

# BRIDGEPORT VALLEY

## Regional Planning Advisory Committee

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February 4, 2020

Sierra Nevada Conservancy - Board of Directors

### **Re: Proposition 68 Vibrant Recreation and Tourism - Buckeye Hotspings Recreation Enhancement Project**

The purpose of Mono County's Regional Planning Advisory Committees (RPAC) is to advise the Mono County Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Planning Division on the development, review, implementation and update of the Mono County General Plan and associated Area / Community Plans including planning of sustainable recreation projects and programs occurring within Mono County. The Bridgeport RPAC meets regularly to identify local planning issues and community needs - and to serve as a community forum and information clearing house on community planning issues.

Having reviewed the preliminary site-plan provided by Mammoth Lakes Recreation (Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Coordinator - applicant), the Bridgeport RPAC finds that the desired outcomes of the Buckeye Hotspings Recreation Enhancement Project align themselves with desired outcomes of the community and carry positive implications for both the economic and ecologic sustainability of the region.

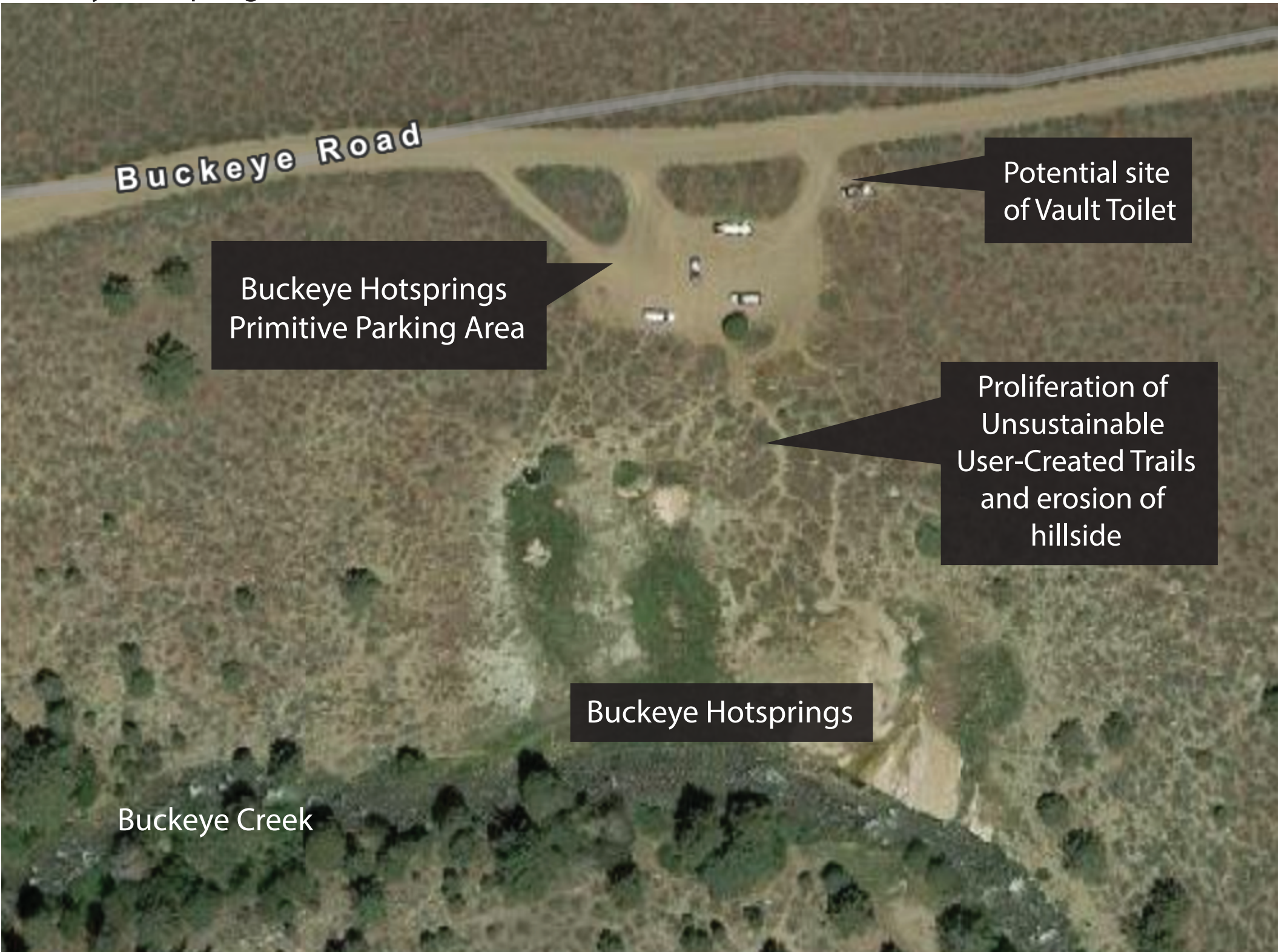
The Bridgeport RPAC recommends that the SNC Board of Directors consider Mammoth Lakes Recreation's application for its Vibrant Recreation and Tourism grant program to bring these much-needed improvements to the Buckeye Hotspings location. The Bridgeport RPAC looks forward to regularly provided updates from the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation and to engaging with both Mammoth Lakes Recreation and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in project design and development.

