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Strategic Plan 2021-2023

A three-year planning document to achieve the mission of Tahoe RCD



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Acronym List

AIS	Aquatic Invasive Species
AISCC	Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinating Committee
CRAM	California Rapid Assessment Method
CTC	California Tahoe Conservancy
EIP	Environmental Improvement Program
FAC	Fire Adapted Communities
JM	Johnson Meadow
JPA	Joint Powers Agreement
Lahontan	Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
LTRA	Lake Tahoe Restoration Act
NAWWG	Nearshore Aquatic Weed Working Group
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NTCD	Nevada Tahoe Conservation District
PESTLE	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental
Resto	Restoration Program
RSWMP	Regional Stormwater Monitoring Program
SEZ	Stream Environment Zone
SNPLMA	Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act
SOAR	Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
SWP	Stormwater Program
Tahoe RCD	Tahoe Resource Conservation District
TCP	Tahoe Conservation Partnership
TFFT	Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team
TIESC	Tahoe Interagency Executives Steering Committee
TNFAC	Tahoe Network of Fire Adapted Communities
TRPA	Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
USFS	United States Forest Service
UTRWAG	Upper Truckee River Watershed Advisory Group
WIP	Watercraft Inspection Program

Executive Summary

For the past 45 years Tahoe Resource Conservation District (Tahoe RCD) has made significant contributions to conserving the natural resources in the Lake Tahoe Basin and is considered a valuable public partner providing conservation services to the region and to the community. Over the next three to five years, funding dynamics will present unique challenges and opportunities for Tahoe RCD. However, with support from strong and collaborative partnerships, highly capable staff, and a creative strategy, Tahoe RCD is poised to explore and develop new, non-traditional opportunities that will offset declines in traditional areas. One of Tahoe RCD's greatest assets is the ability to be nimble and adapt as available funding priorities shift. Therefore, Tahoe RCD will continue to look to new resource areas and creative solutions for future growth.

Tahoe RCD is not well-known to many residents and visitors, and sometimes confused with other land management or environmental agencies in the basin. To offset this, Tahoe RCD will be more proactive in engaging its stakeholder audience in its mission, vision and project work and seek opportunities to diversify the audience. Careful attention to specific branding opportunities will promote Tahoe RCD as an established and well-performing organization in the Lake Tahoe region.

Tahoe RCD will strategically strengthen and prioritize existing partnerships and pursue new areas of partnership that fit with the organization's strategic direction. Numerous non-traditional opportunities exist for Tahoe RCD that have not previously been explored. This is primarily due to a comfortable influx of state and federal funding for the past 5-7 years. Recognizing the end of these once stable funding sources, Tahoe RCD has begun to pursue new program areas, refine existing program areas and develop partnerships that go beyond traditional basin agencies.

Internally, Tahoe RCD has undergone significant restructuring. This was driven partially by a decrease in projected funding revenue, but more importantly through recognition that Tahoe RCD could be implementing its projects and programs more efficiently and effectively. With a greater emphasis on innovation and technology, Tahoe RCD has become a more resourceful, proficient, and highly effective organization.

About Us: Mission and Vision

Tahoe Resource Conservation District (Tahoe RCD) was established in 1975 as a special district of the State of California. Tahoe RCD is a non-regulatory, grant-funded, local agency that works in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Tahoe RCD is governed by a five member locally appointed Board of Directors, who live in the district and understand the local resource needs and concerns.

VISION

Use science and collaboration to ensure the balance between people, natural resources, and their community.

MISSION

To promote the conservation, stewardship, and knowledge of the Lake Tahoe Region's natural resources by providing leadership and innovative environmental services to all stakeholders.

Tahoe RCD plays a critical role in addressing the most important natural resource concerns and opportunities in the basin, including preventing and eradicating aquatic invasive species from Lake Tahoe, helping communities mitigate the risk of wildfire, addressing stormwater management and monitoring needs, and restoring public lands. Tahoe RCD covers over 35,000 acres in El Dorado and Placer Counties, and includes all private, state, and federal land within the California side of the Tahoe Basin. Through collaboration and partnerships, Tahoe RCD is granted authority to work in adjacent Resource Conservation Districts jurisdictions in Nevada and neighboring California counties.

Tahoe RCD serves residents, visitors, landowners, and other stakeholders in and around the Tahoe Basin. As a special district, Tahoe RCD partners with policy makers, funders, implementors, and community members. The core emphasis of Tahoe RCD is to develop and implement projects and programs that serve our communities and maintain and improve Lake Tahoe and its surrounding environment. Tahoe RCD has a reputation through the community for providing accountable, high quality, and cost-effective technical services.

Tahoe RCD responds to community needs by proactively developing programs and solutions. Tahoe RCD cultivates an approach to resource conservation that is grounded

in innovation, creativity, responsiveness, and flexibility. Tahoe RCD is committed to providing excellent service to its partners while continuously seeking new challenges and being one of the best places in the Tahoe Basin to work and serve. To accompany and support this strategic plan, Tahoe RCD will be developing a Business Plan to identify programmatic and district-wide funding cliffs by developing a three-year budget and budget narrative, detailing upcoming funding opportunities and specific strategies to prevent actualizing predicted budget shortfalls. The Business Plan will provide the Board, partners, public and future funders a comprehensive overview of Tahoe RCD programs and operations, and particularly funding strategies and business methodologies, that will instill confidence in all stakeholders of Tahoe RCDs longevity and ability to manage projects and funds. Lastly, the Business plan will provide staff easy access to documents necessary to vet funding opportunities and complete funding applications.

Financial Highlights

Figure 1 below illustrates secured and pending grant funds for 2021 through 2024. The date for secured funding is when the funds must be used by, however pending is when we expect contracts to be signed. As would be expected, pending funding sources show an increasing trend, which indicates that some degree of financial security is on the horizon. Some of these sources are fairly secure and considered pending at this point because contracts are not finalized or signed. The large pending source in 2023 is the funding for the continuation of the Fire Adapted Communities program, at about \$3 million.

