

Background

The Northern Sierra Partnership (NSP) is an alliance of conservation and business organizations that describes itself as “dedicated to the region's future and committed to rapid collaborative action to plan and implement crucial conservation projects, link conservation to sustainable economies, leverage public funds with effective private fundraising, and build a firm base of local support.”

The group as initially convened by the Morgan Family Foundation, includes two local land trusts, a regional business council, a national land conservation organization, and a worldwide conservation organization. The individual organizations have agreed to pursue a strategic approach to conserving the northern Sierra's most valuable lands and waters. The founding partners are:

- Feather River Land Trust
- Truckee Donner Land Trust
- Sierra Business Council
- Trust for Public Land
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Resources Legacy Fund (serves as fiscal manager and coordinator)

Current Status

At this point, the Morgan Family Foundation and the Packard Foundation have led the efforts in raising \$25 million for this initiative. The NSP's goal is to raise \$100 million in non-governmental funds and to leverage \$200 million in public funds to carry out its program.

On October 8, 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger endorsed this public-private partnership saying “This public-private partnership will benefit millions of Californians, by allowing us to preserve more open space, create new recreational opportunities, protect rivers and streams, address the effects of climate change, reduce the risk of wildfire and preserve the working ranches and farms of the Sierra Nevada.” SNC Board Vice Chairman Robert Weygandt and Executive Officer Jim Branham participated in the program at the event on the shore of Donner Lake.

Next Steps

An overview will be provided at today's Board meeting by a representative of the NSP. Staff will continue to coordinate with the NSP to identify potential projects that can be mutually supported. Staff is also coordinating with the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Department of Fish and Game and other state agencies to ensure a collaborative approach in addressing this initiative.

Recommendation

No action is needed by the Board at this time; staff will continue to keep Board updated.