Sincerely,

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Chair,  
Bridgeport Regional Planning Advisory Committee

# Buckeye Hotsprings: Current Site Conditions



Buckeye Road

Buckeye Hotsprings  
Primitive Parking Area

Potential site  
of Vault Toilet

Proliferation of  
Unsustainable  
User-Created Trails  
and erosion of  
hillside

Buckeye Hotsprings

Buckeye Creek



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<b>Date</b>	08-JAN-2020
<b>Program</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Proposition 84 – Remainder Funds <input type="checkbox"/> Proposition 68 – Resilient Communities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proposition 68 – Vibrant Recreation and Tourism <input type="checkbox"/> Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Description: <a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
<b>Project Title</b>	Buckeye Hotsprings Recreation Enhancement and Watershed Restoration
<b>Applicant</b>	Mammoth Lakes Recreation
<b>Applicant Authorized Representative</b>	Matthew McClain
<b>Name</b>	760.500.6381
<b>Phone</b>	<a href="mailto:matt@mammothlakesrecreation.org">matt@mammothlakesrecreation.org</a>
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Applicant Day-to-Day Contact</b>	Matthew Paruolo
<b>Name</b>	760.660.4948 ext. 103
<b>Phone</b>	<a href="mailto:mparuolo@mammothlakesrecreation.org">mparuolo@mammothlakesrecreation.org</a>
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Subregion(s)</b>	East Sierra
<b>County(ies)</b>	Mono County
<b>SNC Representative</b>	Matthew Driscoll
<b>Funding Amount Requested</b>	\$73,500



# Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAMS PROPOSAL



## Project Summary & Location

*Summarize the project, including purpose, acreage (if applicable), and detailed location information. From this narrative, a reader should easily understand what the project is and where it is located.*

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Buckeye Hotsprings is located on Buckeye Creek, a tributary to the Walker River, Bridgeport Reservoir, and Carson/Lahontan Watershed. This natural geo-thermal hotsprings is managed by Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and is located 10 miles from downtown Bridgeport and the Bridgeport Ranger District. The site is accessed by improved Forest Service road including a large (~ 1/4 acre) pull-out that serves as a de-facto staging area for users accessing the primitive hotsprings (see site plan). Increased usership and the proliferation of user-created trails has contributed to erosion and hillside destabilization, creating unsafe and unsustainable impacts to user-experience and water-quality.

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest (land manager), Mammoth Lakes Recreation (applicant), and Mono County (project partner) request assistance in developing sustainable infrastructure that provides for responsible public access and improved water quality of Buckeye Creek. This project will provide parking improvements and hillside stabilization including construction of parking barriers and erosion-control measures, integration of regulatory and interpretive signs and displays, installation of a single vault toilet to manage human waste and fecal contamination, construction of a single sustainable access trail (~1,000 ft), and restoration of user-created impacts. These enhancements will provide a *new* sustainable recreation opportunity that benefits the economy of nearby Bridgeport *and* the natural environment.

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## Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAMS PROPOSAL



### Background & Need

*Concisely describe the background and need for project.*

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Increased visitation spurred by social media, publication of printed-media, and the growth of the outdoor recreation industry in California, have made significant recent impacts to Eastern Sierra public lands including its many unique geologic sites. This hot springs is easily accessed from downtown Bridgeport, and is beloved by locals and visitors to the Eastern Sierra Nevada. The absence of a formal system-trail, restroom, and designated parking area has resulted in substantial "trail braiding", impacts to sagebrush steppe, presence of fecal coliform in and adjacent to riparian habitat and watershed, and significant erosion caused by users accessing the hot springs from the informal staging area on Buckeye Road. There is a real need to develop a formal staging area to promote responsible parking on durable surfaces, provide safe and sustainable access for recreation, provide better public sanitation, foster interpretive and education opportunities, and to cultivate a sense of stewardship and place. These improvements will provide an enhanced recreation experience that meets the statutes of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and desired outcomes of the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership (ESSRP).

