



# OUTDOOR VISITOR SAFETY FUND FULL PROPOSAL

Nevada County RFP No. 154822

Image: Scotts Flat Reservoir

**Project Title:** Scotts Flat Parking

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**Submitted to:** Nevada County  
Department of Information &  
General Services

**Submitted by:**

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## TAB A: ENTITY DESCRIPTION

Nevada Irrigation District (NID) was established in 1921, and for 100 years NID has been reliably delivering high-quality water to its customers. What began as an old reservoir and canal system serving gold mines has been transformed into a modern public water system. The District Mission is to provide a dependable, quality water supply and continue to be good stewards of the Middle and South Yuba and Bear River watersheds, while conserving the available resources in our care. The District provides drinking and irrigation water to more than 25,000 customers in Nevada, Placer and Yuba Counties. NID is also a leader among Northern California water agencies in the production of clean, renewable hydropower. NID manages eight reservoirs in the foothills and Sierra Nevada Mountains that offer recreational opportunities such as hiking, camping, boating, fishing, swimming and biking trails. At Rollins and Scotts Flat reservoirs, NID provides public parks, trails, campgrounds and beaches for the community's enjoyment. Higher in the watershed, NID maintains and operates campgrounds in the Jackson Meadows and Bowman Lake areas. As stewards of thousands of acres of watershed, NID is dedicated to healthy forests and fire safety.

NID believes the great outdoors is an excellent place for families and friends to spend quality time together and create memories to last a lifetime. Our Recreation mission is to "provide safe and stunning campgrounds combined with great customer service, amenities and activities for you, your family and friends to enjoy. Everyone will find fun and adventure. Whatever your preference, our campgrounds and lakes have something for you." Scotts Flat Lake Campground and our trail systems are extremely popular with locals and neighbors, as well as with visitors from all over California and Nevada. Our campgrounds host people looking for a weekend full of mountain biking at the Scotts Drop and Hoot Trail Systems.

NID's General Manager, Jennifer Hanson, joined NID in June 2021 as its 15<sup>th</sup> General Manager and the first woman to serve in the position in the District's 100 Year history. NID is governed by a five-member Board of Directors, elected to four-year terms by the District's voters. The Board is the District's policy-making body and policy is carried out by approximately 200 full- and part-time employees.

## TAB B: COVID-19 IMPACTS

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Sections 602(c)1 and 603(c)(1) acknowledge the disproportionate and negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism, travel, and hospitality industry (Department of the Treasury, pg. 3). Since the beginning of the pandemic, NID has experienced an increase in visitor demand at the eight reservoirs, especially Scotts Flat Reservoir because it is close to Nevada City and Grass Valley and easily accessible to both local and regional tourists looking for outdoor recreation opportunities. This has created a heavy impact on existing infrastructure and environmental assets within and surrounding the reservoirs; high usage of the roads, lake and trail areas has caused a strain on current amenities. The heavy use has caused a financial strain on the organization because it raises environmental and safety issues for the public. There is a higher risk of resource depletion and pollution, and pedestrian injury if visitor demand cannot be accommodated with safe and reliable

infrastructure.

Despite increasing visitor demand, the COVID-19 public health emergency has created a sudden decrease in revenues while simultaneously increasing COVID-related expenditures in the outdoor recreation sector. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA) recorded that California's ORSA value-added growth has decreased by 24.8% since 2019, a sharp decline from its pre-pandemic value nearing 5% positive growth (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020). This reduction indicates a significant loss in revenue for the industry and negatively impacts California's economic development.

In addition, industry organizations have had to allocate funding towards necessary COVID-19 mitigation and infection prevention measures to enable the safe resumption of tourism and hospitality for both staff and visitors. Global supply chain issues also contributed to the increase in spending on COVID-19 mitigation and infection prevention supplies as it was difficult to locate and purchase safe materials at a reasonable price. Many organizations had to pass on supply cost increases to the customer; increasing the prices of goods and services such as recreation fees and rentals.

As previously stated, the Scotts Flat Reservoir Recreation Area has experienced an increase in visitor traffic and as a result, created a need for infrastructure development. In June 2020, Nevada County launched the *Reopen Nevada County Plan*, authorizing the modified reopening of Campgrounds, RV Parks, and Outdoor Recreation. After several months of lockdown, the public was eager to get out and engage in outdoor recreation activities, many of whom were first-time recreation users. Outdoor recreation destinations were popular because they provide a space for visitors to connect with their natural surroundings, get exercise, and hold small gatherings with low COVID risk. Scotts Flat Reservoir has attracted both locals and regional visitors alike, due to its relative proximity and ease of access from the Sacramento area. However, the increase in visitor demand is exceeding the availability of parking amenities and creating a strain on existing recreation assets. On the north side of Scotts Flat Road, vehicles are being illegally parked on the critical, two-lane mountainous roadway, posing a public safety issue for neighbors, staff, and recreation users.

