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STAFF REPORT

Date: November 9, 2022
To: TRPA Governing Board
From: TRPA Staff
Subject: Briefing on the Environmental Improvement Strategic (EIP) Initiative

Summary and Staff Recommendation:

Staff will provide an update on the EIP Strategic Initiative. The presentation will briefly cover the history and accomplishments of the program and provide an overview of the EIP collaborative governance structure, funding, priorities, and how the strategic initiative seeks to increase the pace and scale of the program.

Project Description/Background:

The EIP is the implementation arm of the Regional Plan and centers around proactive project implementation to accelerate threshold attainment. This bi-state, cross-boundary restoration partnership has implemented more than 700 projects since 1997, totaling 2.6 billion in investments, to improve the health of the Tahoe Basin. The [EIP 2021 Accomplishments Report](#) provides a summary of the program focus areas and the most recent projects and priorities. Focus Areas include:

- Watersheds + Water Quality
- Forest Health
- Transportation + Sustainable Recreation
- Science, Stewardship + Accountability

The EIP Strategic Initiative builds on the EIP's success over the last 25 years. This initiative provides a multi-pronged approach to increase the pace and scale of program implementation to keep pace with emerging threats such as climate change.

This Strategic Initiative includes the following activities:

- **Cutting the Green Tape:** EIP projects often require environmental review and multiple permits from a variety of agencies that can take months to years to complete. These processes are important to ensure projects are implemented strategically and in an environmentally beneficial manner with public input. TRPA staff are collaborating with partner agencies to identify opportunities to be more efficient in these processes to ensure environmentally beneficial projects can move forward to implementation and keep pace with emerging threats. This can be through permitting efficiencies, process improvements, improving interagency coordination, or policy/regulatory changes.

TRPA is working with the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) to complete a Case Study on permitting and implementation of the Taylor Tallac Ecosystem Restoration Project. CBI recently convened a multi-agency workshop and report on opportunities for improving processes for future EIP projects. Staff will provide an overview of this case study and next steps.

- **Augment funding for EIP Implementation:** TRPA's strategic advocacy alongside basin partners has been integral in augmenting federal appropriations under the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (LTRA) for the past several years. This year, TRPA staff will execute a funding agreement with the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit to deliver LTRA funds to non-federal partners. Executing this agreement will allow a greater capacity and timeframe to deliver funds to the highest priority projects.
- **Engage in the California and National Landscape Stewardship Networks:** Participate in networks of similar landscape-scale stewardship collaboratives to increase shared learning and problem-solving with other practitioners. Engagement in these networks also builds capacity and awareness for cross-boundary conservation work that helps advance state and national initiatives.

Contact Information:

For questions regarding the EIP Strategic Initiative, please contact Kimberly Chevallier, Environmental Improvement Department Manager, at 775.589.5263 or kchevallier@trpa.gov.