Additionally, the existing site conditions at Buckeye Hot Springs are indicative of similar conditions at other hot springs managed by Inyo National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management. A member of the ESSRP - the proposed enhancements are intended to provide a replicable model for partner organizations to better manage these unique locations with consistent messaging and established best-practices.

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# Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAMS PROPOSAL



## Project Description

*Describe what the project will accomplish and how it will be accomplished. Include specific information about the project, such as tangible deliverables, expected outcomes, comparing existing vs. expected conditions, etc. Identify long-term benefits that will result from this project.*

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- Mono County (project partner) will act as lead-agency on filing CEQA decision based on potential impacts of the preliminary site plan supplied by Mammoth Lakes Recreation (applicant) and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest (land manager). The proposed project will be categorically exempted from CEQA process based on the following provisions under Article 19:

### 15301. EXISTING FACILITIES

Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination. The types of "existing facilities" itemized below are not intended to be all-inclusive of the types of projects which might fall within Class 1. The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of an existing use.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- (c) Existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities (this includes road grading for the purpose of public safety), and other alterations such as the addition of bicycle facilities, including but not limited to bicycle parking, bicycle-share facilities and bicycle lanes, transit improvements such as bus lanes, pedestrian crossings, street trees, and other similar alterations that do not create additional automobile lanes);

*The proposed project will implement minor alteration and rehabilitation of unsustainable user created trails and informal staging area that involves no expansion of use beyond that which currently exists. The creation of a new sustainable access trail will mitigate existing impacts caused by redundant, unsustainable trail-braiding.*

- (d) Restoration or rehabilitation of deteriorated or damaged structures, facilities, or mechanical equipment to meet current standards of public health and safety, unless it is determined that the damage was substantial and resulted from an environmental hazard such and earthquake, landslide, or flood;

*The project will restore and rehabilitate the deterioration of site conditions caused by existing use, restoration of sagebrush steppe caused by informal parking will be completed by grading and construction of a formal parking area and will improve current erosion and vegetation damage. The project includes no expansion of existing (informal) use.*

### 15303. NEW CONSTRUCTION OR CONVERSION OF SMALL STRUCTURES

Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made I the exterior of the structure. The numbers of structures described in this section are the maximum allowable on any legal parcel. Examples of this exemption include, but are not limited to:

- (d) Water main, sewage, electrical, gas, and other utility extensions, including street improvements, of reasonable length to serve such construction.

*The proposed project will install a new vault toilet to greatly improve current fecal coliform contamination created by the absence of a bathroom facility.*

- (e) Accessory (appurtenant) structures including garages, carports, patios, swimming pools, and fences.

*The project will restore and rehabilitate the deterioration of site conditions caused by the informal parking area that is user created. The new parking area will be centralized on-site and will improve current erosion and vegetation damage. The project includes no expansion of existing (informal) use.*

### 15304. MINOR ALTERATIONS TO LAND

Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. Examples include, but are not limited to:



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(a) Grading on land with a slope of less than 10 percent, except that grading shall not be exempt in a waterway, in any wetland, in an officially designated (by federal, state, or local government action) scenic area, or in officially mapped areas of severe geologic hazard such as an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within an official Seismic Hazard Zone, as delineated by the State Geologist.

*This project will perform grading on land with a slope of less than 10 percent to reduce hillside erosion, and delineate parking on durable, permeable surfaces.*

