

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) has held six Tribal Forums in conjunction with the quarterly Board meetings, excepting the two March meetings in Sacramento, over the span of two years beginning in June of 2016. Tribal Forums have been held in Susanville, Lassen County (June 2016); Hope Valley, Alpine County (September 2016); Auburn, Placer County (December 2016); Prather, Fresno County (June 2017); Sierraville, Sierra County (September 2017); and Jackson, Amador County (December 2017). The seventh Tribal Forum was requested by the SNC Board at the December meeting based on the relative isolation of the tribes within the southern portion of the East Subregion. The Tribal Forums have afforded SNC the opportunity to become better informed about tribal issues and concerns within the SNC Region and tribal expectations for forming relationships and partnerships. SNC policies and programs have evolved to support more meaningful tribal engagement in the following areas: Watershed Improvement Program planning and assessments; Grant program project planning and tribal participation; Consultation policies and meeting facilitation; and SNC Strategic Planning efforts.

SNC staff has also been involved in statewide planning and policy efforts (California Water Plan – Tribal Water Summit, State contracting practices, State consultation policies) to improve tribal relationships.

Current Status

Information from the seventh Tribal Forum will be provided to the Board during the Board meeting.

Staff member Julie Griffith-Flatter was designated as the SNC's first official Tribal Liaison in 2013 and has served diligently to date. Julie will be retiring from state service at the end of June and the role of Tribal Liaison will be transitioning to SNC staff member Mandy Vance.

Next Steps

SNC will continue efforts to engage California Native American tribes in its programs, policy development, and projects. Staff will be identifying opportunities for tribal engagement as part of the strategic planning process and would anticipate moving forward based on the information gathered through the tribal Subregional meetings.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.