

Background

Funding for the SNC currently comes from two sources: the operation of the organization is funded from the state's Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF) and Proposition 84 bond funds (limited to 5% of the total allocation); grants are funded from Proposition 84 bond funds. Both types of funding—funds appropriated for operations and Proposition 84 bond funds—are limited in their uses. In addition, overall funding for the SNC from these sources will decline over time as the organization expends all of its Proposition 84 funds and may decline further if funding from the ELPF is reduced in future years due to a declining fund balance.

The anticipated decline in funding from current sources and limits on the uses of that funding prompted the Board to establish a Future Funding Board Committee at its meeting in October of 2008. The Committee, comprised of Boardmembers Wilensky and Sher, reported to the Board at its meeting in December 2008, noting that the Committee had asked staff to continue to evaluate other organizations as potential models for funding and that staff continue to evaluate funding in four areas:

- Identifying additional sources of funding and developing partnerships with other agencies;
- Ensuring support of the SNC in future bond ballot measures;
- Considering a "fee for service" model, where the SNC is reimbursed by other organizations for services rendered; and
- Increasing public and private partnerships outside the Region by targeting urban areas that benefit from SNC funded projects

Current Status

As reported under Agenda Item VIId, SNC staff continues to evaluate other potential sources of funding for the organization and for our partners throughout the Region. Our current focus with regard to potential grant or foundation funding for the SNC is on finding funding for existing organizational initiatives such as climate change and system indicators.

In addition, staff has been working diligently over the last several weeks to provide information to the Legislature relevant to the development of a new state water bond, including information on the status of SNC funding, the benefits to the Region and the state of SNC funded projects, and the identified needs within the Region for additional project funding. Staff has been supported in these efforts by members of the Board, local government representatives within the Region, and other stakeholders. At the time this staff report was written, SBX7 2 (Cogdill) has been signed by the Governor. This bond measure, which contains \$75 million dollars for the SNC, will be on the November 2010 ballot. While the SNC and its partners were successful in obtaining

funding in the water bond bill, the amount of funding continues to lag significantly behind other geographic areas in the state.

SCN staff has also initiated an effort to increase partnerships outside the Region, developing an outreach plan for this fiscal year that targets foundations, state and federal government organizations, and statewide and national interest groups that benefit from or have an interest in the protection and enhancement of the resources within the Sierra Nevada.

The SNC has not pursued the “fee for service” option except for the ongoing discussions with the Stewardship Council.

Next Steps

SNC staff will continue to look for funding for specific organizational initiatives. In addition, staff has already begun implementation of the outreach plan and will be meeting with a number of potential partners in the San Francisco Bay Area during the second week in December.

Recommendation

No action by the Board is necessary, although the Chair may wish to reconstitute the Future Funding Board Committee to advise staff on ongoing activities. Staff also welcomes direction and/or suggestions to staff regarding efforts to secure additional future funding for the SNC.