

Lake Tahoe  
Federal  
Interagency  
Partnership

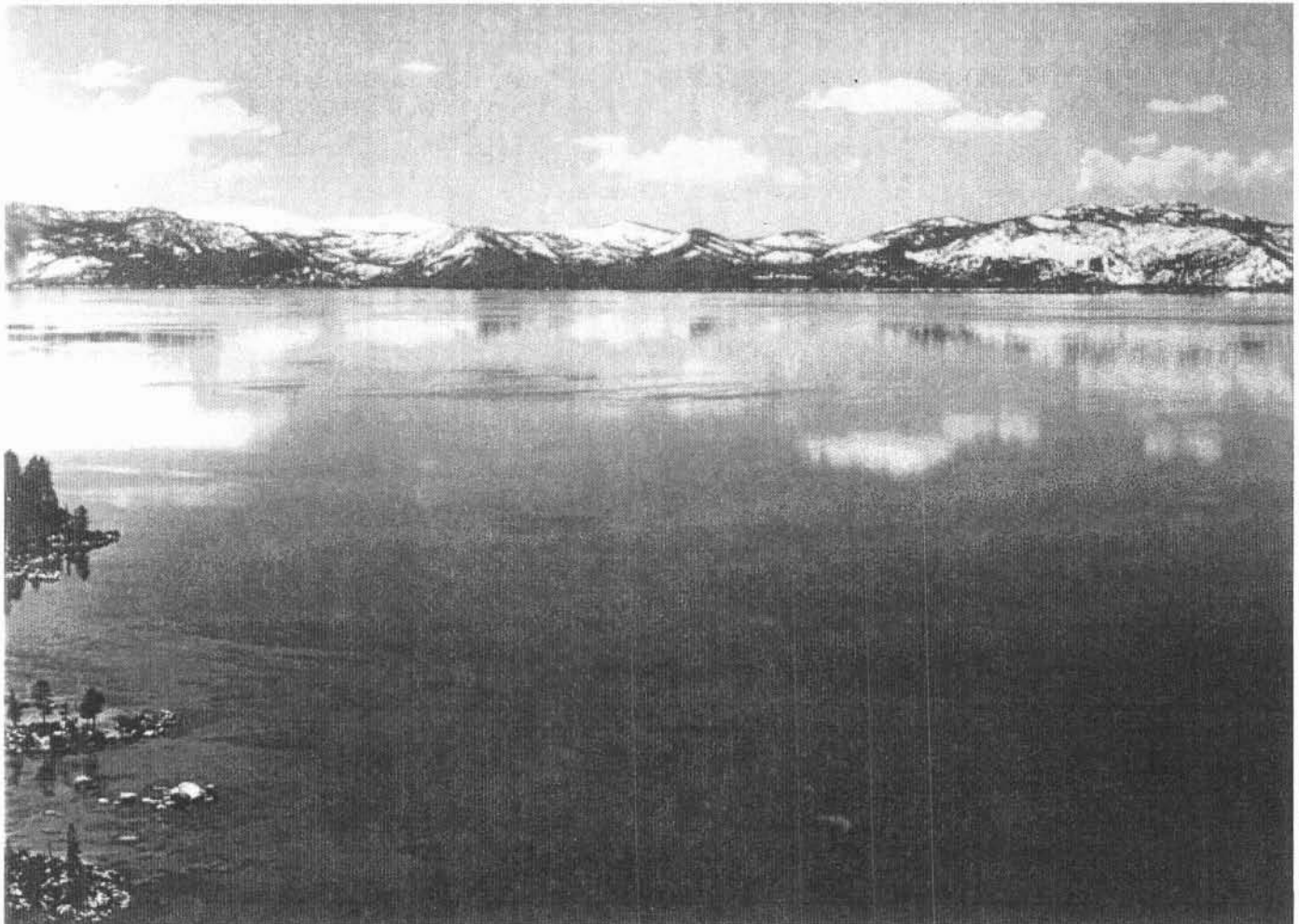


# Federal Interagency Partnership Review Of The Environmental Improvement Program For The Lake Tahoe Region

August 1999



US Army Corps  
of Engineers





# *Lake Tahoe Basin Executive Committee*

*A Lake Tahoe Federal Interagency Partnership*

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August 11, 1999

Dear Colleagues,

During the July 1997 Forum at Lake Tahoe, President Clinton and Vice President Gore pledged their support for the approach embodied in the Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) for the Lake Tahoe Region. Developed by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), the EIP is needed to achieve the environmental goals for the Lake Tahoe Basin, reverse the alarming declines in Lake water quality, restore the health of Tahoe's forests, and improve the transportation systems vital to our tourist based economy.

Much has been accomplished in the two years since the Forum. The federal agencies operating in the Tahoe Basin have come together in a Federal Partnership, delivered the funding promised by the President, and initiated or completed dozens of EIP-related and other projects. The States of California and Nevada have also implemented numerous EIP-related projects, and secured funding to support the EIP for years to come. We have expanded our scientific knowledge of the Tahoe Basin environment, and developed tools to help identify areas in most urgent need of protection. Nevertheless, much work remains to be done.

Now, the second anniversary of the Lake Tahoe Presidential Forum, is a most appropriate time for all parties to renew and revitalize their commitment to the EIP. The Federal Partnership has carefully reviewed the EIP and prepared the attached report, renewing and expanding our statement of support for the EIP, and offering recommendations for efficient implementation of the EIP in the coming years. In addition, and most importantly, with this report, the Federal Partnership commits staff to actively participate in a process, together with our partners in the Tahoe Basin, to plan and manage the EIP's implementation. This means that planning of federal projects in the Tahoe Basin will be closely coordinated with local plans and actions to implement the EIP's much needed

restoration and protection projects. Representatives of the federal agencies will be at the table with our partners from TRPA, the States of California and Nevada, the Washoe Tribe, and other key participants, adjusting the EIP to account for new scientific findings, making decisions about which EIP projects should go forward, and coordinating among the many agencies involved.

We have made a good start on implementing the EIP, but completing the hundreds of remaining projects in the EIP is a costly and complex challenge. We must dedicate our efforts to guarantee the smooth, timely implementation of the EIP's many remaining projects. We hope that the federal government's commitment to the EIP process, along with the recommendations in this report, will help to achieve the crucial task before us, to save and protect Lake Tahoe for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Juan Palma". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Juan Palma, Chair

**LAKE TAHOE FEDERAL INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIP**

**REVIEW OF THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (EIP)  
FOR THE LAKE TAHOE REGION**

**August 1999**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Environmental Improvement Program (EIP), adopted by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) in 1998, is a strategy to achieve the environmental goals for the Lake Tahoe Basin through implementation of capital improvement projects and programs. At the 1997 Presidential Forum on Lake Tahoe, President Clinton directed the federal agencies with responsibilities at Lake Tahoe to form a partnership and to support regional programs needed to attain the environmental threshold standards, including the EIP. The Federal Partnership further committed to review and comment on the EIP, and identify ways for the federal government to coordinate and integrate its activities with the EIP. This report summarizes the Federal Partnership's review and commentary regarding the EIP.

