



**Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG)
Joint Powers Authority Agenda**

STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Staff
Subject: Executive Director Report
Meeting date: August 27, 2025
Prepared on: August 20, 2025
Attachments: None

Sustainable Recreation and Ecosystem Management Program:

Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator:

- Staff participated in the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance meeting with other regional partners.
- Staff participated in the Wildfire Resiliency and Financing Action Team (WRAFT) biomass planning subcommittee meeting.
- Staff assisted Corless Consulting and CLERE, Inc with organizing and facilitating the first Eastern Sierra Biomass Utilization meeting with regional representatives engaged in biomass utilization. The meeting focused on existing planned biomass projects, particularly the West Biofuels project proposed to be sited adjacent to Ormat Geothermal. Additional outreach regarding biomass will be held in early October.
- Staff assisted the wildfire coordinators and other partners with identifying project opportunities for Calfire and Sierra Nevada Conservancy fuel treatment grants submitted in August.
- Staff is participating in the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance meetings and Governance subcommittee. You can learn more about the ESWA here:
<https://www.eswildfirealliance.org/>

Sustainable Recreation:

- Staff met with Mono County and Inyo County representatives to discuss regional project proposals for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access grant. The grant is due December 1, 2025. Staff is currently discussing support for the Bishop Area Climbers Coalition for placement of two toilets in Pine Creek and identifying other locations for toilet placement to benefit recreation sites in Inyo and Mono Counties. The maximum award amount is \$500,000.

Economic Development / Sierra Jobs First:

- Staff successfully recruited a Recreation Coordinator to oversee development of the Eastern Sierra Recreation Collaborative and project management of the Chipmunk Canyon Existing Conditions analysis.
- Staff is preparing RFP/RFQs for contractors to implement Sierra Jobs First awards in collaboration with the Inyo County PMO office.
- Staff has been working with the Business Resource Center to develop program to implement the Sierra Jobs First Catalyst Award, including development of a public agency procurement fair to assist local businesses with applying for local agency contracts.
- Staff has been coordinating with regional Sierra Jobs First project awardees regarding project development and collaboration.
- Staff has participated in the working groups for Natural and Working Lands, Tourism and Sustainable Recreation and Sustainable Agriculture.
- Staff has been working with UC ANR to investigate the eligibility of forming an Eastern Sierra Economic Development District based on unemployment and per capita income. Additional follow-up with the Economic Development Administration will be necessary to confirm eligibility.
- Staff has been collaborating with the Inyo County PMO and Inyo Mono Agricultural Commissioner to develop an RFP for the Eastern Sierra Agriculture Activation Plan for the Eastern Sierra Region.
- Staff continues to host a regional economic development roundtable for information sharing and collaboration, including Inyo County, Mono County, the City of Bishop, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, Alpine County, the Bishop Paiute Tribe, the Sierra Business Council, the Eastern Sierra Business Resource Center, Chambers of Commerce (Mammoth, Bishop, Lone Pine), the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (Go Biz), and RCRC.
- Staff met with the Eastern Sierra regional representative from Go Biz regarding the State's CalCompetes Tax Credit for new businesses in California regarding how that can be leveraged in the Eastern Sierra. <https://business.ca.gov/california-competes-tax-credit/>
- Staff is assisting with organizing the California Jobs First Governing Council meeting to be held in Mammoth September 12th. Importantly, staff is working with the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation in their capacity as an Industry Sector Coordinator to organize site visits, introductions, and a networking event to demonstrate California Jobs First funding initiatives and building connections with Westside partners. The networking event, known as "The Shindig" will be held September 10 at Cerro Coso in Bishop. You can learn more and RSVP here: <https://sierraworks.org/>

ESCOG Administration:

- As a result of the application for USDOT Reconnecting Communities funds, ESCOG was invited to attend the American Metropolitan Planning Organization National Conference, September 15th -19th and invite regional transportation planning partners to attend with all expenses paid by the Reconnecting Communities Institute. Inyo County LTC and Mono County LTC staff will be attending.
- Staff is enrolled in the California State Association of Counties Leadership Training Course, courtesy of Inyo County. The course is conducted one or two days monthly through October.

- Staff met with Regional Managers to discuss ESCOG direction and programs of work, including aligning future programs around the strategic plans of each jurisdiction and ongoing coordination with regional management. Please see attached memo regarding ESCOG activity alignment with member agency strategic priorities.
- Staff has been participating the Regional Housing Needs Assessment planning process. The regional survey closed on August 15. Below are the response totals:
 - Resident/Workforce (ENGLISH) - 1,004
 - Resident/Workforce (SPANISH) - 17
 - Employer (ENGLISH) - 194
 - Employer (SPANISH) - 5
- Staff is coordinating with the Inyo County PMO office to integrate ESCOG projects into Quickbase project management software.
- Ongoing grant administration and reporting for the CDFW Proposition 1 grant, Inyo National Forest Liaison Grant, and California Jobs First Initiative.