

## **SNPLMA Rounds 7-9 Grant to the Tahoe Science Consortium**

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### **Annual Accomplishments Update (October 1, 2008-September 30, 2009)<sup>1</sup>:**

#### **Round 7:**

The Round 7 workplan has been substantially completed and efforts have moved on to the Round 8 workplan. In November- December 2008, the TSC completed an independent survey to assess the value, perceptions and goals of the TSC as the first step in developing a strategic plan; a final report of the survey was completed and distributed to all survey participants, and it is available on the TSC website ([www.tahoescience.org](http://www.tahoescience.org)). One of the major products was the revised Science Plan, which was submitted for publication in January 2009. The TSC Peer Review Committee administered the review of 56 science proposals for Round 9 of SNPLMA and recommended 14 proposals for funding in February 2009. The TSC transmitted its recommended list of Round 10 science themes and subthemes in November 2008; this list was subsequently adopted by LTBEAC, LTFAC, TREX, and the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) executive committee. We held a climate change symposium in March 2009; symposium products are available at the TSC website. Revisions of the forest management literature review and synthesis papers were completed in July and distributed to the Lake Tahoe Management Unit (LTBMU); subsequent reviews resulted in another round of revisions, which were forwarded to the LTBMU in September. A draft monitoring plan for vegetation management activities in sensitive areas of the Lake Tahoe Basin was distributed in December 2008; comments were received in January 2009. A revised draft was not produced due to agency concerns and changing expectations. However, the USFS Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) subsequently expressed interested in obtaining a formal peer review of the monitoring methods used to assess soil impacts from vegetation management activities in sensitive areas of the Tahoe Basin. The TSC has proposed to use remaining Round 7 funds to support the completion of this peer review. During the next quarter the TSC Director will work with COS members to develop a written prospectus for this review. A final version of this prospectus will then be presented to LTBMU staff for their consideration. We will initiate the review when all parties have agreed to the terms, approach, and timeline described in the review prospectus.

#### **Round 8:**

Work under the Round 8 workplan was initiated in the spring of 2009. Pacific Southwest Research Station (PSW) initiated Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 9 projects based upon recommendations of the Tahoe Science Consortium (TSC) Peer Review Committee. PSW staff developed two new agreements with UN Reno and UC Davis and amended an existing agreement with Desert Research Institute (DRI) to accommodate the Round 8 TSC scope of work. We revised the Request for Proposals for Round 10, and PSW issued it on

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<sup>1</sup> This document is an intermediate progress report, not a final report; consequently, any results should be considered preliminary and should not be cited. Please contact the principal investigators or the Tahoe SNPLMA Science Program Coordinator if you have questions.

September 2, 2009. TSC representatives prepared seven technical posters for presentation at the August 8th Tahoe Summit and also made oral presentations at the event. The TSC Director and PSW Science Program Coordinator worked with Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) staff to develop ideas for the content and approach to completing annual science synthesis reports for monitoring and research efforts in the Tahoe Basin. The TSC Director completed the first draft of a white paper entitled “Reconsidering the approach for developing and discussing science needs and activities in the Lake Tahoe Basin with special emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of the Science Management Integration Team (SMIT), Tahoe Science Agency Coordinating Committee (TSACC), and Committee of Scientists (COS).” The TSC Director participated in a technical working group for development of the Tahoe Basin Status and Trends Monitoring and Evaluation Program, which is developing several products used to guide status and trends monitoring for Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) program areas. The TSC Director also participated in a technical working group for the development of performance measures for the Environmental Improvement Program. The TSC Director attended meetings of the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Coordinating Committee to identify ways the science community can help the agencies to address AIS issues, which has led to revised science subthemes. The TSC initiated the SNPLMA Round 11 science planning process. This included assembly of an initial list of themes and subthemes and participation in a meeting with agency executives to identify important management issues. The TSC Director has also worked with members of the COS and agency executives to improve the process for providing scientific input and reviews for SNPLMA capital projects. The TSC Director developed draft written guidance dealing with the issue of how the TSC will handle funding from sources other than SNPLMA. The TSC drafted and revised plans based upon agency input for managing the “rapid response” research funds allocated in Round 9 of SNPLMA and special “science integration” projects under Round 10 of SNPLMA. TSC and PSW staff developed a quarterly Tahoe Science Newsletter; the first edition focused on the topic of climate change and was issued in September. The TSC planned a review and synthesis on the topic of water quality that will consider several issues germane to the Tahoe Basin, including aquatic invasive species. The TSC worked with agency representatives to plan a symposium to examine monitoring methods for stream restoration projects in the Tahoe Basin, which will be held in February, 2010. The TSC has also planned the March 2010 Lake Tahoe Basin Science Conference, which will be a two-day event of regional interest to scientists, government agency representatives, and stakeholders.

### **Round 9:**

Pacific Southwest Research Station (PSW) has finalized agreements for all of the Round 9 approved Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) projects with the exception of one with El Dorado County, which is currently under review by that organization. Tahoe Science Consortium (TSC) activities under the Round 9 workplan are scheduled to begin in March 2010. PSW has also modified the agreements with TSC members needed to implement the Round 9 workplan, although we have not yet established a format agreement with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) because of complications in identifying an appropriate mechanism for transferring funds. This complication has not delayed any work, however, and the TSC members have started to plan how the “rapid response” research funds allocated in Round 9 may be expended in the event of a qualifying emergency. PSW and TSC will initiate review of proposals under Round 10 of SNPLMA in the next quarter.