

# CALIFORNIA TAHOE CONSERVANCY

## NOTICE OF INTENT

### **Release of an Initial Study and Proposed Negative Declaration for the Biomass Transport and Utilization Project**

The California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) has released for public review the Initial Study and Proposed Negative Declaration (IS/ND) for the Biomass Transport and Utilization Project (Project). The Conservancy proposes to fund the Project, upon Board approval. The proposed Project includes the processing, collection, transport, and utilization of 17,500 tons of woody biomass in the form of slash (i.e., non-merchantable woody debris such as small diameter trees, salvage materials, and treetops), generated from forest fuel reduction efforts in the El Dorado County portion of the Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin). Biomass is proposed to be chipped, truck-loaded, and hauled from forest fuels treatment sites (collection points) to receiving facilities throughout the region, which primarily include bioenergy generation facilities. The material will be transported to locations surrounding the Basin for use as bioenergy, wood products, home fuel, and restoration material. The proposed Project will be implemented by the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, the Great Basin Institute, and the Department of Parks and Recreation (collectively, Project proponents). The objective of the proposed Project is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the utilization of woody biomass that may otherwise be burned onsite. The proposed Project would involve the use of mechanical equipment to load and transport the material to any of the facilities analyzed in the IS/ND and does not involve the creation of the woody biomass. Other facilities may potentially be used if they are located within the greatest distance analyzed in the IS/ND (270 miles), they comport with the IS/ND, and no potentially significant environmental effects would occur.

**Project Location:** The Project proponents will collect woody biomass from three locations on USDA Forest Service and California Department of Parks and Recreation lands within El Dorado County. The three collection points are in Meeks Creek Meadow, located west of SR 89 at Meeks Bay; the South Tahoe Fuels Treatment Project parcels surrounding South Lake Tahoe; and Sugar Pine Point State Park, located on the west shore of Lake Tahoe, just south of Tahoma. The biomass will be transported from the collection points to any of the following facilities: Loyalton Biomass, located in Loyalton, California; Rio Bravo Rocklin and Sierra Pacific Industries Lincoln, both located in Lincoln, California; Ampine, located in Sutter, California; Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California Headquarters, located in Gardnerville, Nevada, or used as restoration material on forest restoration sites within Meeks Creek Meadow. As noted above, other facilities may potentially be used; however, all facilities must be located within the greatest distance analyzed in the IS/ND (270 miles), among other requirements.

**Environmental Effects:** The Conservancy has prepared an IS/ND pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Sections 15063 and

15071. The Conservancy has studied the effects the proposed Project may have on the environment. Based on the IS, the proposed Project would not result in significant environmental impacts. Therefore, an IS/ND is proposed for compliance with the requirements of CEQA.

**Where You Come In:** As lead agency under CEQA, the Conservancy is releasing the IS/ND for public review and comments. The document is available for a 30-day public review period from May 1, 2020 to June 1, 2020.

**Where to Review the Environmental Document and Provide Comments:**

Formal comments regarding the IS/ND may be submitted in writing via U.S. mail or email any time during the public review period. Written comments regarding the scope and content of information in the IS/ND or any questions regarding the document should be submitted no later than June 1, 2020. Comments may be sent to:

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A copy of the IS/ND is available online at: <http://www.tahoe.ca.gov>.

**Public Hearing:** A public hearing on the proposed Project, where adoption of the proposed ND and Project approval will be considered, is scheduled during the Conservancy Board meeting that will be held on June 25, 2020. Check the Conservancy's website at <http://www.tahoe.ca.gov> on June 15, 2020 for information on the Board meeting location. Due to possible COVID-19 building closures and social distancing requirements, alternative virtual arrangements for the Board meeting may be necessary.