



**TRUCKEE TAHOE AIRPORT DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTOR STAFF REPORT**

**AGENDA TITLE: Community Benefit – Wildfire Mitigation – Agency Partnership Discussion**

**MEETING DATE: March 27, 2024**

**PREPARED BY: Robb Etnyre, General Manager**

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Provide staff guidance on developing a community benefit program to support regional wildfire mitigation related to the Airport District boundaries.

**Background:**

1. The Truckee Tahoe Airport District (“District”) has established a recent history, over the past ~8 years, of utilizing tax revenue to support community programs.
2. In 2023, the District updated the underlying Board Policy Instruction (PI311) to better define the use of tax revenue related to the “Purpose of an Airport”.
3. In 2023, the District adopted a new strategic plan, which identified the following focus area goals related to the use of tax revenue.
  - a. 1.D. Give Back: Develop a community investment strategy that aligns directly to airport vision, mission, values, and public purpose.
    - i. 1.D.1. Define budget allocation of community investments.
    - ii. 1.D.2. Review existing community investments to prioritize major projects that benefit the region and align with airport purpose and mission (see Focus Area 3, Goal A for more details).
4. The District approved a budget for 2024, which included funds for both community sponsorships, agency partnerships, and \$2M for Wildfire Mitigation. The Wildfire Mitigation line item was contingent on further research and briefing to the District Board for approval.

5. On January 25, 2024, the District Board held a workshop on the District’s community benefit policy. Guidance from that workshop was as follows.
  - a. “There was agreement to host another Board Workshop centered around Airport Capital Projects to take place in the Spring of 2024. And, to continue with Policy Instruction 311 in its current form for 2024, but to further discuss potential policy adjustments to take effect for calendar year 2025 (adjustment concepts included: transition Agency Partnership minimum project funding to \$50k, and explore a new methodology/formula to budget for the Agency Partnership Program, transition community sponsorships to more broad based community benefit programs, and review in-kind community dollars and the associated policy instructions.).”

### **DISCUSSION: The Challenge and Opportunity**

1. Wildfire Mitigation and forest management is a complex, multi-jurisdictional, multiyear issue, which has broad based community stakeholders.

a. “Wildland urban interface (WUI) fire disasters and community risk reduction efforts can be very complex, crossing multiple geographic jurisdictions. This unique fire problem has become a high-risk public safety concern for life safety, public and responder health, private property and businesses, the economy, and ecology. Likewise, potential solutions also require an all-hands approach. The need for the engagement of multiple agencies is real.” Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell, U.S. Fire Administrator<sup>1</sup>

b. “California has seen a marked increase in forest fire activity in recent decades. This trend is expected to continue with climate change, endangering lives and altering ecosystems. Fuels reduction treatments, including controlled burning and mechanical removal of woody debris from fire-prone forests, have received increasing policy attention in recent years as a wildfire mitigation strategy. However, the impacts of regional-scale, multi-decadal fuels reduction programs are not well understood. We use a coupled dynamic vegetation and fire model to compare the impacts of different fuels treatment strategies to understand how intersecting technical and political constraints impact treatment efficacy over 100 years of treatments. We find that precise assignment of treatments to the most fuel-heavy stands in the region could decrease cumulative avoided fire-driven stand-replacement rates by ~50% compared with no-treatment simulations, and by ~30% when prioritization of fuel loading was lower. Opening remote, rugged, and multi-stakeholder lands for treatment in tandem with high prioritization of fuel loading could increase total avoided stand mortality events to ~90%.

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<sup>1</sup> Wildfire Evacuation Roundtable January 31, 2024, Federal Emergency Management Agency and U.S. Fire Administrator, presentation as part of the [International Association of Fire Chiefs](#) conference.

Overall, avoided live carbon loss rates are less sensitive to treatment, and remained relatively small in absolute terms. Importantly, we found that even effective treatments may take multiple decades to yield measurable results on a regional scale.”<sup>2</sup>

2. Potential for an Agency Partnership program with the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation in creating a collaborative pathway, review process, and leverage more resources aligned with established program goals. [Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation, Forest Futures](#)
3. Are additional community and agency partners interested in participating in a collaborative program to address wildfire mitigation?

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. TTAD Board Policy Instruction 311
2. U.S. Fire Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), [Wildfire Evacuation Roundtable, January 31, 2024 \(Slide Presentation\)](#)
3. “Do Vegetation Fuel Reduction Treatments Alter Forest Fire Severity and Carbon Stability in California Forests?” Advancing Earth and Space Science, Earth’s Future, RESEARCH ARTICLE 10.1029/2023EF003763
4. TRUCKEE TAHOE AIRPORT DISTRICT PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT
5. [A POSITION PAPER OF THE TAHOE TRUCKEE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION](#)

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<sup>2</sup> Kristofer L. Daum, Winslow D. Hansen, Jacob Gellman, Andrew J. Plantinga, Charles Jones, and Anna T. Trugman. “Do Vegetation Fuel Reduction Treatments Alter Forest Fire Severity and Carbon Stability in California Forests?”. Advancing Earth and Space Science, Earth’s Future, RESEARCH ARTICLE 10.1029/2023EF003763.

## Potential Agency Partnership Structure

