



STAFF REPORT

DATE: April 19, 2024

TITLE: Euer Valley Restoration Phase 2 and Memorandum of Understanding

RECOMMENDATION:

By Motion:

The Board of Directors directs the staff to work with the Truckee River Watershed Council to develop an overarching memorandum of understanding for a working partnership for the long-term analysis, protection, and restoration of Euer Valley with the following parameters:

1. Approve Tahoe Donner and Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC) staff collaboration in development of an overarching memorandum of understanding.
2. Authorize TRWC to seek and accept grant funding applicable to mutually agreed upon projects.
3. Authorize TRWC, approved subconsultants and grantor representatives long term, 10–20-year access to Euer Valley for project planning, design, implementation and follow up environmental monitoring.¹

BACKGROUND:

Tahoe Donner Association (“TDA”) is the owner of 682 acres, commonly known as middle to lower Euer Valley, in Nevada County, California. TDA acquired this property to conserve the property as open space for recreational and natural resource management. This property has one in-holding homestead by the Euer family, and several dedicated access easements by adjacent landowners including the Donner Tahoe, LLC., and Truckee Donner Land Trust.

TDA, Truckee River Watershed Council (“TRWC”), and many other entities consider this landscape a priority for conservation and restoration. The habitat and water quality benefits of restoring the meadow and streambed on this property are significant.

TDA and TRWC have been working together under memorandum of understanding (“MOU”) to study the Euer Valley area through multiple projects including,

- The Prosser Basin Watershed Assessment, (Complete)
- Euer Valley Phase 1, (Ongoing)
- Euer Valley Phase 2, (Preliminary grant and initial design-Initiated)

This staff report is prepared to seek board consideration and direction on enhancing the partnership with Truckee River Watershed Council through an overarching MOU for the long-term analysis, protection, and restoration of Euer Valley.

¹ Note: standard practice for receiving state, federal and NGO grant dollars.





ANALYSIS:

TDA and TRWC have had a long-standing relationship based on a shared vision of stewardship for local watersheds including Euer Valley. The two entities have collaborated for many years on volunteer projects and began developing a more formal relationship during the Nature Loop Bridge and Trail Enhancement Project. During this project TDA and TRWC collaborated on conceptual ideas, planning, design and seeking potential grants related to implementation. Since the Nature Loop Bridge and Trail Enhancement Project, TDA and TRWC staff have partnered on multiple additional projects including,

- Prosser Creek Watershed Assessment completed in 2022. This report details the physical and biological attributes of the Prosser Creek watershed and basin, its history, challenges and opportunities for restoration and enhancement.
- Euer Valley Phase 1, (aka Coyote Crossing) status ongoing. Deemed a priority area in the Prosser Creek Watershed Assessment. TDA and TRWC staff again worked collaboratively through analysis, planning and design. TRWC took the lead on facilitation and seeking grant funding. To date, TRWC has successfully acquired approximately \$1.7M (and more grant seeking in progress) in multiple source grant funding towards this project. TDA commitment includes planned funding for the Coyote Crossing bridge replacement, Euer Valley trail improvement, and South Euer Valley Road improvement along with staff collaboration TRWC access to Euer Valley for a period of 20 years for project implementation and monitoring.
- Euer Valley Phase 2, status initiated. Building on the Prosser Watershed Assessment, TRWC received a grant from the California Wildlife Conservation Board for approximately \$200,000 to analyze, plan and design four priority recreation and restoration subprojects within Euer Valley identified as Phase 2. TRWC and subconsultants will lead project analysis and design. Implementation and funding timeframe are yet to be determined. Prioritized projects will be brought before the TD board for approval. Further TDA commitment would include staff collaboration and granting TRWC access to Euer Valley for a period of 20 years for project implementation and monitoring.
- Prosser Road Maintenance Agreement. Building on the Prosser Watershed Assessment, TRWC received a grant from California State Water Resources Control Board to conduct 16 miles of road maintenance through Tahoe Donner, Truckee Donner Land Trust, and US Forest Service lands over a two-year period. TRWC and subconsultants will lead project implementation. TDA would commit staff collaboration and granting TRWC access to Euer Valley for a period of 10 years for project implementation and monitoring.

TDA and TRWC staff foresee additional project opportunities developing out of the initial Prosser Creek Watershed Assessment. The two entities share a common vision for the protection, restoration, and enhancement of the physical, biological, and recreational attributes of Euer Valley and associated landscape. The vision is in alignment with Tahoe Donner's Governing Documents and 2021-2026 Strategic Plan.

Beyond a shared vision, there are administrative complexities to each of the existing and potential future projects such as, accept with TDA collaboration along the process, authorizing TRWC to seek out, commit and potential grant funding on behalf of TDA. Authorizing TRWC, approved subconsultants





and grantor representatives long term access to fulfill the requirements of grant funding. TRWC has similar partnerships with the United States Forest Services, Army Corp of Engineers, Teichert, etc.

TDA and TRWC have had great success working on a project-by-project basis in the past, however each individual MOU and agreement are becoming administratively burdensome and redundant. TDA staff recommends and requests board approval to collaborate with TRWC in developing an overarching MOU that will better define the shared long-term vision and document the administrative details of the working relationship.

For these reasons, TDA staff recommends the Board of Directors directs the staff to work with the Truckee River Watershed Council to develop an overarching memorandum of understanding for a working partnership for the long-term analysis, protection, and restoration of Euer Valley with the following parameters:

1. Approve Tahoe Donner and Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC) staff collaboration in development of an overarching MOU.
2. Authorize TRWC to seek and accept grant funding applicable to mutually agreed upon projects.
3. Authorize TRWC, approved subconsultants and grantor representatives' long term, 10–20-year access to Euer Valley for project planning, design, implementation and follow up environmental monitoring.

OUTREACH:

Not applicable

FISCAL IMPACT:

To date, TRWC has received the following grants that directly benefit TDA and to be applied towards restoration and recreation enhancement:

- Euer Valley Phase 1: approximately \$1.7M towards the construction of Coyote Crossing bridge, Euer Valley trail improvement, South Euer Valley Road improvements, and Prosser Creek restoration.
- Prosser Road Maintenance: TDA will receive 2.5 miles of road maintenance implementation valued between \$50-\$70,000.
- Euer Valley Phase: TD will receive approximately \$200,000 worth of planning and design work from TRWC and Balance Hydraulics consultants.

ALTERNATIVE:

The Board of Directors may consider to not direct staff to pursue an overarching MOU. Staff does not recommend this approach as there are more benefits to the MOU than disadvantages.





RESOURCE:

Prosser Creek Watershed Assessment www.truckeeriverwc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/220029-Prosser-Watershed-Assessment-FINAL-REPORT-6-3-22-optimized-reduced.pdf

Prepared by: *John Groom*, Director of Land Management

Reviewed by: *Annie Rosenfeld*, General Manager

Board Meeting Date: April 26, 2024