The Federal Partnership finds that there is widespread support for the EIP in the Tahoe Basin and that the EIP is viable framework for guiding implementation of actions needed to attain the environmental thresholds for the Tahoe Basin. The EIP conforms to federal guidance on watershed restoration action strategies. In this report, the Federal Partnership strengthens and expands its statements of support for the EIP, and recommends that all federal agencies operating in the Tahoe Basin coordinate their actions with the EIP.

Implementation of the EIP is underway. With the funding support of federal agencies, the States of California and Nevada, local governments, and the private sector, dozens of EIP projects have been completed or initiated. Through implementation of commitments made at the Presidential Forum, as well as base program activities, the federal government has already made substantial funding contributions to the EIP. California and Nevada are also providing significant funds in support of the EIP. Despite these efforts, much more is needed to restore Lake Tahoe and attain the environmental thresholds. The Federal Partnership agrees with the scientific studies and assessments made by the TRPA and other entities, which conclude that much work remains to be done in the areas of restoring forest health, managing traffic congestion and parking, watershed and habitat restoration, control and prevention of erosion, and the acquisition of environmentally sensitive land. The EIP is a viable framework for guiding this essential work which is needed to reverse environmental declines in the Tahoe Basin and achieve the area's environmental goals.

This report is not a commitment of federal funds to the EIP, nor a forecast of funding that may become available. Nevertheless, it is paramount that the activities of the Federal Partnership be coordinated with state and local partners. The Federal Partnership intends that the federal agencies active in the Tahoe Basin will be full partners with TRPA, the States, local governments, and the Washoe Tribe in a process developed by TRPA to manage and coordinate implementation of the EIP. The Federal Partnership recommends that this process be refined to establish a routine mechanism for periodically updating the EIP by adding/deleting projects, adjusting project priorities, and responding to findings from ongoing monitoring and scientific research. Finally, the Federal Partnership wishes to offer a number of suggestions for improving the EIP, and plans to work as members of the EIP Integration Team to address these recommended improvements.

# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. EIP BACKGROUND

The Environmental Improvement Program (EIP), adopted by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) in 1998, is a strategy to achieve the environmental goals for the Lake Tahoe Basin through implementation of capital improvement projects and programs. The EIP is part of a broader Regional Plan, which also includes a code of ordinances, community plans, and transportation and environmental management plans.

The federal government was instrumental in setting the stage for key aspects of the environmental management framework now operating in the Tahoe Basin. In 1979, the Western Federal Regional Council (Council) produced the Lake Tahoe Environmental Assessment, which analyzed the impacts of development on the Basin ecosystem and made recommendations for addressing the Basin's environmental concerns. The Council, which was established to address environmental problems in the Tahoe Basin, included representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service; the U.S. Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Energy; and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. To manage the environmental threats facing Lake Tahoe, the Council recommended adoption of environmental threshold standards and associated carrying capacities.

The recommendations of the Council were then incorporated into federal law entitled the "Tahoe Regional Planning Compact" (Public Law 96-551), which also established the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. In 1982, the TRPA adopted environmental threshold carrying capacity standards for the Lake Tahoe Basin. TRPA, working in cooperation with the States of California and Nevada, as well as federal government representatives, established threshold standards for nine categories of values identified for the Lake Tahoe Region. The threshold categories are:

Water Quality	Vegetation	Scenic Resources
Soil Conservation	Fisheries	Recreation
Air Quality	Wildlife	Noise

Since adoption of the threshold standards, a great deal of effort has been invested by the communities within the Tahoe Region and the States of California and Nevada in developing land use plans, resource plans, land use regulations, and improvement programs to achieve the thresholds.

The EIP, which was adopted by TRPA in 1998, is a strategy to achieve the environmental threshold carrying capacity standards for the Lake Tahoe Basin. In part, the EIP was developed in response to warnings from scientists that Lake Tahoe's water clarity would suffer irreversible damage unless significant restoration actions were implemented over the next ten years.

The EIP has four components:

- Planning,
- Action Plan,
- Implementation, and
- Monitoring and Evaluation

The EIP action plan is described in a document entitled the "Environmental Improvement Program for the Lake Tahoe Region," which lists regulatory programs, scientific research and study, and hundreds of capital improvement projects which, when implemented, will contribute to attainment of the Basin's environmental thresholds. The EIP document also proposes a sharing of responsibility among federal, state, and local governments and the private sector to fund, implement, and maintain the necessary programs and capital improvement projects. The list of capital improvement projects in the EIP was collected from various regional and community plans.

The federal government owns 77% of the land in the Lake Tahoe Basin. This land is managed by the Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, making the federal government responsible for many priority projects on Forest Service land.

#### **B. FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

As part of the Presidential Forum on Lake Tahoe, on July 26, 1997, President Clinton issued Executive Order #13057 directing the federal agencies with responsibilities at Lake Tahoe to form a partnership to achieve the environmental and economic goals identified during the Forum, and to support regional programs needed to attain the environmental threshold standards. In the charter which was subsequently signed forming the Lake Tahoe Federal Partnership, the member federal agencies agreed to review and comment on the EIP, and to integrate appropriate federal programs and funds to help achieve the its goals. This report fulfills the federal obligation to comment on the EIP, and will assist the Federal Partnership in better integrating federal programs to support the EIP.

#### **C. PURPOSE OF THE FEDERAL REVIEW**

In this report, the Federal Partnership:

1. Provides constructive comments on the EIP, and suggest approaches for improving its effectiveness.
2. Makes a public statement of the federal commitment to the EIP process.
3. Informs decision-makers (federal, state, and local) about the EIP and the status of its implementation.
4. Describes a consolidated federal position on the EIP, and identifies opportunities for coordination among the federal agencies operating in the Tahoe Basin.
5. Satisfies the obligation of the Federal Partnership Agreement.

## **II. FEDERAL STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE EIP**

At the Presidential Forum, the President pledged support for appropriate federal programs and studies needed to attain the environmental threshold standards for the Lake Tahoe Region. The Federal Partnership has examined the EIP, and determined that it is a viable



framework, or conceptual plan, consisting of a set of specific actions and projects for attaining the desired threshold standards. The Federal Partnership is pleased to recognize the widespread support in the Tahoe Basin for the approach embodied in the EIP, which serves as the focal point for key organizations in the region (TRPA, the Federal Partnership, the States of California and Nevada, the Washoe Tribe, and local governments and districts) to organize and guide implementation of a unified and coordinated approach for restoring Lake Tahoe and the surrounding Basin. Therefore, it is important that the agencies of the Federal Partnership respect the EIP process by developing and implementing federal projects for the Tahoe Basin in consultation with state, tribal, and local partners.