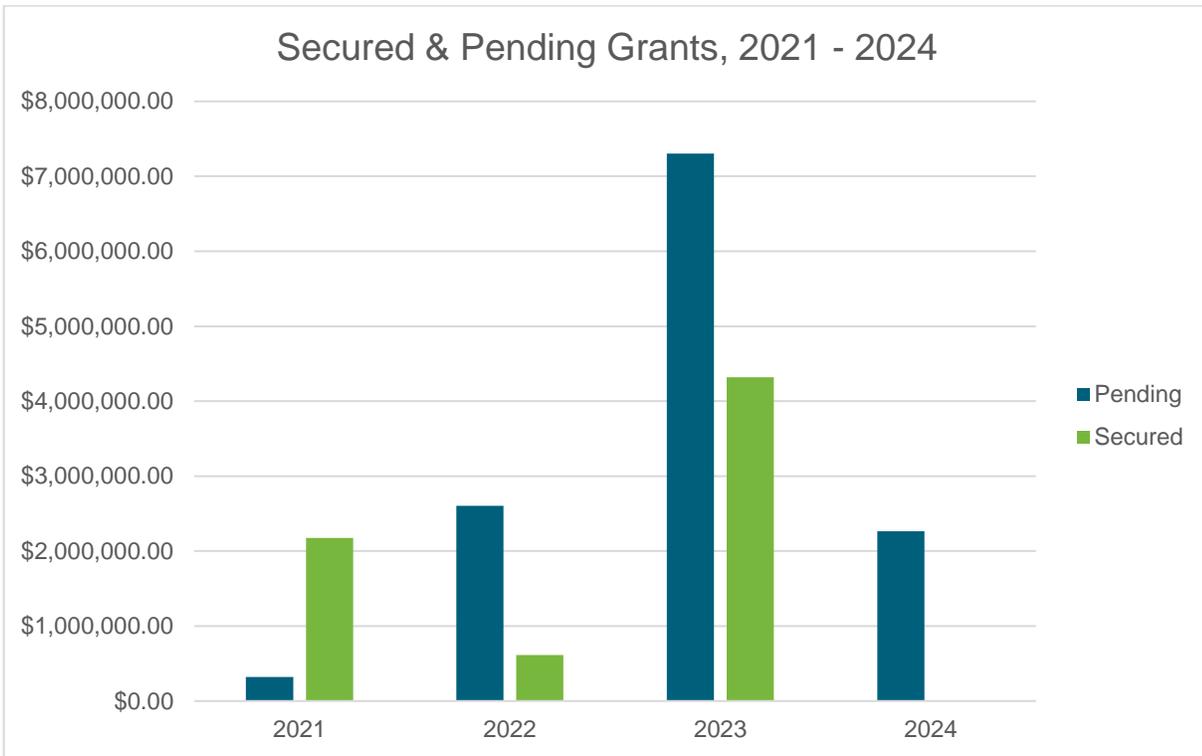


Figure 1: Secured and pending grant funding for Tahoe RCD from 2021 – 2024.
 *Note – spike in 2023 pending funding is for the continuation of the Fire Adapted Communities program, estimated at \$3million to be spent between 2023 and 2028.

Figure 2 below represents revenue by program area for Fiscal Year 2021 – 2024, including both secured and pending funding. The Fire Adapted Communities and AIS Prevention make up 56% of the total revenue.

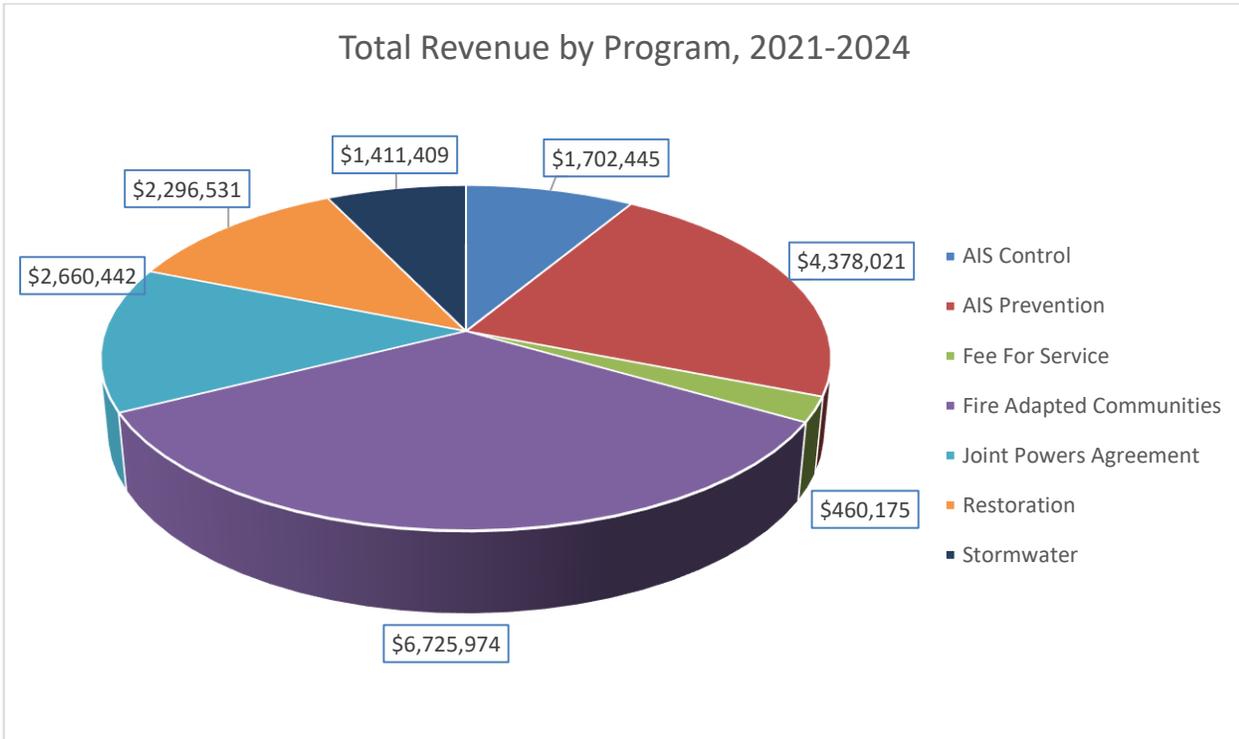


Figure 2: Total revenue by program area for 2021 – 2024.

Values and Guiding Principles

Honesty and Integrity

Tahoe RCD staff and board will act with honesty, trust, and integrity while implementing this strategic plan. Tahoe RCD will make all attempts to provide our staff and stakeholders with information that is accurate, complete, objective, relevant, timely, comprehensible, and transparent. Tahoe RCD complies with rules and regulations of federal, state, county and local grants and contracts.

