



STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Staff
Subject: Executive Director Report
Meeting date: April 24, 2024
Prepared on: April 17, 2024
Attachments: None

Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator:

- Staff has continued discussions with CDFW and Whitebark regarding Project expansion into the Mono Basin using unspent funds.
- Met with Southern California Edison on their Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding application for regional workforce benefit.
- Staff has continued to participate in Regional Wildfire Resilience Workforce Development partnership discussions to identify Community College curriculum roll out timing, job placement needs and on the ground training opportunities and build connections to support California Jobs First project opportunities.
- Staff met with regional wildfire resilience workforce development partners to discuss projects and needs.
- Staff continues to participate in bi-monthly Wildfire Resiliency Action Finance Team (WRAFT) to identify models to finance wildfire resiliency project implementation.
- Routine invoicing and reporting
- Whitebark has been working on the finalization of response to public comment and associated edits to the Final Environmental Assessment and preparation of the Final EA and Decision Notice, including:
 - Final review and edits to the Draft Biological Assessment and initiation of formal Section 7 Consultation with US Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Update of design criteria to address US Fish and Wildlife Service comments
 - Working with INF to identify strategy for Section 106 compliance given concerns from local tribes
 - Continued coordination with local tribes and INF Heritage Program regarding shift in approach to section 106 compliance for ESCCRP

Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Planning Initiative:

- Document was completed in December 2023
- Staff has provide the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) all final invoices and reports required by the grant agreement, which expired December 31, 2024; however,

staff is working with NFWF to reserve unspent implementation funds for future work pending the decision of the funding agency.

- Staff is working with Inyo County in a limited capacity to transition in the project from planning to implementation.

Towns-to-Trails:

- Alta Planning and Design has identified a draft trail alignment from Olancho to Markleeville based on public input provided in Fall 2023 and computer modeling. The draft alignment is currently being vetted by local area trail experts for appropriateness and feasibility.
- The revised alignment has been send to regional Agency partners and Tribes to provide feedback on any sensitive resource concerns.
- The next round of public consultation is scheduled to be held in Inyo, Mono and Alpine Counties the week of June 10, 2024.

Community Economic Resilience Fund:

- Staff is convening a monthly regional economic development staff roundtable to discuss project and priorities to inform CEDS and California Jobs First plan development and implementation.
- Staff continues regional convening work in support of the California Jobs First project at the direction of the Sierra Business Council.
- Staff is assisting SBC is preparation of materials for the Sierra Jobs First strategic retreat to be held April 25 and 26 in Truckee.
- Staff has been coordinating community outreach and industry sector partner meetings to be held in May and June.

ESCOG Administration:

- Staff has met with interested candidates to provide on-call consulting services to the ESCOG in support of projects.
- Staff has been participating on the Visit California Regional Advisory Board to inform the Tourism Strategic Plan for the High Sierra region and providing materials as needed.
- Staff is coordinating with member agency leadership to provide regular Board updates as needed.
- The ESCOG was not awarded the Highways-to-Boulevards grant and attended an debrief with Caltrans to review the application.
- Staff met with Eastern Sierra Community Housing and the City of Bishop Planning staff to discuss interest in updating the 2005 ESCOG Eastern Sierra Regional Housing Needs Assessment per the requests of several member agency officials. Staff will draft desire outcomes and a potential scope of work for future consideration.