The Federal Partnership has determined that the EIP conforms to federal guidelines for environmental restoration plans. In the 1998 Clean Water Action Plan, the federal government encouraged a watershed approach to protecting and restoring the nation's water resources. Included in the watershed approach is a recommendation for development of Watershed Restoration Action Strategies to bring together federal, state, tribal, and local interests in a logical plan for attaining environmental goals. To assist groups in their efforts to restore watersheds, EPA developed guidance which describes the nine elements of a Watershed Restoration Action Strategy, which are:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Identify environmental goals            | 6. Monitor and evaluate progress                    |
| 2. Identify sources of pollution           | 7. Develop funding plans                            |
| 3. Implement controls and restoration      | 8. Implement a process for interagency coordination |
| 4. Implementation priorities and schedules | 9. Include public involvement                       |
| 5. Identify lead implementation agencies   |   |

The Lake Tahoe environmental threshold standards, periodic threshold reviews, and the Environmental Improvement Program embody these elements.

In addition to conforming to federal guidelines for watershed restoration plans, the Federal Partnership finds the following reasons to support the Environmental Improvement Plan:

1. Protection of Lake Tahoe is a high priority for the federal government, and the EIP offers a plan for restoring and protecting this national treasure.
2. The nine environmental thresholds are an expression of the community's goals for desired environmental conditions.
3. The EIP is the primary framework document for achieving the nine thresholds.
4. The EIP incorporates projects from various local plans in the Tahoe Basin and therefore has undergone public review.
5. The EIP emphasizes a well-coordinated approach for capital improvements and is therefore a good investment for public funding.
6. Scientists agree that the EIP lists the types of projects needed to attain thresholds. Evaluation of the effectiveness of individual projects will be refined over time as more scientific knowledge is gained.
7. The EIP is an adaptive management plan which can be adjusted over time to account for new scientific knowledge and measures of success, through periodic threshold evaluations, new monitoring information, etc.
8. TRPA proposes a balanced and comprehensive approach to EIP funding

responsibility among the federal, state, and local governments as well as private interests.

### III. STATUS OF EIP IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the EIP is underway. With the funding support of federal agencies, the States of California and Nevada, local governments, and the private sector, dozens of EIP projects have been completed or initiated. In addition, several governmental programs, environmental monitoring, and scientific research projects are in place to help coordinate and guide EIP implementation.

The EIP lists hundreds of capital improvement projects which, when implemented, will contribute to attainment of the environmental thresholds. TRPA proposes that \$908 million be directed to implementing EIP capital improvement projects over a ten year period which began in 1997. In addition, the EIP lists dozens of scientific research projects and studies, totaling \$18 million, which are needed to better understand the Lake Tahoe environment and effectively adapt the plans for implementing the hundreds of capital improvement projects. Finally, the EIP lists a variety of governmental and community programs needed to support implementation of the EIP. The EIP includes a proposed sharing of the \$908 million capital project expenses as described below.

TABLE III-1: EIP's Proposed Apportionment of Ten Year Capital Project Needs					
	Private Sector	Local Govt.	State of California	State of Nevada	Federal Govt.
Allocation (\$ millions)	\$152.7	\$101	\$275.1	\$82	\$297.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 908 million</b>				

Since the Presidential Forum in July 1997, the federal government has carried out dozens of projects and initiated several programs that are either in the EIP or otherwise aimed at attaining the environmental thresholds (See Table III-2). Among these federal projects and programs are the 39 Presidential Commitments, over \$25 million in federal actions in the Basin as promised by the Administration at the 1997 Forum. With these projects alone, the federal agencies have directed nearly \$20 million to EIP projects (note that not all Presidential Commitments are for actions included in the EIP). Federal base programs and other Lake Tahoe initiatives since the Forum have brought even more federal funds to implementation of the EIP.

**TABLE III-2  
PARTIAL LISTING OF FEDERALLY FUNDED EIP PROJECTS**

<b>CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS</b>		
<u>Forest Health</u> Urban Lots Prescribed Burning Mechanical Treatments	<u>Watershed Preservation</u> Land Acquisition	<u>Watershed Restoration</u> USFS Watershed Restoration
<u>Runoff Control/Prevention</u> NDOT Master Plan Ski Way Stormwater Basin Forest Roads	<u>Transit</u> Coordinated Transit System East Shore Shuttle N. Tahoe Transit Center Mail Delivery	
<b>SCIENCE PROJECTS</b>		
<u>Decision Making Tools</u> Water Clarity Model Real Time Management	<u>Environmental Assessment</u> LTIMP Monitoring Mapping Lake Tahoe Gasoline Pollution Lahontan Cutthroat Trout	Wetlands Restoration Watershed Assessment Fire History
<b>PROGRAM SUPPORT</b>		
<u>Programs</u> Research Team Road Weather System Backyard Conservation Source Water Program	Forest Health Group GIS Internet Database EPA Staff Support Water Quality Agreement	<u>Capital Projects</u> Studies/Planning Restoration Opportunities Watershed Partnership

Federal activities in the Tahoe Basin include EIP capital improvement projects in the areas of forest health, acquisition of environmentally sensitive land, watershed restoration, runoff control and prevention, and transit projects. In addition, the federal government has invested in studies and projects to enhance our scientific knowledge of the Lake Tahoe environment, thus improving our ability to make wise decisions on the use of public funding for future EIP capital projects. Finally, the federal government has directed funding to establish and implement programs that will support the implementation of the EIP. Overall federal action in the Basin is described in detail in the May 1999 report, "Progress Report, Federal Actions at Lake Tahoe."

A number of processes are underway to garner the resources necessary to meet the funding needed to carry out the EIP:

- As noted above, the federal government has provided substantial funding over the past two years for EIP capital projects, science projects, and program support, and

will be seeking further funding to meet the federal commitments in succeeding years. A broad based coalition of Tahoe interests is pursuing \$33 million in Congressional requests for federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2000.

- The State of Nevada passed a \$20 million bond measure in 1996 and an additional \$56.4 million bond measure in 1999 which nearly fully funds the Nevada's share of the EIP.
- California passed a \$10 million bond measure in 1996; has been fully funding the California Tahoe Conservancy at \$21 million for the past two years; and is considering a bond initiative for the year 2000 ballot to help meet its share of the EIP.
- At the local level, discussions are underway through the Chambers of Commerce to analyze financing options available to local government and private entities. In addition, the TRPA is currently undertaking an EIP finance plan to further refine funding needs and to identify funding mechanisms.

An important factor in all of these efforts is the assurance that each of the partners is working toward meeting their respective commitments. In particular, federal resources are critical for leveraging the state and local resources necessary for successful completion of the EIP.

#### **IV. FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EIP**

##### **A. FURTHER WORK NEEDED TO ATTAIN THRESHOLDS**

In 1982, the TRPA established the environmental threshold carrying capacities for Lake Tahoe. Threshold carrying capacity is defined as a standard necessary to maintain the significant, recreational, educational, scientific, natural, and public health values in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The thresholds address nine components of the environment and are listed on page 2. The thresholds were developed using the best available monitoring and research information, and with input from the public and resource agencies. The thresholds were adopted by the TRPA Governing Board to serve as the standards for the Basin, and are to be achieved through implementation of the Regional Plan.