## TAB C: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Scotts Flat Reservoir Recreation Area has become the mecca of locals and regional visitors alike, bringing in well over 120,000 visitors per year. The majority of our recreation users come from all over northern and southern California and Nevada. On the north side of the reservoir access to public parking for mountain bikers, road bikers and hikers has led to increasingly dangerous parking issues along Scotts Flat Road. The County has installed signs along the roadway reminding people to park off the road and the campground offers \$5.00 parking for bikers. These additions to the safety of our recreation users and neighbors have helped with the dangers along the road, but the problem still exists. Cars parked along the road create an ingress/egress issue on the small two-lane road, especially during the busy summer months.

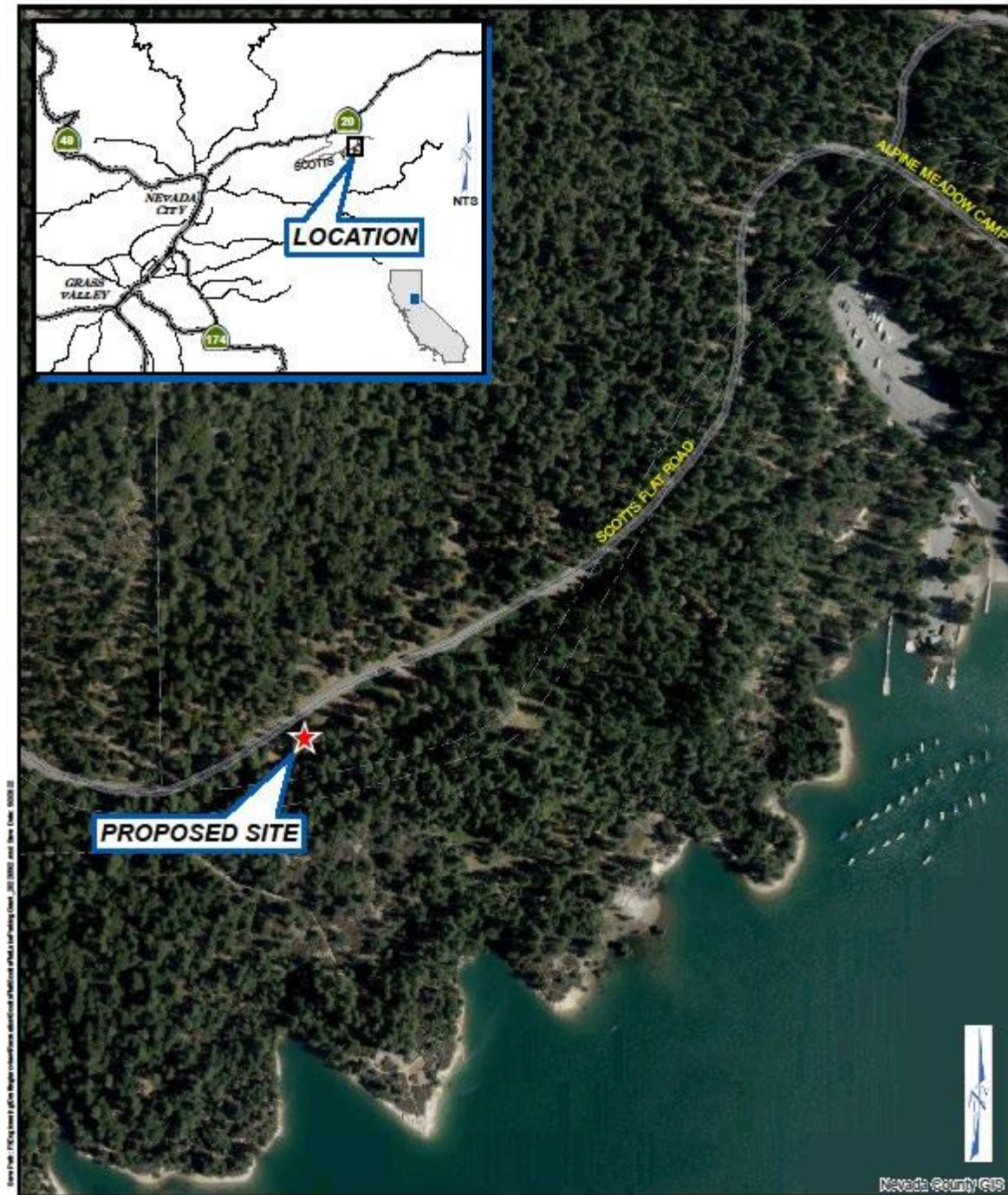
Nevada County is located in a High Fire Severity Zone and there is a real health and safety issue for those who drive and park along Scotts Flat Road, as well as, for our neighbors, staff and visitors. In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation of the campground and private landowners in the area, parked cars along the road could pose a threat to the evacuation process as well as emergency vehicle access. A quality, well-designed parking location, approximately a half-mile up from the Gate 2 entrance and the end of the Scotts Drop Trail, will help alleviate the year-round road congestion and parking hazards in the area (Figure 1. Scotts Flat Lake Proposed Parking Site). The location of the parking lot should be ideal for bikers since most of them park at the bottom of Scott Flat Road and bike up to the top of Scotts Flat and Highway 20 then take the Scotts Drop Trail back down.