Collaboration

Tahoe RCD depends on the collaboration of individuals, community organizations, and government agencies to be successful in our conservation work. Tahoe RCD works with others to leverage our collective strengths in pursuit of shared goals. Tahoe RCD is committed to being a trusted partner in protecting natural resources within the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Tahoe RCD is committed to cultivating and preserving a culture of inclusion, diversity, equity, and connectedness. Tahoe RCD grows and learns better together with a

diverse team. Tahoe RCD believes in the fair, just and equitable treatment of all members of our community. Achieving equity requires commitment to strategic priorities, respect, and civility, as well as ongoing action and assessment of progress toward achieving specific goals. The collective sum of the individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, innovation, self-expression, and talent that Tahoe RCD employees invest in their work represents not only an integral part of Tahoe RCD culture, but also contribute greatly to Tahoe RCDs reputation and achievements. Tahoe RCD welcomes the unique contributions that individuals bring in terms of their education, opinions, culture, ethnicity, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, nation of origin, age, languages spoken, veterans' status, color, religion, disability, and beliefs.

At Tahoe RCD, all staff and board members contribute to inclusion—everyone has a role to play. Tahoe RCD believes that successful conservation depends on the inclusion, empowerment, and engagement of all members of the community, and that Tahoe RCD should reflect the diversity of the community. Tahoe RCD strives to encourage community dialogue and develop effective programs that promote a healthy environment and thriving communities.

Supporting Decisions with Sound Science

Tahoe RCD is committed to using scientifically sound methods to inform actions. Tahoe RCD provides evidence-based information and guidance to support leaders, landowners, and community members in understanding natural resource issues and making both on-the-ground and policy decisions.

Strategic Planning Process

Tahoe RCD's current strategic direction document (2018-2021) was completed in the Fall of 2017. Tahoe RCD is approaching the end of the three-year planning document, which highlights the need for new strategies and the need to identify new opportunities and encourage reflection on accomplishments. To acknowledge the success of the recent strategic direction document, more than 75% of the actions identified to accomplish our goals were completed, initiated or are ongoing. Goals for 2018 to 2021 were:

1. All Tahoe RCD conservation programs are sustainable and effective
2. Johnson Meadow is a model of natural sustainability and community use
3. Tahoe RCD advances innovative technical solutions to address the Basin's most pressing conservation issues

4. Tahoe RCD is recognized as a key player in conservation for the Basin
5. Tahoe RCD has stable financial resources with which to conduct its work
6. Tahoe RCD is one of Tahoe's most sought-after places to work and serve

These goals are still relevant today and will continue to serve as a backbone for this new strategic plan. Tahoe RCD conducted a multi-phased process with input from staff, board, and stakeholders to develop new strategies and actions that continue to meet the above goals. Tahoe RCD utilized the Situation Analysis and Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (SOAR) analysis techniques.

Situation Analysis is the process of critically evaluating the internal and external conditions that affect an organization. It provides a method for identifying current opportunities and challenges of an organization and its services or products. This in turn helps devise a strategy to move forward from the current situation to the desired situation. Situation Analysis helps give a comprehensive view of the current situation of the organization, helps detect the gaps between the current state and desired state and provides information necessary to create a plan to reach organization goals. The PESTLE - Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental -factors, analysis is an environmental scanning technique that helps provide insight into the external influences on an organization from many different angles.

The SOAR analysis is a strategic planning technique that helps organizations focus on their current strengths and opportunities and create a vision of future aspirations and the results they will bring. In contrast to the traditional SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis, the SOAR analysis uses appreciative inquiry to focus the organization on what is known to work, rather than on internal weaknesses or perceived threats that might not emerge. Building on strengths requires less effort and resources than trying to correct weaknesses. The output from a SOAR analysis is a set of actions that leverage strengths and opportunities to strive for shared aspirations with measurable results. It provides a basis for further in-depth analysis using other business tools such as developing work plans, business plans, performance evaluations and more. SOAR analysis is a powerful tool to bring stakeholders together to recognize the potential of an organization and create a shared vision of the future. The technique is more action oriented than a SWOT analysis and is focused on outcomes. Tahoe RCD used the SOAR analysis to:

- Explore new initiatives
- Develop a strategic plan

- Focus and redirect efforts and resources
- Plan program and individual staff work plans

The objective of the SOAR analysis and the process set forth was to provide Tahoe RCD and its programs with strategic, obtainable actions for the next 3 years.

Situation Analysis Results

The Lake Tahoe region is experiencing pressures from the economic, social, and environmental sectors of the community. From the economic and social perspectives, full-time residents and Tahoe RCDs primary workforce are leaving the area for job opportunities and affordable housing opportunities elsewhere. Conversely, we are seeing an influx of new residents with the opportunities to telecommute with COVID, potentially bringing in new talent to the area and increasing the hiring pool. Second homeowners and visitors are the primary drivers of the local economy; however, the reasons why visitors come to Lake Tahoe has changed over time. Most significantly, over the last decade, fewer visitors have come to gamble, and more have come for the unique recreational, cultural, and environmental experiences that can be found at Lake Tahoe. From an environmental perspective, the Lake is experiencing multiple pressures including urban runoff, invasive species, climate change, and outdated infrastructure. One of the greatest challenges ahead for the Tahoe RCD will be to identify a sustainable and effective strategy that meets the needs of the Lake Tahoe community while adapting to significant near-term reductions in federal and state funding. Maintaining strong partnerships through these coming lean years will be critical for many agencies in the Tahoe Basin. Figure 3 below shows the qualitative estimated level of impact each factor has on Tahoe RCD based on staff interpretation of the factors.

- **Political factors** – Impact of government policies, trading policies or elections.
 - **2020 Election** – Leadership changes on the national and regional level could affect federal funding priorities and funding amounts allocated for Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (LTRA) projects. Currently Tahoe RCD is the lead implementer on the LTRA priority project list for Johnson Meadow Phase 2 planning/design (\$1.6 million) and several aquatic invasive species control projects.
- **Economic factors** – Impact of economic trends, taxes, or import/export ratios.
 - **COVID Pandemic** – The COVID-19 pandemic will have a large impact on Tahoe RCD. Funding priorities for the states and the federal government have shifted to COVID-19 response and economic recovery. In the

California Governor's 2020-2021 budget, the funding priorities are COVID response/recovery, wildfire, and homelessness.