The TRPA reviews available monitoring information every five years to determine whether the Regional Plan is attaining the thresholds. In the 1996 Threshold Review, the TRPA found that the majority of threshold indicators are still in non-attainment. In fact, some measures, such as Lake clarity, are declining at an alarming rate. The 1988 Section 208 Water Quality Management Plan for the Tahoe Region, as well as the 1991 and 1996 threshold evaluations, called for an integrated threshold implementation program. In addition, the threshold evaluations also found that progress on attaining the thresholds was behind the pace envisioned by the Regional Plan, and indicated the need to increase the pace of improvement.

The EIP was developed in response to these findings, and identifies activities that are intended to reverse environmental declines and bring the threshold indicators into attainment. The EIP strategy evolved from the regulatory and capital improvement approach that has been underway within the Region for more than ten years, including those strategies in the Section 208 Plan and the Regional Plan. It is designed to accomplish, maintain, or exceed multiple environmental thresholds through an integrated, proactive approach.

The list of projects in the EIP represents the Basin's best plans, based on current scientific knowledge, for attaining the thresholds. TRPA has proposed a process for periodically modifying the EIP, and adding or deleting projects as more is learned about Tahoe's environment and the effectiveness of projects. (See Section VI for a more complete description of the EIP modification and implementation process.) A number of projects are now underway that will help decision makers modify and adapt the EIP project list based on environmental monitoring and project evaluations. One of these projects is the Real Time Management Program, which is designed to develop real time indicators of the environmental thresholds. Development of this program will allow TRPA to evaluate the thresholds on a yearly basis, rather than every five years. With this "real time" information, the TRPA and other agencies will be better able to adjust EIP projects to address those thresholds that are still not being attained.

At this time, the Federal Partnership is unable to make a definitive assessment of the total funding that will be needed to attain the environmental thresholds in the Tahoe Basin. However, the Federal Partnership agrees with scientific studies that warn that extensive action must be taken over the next decade to reverse the trend of declining water clarity and to avert an irreversible loss of Lake clarity. Based on this risk, the Federal Partnership agrees with TRPA that a significant investment over the next decade is warranted. Management processes and decision-making tools are in place or being developed that will provide for effective expenditure of public funds committed to the EIP.

## **B. PRIORITY PROJECT NEEDS**

Much work remains to be done in order to attain the environmental thresholds for the Lake Tahoe Basin. There is a particular need for capital improvement projects in the areas of forest health, land acquisition, watershed and habitat restoration, runoff controls and prevention, and transit. As the EIP capital improvement projects are implemented, it is important to monitor their effectiveness, and have a feedback system to adjust and improve implemented projects as well as plans for future projects. In addition, it is necessary to continue scientific studies and environmental monitoring needed to help make decisions about EIP funding. Finally, governmental agencies must continue supporting programs to implement the EIP. These priority projects and programs are highlighted in Table IV-1 below.

The EIP lists dozens of projects in each of these categories. This report will not attempt to assign a priority to individual projects listed in the EIP. Setting of these priorities is best done jointly with other Tahoe Basin stakeholders. As described in Section VI. of this report, the Federal Partnership is participating in a process that will manage implementation of the EIP, including procedures to identify priorities for individual projects.

**TABLE IV-1: PRIORITY PROJECTS NEEDED TO ATTAIN TAHOE THRESHOLDS**

<b>CAPITAL PROJECTS</b>		<b>SCIENCE AND PROGRAMS</b>	
<b>Forest Health</b>		<b>Scientific Studies</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mechanical Treatments*</li> <li>Prescribed Burning*</li> </ul>		<b>Monitoring</b>	
<b>Land Acquisition*</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental Monitoring</li> <li>Project Effectiveness</li> </ul>	
<b>Watershed and Habitat Restoration*</b>			
<b>Runoff Control and Prevention*</b>			
<b>Transit</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic and Parking Management*</li> <li>Highway Runoff Controls</li> <li>Public Transportation Systems</li> <li>Pedestrian Paths and Bike Lanes</li> </ul>			

\* Particular need for these projects on USFS land in the Lake Tahoe Basin

**C. RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL PROJECTS FOR THE EIP**

The Forest Service is conducting a comprehensive watershed assessment of the Lake Tahoe Basin. The assessment will set the stage for identifying additional capital improvement projects, which are not currently listed in the EIP, but will be needed to attain the environmental thresholds. Based on the Federal Partnership review of the EIP and preliminary results of the watershed assessment, it is expected that the Forest Service and the Federal Partnership will recommend additional EIP projects in the areas listed below:

- Forest health projects on federal lands
- Watershed habitat restoration projects on federal lands
- Acquisition of environmentally sensitive land
- Programs to protect sensitive species
- Scientific studies
- Environmental monitoring

As described in Section VI. below, the Federal Partnership will work with the EIP Implementation Process to have specific projects added to the EIP as these projects are identified.

## **V. MECHANISMS FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT OF THE EIP**

### **A. FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND FUNDING MECHANISMS**

There are a variety of federal programs that are suitable for funding the types of priority EIP projects mentioned above in Section IV. Since the 1997 Forum, as noted in Section III. above, federal agencies have been actively funding and implementing EIP projects and programs. Most of the federal projects and programs carried out since the Forum are the same types of projects identified in this report as priorities for future work needed to attain the environmental thresholds. The federal agencies used a wide variety of programs and authorities to fund and implement the projects highlighted in Section III. In the future, pending the availability of federal funds, these same programs and authorities can be used to fund and implement additional EIP projects and other work needed to attain the environmental thresholds.

As the Federal Partnership works with TRPA, the States, the Washoe Tribe, and local governments to manage implementation of the EIP, it is important for all involved to understand the federal programs and funding mechanisms that may be used to implement EIP projects and make progress toward attaining the environmental thresholds. The federal programs and authorities that are best suited for the types of projects needed in the Tahoe Basin are listed in the Appendix. The list includes programs and authorities already used successfully in the Tahoe Basin, plus some additional programs identified by the Federal Partnership as potentially useful for Tahoe.

### **B. OPPORTUNITIES FOR COORDINATION**

As the Federal Partnership works with its state, tribal, and local partners to manage EIP implementation and attainment of environmental thresholds, it is important for the federal agencies to coordinate their activities among the various federal agencies and with state, tribal, and local partners. A key element of this coordination will be Federal participation in the EIP implementation process as described in Section VI. of this report.

Federal collaboration was one of the major commitments of the 1997 Forum, and the Federal Partnership has made great strides in enhancing federal coordination with its partners in the Tahoe Basin. The Federal agencies are now routinely consulting with and coordinating plans and actions with the many stakeholders in the Basin. The Federal Partnership agencies are participating in numerous planning processes and work groups that are directly or indirectly linked to implementation of the EIP. Examples include:

- Water Quality Working Group
- Upper Truckee Focused Watershed Group
- Forest Health Consensus Group
- Nevada Department of Transportation Master Plan Partnership
- State Route 28 Scenic Byways Steering Committee
- Tahoe Basin Roadway Maintenance and Operations Committee

In addition, the Lake Tahoe Basin Federal Advisory Committee is advising the Federal Partnership on integration and coordination of federal programs and funds to help achieve the EIP.