The parking site will be approximately 100' x 60' and safely hold 15 - 20 parked vehicles with sufficient room to pull in, back up and maneuver around safely. We will also include one handicapped parking spot. The site will be graded for access and adequate drainage, rocked with  $\frac{3}{4}$ " - 1" appropriate base and top rock, designed for maximum vehicle amounts as appropriate, properly defined with perimeter barriers and will have educational watershed/recreation signage and trail markers. Since Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) does access this area a few times throughout the year for tree work, we will make sure the area is accessible to them by having a few movable barriers. The project will also require the rental of a stump grinder to remove three stumps for grading purposes. NID staff will build and install an 8' x 5' informational kiosk and a payment box will be attached to the kiosk. The kiosk will be located in the middle of the parking lot for easy and convenient access, with two garbage cans on each side. The kiosk will pose an educational opportunity for locals and visitors to understand their surroundings, watershed resources and recreational opportunities.

The project would be started and completed during our off-season between October 2022 and March 2023, with an opening in time for the 2023 summer season. Weather depending, the project should take approximately two weeks to complete. All of the labor work will be performed by NID's Recreation and Maintenance staff. The grant funds will be utilized for the necessary "Services and Supplies and Equipment Charges."

Consistent with the fee structure for bike parking within the campground, NID's Recreation Department will charge \$5.00 for parking in the lot. However, the fee of \$5.00 per vehicle will not be enough to cover the yearly expenses of ongoing long-term maintenance (grading, additional gravel, signage, etc.) and also for staffing needs for security and garbage pickup; therefore, NID's Recreation Department will cover these long-term expenses through its materials and supplies budget. The lot will be monitored by NID Recreation staff daily. The parking sites will be day-use only, with no overnight parking. This parking lot, although not in the campground, will be routinely inspected and maintained throughout the year, as needed, similar to the campground. NID's top priority in its recreation areas is the health and safety of the public and staff. If significant improvements are needed, or if there were a need for more parking spaces, the cost for those improvements will be budgeted into the following year's Recreation Project budget.

Figure 1. Scotts Flat Lake Proposed Parking Site



Source: 1:75000 scale 8.5x11 inch map of Nevada County, California, published by the Nevada State Geologist, 2010, and the Nevada State Geologist, 2008, and the Nevada State Geologist, 2008.

	<b>SCOTT'S FLAT LAKE PROPOSED PARKING SITE</b>	
	Date: <u>5/2/2022</u> Drawn By: <u>L. HAMMER</u>	NEVADA IRRIGATION DISTRICT NEVADA COUNTY – PLACER COUNTY GRASS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA
		Scale: <u>1" = 300'</u> @ 8.5x11 Sheet <u>1</u> of <u>1</u>

Construction of a new parking area will support NID's efforts to provide safe and reliable outdoor tourism and hospitality service to its ever-increasing number of visitors. As mentioned in the ARPA Interim Final Rule, communities are experiencing negative economic impacts due to budget shortfalls triggered by the COVID-19 public health emergency (Department of the Treasury, pg. 14). If awarded funding, the project will help promote economic recovery through the outdoor recreation industry and promote tourism to Nevada County.

