

**Tahoe Fund  
Communications Committee**

Meeting Notes, 6-30-11  
1:00pm – 2:30pm

**Board members present:** Mertens, Ritchie, Kahn, Wright, Friedrich, Greene (last 15 minutes)  
**Consultants present:** Thaler

**I. CONSERVATION STRATEGY GROUP (CSG)**

Mertens and Thaler met with CSG on 6/27/11 to discuss the most effective ways for the Tahoe Fund to get in front of key influencers in Sacramento. CSG suggested the following:

- **Lobby Days:** set up a number of 30-minute meetings with key legislators and a group of TF Board Members
- **Brown Bag Lunches:** set up an informal lunch with staffers to introduce them to the TF, inform them of Tahoe issues and answer questions
- **Tour of Tahoe:** schedule a CA legislative tour of Tahoe sometime in the winter; provide accommodations, skiing, activities for their kids, etc.

CSG stressed that it will be important for the TF's message to be consistent with the Conservancy and EIP messaging, and that our presentations should provide a broad picture of what is happening in the basin. The committee will provide CSG with our messaging and CSG will help us distribute our message. Mertens will be the point person in communication with CSG.

CSG expressed concern about the lack of branding and understanding about the EIP and suggested that the TF come up with a new sub-name or slogan for the projects that will be funded.

**II. SLOGAN**

After a brief discussion, the committee agreed to recommend moving forward with:  
**Together Creating a Legacy**

**III. TOP 5 REASONS TO SUPPORT THE TAHOE FUND & TALKING POINTS**

After a brief discussion, the committee agreed on replacing "activists" with "advocates" for our 5th reason to support the Tahoe Fund:

**Top 5 Reasons...**

1. To deliver projects that ensure a sustainable future for Lake Tahoe.
2. To balance our environments.
3. To nurture a culture of environmental stewardship.
4. To encourage public-private partnership and collaboration.
5. To inspire a new generation of **advocates** for Lake Tahoe.

**Messages:**

1. The Tahoe Fund is a non-profit organization that raises private money to match available public funding for on-the-ground environmental improvement projects in the Tahoe Basin.

**Proof point 1:** The Tahoe Fund builds financial partnerships with foundations, businesses and individuals.

**Proof point 2:** The Tahoe Fund builds partnerships with other non-profits.

**Proof point 3:** Projects are related to conservation, recreation and education.

2. The Tahoe Fund is led by a board representing the diverse interests of the community, including leaders in business, real estate, state and local governments, recreation and the environment.

#### **IV. PROPOSED QUOTE FROM FEINSTEIN**

The committee briefly reviewed Mertens' revised quote for Feinstein with no suggested changes. It was also discussed that Feinstein may have mentioned the Fund in a recent Tahoe Quarterly article. If so, we may be able to leverage a quote from the article. Thaler will follow up. The committee would like to include a quote from Feinstein in the Fund's media release about the Summit later this month.

The committee was not convinced that a quote is necessary at this time.

**ACTION ITEM:** Thaler to follow up on Feinstein quote in latest issue of Tahoe Quarterly and provide to Mertens for media release on the Summit

v3.0

"The new Tahoe Fund fills the private investment void in the basin as it is focused on obtaining private money to leverage the available public funds committed to environmental improvements. The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act for over a decade has provided the federal impetus for project funding in the Tahoe Basin, with additional support from state and local jurisdictions in Nevada and California. Significant private partnership is still required to bring about the on-the-ground enhancements. The non-profit Tahoe Fund is the mechanism needed to propel this public-private partnership."

V1.0 5-23-11

The new Tahoe Fund fills the private investment void in the basin as it is 100 percent focused on obtaining private money to leverage the available public funds committed to environmental improvements. The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act for over a decade has provided the federal impetus for project funding in the Tahoe Basin, with additional support from state and local jurisdictions in Nevada and California. Significant private partnership is still required to bring about the on-the-ground enhancements that will help preserve this national jewel. The non-profit Tahoe Fund is the mechanism needed to propel this public-private partnership."