## **VI. EIP IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

### **A. TRPA's PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

The TRPA has developed a proposed EIP implementation process which will organize, coordinate and integrate the many interrelated planning, project development, and policy efforts in the Basin in order to effectively implement the EIP. The process is composed of three primary function areas, as shown in Figure #1: the working groups, the EIP integration team, and the existing executive/policy level decision-makers. The key to this process is the understanding that no one agency or organization can accomplish all that is needed to fully implement the EIP. The EIP is set up to rely on resources from federal, state, local, and private sources, and the implementation strategy is also designed to bring together agencies and organizations at different levels to accomplish this large task.

**1. Working Groups:** Although there are a number of existing issue-specific working groups, such as the Forest Health Consensus Group, the goal of this process is to better utilize these groups to address EIP implementation and priority setting. The groups consist of representatives from public agencies, private and nonprofit organizations, and the public. Where there isn't currently a group to cover each environmental threshold area, the process may need to create these groups to ensure that each threshold is adequately represented in the EIP implementation process. The groups will be tasked with developing and coordinating EIP projects, identifying project priorities, and identifying research, monitoring and maintenance needs. This information will be funneled through the Integration Team (see below) prior to policy level discussions.

**2. EIP Integration Team ("I-Team"):** The Integration Team, or I-Team, will play both a support role and development role in updating and implementing the EIP. The support role serves both the policy/executive and working group levels by acting as a link for communication, and by focusing integration activities. The development role is that of linking, overseeing, and creating the structure and process necessary to integrate, communicate, and implement policy and EIP project goals.

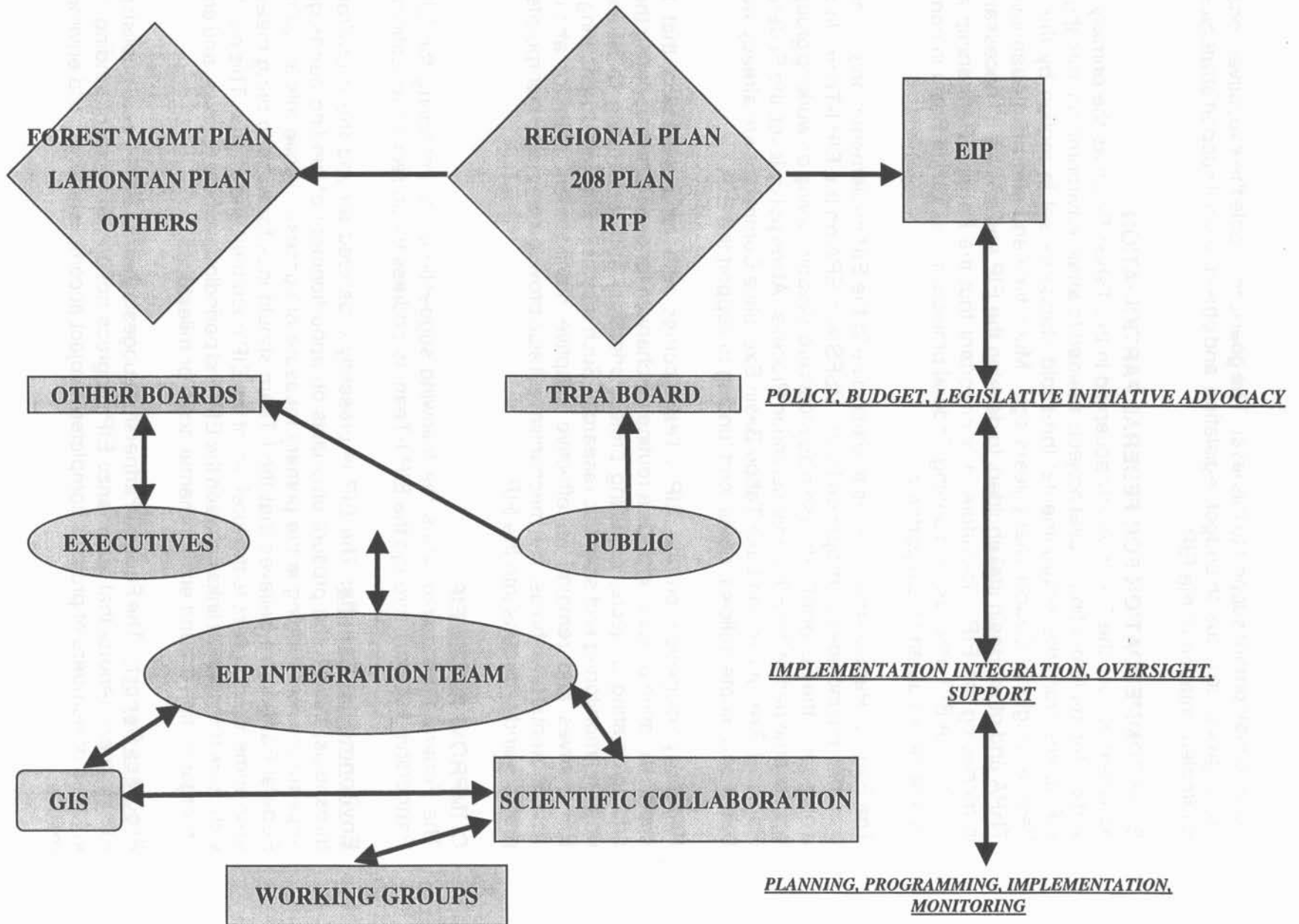
The I-Team will consist of agency representatives from federal, state, local, tribal, and regional government. In addition, an ancillary group will be created from the research community to serve as an advisory group to the I-Team. A second ancillary group will be dedicated to creating and operating a regional Geographic Information System (GIS) for availability to the agencies and public.

The I-Team will be responsible for the EIP update process which includes setting project priorities, adding and deleting projects, and project scheduling. In addition, the I-Team will be responsible for developing and overseeing the EIP finance plan, GIS operation and support, data collection, monitoring and evaluation, the working groups input on EIP priorities and implementation, and promotion, education, and advocacy of program goals.

**3. Policy/Executive Level:** The process will aim to improve coordination, communication, and agreement on policy and strategy at the executive level. This level includes federal, state, and tribal agency heads, and city and county managers. The I-Team will provide



**FIGURE 1. PROPOSED EIP IMPLEMENTATION AND UPDATE PROCESS**



policy development support to this level. The goal is to enable the executives, boards, and public groups to focus on budget, legislation, and other financial support strategies needed for implementation of the EIP.

## **B. RECOMMENDATION FOR FEDERAL PARTICIPATION**

As noted above, the EIP is widely accepted in the Tahoe Basin as the primary planning vehicle for implementing capital projects needed to attain environmental thresholds. The EIP stems from the environmental threshold standards set in motion by the Western Federal Regional Council many years ago. Much time and effort has been invested by TRPA and other Basin stakeholders to develop the EIP and involve all necessary parties in managing the EIP. Therefore, it is important that the Federal Partnership agencies respect the EIP process by planning Federal projects in the Tahoe Basin in consultation with state, tribal, and local partners.

