

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) has made the educating of state legislators and their staff on the value of the Sierra Nevada and the need to invest in our Region a top outreach priority. During discussions regarding the 2014 Water Bond, SNC staff met with numerous members who represent districts outside of our Region and made progress in gaining their support. However, this continues to be a challenge and remains a top priority.

Some other state conservancies have a statutory relationship with members of the legislature. For example, Coastal and Santa Monica Conservancies have two members in each identified to “meet with the conservancy and participate in its activities to the extent that such participation is not incompatible with their respective positions as Members of the Legislature.” While the SNC has two Boardmembers appointed by the legislature, there is no identified relationship with members of the legislature.

Current Status

In order to assist in the SNC’s legislative outreach, staff has initiated the process to consider legislation to establish a statutory relationship with two members of each house of the legislature, one who represents the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Region, and one who does not. The SNC is using the language guiding the Coastal and Santa Monica Conservancies as the basis for this proposal. The SNC is currently following the process outlined by the Administration for consideration of legislative proposals.

The goal of the potential legislation is to have members of both houses of the legislature who are more knowledgeable about the SNC, our Region and our needs. It is anticipated that these members will advocate for us as key policy and funding issues are addressed in the state legislature.

Next Steps

The SNC will continue to work with the Natural Resources Agency on our proposal. If the Board approves the concept and it is approved for introduction by the Administration, SNC staff will pursue introduction of the proposal in the 2015-16 legislative session.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board authorize staff to continue to pursue the legislation identified in this staff report.