



**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:** October 22, 2025  
**Prepared on:** October 10, 2025  
**Attachments:** None

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**Sustainable Recreation and Ecosystem Management Program:**

Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator:

- 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.
- 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.
- Staff has participated in the Eastern Sierra Golden Mussel Prevention Collective, which has formed subcommittees around policy, funding and outreach/communications. Three grants have been identified to procure decontamination units, provide training, and conduct education campaigns. CalTrout submitted a Federal Fish and Wildlife Grant on behalf of the region for the scope described above on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

## **Economic Development / Sierra Jobs First:**

- The Recreation Coordinator is working with federal agencies to finalize an RFP for the Chipmunk Canyon Existing Conditions Analysis. This project is delayed due to the Federal government shutdown. The Recreation Coordinator is organizing regular meeting with the ESCOG Recreation Oversight Committee for implementation 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. The proposal period for the Inyo / Mono Agricultural Activation Study closed on September 22, 2025. One proposal was received and is being scored by ESCOG, Inyo County Agricultural Commissioner and PMO staff.
- 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. The Business Resource Center Leadership Course launched on September 23, 2025. There are 27 participants.
- Staff presented on the Sierra Jobs First initiative and ESCOG projects at the Sierra Jobs First Shindig and Governing Council, held in Bishop and Mammoth respectively September 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>.
- 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 confirmed Inyo and Mono Counties do not meet the minimum legislative thresholds to establish an EDD; however, the EDA encouraged the ESCOG and partners to develop a qualitative case demonstrating the unique geography of the Eastern Sierra and how that reinforces a holistic regional economy. The EDA requested an application be deferred to Q1 2026.
- 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.

## **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 15<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> and invite regional transportation planning partners to attend with all expenses paid by the Reconnecting Communities Institute. Staff attended with Inyo County LTC and Mono County LTC partners. This opportunity was made available through a technical assistance grant through the Reconnecting Communities Institute, which is available to assist with funding opportunities for reconnecting communities projects through 2027.
- Staff met with the Tahoe Regional Planning Organization to discuss opportunities for regional partnerships.

- Staff presented on the ESCOG programs of work at the NACO Western Interstate Region Conference held in Bridgeport, CA on September 25<sup>th</sup>.
- 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 November.
- 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..
- Staff has been participating the Regional Housing Needs Assessment planning process.
- 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.