The Federal Partnership commits to participate in the EIP implementation process. This commitment includes participation by the USFS and EPA on the EIP I-Team. In addition, a number of the Federal Partnership agencies are already serving on working groups which will become part of the EIP Implementation Process. At the policy level, the Federal Tahoe Regional Executives and Lake Tahoe Basin Executive Committee are already working to better coordinate policies, goals, and funding to support the EIP.

Federal participation on the EIP I-Team comes with an expectation that the EIP implementation process include a routine mechanism for periodically updating the EIP by adding/deleting projects, adjusting project priorities, and responding to findings from ongoing monitoring and scientific research. Such a system is crucial to ensuring that the EIP evolves and remains an effective adaptive management plan for attaining the environmental thresholds. The mechanism will also provide a way for to incorporate federal projects and programs into the EIP.

## **C. IMPROVING THE EIP**

The Federal Partnership offers the following suggestions for improving the EIP. The Partnership will work through the EIP I-Team to address these recommendations.

**Environmental Results:** The EIP is presently organized around the 9 environmental thresholds, though the present emphasis on apportionment of funding needs gives the appearance that funding is the primary measure of success. While this is not true, the Federal Partnership believes that the I-Team should look for ways to bring measures of environmental progress to the forefront of the EIP document and efforts. This can be done with more transparent links between the EIP and periodic threshold reviews, and emphasis on organization around environmental goals or milestones.

**Progress Reports:** The Federal Partnership suggests that the EIP I-Team publish periodic EIP progress reports that summarize EIP progress not only in terms of funding, but also in terms of numbers of projects completed, project accomplishments, and environmental results.

**Adaptive Management Systems:** A number of projects are underway in the basin to allow for more careful forecasting of project priorities based on predicted results. As intended, these adaptive management systems must be emphasized and closely linked with the EIP.

**Science:** The scientific community needs to be a part of the EIP project evaluation and recommendations. The proposed Science Advisory Panel, plus participation of scientists at the working group level should assure this involvement.

**Project Effectiveness:** As evaluation data becomes available, statements should be included in the EIP regarding effectiveness of past projects in moving toward threshold attainment.

**Periodic Update Mechanism:** The EIP I-Team should focus early attention to developing an annual EIP update process and progress report, which includes input from the working groups and other stakeholders.

**Project Scheduling:** The EIP currently assigns an implementation year to each project, with the schedule considering both the environmental priority as well as practical implementation considerations. The Federal Partnership suggests that the EIP address project scheduling and sequencing in greater detail. Should funds become available for EIP projects, it is crucial that there be a queue of projects ready to go. The EIP should indicate the schedule for project funding, planning, design, environmental review and permitting, and implementation.

**Identification of Funding Sources:** The Finance Plan should be incorporated into the EIP to better reflect potential funding sources and, therefore, viability of project implementation. In addition, as EIP projects are further refined, project costs should also be refined to better reflect the actual costs associated with each project.

**Project Operation, Maintenance, and Evaluation:** The EIP should address both the long term operation and maintenance of projects as well as the project-specific monitoring and evaluation that is necessary to track improvements and threshold attainment.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Federal Programs Applicable to Attainment of Environmental Thresholds in the Tahoe Basin**

## APPENDIX

### Federal Programs Applicable to Attainment of Environmental Thresholds in the Tahoe Basin

#### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

##### Forest Service

Most of the Forest Service allocations are appropriated through the Interior Appropriations Committee. These funds are for research, State and private forestry, and National Forest System Lands. A majority of dollar allocations for the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit come from the National Forest System Lands budget. Below are highlights for Presidential initiatives and other special funding for Fiscal Year 2000, as well as some of the general funding programs.

Forest Service Special Funding sources applicable to the Tahoe Basin include:

President's Lands Legacy Initiative - This initiative highlights the Administration's commitment to making new tools available and working with states, tribes, local governments, and private partners to protect great places; to conserve open space for recreation and wildlife habitat; and to preserve forest, farmlands, and coastal areas. A large portion of the Initiative is funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The "Great Places" component focuses on federal lands acquisition (\$118 million for the Forest Service), while the "Green Space/Smart Growth" component emphasizes conservation grants, and public/private partnerships and technical and funding assistance programs (\$100 million for the Forest Service). The Forest Service portion of this Federal initiative is funded through State and Private Forestry programs, such as the Forest Legacy Program, Urban and Community Forestry Program, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Land Acquisition Program.

The Clean Water Action Plan - The Clean Water Action Plan directs Federal agencies to manage Federal lands on a priority watershed basis, and to work cooperatively with States and Tribes in determining priority watersheds where protection and improvement programs will be focused. The Fiscal Year 2000 budget includes an increase of \$89 million for this initiative compared to Fiscal Year 1999.

Recreation Fee Demonstration Program - This program is proposed to be permanently expanded beyond 2002, and would authorize the direct expenditure of all recreation fees collected by the Forest Service.

The following are a few of the Forest Service General Programs relevant to EIP projects:  
The Burton-Santini Program - This program provides funding for land acquisitions in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

### State and Private Forestry Programs -

- Forest Stewardship Incentive Program - provides cost-sharing assistance to non-industrial private forest landowners for restoration and sustainable forest management activities.
- Forest Legacy Program - provides for land acquisition, conservation easements, and rights of public access to protect forest areas threatened by conversion to non-forest uses.
- Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Cost-Share Program - for urban and community forestry projects.

### **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**

Technical Assistance and Public Outreach - NRCS staff at Lake Tahoe provide public outreach and technical assistance to promote and support voluntary conservation measures by private landowners in the Tahoe Basin. An example of this assistance is the Backyard Conservation Program, under which NRCS has provided technical assistance and advice to hundreds of homeowners in the Tahoe Basin on installation of best management practices such as erosion control, water conservation, nutrient management, and vegetation.

Cost Share Programs - NRCS also has available several cost share grant programs that provide financial assistance for conservation and restoration work on private lands in agricultural production, forestry, or livestock grazing. These grants are often awarded based on a statewide competition, with proposals assessed against criteria that often favor areas with more intense agricultural production. The programs include:

- Emergency Watershed Program - restoration of watersheds damaged by floods.
- Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program - technical and financial assistance for installation of works of improvement to protect, develop, and utilize the land and water resources in small watersheds.
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) - provides technical, financial, and educational assistance for conservation measures on farms and ranches in priority areas where there are significant natural resource concerns.
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program - provides technical assistance and cost sharing to improve fish and wildlife habitat.
- Wetlands Reserve Program - provides landowners with financial incentives to enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal agricultural or grazing land. Landowners may sell a conservation easement or enter into a cost share restoration agreement.
- Forestry Incentive Program - provides cost share grants for tree planting, timber stand improvements and related practices on non-industrial private forest lands. Improvements can result in natural resource benefits including reduced soil erosion, and enhanced water quality and wildlife habitat.