- **Property Taxes** – Tahoe RCD could see a delay or reduction in property taxes (unrestricted funding) due to the county's relaxation of penalties for late payments from all residents potentially facing hardships from COVID-19.
 - **Loss of Revenue** – With the separation from the County as the treasury, Tahoe RCD no longer receives interest on the cash balance in the bank, resulting in approximately \$10,000 revenue loss. The Board needs to look at other methods to increase interest revenue through a Section 115 trust, investments accounts or Certificate of Deposit (CD) account.
 - **Lack of Outreach Funding** – Tahoe RCD receives funding for programmatic outreach and stewardship activities, but restrictive funding makes it difficult to brand Tahoe RCD as a whole to showcase all programs and projects. Identifying funding and opportunities to leverage partner resources for cross program information sharing and the ability to educate on all Tahoe RCD work would assist with recruitment, partner and funding opportunities, community engagement, and overall recognition.
- **Social factors** – Impact of demographics, lifestyles, or ethnic issues.
 - **Remote Working Lifestyle** – Staff working remotely has had both positive and negative impacts on Tahoe RCD work. Staff are productive at home; however, it has reduced casual personal communication and collaboration. Staff have become accustomed to this new normal and appreciate the flexible scheduling. The District needs to consider what flexibility looks like in the future, once COVID-19 diminishes (past Stage 3 or 4 of reopening), to maintain high staff morale.
 - **Social justice and human rights movements** – 2020 has been filled with social justice and human rights movements, specifically Black Lives Matter. Our nation and community are focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Tahoe RCD has a responsibility to our stakeholders and staff to be clear on Tahoe RCD intentions and beliefs. The mission of Tahoe RCD states that services are provided to "All Stakeholders." Tahoe RCD has a duty to uphold that mission through policy, practice, and implementation.
 - **Technological factors** – Impact of advancing technology or technology legislation.
 - **Plant Control Innovation** – Innovation is increasing for aquatic invasive plant control techniques which will likely increase project opportunities. Tahoe RCD staff need to stay engaged and be leaders in implementing innovative methods (ex. when ultraviolet light was tested and

scientifically reviewed for efficacy as a control technique in Lake Tahoe by Tahoe RCD).

- **Legal factors** – Impact of employment laws or health and safety regulations.
 - **Minimum wage increases** – Minimum wage increases in California will grow to \$15.00/hour by 2022 (for businesses with >26 employees). This greatly impacts seasonal staff pay ranges (environmental technician classifications) and Tahoe RCDs need to stay competitive in the job market. Paying above minimum wage benefits Tahoe RCD through successful recruitment and retention and compensates staff fairly for their experience and acquired skills.
 - **COVID-19** – Depending on the length of COVID closures and restrictions, programs and project operations, specifically Tahoe Conservation Partnership (TCP) and Watercraft Inspection Program (WIP), may be directly impacted. The TCP will see smaller revenues for administrative costs with fewer crews operating. WIP will potentially see smaller revenues from 2020 inspection and decontamination sales and have been notified of reductions in state funding, which will impact the 2021 budget.
 - **Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Environmental Documents** – With the completion of the plant and fish control environmental documents Tahoe RCD can compete for funding and develop lake wide, long-term control programs as outlined in the 2021-2030 AIS Action Agenda.

- **Environmental factors** – Impact of climate change or environmental regulations.
 - **Climate Change and State Priorities**– The State’s focus on climate change is a great advantage to Tahoe RCD for potential funding opportunities. Other State priorities to be considered for new programs and projects are defined as:
 - a) Protects communities from wildfire,
 - b) Promotes resilience of watersheds, forests, or communities (Resilience projects help systems withstand and recover from climate change impacts like drought, flood, fire, extreme weather, etc.),
 - c) Promotes adaptation for Basin watersheds, forests, or communities. (Adaptation projects prepare for current or projected climate change impacts. Examples include fire breaks/thinning, drought-tolerant vegetation, flood resistance water systems, etc.),
 - d) Provides public access for all communities, and
 - e) Promotes sustainable communities by encouraging non-motorized transportation, transit, and/or infill development in Town Centers.
 - **Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) priorities** – Tahoe RCD shall continue to align programs and projects with EIP categories to

maximize funding and partner support. EIP categories are Watersheds & Water Quality, Forest Health, Transportation, Sustainable Recreation, Applied Science, and Stewardship & Accountability.

Tahoe RCD Situation Analysis



Figure 3: Estimated level of impact that each PESTLE factor has on Tahoe RCD

SOAR Analysis Results

The following is a summary of the SOAR analysis conducted by staff. The full list of results is attached as Appendix A.

STRENGTHS

- Culture & Essence
- Professional Services & Technical Expertise
- Quality Products & Services
- Strong Communication
- Strong Partner Relationships

OPPORTUNITIES

- Reach New Demographics
- Seek New Funding & Revenue Strategies
- Build & Foster Relationships
- Bolster Internal Collaboration & Staffing
- Develop & Expand Programs, Projects & Services

ASPIRATIONS

- Incorporate Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
- Increase Capacity
- Make Program Improvements
- Diverse & Sustainable Funding
- Share Knowledge & Expertise
- Expand Technology

RESULTS

- Planning Documents
- Outreach Resources
- Funding Metrics
- Partner/Customer Satisfaction
- Post-Project Data
- Employee Satisfaction

Strategic Direction

Organizational Direction

Tahoe RCD is a technical services organization addressing the impacts of urban runoff, invasive species, climate change, wildfire awareness, restoration, and other critical environmental concerns of the basin. The future goal of the organization is to diversify funding, build long term funding partnerships, and position Tahoe RCD as a solution-oriented services provider. Within this concept, several fundamental organizational elements, as described below, will guide Tahoe RCD in a direction to achieve its stated goals.

Becoming a resource hub is not only desired by Tahoe RCD, but also is the overall vision defined by Resource Conservation Districts (RCD) statewide. Through the hub model, opportunities to build platforms such as scientific expertise and integrating advanced technology begin to materialize. To flex within this model, Tahoe RCD wishes to continue to operate with a flat organization chart with an adaptive and swift governance and execution. This will enable Tahoe RCD to either share expertise from other RCDs, retain contractors with specific expertise, or develop the capacity to build the expertise in house.

Programmatic Direction

As the organization develops program areas it will do so with an emphasis on partnership, innovation, and use of state-of-the-art technology. Tahoe RCD looks to expand the capacity of current program areas such as Invasive Species, Restoration, and the fee for service areas such as land management, wildlife monitoring, and environmental planning. Careful consideration will be given to program development to maintain alignment with Tahoe RCD's mission and operate within well-defined capacity limits. Growth should only occur where services are not compromised, as more is not always better. Ideally programs and services would be sustainable, and Tahoe RCD would be able to maintain services at a high-quality level in perpetuity. However, Tahoe RCD is a primarily grant funded organization and this makes sustainability a vulnerability and a goal to continuously strive for. Part of Tahoe RCDs sustainability is the ability to be flexible and follow funding and environmental priorities.

