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STAFF REPORT

Date: January 18, 2023

To: TRPA Governing Board

From: TRPA Staff

Subject: Update on Measuring What Matters: The Thresholds and Monitoring Update Strategic Initiative

Summary and Staff Recommendation:

Staff will provide an update on Measuring What Matters: The Thresholds and Monitoring Update Strategic Initiative, and the work to leverage the partnership's significant investments in science and planning that will guide the update of threshold standards in the first six categories; air quality, fisheries, soil conservation, vegetation preservation, water quality, and wildlife. This item is for informational purposes and no action is required.

Background:

The threshold standards establish goals for environmental quality and express the desired outcomes for the Tahoe Region. The standards shape the goals and policies of the Lake Tahoe Regional Plan. The first set of threshold standards was adopted in 1982. To help reach these goals, a collaborative partnership of over 80 entities implements projects as part of the Environmental Improvement Program (EIP). The EIP has been the organizing program for the basin's restoration priorities for the last twenty-five years and guides millions of dollars of public and private investment in the basin.

The vast majority of the threshold standards are now over 40 years old. The initial threshold standards set the course for the Region forty years ago but were never intended to be immutable. The multi-disciplinary team that authored the 1981 threshold study report suggested the standards should be reassessed at least every five years and wrote: "environmental thresholds are not static standards that once in place remain forever."

The TRPA Governing Board identified the review and updating of the threshold standards and performance measures as a strategic initiative for the agency. The Tahoe Interagency Executive Steering Committee (TIE) made the review and updating of the threshold standards a priority for the partnership in their 2022 work plan.

Standard and performance measure refinement has proceeded over the last 10 months, through the relevant EIP working groups, partners, and stakeholders with additional guidance from the Tahoe Science Advisory Council. The presentation will provide an update on the progress on standard and performance measure refinement over the last 10 months.

Contact Information:

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