementation plan projects; however, was set for the next five-year period for planning, design and construction. Management began the initial planning of the project in late 2018 as they looked to closeout and complete projects in the first five-year implementation plan.

As part of the initial planning phase management partnered with the Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC) to evaluate and analyze this project and the Nature Loop to prepare cohesive projects that not only address recreational issues, but also natural resource degradation. Through these efforts, TRWC assisted TDA in applying for several grants for the Nature Loop, although the attempts to secure grant funds were unsuccessful.





TDA and TRWC both agreed that the Coyote Crossing/West Euer Valley trail, now referred to as the Euer Valley Restoration Phase 1 project, would be a successful candidate to obtain grant funding to offset costs of the project.

Late last fall/early winter TDA and TWRC jointly applied for planning and construction match grant funding available through the State Water Resources Board. This May, we were informed of the grant award for a total of \$589,835.80 not including TDA match. Components for the Coyote Crossing and West Euer Valley Road are included in the TDA Replacement Reserve Study in 2020 and 2022; \$150,000 in 2020 for Soft Costs, and \$400,000 in 2022 for Construction Costs.

### **ANALYSIS:**

The project is a step forward in multiple overlapping planning efforts. The project was first identified as a high priority effort during the development of the Trails Master Plan). This included the “Coyote Crossing” and West Euer Valley trail. For the purposes of resource management, the project scope was widened to address the legacy impacts to the meadow and stream. TDA views this project as an opportunity to reduce impacts to an important ecosystem and the Truckee River, while continuing to provide quality access for community recreational opportunities.

This project builds on the lessons and results of more than 20 meadow and stream restoration projects implemented by TRWC and trail projects completed by TDA. The project is expected to employ similar techniques, including instream structures, culvert removal, bioengineered bank stabilization, and grade control structures as have been used in all of the other projects.

Restoration opportunities identified in conjunction with project partners include:

- Geomorphic function and channel stability
- Floodplain restoration and increased connectivity
- Water quality improvement
- Habitat improvement
- Recreational access improvements

Complete restoration of pre-disturbance geomorphic function may not be possible within the Euer Valley; however, TRWC and TDA recognize that specific actions implemented will significantly reduce erosion potential, improve channel stability and floodplain interaction and enhance habitat availability and ecosystem functionality. This project is expected to span over a three-year period with planning/design/permitting over 2020-2021, and construction in 2022.

With confirmation of receipt of the grant, TDA and TRWC prepared a request for proposal (RFP) for planning, design and permitting. The RFP was released in June and was of high interest to qualified firms. Following proposals reviews and firm interviews, Sierra Ecosystems Associates (SAE) was chosen as the contracting firm.

The area of interest for the scope of work to be performed will encompass roughly 30 acres and will include approximately ½ mile of stream channel and 1,200 feet of existing/eroding recreational trails. Design for the





existing trail system will include a minimum of two alternate trail alignment locations and recommendations for a preferred alternative as well as construction of approximate 500 linear-foot boardwalk and a weight-bearing bridge to accommodate our winter grooming equipment that will span an approximate length of 75 feet over the south fork of Prosser Creek.

Work that is expected to be conducted in 2020 will include the following components:

- biological and archaeological surveys (although some work has already been conducted)
- 30 and 60% design development (documents at each milestone will be reviewed and approved by TRWC and TDA)
- CEQA preparation and documentation (Nevada County is expected to serve as CEQA lead)

#### **OUTREACH:**

Board of Directors Meeting Trail Updates  
Tahoe Donner News August 2020 - Article announcing grant award

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is \$150,000 of Replacement Reserve Funds budgeted in the approved 2020 Replacement Reserve Fund Budget. Trail components are listed in the Replacement Reserve Study with a future replacement value of \$400,000 in 2022 to address construction costs for the crossing over Prosser Creek and trail replacement.

#### **ALTERNATIVE:**

Tahoe Donner Association will be required by our permitting agencies to restore and enhance or close the summer recreational use at the Coyote Crossing area in the near future. This grant opportunity gives the association a 2:1 payback on our investment with potentially more grant funding for this project pending. In addition, the partnership with the Truckee River Watershed Council opens up further grant opportunities for this project moving forward. The Board of Directors could consider not moving forward with this grant partnership and project at this time but it would most likely require higher project costs to the association in the future.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Project Schedule-Draft

Prepared By: Annie Rosenfeld, Director of Risk Management and Real Property

Board Meeting Date: October 23, 2020

General Manager Approval to Place on the Agenda: \_\_\_\_\_