Financial Direction

The financial direction of Tahoe RCD is built upon a strong foundation of accountability, transparency, and accuracy. Tahoe RCD achieved financial independence from El Dorado County in 2020. This increased the fiscal

responsibilities, but it also provides opportunities for flexible financial management, including investments, disbursement, and benefits. Internal financial direction also includes the development of an Indirect Cost Rate and fully burdened rate to help recover basic costs of running a high-quality organization. Basic operational costs are increasing (rent, phone, internet, administrative salaries) and the limited administrative/overhead percentages allowed on most grant funds are not enough to cover these baseline costs.

Diversifying revenue is central to a secure and prosperous future. This includes diversification within programs and between program areas. Tahoe RCD's involvement in legislative appropriations and propositions lays the fundamental structure for large, multi-year grant awards. For example, the Integrated Regional Watershed Management (IRWM) program is funded at the statewide level through voter-approved bills such as the water bond, and parks bond and the funding is administered through state agencies like the California Tahoe Conservancy (CTC). Continued involvement could result in Tahoe RCD programs seeing large, multi-year funding. Additionally, Tahoe RCDs continued involvement and support of the California Association of RCDs (CARCD) work with lobbyists could result in additional baseline funding through state budget line items or by securing additional revenue such as property taxes. Tahoe RCD should look to future funding sources and state priorities like climate change and wildfire.

Collectively, RCDs should not only be recognized as, but utilized for, the services they can provide. This can lead directly into developing a fee-for-service structure. Tahoe RCD differs from many RCDs throughout the state primarily due to the resource needs unique to the Sierra Nevada. While other RCDs work directly with the agricultural communities, either in the coastal region or the valley, Tahoe RCD works primarily to protect one of the nation's most outstanding national resources, Lake Tahoe. Given this reality, identifying the appropriate audience for a fee for service program is critical. Some examples could include providing local maintenance crews for stormwater jurisdictions' infrastructure, providing home hardening technical assistance to homeowners or conducting wildlife monitoring services to local landowners.

Partnership Direction

Strong partnerships are vital to the future success of Tahoe RCD. And while individually strengthening each partnership is important, expanding the range of partnerships is equally as important. For this reason, suggested partner categories to consider are federal, state, local; bi-state partnerships; non-traditional; businesses; private; and out

of Basin. To utilize partnerships to their fullest potential, Tahoe RCD will strategically prioritize and develop each partner relationship. The strategic development of partnerships can begin with a simple matrix that defines each partner and funding opportunity. This will allow Tahoe RCD to leverage these relationships and associated funding streams throughout all operations and program areas. Another significant partnership is the citizen relationship. Building connections to the local community and visitor base will open opportunities for recognition, outreach and 'boots on the ground' conservation projects as well as open opportunities for greater diversity and inclusion.

Marketing/Branding Direction

Tahoe RCD has long struggled with differentiating itself as an organization from the many prominent agencies within the Basin. This is likely due to how closely tied Tahoe RCD is to the conservation work that is on-going and promoted by a number of organizations. Funding constraints have limited the capacity of Tahoe RCD to fully brand itself independently from the larger, more recognized agencies such as the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), United States Forest Service (USFS), and CTC. Whereas unity with these agencies is important and critical, the community's recognition of Tahoe RCD as an independent entity is also essential for the future success and individual recognition of Tahoe RCD and other RCDs statewide.

Tahoe RCD will continue to expand its marketing effort with focused branding. This will include positioning the organization as flexible and sustainable, solution-oriented, and scientifically savvy, with well-articulated messaging. Leveraging resources of partner agencies and organizations can increase positive public exposure and raise awareness about the services and capabilities of Tahoe RCD. Having the support of an AmeriCorps member to assist with District-wide branding will continue to be a priority.

Value Driven Direction

Tahoe RCD is committed to creating and upholding values such as integrity, trust and accountability. In pursuing future programs and sustainable development, Tahoe RCD will incorporate programs that are conservation and community focused while still achieving financial viability. Tahoe RCD will continue to participate in strategic initiatives with partners and legislative affairs to uphold the core values.

2021-2023 Goals and Action Plan

GOAL 1 – All Tahoe RCD conservation programs are sustainable and effective		
Actions	Who	When
1.1 Develop a business plan and long-range budget. Use gap analysis to identify potential new services	Director of Programs and Director of Finance	2021
1.2 Reach new demographics - Engage families with school age children, non-English speaking communities, long-term renters, visitors in outreach efforts	Fire Adapted Communities (FAC)/AIS outreach staff	Ongoing
1.3 Develop new programs/projects that fit with Tahoe RCD mission and regional priorities (ex. Best Management Practices maintenance program, home hardening technical assistance or expand regional inspections)	Executive Director & Director of Programs	Ongoing
1.4 Connect with National Firewise Program and incorporate it into the Tahoe Network framework	FAC Program Manager	2021
1.5 Expand wildlife services	Stormwater Program Manager	2022
1.6 Implement market research across demographics to understand knowledge and resource gaps and how best to fill them	FAC Program Manager	2023
1.7 Provide ongoing community education, communication, and education by continuing to fund an AmeriCorps outreach specialist position with program/grant funds and/or general funds	Executive Director	Ongoing

GOAL 2 – Johnson Meadow is a model of natural sustainability and community use		
Actions	Who	When
2.1 Build on current partnerships through the Upper Truckee River Watershed Advisory Group (UTRWAG) to expand regional planning and management efforts. Consider Upper Truckee River (UTR) joint management plan (see 2.5)	Resto Program Manager	Ongoing
2.2 Formalize partnerships to advance homeless outreach and management across jurisdictions (USFS, State Parks, CTC, law enforcement, Clean Tahoe)	Resto Program Manager & TCP staff	2023
2.3 Streamline land steward reporting between Johnson Meadow (JM) and CTC lands	Resto Program Manager & TCP staff	2021

2.4 Revisit roles and qualifications of CTC land stewards to increase capacity for JM monitoring and management of illegal use and outreach	Resto Program Manager & TCP staff	2021
2.5 Fund and develop a lasting management plan for JM that could be expanded to include other neighboring jurisdictions along the UTR	Resto Program Manager	Ongoing
2.6 Identify revenue and funding strategy for long term maintenance of JM (General Fund allocations, investment funds, partnerships, etc.)	Board & Executive Director	2023