## TAB D: COMMUNITY BENEFIT

The proposed parking area will enhance public health and safety for neighbors, staff and visitors by reducing the occurrence of unauthorized parking and easing year-round vehicle congestion on Scotts Flat Road. The project will increase road safety for drivers who use the road regularly, such as neighbors and staff. In addition, this project will help clear evacuation routes for emergency vehicles. Emergency vehicles must have right-of-way access to Scotts Flat Road without having to maneuver around illegally parked vehicles or encountering vehicle congestion on the roadway. Such factors can delay response time and create dangerous traffic congestion and roadway blockages in the event of an emergency or evacuation.

The proposed parking area will also promote equitable access for recreation users to engage with the outdoors without being deterred by physical barriers to entry. The proposed parking area will be constructed a half-mile up from the Gate 2 entrance and the end of Scotts Drop Trail, a popular mountain biking and hiking trail. Currently, recreation users have resorted to parking on the roadside or at the entrance of the reservoir, traveling by foot or by bike to access reservoir assets. Factors such as long walking distance, uneven terrain, and the risk of walking alongside speeding traffic can prevent recreation users from accessing the trailheads and lake, and even deter visitation to the reservoir. Such barriers can also result in pedestrian injury. By upgrading the parking amenities, NID can promote equitable accessibility and safety to outdoor spaces.

The construction of quality and safe parking infrastructure will also promote resiliency for both the reservoir and the County of Nevada. An investment in infrastructure is an investment in the economic future of the region and will serve locals and visitors for years to come.

In addition, the proposed parking area will help preserve environmental assets in the reservoir. Unauthorized roadside parking destroys plant life and creates soil erosion, which negatively impacts the resiliency of the watershed, including water quality, in the reservoir. Additionally, the proposed project will help protect the environment by installing signage that will educate visitors about the local watershed.

## TAB E: LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES

Most, if not all, the earth moving work, grading, drainage, tree cutting and installation of the parking barriers and fencing will be performed through the expertise and capacity of NID staff and equipment. Although NID will not necessarily be leveraging funding from other resources or



outside agencies, it will be leveraging internal resources. The work performed by NID staff will be funded by NID Department budgets. We will, leverage the help of our partnerships with [Bicyclists of Nevada County](#) (BONC), [Youth Bicyclists of Nevada County](#) (YBONC), [Bear Yuba Land Trust](#) (BYLT), the [Fire Safe Council](#) and the [County](#) for their guidance and expertise on signage and getting the word out about the new parking area and the importance of keeping Scotts Flat Road safe and clear by parking in the new parking lot.

## TAB F: MANAGEMENT CAPACITY AND MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Our primary outcome for this project is to alleviate year-round vehicle congestion and increase public and neighborhood safety on the critical two-lane mountainous road leading to the trailheads around the reservoir. The indicator from the outcomes would be the number of cars parked in the new lot as well as those who are still parking on the road. NID's Park Ranger will monitor the parking lot and the on-street parking. A tally sheet will be developed that our Park Ranger will fill out several times throughout the day. Using the special code for "bike parking" will ensure that payment and use tracking is accurate. While payment information is not 100% reliable because not everyone will pay due to the payment box being an honor system, the Park Ranger will follow up with a tally sheet to capture any possible missing data. Handouts will also be placed on the windshields of cars parked on the road informing them of the new parking lot, as well as encouraging them to use the new lot for the safety of our community, neighbors and staff. With the results of daily tallies and financials, we will be able to develop a Parking Lot Status Report that can serve as a deliverable of the grant award.

## TAB G: BUDGET AND FINANCIALS

The total budget for this project is estimated at \$39,831.00. NID is requesting \$18,000.00 in grant funding from the Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund. The funding request will cover the project's services and supplies costs and NID equipment charges (144 hours of equipment work) as outlined in the attached budget (Attachment A: Line-Item Budget). Hourly rates are based on Caltrans Equipment Rates. NID staff will design, build and complete the project; salaries and benefits are estimated to be \$21,831.00, which covers four full-time NID employees across the span of 10 workdays for a total of 320 hours of work. Please refer to Attachment A: Line-Item Budget for budget details.

Please refer to Attachment B: Nevada Irrigation District Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, 2020, for the most recent audited financial report details.

## REFERENCES

"Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, Interim final rule, 31 C.F.R. Part 35".  
Department of the Treasury. 86 Fed. Reg. 93. (May 17, 2021). Accessed at  
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-05-17/pdf/2021-10283.pdf>

“Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA), 2020-California”. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. 4 Nov., 2021. Accessed at <https://apps.bea.gov/data/special-topics/orsa/summary-sheets/ORSA%20-%20California.pdf>