#### **V. PROPOSED QUOTE FROM REID**

The committee briefly reviewed Mertens' quote for Reid with no suggested changes.

v1.0

"Projects in Nevada will benefit from the private donations raised by the Tahoe Fund. This is a partnership that addresses current environmental issues as well as the need for Lake Tahoe to be preserved for our future generations. With the financial help provided by the Tahoe Fund, our state will be able to provide better recreational and educational activities for Nevadans while remaining active in the preservation of this Jewel of the Sierra."

#### **VI. TALKING POINTS – SB271**

The committee briefly reviewed Mertens' talking points for SB 271 with no suggested changes.

**Position:** The Tahoe Fund strongly supports a bi-state Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

**Messages:**

1. The Tahoe Fund supports cooperation between the two states, the federal government and local counties and municipalities in a common effort to protect and improve the extraordinary natural environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin by building broad support for projects and programs that preserve the Lake for the enjoyment of current and future generations.
2. The Tahoe Fund favors a strong partnership between the States of Nevada and California and among all stakeholders in endeavors related to responsible management and improvement of the natural and human environments at Lake Tahoe.

**VII. TALKING POINTS – REGIONAL PLAN**

The committee briefly reviewed Mertens' talking points for the Regional Plan with a few suggested changes from Wright. The committee also discussed the public's general lack of understanding of the EIP. Mertens recommended that in the near future the committee discuss the EIP and an alternative "brand" that might resonate better with legislators and the public.

**Position:** The Tahoe Fund supports adoption as soon as possible of a TRPA Regional Plan.

**Messages:**

1. The Tahoe Fund supports environmental improvement projects that are based on thresholds and provisions of the TRPA Regional Plan.
2. TF helps fund agency projects that are consistent with the EIP and the Regional Plan.

**Proof Point:** Until a Regional Plan is updated every project in the Tahoe Basin will be controversial

Without an updated Regional Plan, projects of any type will be subject to outdated rules and regulations, subjective interpretation and vulnerable to variations and loopholes that threaten the integrity of responsible attempts to responsibly manage the natural and human environment at Lake Tahoe.

**ACTION ITEM:** Thaler to add EIP discussion to next Comm Comm agenda.

**VIII. NEWS RELEASES**

Mertens reviewed the following news release schedule with the committee:

- **Benefit Dinner & Art Auction Release**
  - Monday, 7/4 draft
  - Tuesday, 7/5 sign off
  - Thursday, 7/7 drop

Thaler communicated Chapman's offer to leverage JMA's PR firm in SF to help distribute the release. Mertens asked Thaler to follow up with Chapman on the deadlines for special sections in the SF Chronicle. Ritchie also suggested we send the release locally to the Tahoe Mountain News and soon since they are a monthly publication. Ritchie will send Mertens the information.

- **Summit Release**

- Monday, 7/11 draft
- Tuesday, 7/12 sign off
- Thursday, 7/14 drop

Mertens asked Thaler to get approval from Gina Banks on the “organizing sponsor” title. Wright also expressed his preference to lead with announcing the Summit rather than lead with announcing the Fund as the sponsor.

- **Children’s art contest**

- Monday, 7/18 draft
- Tuesday, 7/19 sign off
- Thursday, 7/21 drop

Mertens asked Friedrich to provide the first draft of the release for the children’s art contest. Distribution of this release will be targeted to local media.

Mertens added that a separate release about the Tahoe Fund’s first project(s) will go out just before the benefit dinner event on 8/15.

Greene offered to put together a list of radio contacts in the basin to be added to the media list for the Fund.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**Mertens** to write news releases for benefit dinner, Summit (and receive from Friedrich the children’s art contest release)

**Ritchie** to send Mertens the contact information and publication schedule for Tahoe Mountain News.

**Friedrich** to write draft release for children’s art contest

**Greene** to provide list of radio contacts in the basin for TF media list

**Thaler** to follow up with Chapman leveraging JMA’s PR firm to help distribute the event release

**Thaler** to follow up with Gina Banks on “organizing sponsor” title

**IX. COLLATERAL UPDATE**

Thaler gave brief update on the following collateral pieces:

- Web site: build is complete, currently entering content and photography
- Project Portfolio: in final design
- Letterhead: completed
- Bcards: designed for the Kahns; at the printer and should be ready for first cocktail party on 7/7

**X. MISC**

Ritchie asked Mertens to reemphasize talking points at the next Board meeting.