



COUNTY OF NEVADA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Memorandum

MEETING DATE: February 28, 2023

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Trisha Tillotson, Community Development Agency Director

SUBJECT: Resolution approving submittal of an application to the U.S Endowment for Forestry and Communities' 2023 Innovative Finance for National Forests (IFNF) grant program requesting \$150,000 to fund an economic and financial feasibility study of in-depth cross-jurisdictional financing models and partnerships to support implementation of Recreation and Resiliency projects on Tahoe National Forest public lands in Nevada County and authorizing the Community Development Agency (CDA) Director or their designee to execute this application and other required documents.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt the resolution.

FUNDING: There is no application fee for the IFNF grant. If awarded, the grant will be managed through the CDA Recreation Budget. The grant application will request the maximum award amount of \$150,000 to contract with a financial consultant, with 11% allocated towards the CDA Senior Administrative Analyst (Recreation) to cover project management costs as well as 10% for in-direct County costs. If the proposed grant application is awarded, approval will be requested by the Board of Supervisors.

BACKGROUND:

At the regular meeting of February 7, 2023, the Nevada County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 23-0068, establishing Recreation as a 2023 Board Objective to promote sustainable recreation in partnership with community providers and other

jurisdictions to enhance recreational access, support public health and safety, realize economic opportunities, and preserve natural resource assets.

The principal goal of the Innovative Finance for National Forests Grant Program is to support the development and implementation of innovative finance models that leverage private and public capital other than US Forest Service (USFS) annual appropriations to enhance the resilience of the National Forest System (NFS) and deliver commensurate returns to stakeholders.

The IFNF grant program seeks to:

- Leverage private and public capital other than USFS annual appropriations to support agency priorities;
- Deliver measurable social, ecological, and financial outcomes to multiple stakeholders;
- Demonstrate solutions that promise improved financial sustainability for land management;
- Chart a path to scale in addressing landscape-level challenges on and near National Forests;
- Generate lessons learned to incorporate in agency management and decision making.

The IFNF program funds grants to support local stakeholders and project developers to connect public and private capital to unfunded environmental challenges in National Forests and surrounding landscapes across the United States. The 2023 IFNF grant program emphasizes three focus areas: watershed health, sustainable recreation infrastructure and access, and wildfire resilience and recovery. The program provides funding for three project types: feasibility, pilot and scaling.

As such, Nevada County is proposing an economic and financial feasibility study to support the funding of recreation and resiliency projects that would help mitigate threats to life, property, the environment and outdoor recreation economy from wildfire, climate impacts and increased visitation. The study would cover 265 square miles of Tahoe National Forest public lands in Nevada County and surrounding headwaters of the Bear, Yuba, and Truckee Rivers. Further, this project will include a Joint Governance and Partnership Strategy to help set the conditions for deploying non-federal funding to cross-jurisdictional projects.

CDA Recreation Staff have evaluated the IFNF grant program with intradepartmental staff, stakeholders, and Recreation and Resiliency Master Plan consultants Design Workshop and Sierra Business Council. Additionally, the Tahoe National Forest Ranger Districts support the County's intention to apply and will be assisting with review of the final application as a key stakeholder. Quantified Ventures, a certified B-Corp that works with pioneering organizations to design, capitalize, and scale solutions that generate positive environmental and social impacts, is providing grantwriting support for the IFNF

program. Quantified Ventures has undertaken over 90 outcomes-based projects, working with federal land managers, the outdoor recreation industry, and local communities to deliver comprehensive funding, financing, and governance strategies for the development and management of outdoor recreation infrastructure. The firm seeks to provide financial consulting services for this project, if the grant is awarded.

This recreation & resiliency economic and financial analysis will provide models that:

- (1) invest in natural resource protection, wildfire resilience/vegetation management, sustainable tourism practices and critical infrastructure (built/natural)
- (2) increase visitor spending and optimize fee structures;
- (3) enhance revenues to local gateway communities including sales/lodging taxes;
- (4) diversify economic development opportunities; and
- (5) value the benefits and return on investment from mitigation strategies that avoid loss of life, property, the environment and outdoor recreation economy

Upon the Board's approval, CDA Recreation Staff will submit the application to the U.S Endowment for Forestry and Communities' IFNF grant program by the March 6, 2023 due date. If awarded, staff will return to the Board to request approval to accept the grant funds and provide an additional update.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt the resolution to submit an application to the U.S Endowment for Forestry and Communities' Innovative Finance for National Forests grant program.

Item Initiated by: Erika Seward, Senior Administrative Analyst

Approved by: Trisha Tillotson, Community Development Agency Director