

Background

In early 2009 Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) partnered with the Sierra Business Council (SBC) and the National Geographic Society to develop the Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide Project. The MapGuide Project consists of an interactive Web site to highlight unique and authentic tourism destinations in the Sierra Nevada. The project supports the SNC's mandate to enhance tourism in the Sierra Nevada Region while also promoting the preservation of cultural and heritage resources.

The project has been divided into four phases covering the entire Sierra Nevada Region including three counties of western Nevada. Funding for the project has come from the SNC (\$106,000), SBC, the Morgan Family Foundation, El Dorado County, and the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA). Thousands of hours have also been contributed to the project by volunteers serving on the geocouncils and locals who have nominated tourism assets for inclusion on the map. Total committed funding for the project to date is approximately \$485,000. Additional investments totaling approximately \$140,000 are needed to complete the project.

Phases one and two of the project (The Yosemite Gateways and Byways and the Tahoe Emigrant Corridor) have been completed and are live on the web at (www.sierranevadageotourism.org). Web site viewing metrics are monitored on a regular basis to help gauge project success and for use by businesses and tourism professionals in the region. The Board was last updated on the progress of the project in June 2010.

Current Status

The Southern Sierra nomination phase was opened on January 19, 2011 to solicit asset nominations for Madera, Fresno, Tulare, and Kern counties. Three separate media events were held to highlight the opening of the nomination period, which will conclude on April 30th. Community members and project supporters in the Southern Sierra phase have been very active and are helping to plan and host several nomination workshops over the course of the nomination period.

Next Steps

The final nomination phase for the Sierra Cascade region is scheduled to begin in June and extend through September. The Sierra Cascade phase will be soliciting nominations from Sierra, Plumas, Yuba, Butte, Tehama, Lassen, Shasta, and Modoc counties. All concentrated nomination phases are scheduled to be completed and reviewed by November 2011.

The project management partners and the Sierra Nevada-wide Geocouncil will continue to develop marketing strategies and related programs to benefit communities in the region and enhance the quality of tourism opportunities in the region.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.