GOAL 3 – Tahoe RCD advances innovative technical solutions to address the Basin’s most pressing conservation issues

Actions	Who	When
3.1 Expand data sharing with partners and the public with data visualizations, share existing protocols or offer consulting services, share program frameworks	Executive Director	Ongoing
3.2 Collaborate with boat industry and manufacturers to develop innovative solutions more conducive to inspections and reducing the spread of aquatic invasive species	AIS Program Manager	Ongoing
3.3 Gain experience with more diverse aquatic plant control techniques (i.e. laminar flow, ultraviolet light, containment methods)	Director of Programs	Ongoing

GOAL 4 – Tahoe RCD is recognized as a key player in conservation for the Tahoe Basin

Actions	Who	When
4.1 Continue to build relationships and work on long term agreements/partnerships. Examples include Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT), WIP, TCP, Regional Stormwater Monitoring Program (RSWMP)	Executive Director & Board	Ongoing
4.1 Foster new partnerships with TRPA and Lahontan for monitoring services	SWP Program Manager	2022
4.3 Continue to serve as facilitator for large collaboratives – AIS Coordinating Committee, AIS control working group, Tahoe Network of FAC, TFFT Public Information Team	Director of Programs	Ongoing
4.4 Be recognized as a trusted and high-quality environmental services and community needs provider. Seek opportunities to highlight Tahoe RCD value at partner board meetings, workshops and events.	Executive Director & Board	Ongoing

GOAL 5 – Tahoe RCD has stable financial resources with which to conduct its work

Actions	Who	When
5.1 Develop Tahoe RCD Business Plan	Director of Finance & Director of Programs	2021
5.2 Seek new funding opportunities (Wildfire work, COVID-19 stimulus funding, fish control) and use Business Plan to evaluate funding priorities	Executive Director	Ongoing
5.3 Expand Fee-for-Service activities (GIS, wildlife, restoration, water quality monitoring, home hardening)	Executive Director & Director of Programs	Ongoing
5.4 Provide master level trainings for Administrative staff on Excel, QuickBooks, and accounting to increase efficiencies and processing times	Director of Finance	2023
5.5 Increase staff capacity for TCP services like forestry and land management, and education & outreach staff, and incorporate opportunities for staff advancement in future funding agreements	Resto & FAC Program Managers	Ongoing
5.6 Produce timely invoices and payments to partners	Director of Finance	Ongoing
5.7 Maintain clean audits by following protocols and procedures	Director of Finance	Annually
5.8 Create a Tahoe RCD Statement of Qualifications and provide to all land managers to assist with expanding services	SWP Program Manager	2021
5.9 Identify funding for non-program related actions and needs	Board of Directors	Ongoing

GOAL 6 – Tahoe RCD is one of Tahoe’s most sought-after places to work and serve		
Actions	Who	When
6.1 Expand cross-program work and outreach within Tahoe RCD	Executive Director & Director of Programs	Ongoing
6.2 Increase experience and retention of staff through trainings, and cross program sharing	Executive Director & Director of Programs	Ongoing
6.3 Continue District-wide communication through all staff meetings, sharing board meeting agendas, bi-weekly coffee chats, etc.	Director of Programs	Ongoing
6.4 Incorporate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion into policies and practices including hiring, program implementation, and professional development	Executive Director	Ongoing

6.5 Strive for a balanced workload and clear roles and responsibilities for all staff	Executive Director	Ongoing, annually work plans
6.6 Upgrade to a payroll system that is easy to use, accurate and flows into QuickBooks with grant information	Director of Finance	2022

Acknowledgement

The ongoing success of Tahoe RCD is contingent upon continued support and contributions from partner agencies, jurisdictions, stakeholders, and community members. Tahoe RCD is reliant on the continued dedication of our staff and board. Tahoe RCD would like to thank all staff and board who participated in this process and invite all to join as the implementation of the above strategic direction begins.

Appendix A: Complete SOAR Analysis Results

Strengths:

Culture and Essence

- We are very adaptable and flexible to challenges and change, and resilient in times of stress.
- We have a desire and willingness to learn and expand skill sets and maintain a high level of expertise.
- We are passionate, dedicated, dependable, and persistent about helping and educating people.
- We work well as a team and on our own with well-defined roles and responsibilities.
- We are resourceful problem solvers, willing to go above and beyond to help and support other staff and departments by taking on tasks that are outside of our department to get the job done

Professional and Technical Expertise and Services

- Tahoe RCD supports all aspects of conservation including, but not limited to: water quality improvement, wildlife habitat restoration, fire prevention and defensible space maintenance, sustainable recreation, water conservation, and community enhancement. Current programs at the Tahoe RCD focus on stormwater management and monitoring, invasive species control and prevention, wildfire prevention and preparedness, restoration, and conservation landscaping initiatives. Tahoe RCD serves as an ideal partner to connect private and public stakeholders to collaboratively conserve our natural resources
- Knowledge and use of advanced technologies to enhance efficiencies
- Environmental planning and coordination
- Project Management
 - Management of federal, state, local and private grants
 - Meeting facilitation including online/remote working tools
 - Administration & management of contractors and consultants
 - Permitting and coordinating environmental documentation
 - Public outreach and marketing (Website and Social Media management and video technology)
- Quality data collection, management, analysis, reporting and visualization
- Monitoring and Assessment
 - Wildlife monitoring
 - Vegetation surveys and monitoring
 - Stream and stormwater runoff monitoring
 - Restoration monitoring (geomorphology/hydrology)
 - California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM) monitoring
- Land Management services
 - Addressing issues related to homelessness and illegal camping

- Fuel hazard reduction to protect communities
- Fence, signage, and trail building and maintenance
- Providing research and monitoring to investigate strategies and tools that reduce particulates flowing into Lake Tahoe
- Plan and implement complex logistical programs:
 - Lake Tahoe Watercraft Inspection Program
 - Regional Stormwater Monitoring Program
 - Tahoe Conservation Partnership
 - Fire Adapted Communities Program
- Geographic information system analysis & database development (online maps, data, and apps)
- Mechanical equipment development, improvements, maintenance, and troubleshooting

Quality Products & Services

- Quality services and products at a competitive cost and delivered on time
- Systems thinking and planning approach
- Organized, detail oriented and always improving and evaluating processes and program structure for maximum efficiencies
- Distinct services (fee-for-service) and complex programs with excellent customer service while being fiscally conservative