- Mammoth Lakes Recreation will procure a land tenure agreement with Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest for the purpose of fulfilling SNC requirements for project monitoring, and public access
  - Creation of a formal site-plan for implementation will be completed with assistance from project partners including Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and Mono County
  - Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest - Bridgeport District will complete pre-construction NEPA (expected Categorical Exclusion from NEPA process) based on input from Interdisciplinary (ID) Team
  - Design of restroom, interpretive panels, regulatory signage, access trail, staging area, and vault toilet will be completed (pre-construction) with coordination from Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Mono County Public Works, and in consultation with Bridgeport Indian Colony, Lahontan Regional Water Board, and adjacent land managers for the purpose of providing continuity in regional messaging and established best practices (ie. Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership organizations and the BLM)
  - Based on findings of pre-construction planning and design; Mono County Public Works will act as lead agency on road grading, restoration, and improvements to the Buckeye staging area. Sustainable vault toilet will be installed (sub-contract), new access trail will be constructed (sub-contract), and interpretive and regulatory signage will be installed by Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest - Bridgeport Ranger District.
  - Revegetation and rehabilitation of site impacts will be completed following completion of above project deliverables (sub-contract)
  - Mammoth Lakes Recreation Sustainable Recreation Coordinator will install trail/vehicle counter(s), and record metrics for project monitoring.
  - Mammoth Lakes Recreation will provide project reporting to SNC at all stages of this process.
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## Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAMS PROPOSAL



### Project Partners

*Describe other partners involved in the project. Describe who was engaged in project planning and who will be responsible for implementation. Highlight local agencies, citizen groups, or tribal organizations engaged with the project. Identify if other partners are contributing in-kind or financial resources to the project.*

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- The Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership (essrp.org) including the Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mono County, and Inyo National Forest will be consulted throughout the process to provide continuity, leverage local resources, and create a replicable model for similar projects (ie. BLM and Inyo National Forest managed Long Valley Hotsprings locations). The Town of Mammoth Lakes trail crew may be identified as a sub-contractor for construction of sustainable access trail.
  - Bridgeport Indian Colony (local federally recognized tribe) will be consulted in developing interpretive materials and providing visitor audience information from a historical and tribal perspective.
  - The Bureau of Land Management and Inyo National Forest (R5) will be consulted to provide continuity on messaging and management of Eastern Sierra hotspring locations and shared land manager concerns, including management of bi-state sage grouse, and proper hotsprings etiquette/marketing.
  - Mono County partners with Mammoth Lakes Recreation (MLR) to support the position of Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Coordinator (grant/project administration). Mono County will also act as lead agency for filing CEQA, and will work with MLR and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest to leverage resources. Mono County Public Works will act as lead-agency on heavy equipment operation/road-grading of new parking/staging area and currently maintains Buckeye Road in partnership with Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.
  - Lahontan Regional Water Board will be consulted on project development supports the proposed improvements and its implications for water quality. Lahontan Regional Water Board may work to help identify potential funding for restroom/restroom operations.
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## Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAMS PROPOSAL



### SNC and Funding Source Priorities

*Describe how the project supports the SNC Strategic and Action Plans, as well as the goals and priorities of the funding source. Include reference to specific sections of the Plans or funding guidance.*

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This project addresses several of SNC's seven statutorily mandated program areas identified in its strategic plan including:

- Increasing the opportunity for tourism and recreation in the Region
- Protecting, conserving, and restoring the Region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources
- Aiding in the preservation of working landscapes
- Protecting and improving water quality and air quality
- Assisting the Regional economy through the operation of the SNC's program and;
- Enhancing public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public

In addition; this project falls squarely into SNC's Vibrant Recreation and Tourism mission to "Enhance, promote, and develop sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities in the Sierra Nevada Region." Comprised 94% of Public Lands, Mono County and the town of Bridgeport (county seat) are largely dependent upon recreation and tourism and are well-defined by the following statement found in SNC's Strategic Plan: "For many of the communities in the region, revenue from recreation and tourism represents the largest portions of their economies, and jobs from recreation provide residents with the opportunity to work and thrive in their communities." (p.29)

This project will directly support and be supported by the newly established Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership ([essrp.org](http://essrp.org)) - a regional effort to help leverage resources, reduce duplication of efforts, and provide regional continuity to sustainable recreation projects and programs. Partnership between Mono County (local government), the Department of Agriculture (land manager), and local NGOs (applicant) to accomplish project deliverables meets several strategies of SNC's Vibrant Recreation and Tourism initiative including:

- Strategy 2: Identify, create, and participate in partnerships to support the development of vibrant recreation and tourism throughout the Region.
- Strategy 3: Distribute available funds for development of sustainable recreation and tourism throughout the Region in a timely and strategic manner to achieve maximum positive impact by coordinating with other state and federal funding agencies and partners.
- Strategy 4: Advocate for and secure increased funding for sustainable recreation and tourism development and increase access to public lands in the Region [...]
- Strategy 5: Provide assistance to pilot projects or collaboratives that test innovative governance, finance, and implementation tools that can achieve sustainable recreation and tourism objectives across the Region.



