



Mammoth Lakes Town Council

P.O. Box 1609, Mammoth Lakes, CA, 93546

(760) 965-3600

www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Attention: Angela Avery
Executive Officer
Sierra Nevada Conservancy

RE: Support for the Whitebark Institute grant application for the Eastern Sierra Climate & Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP): Reds Meadow II Implementation

The Town of Mammoth Lakes writes this letter to express support for the Whitebark Institute grant application for the *Eastern Sierra Climate & Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP)- Reds Meadow II Implementation*, which will build on work initiated with the ESCCRP Phase I Implementation project on the Inyo National Forest and funded by CAL FIRE in 2021. The ESCCRP is a 56,000-acre landscape-scale forest restoration project addressing both climate and community resilience surrounding the Town of Mammoth Lakes. These uncharacteristically overstocked headwater forests are declining in function due to more than a century of anthropogenic influences. The ESCCRP aims to promote resilient landscapes, help create fire adapted communities, increase public and firefighter safety, and protect the priceless ecosystem services upon which millions of Californians depend.

The Eastern Sierra Nevada is a remote and unique region of California comprised of rugged mountains, high desert, and rural communities. The region is a year-round tourist destination, supporting rural communities via a robust recreation and tourism economy which is largely dependent on healthy forests. The headwater forests of the ESCCRP area provide vital water resources for local communities, the Central Valley, and the City of Los Angeles, and are home to an abundance of terrestrial and aquatic species. Declining forest health, coupled with a rapidly intensifying wildfire trajectory fueled by climate change, underscores the imperative to protect the ecological and economic resources of the region. The **ESCCRP Reds Meadow II Implementation** is an opportunity for Sierra Nevada Conservancy to continue to serve as an active partner in the Eastern Sierra on our continued journey to achieve regional resilience.

The **ESCCRP- Reds Meadow II Implementation** is a continuation of work completed during the ESCCRP Phase I implementation to restore forest health on the Inyo National Forest. The approximate 1,800 acres proposed would provide forest restoration in high wildfire hazard areas with a focus on the Reds Meadow planning area within the ESCCRP, a priority conservation watershed on the Inyo National Forest. Implementation of these acres would not only allow for immediate action towards restoring forest health and reducing the risk of unnaturally large high

severity wildfires, but it will continue to prepare us for restoration on the remaining acres of the ESCCRP at the desired pace and scale of the project.

Funding, if awarded by Sierra Nevada Conservancy, would enable the Whitebark Institute to continue implementation of an additional 1,800 acres of Inyo National Forest lands within the ESCCRP, in a highly vulnerable watershed, and continue to build on acres completed during ESCCRP Phase I Implementation.

Proactive management of forests is our only hope to ward off catastrophic loss of these irreplaceable habitats and the multitude of co-benefits that headwater forests provide. We strongly urge Sierra Nevada Conservancy to consider this application as a pivotal opportunity to continue forest health restoration and promote resilience in the Eastern Sierra.

Sincerely,

Lynda Salcido, Mayor