Strong Communication

- Excellent internal and external communication
- Professional public engagement especially through neighborhood leader program, workshops, events, and response to citizen reports
- Community and regional level engagement to share our expertise with all stakeholders
- Consistent and representative branding

Strong Partner Relationships

- Coordinated and collaborative relationships with partners, funders, and vendors/contractors throughout the Basin
- Involvement and influence in many regional coordinating groups including AISCC, NAWWG, TFFT, TNFAC, RSWMP, URTWAG, TIESC, Take Care, WRP, STEEC
- Relationships between land stewards and neighbors adjacent to CTC/RCD properties
- Reliable, stable commitment to community and partners, demonstrated through our credibility, long term relationships, performance, and staff retention

Opportunities:

Reach New Demographics

- Engage families with school-aged children, non-English speaking community, long-term renters, visitors in outreach efforts (FAC)
- Expand data sharing with partners and the public with data visualizations (AIS)
- Expand cross-program work and outreach within Tahoe RCD (All)

Seek New Funding

- Seek funding opportunities for wildfire work related to forestry, prevention, and preparedness. Current funding focuses on preparedness. (FAC)
- Use potential COVID-19 stimulus funding as an opportunity to reinvent types of services we can provide (SWP, All)
- Provide fee for service wildlife surveys to partners other than CTC (CSLT, Power Companies, Truckee Donner Land Trust, Sierra Nevada Alliance, Public Utility Districts, Lake Tahoe West, Homeowner Associations doing restorative work) (Wildlife)
- Capitalize on interest in tackling AIS in Lake Tahoe (AIS Action Agenda) through collaborative management and stakeholder contributions (AIS)

Build & Foster Partnerships

- Continue to build relationships and work on long term agreements/partnerships
 - External partners desire leadership support from the FAC team/Tahoe RCD which provides an opportunity for a new dedicated program at Tahoe RCD to work collaboratively with the Tahoe Network of Fire Adapted Communities (FAC)
 - Develop a stronger relationship with TRPA to provide more monitoring and planning services (SWP)
 - Develop a stronger relationship with Lahontan to receive California State Water Quality Control Board funding to provide more monitoring and planning services (SWP)
 - Build on current partnerships through the UTRWAG to expand regional planning and management efforts (ex. UTR joint management plan) (Resto)
 - Formalize partnerships to advance how to address homeless situation across multiple jurisdictions – Formal partnerships with USFS, State Parks, CTC, local law enforcement, Tahoe Coalition for the Homeless, Clean Tahoe (TCP)
- Provide technical advisory services to local agencies/landowners/partners (Resto)
- Continue serving the role of facilitating AIS control in the basin (AIS)
- Support and expand the work of the TCP crews when CTC exchanges large land parcels with smaller USFS land parcels (TCP)

- Work with boat manufacturers to develop systems more conducive to inspections, continue working closely with CDFW and NDOW (WIP)
- Communicate with other regional programs to identify threats and solutions (ex. mussels being found in sea strainers at Lake Powell and Lake Mead) (WIP)

Internal Collaboration & Staffing

- Increase level of sharing/engaging/leveraging with other RCD programs
 - Forestry crews receive training on TNFAC outreach to provide to neighbors when in the field (FAC)
 - Webinar facilitation (FAC)
 - Proactive cross-program outreach at events like farmers' markets and Live at Lakeview – invite crew members or other program staff to participate, assist with recruitment and share cross-program knowledge (All)
- Increase pool of experience through staff retention, providing trainings, and attracting talented staff (AIS)
 - Receive trainings in Excel and QuickBooks to become masters (Admin)
 - Take formal accounting classes to become less reliant on CPA (Admin)
 - Provide trainings to staff on payroll and receipt processing (Admin)
- Streamline reporting for land stewards. CTC currently requires a written narrative and Excel spreadsheet – report on changes instead; for JM use a shared Google or SharePoint doc (TCP)
- Provide clarity to all staff on which admin staff is performing certain tasks (Admin)
- Increase capacity to broaden experience and skills available by incorporating other Tahoe RCD program staff and hiring where appropriate (Resto)
- Update TCP warehouse to a more functional workspace (TCP)
- Educate new boat owners on responsible boating practices (WIP)
- Improve equipment to more efficiently inspect and decontaminate boats (WIP)
- Continue to develop unified protocols and policies to address the unknowns. (WIP)

Develop and Expand Programs and Projects

- Develop new programs or projects:
 - Develop a BMP maintenance program (SWP)
 - Develop a basin-wide strategy to repave roads and improve pavement condition or other planning (SWP)
 - Evaluate the potential for creating a certification program for mechanics and private facilities to provide decontaminations for watercraft (WIP)
 - Plan and implement satellite locations to provide inspections/decontaminations (WIP)
 - Plan and implement mobile inspections and decontaminations (WIP)

- Incorporate other businesses or partners to provide services currently done in-house (ex. changeouts/water transport) (WIP)
- Expand current services
 - GIS assistance – not just stormwater and FAC (SWP)
 - Wildlife services. (Wildlife)
 - Restoration program to include other projects other than JM. (Resto)
 - Fee for service program (Resto, All)
 - AIS control efforts (i.e. fish) (AIS)
 - Water quality monitoring to more than stormwater; human health, groundwater, streams, wildlife, stream profiles, vegetation (SWP)
 - Connect with National Firewise Program and explicitly incorporate it into the Tahoe Network framework (FAC)
 - Gain experience with more diverse AIP control techniques (i.e. laminar flow, UV light, containment) (AIS)
 - Purchase more properties to provide open spaces (TCP)
 - Offer consultant services to regional water bodies (Pyramid Lake, Lake Berryessa) to develop a comprehensive prevention program (outreach, equipment, protocols, and planning) (WIP)
 - Monitor RCD & CTC properties for illegal use including camping, use of fire, motorized vehicles. Revisit roles and qualifications of the land stewards to serve this role or modify the TCP to provide more staff capacity to JM/RCD properties

Aspirations:

Incorporate Diversity Equity and Inclusion

- Reach a more diverse audience (i.e. income, socioeconomic, age, language) and increase programmatic capacity to meet an increase in demand or expansion of programmatic framework that results from a larger audience engagement (FAC)
- Contribute to and/or lead Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion conversations and actions at Tahoe RCD (FAC)
- Create/provide bilingual resources (FAC)
- Reinforce structure so that TCP staff are treated more like Tahoe RCD employees than CTC (TCP)