## **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)**

Regulatory Programs - USACE regulatory programs include the Section 404 Permits (regulating filling of wetlands) and Section 10 Permits (navigation). A Section 404 permit is required whenever anybody desires to fill a wetland, even temporarily, including seasonal wetlands. A Section 10 permit is required whenever anybody desires to place objects, even temporarily, in a navigable waterway.

Civil Works Programs - Civil Works programs include investigation, design, and construction for a variety of water related features. With a few exceptions, these programs are cost shared with State or local sponsors who enter into a formal partnership with the USACE. The USACE provides 50-75% of project costs depending on program and phase. Cost share sponsors are responsible for ongoing maintenance and operation. Civil works includes aquatic ecosystem restoration, flood damage reduction, planning assistance to states and tribes, technical assistance to states and tribes, stream bank and shoreline erosion control, and flood plain management planning.

A variety of Civil Works programs exist to support projects of varying size and complexity. The programs include the USACE's General Investigation/General Construction Program (projects initiated by Act of Congress) and several Continuing Authority Programs (initiated by local request to the USACE or by Act of Congress in response to a local request).

- General Investigations and Construction Programs - address flood control problems through structural and nonstructural solutions, water supply needs, hydropower use, environmental restoration, and development or recreational opportunities.

Continuing Authority Programs include:

- Section 14, Emergency Streambank and Shoreline Protection - to prevent erosion damage to highways, bridge approaches, public works, and nonprofit facilities by the emergency construction or repair of streambank and shoreline protection works. Planning, design, and analysis are followed by construction of the projects.
- Section 205, Small Flood Control Projects - provides for local protection from flooding by the construction or improvement of flood control works such as levees, channels, and dams. Nonstructural alternatives are also considered and may include measures such as providing flood warning systems, raising and/or flood proofing structures, and relocating flood prone facilities.
- Section 206, Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program - provides for restoration and protection of aquatic ecosystems if it is determined that the project will improve the quality of the environment, is in the public interest, and is cost effective. A federally funded reconnaissance study to determine if there is a federal interest in pursuing these projects takes about 6 months.
- Section 208, Clearing and Snagging for Flood Control - provides for channel clearing and excavation, with limited embankment construction using only materials from the clearing operation.
- Section 1135, Project Modifications - for the improvement of the environment of existing USACE projects.

- Planning Assistance - to states, tribes, local governments, and other non-federal entities for the preparation of comprehensive plans for the development, use, and conservation of water resources and related land activities.
- Technical Assistance - provides assistance to states, tribes, and local governments in understanding the flood hazard associated with flood plains, and promotes the prudent use and management of flood plains, paid 100% by the USACE, or to address a broad range of water resources and water quality issues on a cost share basis through specific Congressional authorization.

Services to Other Federal Agencies - The USACE has a long history of providing emergency, technical, real estate, and contracting assistance to other Federal Agencies. This work is funded entirely by the other Federal Agency. Examples include supplementing technical staffs, managing FEMA emergency recovery, and using USACE contracts to execute work.

## **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR**

### **U.S. Bureau of Reclamation**

The Wetland Development Program - provides funding for wetland, riparian, and associated upland habitat protection, enhancement, and restoration. Funds can also be provided for monitoring, evaluation, and public education.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - receives federal appropriations and seeks 2:1 non-federal match for several categories of grants that would be suitable for Tahoe projects.

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program - The Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program provides funding on up to a 50 percent match for projects that restore wetland/riparian habitat through voluntary partnerships with private landowners.

### **U.S. Geological Survey**

The Geological Survey (USGS) has provided technical support to agencies in the Lake Tahoe Basin under a variety of programs. The largest and longest standing projects have been conducted under the Water Resources Division's Federal-State Cooperative Program, described below. Additional work by USGS research units has been funded as part of larger national science or research programs or as reimbursable projects funded in part by local or other Federal Agencies.

Federal-State Cooperative Program: This major program of the USGS Water Resources Division (WRD) matches local or State funds with USGS Federal Matching Funds (FMF) for USGS to conduct data collection or projects of mutual interest. Each USGS WRD District Office (based on State boundaries) receives an annual allocation of FMF for cooperative monitoring activities or research projects that address both local and national water-resources interests. These projects, conducted by USGS, require at least a 50 percent cash or in-kind service match from the local cooperating agency. Work conducted



in the Lake Tahoe Basin under this program includes the long-term monitoring of the quality and flow from tributary streams as part of the Lake Tahoe Interagency Monitoring Program (LTIMP) and recent studies in support of the Presidential Initiative to assess the occurrence of gasoline by-products in surface waters and analysis of the historical LTIMP data. USGS is prepared to continue its substantial investment in the basin in support of future monitoring and research projects under this cooperative program.

## **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation is an issue of vital importance to protect and enhance Lake Tahoe's tourism based economy and fragile environment. The Transportation Workshop, preceding the Lake Tahoe Presidential Forum, was chaired by the US Secretary of Transportation. The workshop built a partnership and consensus regarding the challenges and opportunities in the Lake Tahoe Basin to:

- Improve tourism and recreational access to and within the Tahoe Basin;
- Reduce automobile dependency and resulting congestion and air pollution;
- Enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities; and
- Mitigate other environmental impacts of transportation facilities.

Four U.S. Department of Transportation agencies have principal management or jurisdictional authorities in the Lake Tahoe Basin. These agencies agreed to cooperate with other interested parties to pursue implementation, including appropriate funding to achieve the environmental thresholds for the Lake Tahoe Basin.

### **Coast Guard**

Monitors safety and other activities on the Lake from its station in Tahoe City;

### **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)**

Operates the national air traffic system including towers at South Lake Tahoe Airport and Reno/Tahoe International Airport. The FAA Division Office in San Francisco administers the airport improvement program through which Federal funds are invested in capital improvements, including projects to reduce the environmental impacts associated with airports. For example, recent FAA grants to the South Lake Tahoe Airport include the following projects related to the environmental thresholds:

- Construction of a settlement basin (environmental mitigation)
- Erosion control master plan
- Fuel spill containment in west drainage ditch

### **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)**

The FTA Regional Office in San Francisco provides funding assistance to local transit systems for the maintenance and improvement of public transportation. FTA projects in the Presidential Commitments include the coordinated transit system and a transit center. The FTA funding programs in the Federal Transit Law which are most applicable to the Lake Tahoe Basin include:

Section 5309 Discretionary Grants - This program provides funding for the establishment of new rail projects (new starts) and fixed guideway systems, and for bus and bus-related projects. Funding under this program is all earmarked by Congress and the Federal share of such projects may be up to 80%.

Section 5313(a) and (b) State Planning and Research Programs - This is a formula-allocated program that supports state-initiated technical activities associated with urban, suburban and rural public transportation assistance including planning, research, technical assistance, and training.