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### Project Schedule

Complete the chart below. Please include all tasks and deliverables, including SNC reporting requirements.

Project Tasks and Deliverables	Timeline
CEQA environmental review	NLT March 2020
Finalize land tenure agreement	NLT October 2020
Development of formal site plan	NLT October 2020
NEPA environmental review	NLT October 2020
Design of interpretive panels and regulatory/etiquette signage	NLT December 2020
Design of single sustainable access trail	NLT October 2020
Design of staging area improvements	NLT October 2020
Design of vault toilet	NLT October 2020
Implementation - staging/parking area road grading	NLT October 2021
Installation of parking barriers and erosion control	NLT October 2021
Installation of interpretive panels and signs	NLT October 2021
Installation of single sustainable access trail	NLT October 2021
Installation of trail counters to provide usership data and monitoring	NLT October 2021
Installation of vault toilet	NLT October 2021
Rehabilitation/ revegetation of user-created impacts	NLT October 2021
Installation of picnic tables	NLT October 2021
<b>Estimated Project Completion Date:</b>	October 2021



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## Project Costs

Complete the charts below.

Administrative Costs must not exceed 15% of Direct Project costs, or an alternate limitation imposed by the program and funding source.

For Additional Project Costs, include in-kind or funding from sources **other** than SNC used within the scope and timeline of the project described here.

Direct Project Costs	SNC Funding
ID Team - Development of formal site plan	\$1,000
ID Team - Design of single access trail	\$1,000
Mono County - Design of parking improvements	\$1,000
Materials - Gravel for erosion control of parking area	\$10,000
Mono County - Road grading	\$5,000
Materials and Installation - Parking barriers, erosion controls	\$5,000
Materials and Installation - Interpretive signs	\$5,000
Construction - Access trail	\$6,500
Construction - Vault toilet	\$30,000
Rehabilitation - Vegetation and user created trails	\$1,000
Construction - Picnic tables	\$2,000
MLR - Agency Coordination, Site Visits, Project Supervision, Fuel	\$4,000
<b>Total Direct Project Costs</b>	<b>\$71,000</b>

<b>Administrative Cost</b>	<b>\$2,500 - MLR Admin</b>
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<b>TOTAL SNC REQUEST</b>	<b>\$73,500</b>
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Additional Project Costs	In-Kind or Funding from Other Sources
MLR - Sustainable Recreation Coordinator admin. & reporting	\$2,000 - In Kind
HTNF - NEPA ID Team - Decision Memo	\$6,000 - In Kind
Mono County - CEQA Filing	\$1,000 - In Kind
HTNF - Design of Interpretive Panels and Regulatory Signage	\$2,000 - In Kind
MLR - Installation of trail counters and site monitoring	\$2,000 - In Kind
<b>Total Additional Project Costs</b>	<b>\$13,000</b>

<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST (SNC plus additional sources)</b>	<b>\$86,500</b>
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## Resolution or Authorization to Apply

*Applicants are required to provide a copy of documentation authorizing them to apply for grant funding to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC). A project-specific governing board resolution is required for nonprofit organizations, tribes, and local government agencies. However, if the organization's governing board has delegated authority to a specific officer to act on behalf of that organization, the officer may, in lieu of a resolution, submit a letter of authorization along with documentation of delegated authority. The documentation of delegated authority must include the language granting such authority and the date of the delegation. Follow these links for sample resolutions for [nonprofit organizations](#) and [local government agencies](#).*

*In the space below, briefly describe the authorization to apply, if it has been authorized or is scheduled for future consideration, and include documentation with proposal submission.*

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Formal Resolution to apply for Proposition 68 funds from SNC - Vibrant Recreation and Tourism will be considered by the Mammoth Lakes Recreation Board of Directors at the regularly scheduled Tuesday March 10, 2020 Board Meeting.

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### Supplemental Information

*Please provide any documents that will enhance the project information including maps (topo, ownership, or site), landowner support, evidence of community support, etc. Additional information may be requested by SNC staff.*

*List additional documentation included in the space below.*

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- Mammoth Lakes Recreation - Authorized Resolution
  - Land Tenure Agreement - Memorandum of Understanding
  - Preliminary Site Plan
  - Topographic Map of Project Site
  - Letters of Support
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