

Background

In July 2006, the Board adopted a five-year Strategic Plan (Plan) for the SNC, which it subsequently revised in December 2008. In June 2010, the Board endorsed a process for the creation of a new Strategic Plan by September 2011. This process included:

- A Board workshop in June 2010 where Boardmembers and stakeholders brainstormed potential areas of focus for the new Plan.
- A survey of SNC stakeholders and meetings with SNC stakeholders and staff regarding potential areas of focus for the Plan.
- An assessment of work being done by other organizations in the Region, as well as potential sources of funding, and potential roles and objectives for the SNC within each potential area of focus.
- Six workshops throughout the Region and numerous other meetings to gather input from stakeholders on what the SNC should do over the next three years within the areas of focus adopted by the Board.
- A review of the existing Climate Action Plan and Education and Communication Plan and incorporation of their contents into the new Plan wherever appropriate.

Based on all of this input, staff brought a draft of the new Strategic Plan to the Board in June 2011. The draft Plan also included initiatives already underway within the organization, which had previously been approved by the Board. The Board provided input regarding needed changes to the draft Plan and approved it to be posted for a 30-day public comment period.

Changes to Draft Plan Based on Board Input

Staff made a number of changes to the draft Plan based on input provided by the Board prior to posting it for public comment. These changes are summarized below:

- Healthy Forest Area of Focus:
 - Addition of wording in the discussion section referring to “improving forest ecological health” “traditional lumber products” and “maintenance of existing facilities such as sawmills and biomass energy plants, as well as the development of additional infrastructure.”
 - Addition of a new strategy that refers to quantification of the benefits provided by improving the health of Sierra forests.
- Preservation of Ranches and Agricultural Lands Area of Focus:
 - Changes to wording in various places to better reflect our desire to carry out our objectives and strategies in partnership with landowner organizations and others already engaged in similar activities in the Region.
 - Addition of wording in the objective related to increasing funding for preservation and stewardship of ranches and agricultural lands in the Sierra to focus on lands “that are under the threat of conversion or where additional funds are needed to ensure the long-term viability of family farms.”

- Watershed Protection and Restoration Area of Focus:
 - Addition of wording in the discussion section which stresses the benefits of “natural upstream storage.”
- Promotion of Sustainable Tourism and Recreation—no changes
- Long Term Effectiveness of the SNC Area of Focus:
 - Replacement of the term “greening” with implementation of “resource efficiency measures” in one of the strategies.
 - We added the first four words to the strategy, “Continue to assess and” streamline internal processes and systems to maximize efficiency and effectiveness,” in order to make it more clear that we are building on all of the work we’ve already done.

In addition to these changes, and as noted at the June Board meeting, all of the example actions were removed from the draft Plan prior to public comment. Staff will develop an Action Plan for approval by the Board each year, which will lay out the specific actions the SNC will take with regard to the objectives and strategies laid out in the Plan.

Current Status

In addition to posting the draft Plan for public comment, staff began to develop the first Action Plan as a further means of “ground truthing” the objectives and strategies in the draft Plan. This proved to be a very effective means of finding redundancies and the need for additional clarity in a number of areas. The final draft Strategic Plan (Attachment A) shows all of the changes made to the draft Plan based on public comment and this additional staff input.

Although SNC solicited input through an email and subsequent reminder that went to over 1,000 people, representing hundreds of organizations living or working in the Sierra, public input was very limited. Attachment B includes all of the public input received as well as an explanation of how SNC responded to the input in the final draft of the Plan.

Ultimately, the changes made to the draft Plan did not have a substantive effect on the objectives and strategies included in the Plan when it went out for public comment. The changes shown in Attachment A are generally aimed at clarifying, rather than changing, the contents of the Plan.

Changes made to the Plan based on Board input, public comment, and additional staff input was discussed with the Board committee overseeing the strategic planning process, which is comprised of Boardmembers Bob Johnston and Ted Owens.

Next Steps

Once the Board has reviewed and approved the new Strategic Plan, staff will complete development of a draft Action Plan, which will cover the period from January 2012 through the first half of 2013. Although Action Plans will ordinarily be brought to the Board on an annual basis, this initial Action Plan will cover an 18-month timeframe, so that future Action Plans will align with the State's fiscal year. This will enable SNC to build its annual budget plan based on the Action Plan approved by the Board.

The draft Action Plan developed by staff will be posted for public comment in the fall. Any input received, as well as any changes made to the Action Plan based on that input, will be provided to the Board when the Action Plan is presented to the Board for review and approval in December.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board approve the new SNC Strategic Plan, with any changes the Board deems appropriate.