Section 3008 Clean Fuels Formula Grant Program - This program assists transit operators in the purchase of low-emission buses and related equipment, construction of alternative fuel fueling facilities, modification of garage facilities to accommodate clean-fuel vehicles, and the utilization of bio-diesel fuel. Funding for federal fiscal years 1998 and 1999 was all earmarked by Congress.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Designation - The Lake Tahoe Basin MPO designation allows for the receipt of Metropolitan Planning funds from both FHWA and FTA. However, because FTA program requirements are closely tied to area urbanization and/or population size and densities, the Lake Tahoe Basin would not benefit from common transit funding resources used in larger areas. FTA has informed TRPA that all MPOs in the State of California and Nevada must agree to share the Metropolitan Planning funds with the Lake Tahoe area.

### **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)**

The Federal-aid Highway program administered from Division Offices in the State Capitols (Carson City and Sacramento) provides financial assistance to the State Highway Departments for construction and improvements of roadways and bridges. In accordance with the Lake Tahoe Federal Interagency Partnership Agreement, the FHWA has been actively involved in several partnerships with state, local agency and other groups concerned with improving the economic vitality and the environmental health of the Lake.

The FHWA funded projects are linked to six of the nine environmental thresholds (i.e. water quality, soil conservation, air quality, scenic resources, recreation, and noise). FHWA funding categories eligible for transportation programs and projects at Lake Tahoe include: *Public Lands Discretionary and Forest Highway, Congressional Demonstration Funds, Bike & Pedestrian Facilities, Enhancement, National Recreation Trails, and Scenic Byways.*

Public Lands Discretionary and Forest Highway - Section 126 of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982 (1982 STAA, Public Law 97-424) established a coordinated Federal Lands Highway Program (FLHP) consisting of forest highways, public lands highways, parkways and park roads, and Indian reservation roads. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (1998 TEA-21, Public Law 105-178) continues the program but places forest highways and discretionary public lands highways in a combined category. Section 1101 of the TEA-21 authorized over \$1.4 billion to be appropriated out of the Highway Trust Fund over a 6-year period.

The Public Lands Highway (PLH) funds may be used on eligible PLH and Forest Highways as defined in 23 U.S.C. 101 for planning, research, engineering, highway construction and highway reconstruction. Also eligible is transportation planning for programs to enhance tourism and recreational development, adjacent parking areas, interpretive signs, acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, modification of public walkways to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and construction and reconstruction of roadside rest areas.

Congressional Demonstration Funds - Congress may authorize demonstration, priority, pilot, or special interest projects in various Federal-aid Highway and appropriations acts. Eligible activities include studies, preliminary engineering, and construction as specified in the law authorizing the project.

Metropolitan Transportation Planning - In December 1998, the Governors of Nevada and California designated the Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO) as allowed under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and TEA-21. Planning funds for the TMPO are made available in California and Nevada and may be used to pursue EIP projects related to transportation planning. Funds are available for MPOs to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process required by 23 U.S.C. 134, including development of metropolitan area transportation plans and transportation improvement programs. Eligible activities include conducting inventories of existing routes to determine their physical condition and capacity, determining the types and volumes of vehicles using these routes, predicting the level and location of future population, employment, and economic growth, and using such information to determine current and future transportation needs.

Bike and Pedestrian - This program was established by Section 124(a) of the Federal-aid Highway Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-87), which provided for the use of Primary, Secondary and Urban system funds on independent projects constructing separate or preferential bicycle lanes and facilities, and pedestrian walkways in conjunction with those systems. Forest Highway, Forest Development Roads and Trails, Park Roads and Trails, Parkways, Indian Reservation Roads, and Public Lands Highways funds could also be used. The program is codified in 23 U.S.C. 217.

Surface Transportation Program (STP), Safety - STP funds set aside for safety may be used on any public road for any of the activities set forth in 23 U.S.C. 130 and 152 (rail-highway crossings and hazard elimination activities, respectively). TEA-21 amended 23 U.S.C. 152 to allow funding of safety improvements at public transportation facilities and public pedestrian and bicycle pathways and trails.

Surface Transportation Program (STP), Enhancement - The STP was established by ISTEA on December 18, 1991. In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 133(d)(2), 10 percent of the STP funds apportioned to a State each fiscal year may only be used for transportation enhancement activities. Section 1201 of the TEA-21 amended 23 U.S.C. 101(a) to change the definition of "transportation enhancement activities." They include facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, scenic or historic highway programs, landscaping and other

scenic beautification, and environmental mitigation to address water pollution due to highway runoff.

## **U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

Clean Water Act Section 104(b)(3) Water Quality Grants - These grants can be used for a wide variety of water pollution control projects or programs including research, investigations, training, demonstration projects, environmental studies and surveys, and for the development of environmental management programs. Grants may be awarded to State water pollution control agencies, interstate agencies, other public or nonprofit private agencies, institutions, organizations, or individuals. For example, in the Tahoe Basin, this grant program was used to fund construction of a stormwater settling basin in Incline Village and for the development of a stream environment zone classification program. Grant awards are normally in the range of \$25,000 to \$250,000.

Clean Water Act, Section 205(j) and 604, Water Quality Assessment and Planning Grants - These grants support water quality assessment and planning projects which lead to implementable actions that promote healthy aquatic ecosystems. State water quality program agencies are eligible for these grants and can pass the funds through to regional public comprehensive planning organizations. Grant awards range from \$10,000 to \$125,000. In fiscal year 1998, the total grant allotment for California was \$500,000 and \$40,000 for Nevada.

Clean Water Act Section 319, Nonpoint Source Water Pollution Control Grants - EPA Region 9 provides approximately \$12 million annually to the States of California and Nevada which the States then pass on to local governments and private organizations for projects that control or prevent nonpoint sources of water pollution, including wetlands restoration projects. Half of the \$12 million annual allotment for California and Nevada was added in 1999 to fund the Administration's Clean Water Action Plan initiative and is earmarked for priority watersheds identified by California and Nevada, including Lake Tahoe. Grants are awarded by the States in statewide competition. Individual grant awards range from \$20,000 to \$300,000.

Clean Water Act, State Revolving Fund - EPA has provided grants to California and Nevada to capitalize their Clean Water State Revolving Funds (SRF). The States, through the SRF, make low interest loans for high priority water quality activities. SRF funds can be used for a wide variety of projects including wastewater infrastructure, nonpoint source runoff controls, and watershed restoration projects. As an example, in the Tahoe Basin, SRF loans are available to private home owners through the Tahoe Regreen Program and the BMP Retrofit Program. Loan amounts can range up to \$40 million.

Environmental Education Grants - These grants provide financial support for projects which design, demonstrate, or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques. Parties eligible for these grants include local, tribal, or state education agencies, colleges and universities, nonprofit organizations, state environmental agencies,

and non-commercial educational broadcasting agencies. Grants are available at two funding levels: \$5,000 and less, and \$5,000 to \$25,000.

Sustainable Development Challenge Grants - These grants encourage community groups, businesses, and government agencies to work together on sustainable development efforts that protect the local environment and conserve natural resources while supporting a healthy economy and an improved quality of life. Organizations eligible for these grants include nonprofit organizations, local governments, tribes, educational institutions, and states. Grants are available at two funding levels: \$100,000 and less, and \$100,000 to \$250,000.