Increase Capacity

- Increase staffing capacity
 - for crews (TCP)
 - for Education and outreach staffing (WIP)
 - Create Program manager position for TCP (TCP)
 - Hire land management staff, or amend the CTC/TRCD TCP, for JM specific management action (Resto)
- Achieve a more balanced workload (Admin)
- Need time for programmatic introspection/planning (WIP)

- Improve employee retention and adaptability through organizational structure (responsibilities and accountability). (WIP)
- Provide more trainings improve skills, and provide room in the organizational structure for upward movement (WIP)
- Incorporate opportunities for staff advancement into funding agreements – accounting for merit increases and other potential advancements (trainings, classification changes, new positions, or additions) (AIS)
- Increase breadth of services that Tahoe RCD offers, tapping in to staff specialties and qualifications (AIS)

Make Program Improvements

- Continue to provide valuable services; quality data collection and management, data analysis, reporting, quality project management and basin-wide planning strategies to increase partnership funding opportunities (SWP & Resto)
- Seek opportunities for varied projects, expansion of current projects, opportunities for field work, or new projects (SWP)
- Continue to be trusted by our partner agencies so they come to us with projects (SWP)
- Adjust protocols to better suit client and/or final product while still staying within regulations (Wildlife)
- Expand from preconstruction surveys to include implementation monitoring and post-construction surveys to measure effects on wildlife species of interest
- Improve and protect habitat by monitoring for best results (Wildlife)
- Fund and develop Johnson Meadow management plan that could be expanded to include other jurisdictions as opportunity allows (Resto)
- Become a trusted and sought-after authority on environmental and regional planning within the Lake Tahoe Basin for both environmental services and community needs (Resto)
- Work with multiple contractors to meet pace and scale of AIS control needs as they increase (AIS)
- Produce timely invoices to partners (Admin)
- Identify efficiencies to improve work life for staff such as permanent watercraft inspection locations and equipment (WIP)
- Identify efficiencies to improve outcomes such as more inspections with fewer staff, evaluation of regional sites, and reducing unknowns (WIP)
- Research fee-for-service opportunities to respond to individual requests for inspections and decontaminations as well as changes to launch ramp hours operated by Tahoe RCD staff (WIP)
- Develop adjustable inspection fee structure with partners (week vs. weekend) (WIP)
- Research equipment and partnerships/contracts to accommodate work capacity issues (WIP)

- Update outreach focus to include more education to guide boater behavioral change, while continuing to provide outreach for program navigation such as how to get inspected and on the water quicker (WIP)

Diverse & Sustainable Funding

- Diversify funding to include and increase unrestricted management funding (Resto)
- Secure more long-term funding for AIS control implementation and planning/collaboration (AIS)
- Secure grants for expanding projects on RCD and CTC lands; homeless camp remediation & clean-ups, educational & stewardship activities and land stewardship or patrolling (TCP)
- Maintain clean audits (Admin)

Share Knowledge & Expertise -

- Package our program framework to provide to other FAC Networks and partners (FAC)
- Continue to use expertise to help guide unified plan to tackle AIS control in the basin (AIS)
- Be a resource for AIS control information in the basin, including control methods and environmental documentation, and facilitate collaboration/information sharing among partners (AIS)
- Continue to expand Tahoe RCD's role in development of regional watercraft inspection protocols and resources (WIP)

Expand Technology

- Implement market research across demographics to understand knowledge and resource gaps and how best to fill them (FAC)
- Provide more GIS assistance to various natural resource sectors (expand from Fire and Stormwater sectors) (SWP)
- Fund software to streamline invoicing (ex. Grant Vantage) (Admin)
- Procure a payroll system that is easy to use, accurate, and flows into QuickBooks with grant info (Admin)
- Obtain master level training in Excel, QuickBooks and Accounting to increase efficiencies and processing times (Admin)

Results (Measured Outcomes)

Planning Documents

- A Tahoe Network framework/strategic planning document that defines programmatic goals, can be easily updated, can be shared with networks and partners, and can be used to measure success. (FAC)
- The Tahoe Network is a cross-section of Tahoe residents and visitors who benefit from our knowledge, our resources, and our network. (FAC)

- Widely adopted planning procedures and documents (Resto)

Outreach Resources

- Renter's Guide to Wildfire Preparedness (FAC)
- Bilingual resources (FAC)
- Updated website to share information, organized data to share with partners (AIS)

Funding Metrics

- Fully funded staff (SWP)
- Sustained and reliable funding (Resto)
- Expanded and funded staff (Resto)
- Three to five-year plan for funding (AIS)
- Payroll increase justification document to submit to funders when applying for grants (Admin)
- Successful annual audit and single audit (Admin)
- Successful individual audits from funders and states (Admin)

Partner/Customer Satisfaction

- Projects completed for our partners and continued involvement in stormwater management and monitoring (SWP)
- Appreciation and respect from partners (SWP)
- Quality products provided to partners (SWP)
- Post project survey completion and better understanding of project effects on wildlife (Wildlife)
- Demand for Tahoe RCD restoration and planning services (Resto)
- Continued positive partner engagement (Resto)
- Timely delivery of quality products (Resto)
- Successful implementation of AIS Action Agenda and reduction/local elimination of AIS in Lake Tahoe - track metrics for success (AIS)
- A contact list of qualified dive contractors/establish relationships as needed (AIS)
- Shorter decontamination times, higher percentage of boats arriving clean, drained, dry (WIP)

Post-Project Data

- Long term environmental data sets on important fuel treatment areas, wildlife habitat, and recreational areas in the Tahoe Basin (Wildlife)
- Documented reproductive success for wildlife species of interest (Wildlife)
- No new species invasions (WIP)
- Narrative and Excel reports from land stewards (TCP)

- End of year reports with feet of fence/barriers, square feet of de-compacted and revegetated soil, number of hazard trees removed, acreage of fuel hazard reduction (TCP)
- Secret shopper success/high rating (WIP)
- Identify indications of success through customer surveys, number of AIS found, income (WIP)

Employee Satisfaction

- Tahoe RCD employees reporting high job satisfaction (Wildlife)
- Staff included on multiple grants within organization (AIS)
- Certifications of trainings (Admin)
- Improved staff retention, and improved work/life balance (WIP)
- Sustainable job duties may be indicated by lower turnover and the time and ability to work on future planning and projects beyond immediate needs (WIP)