

# **TRUCKEE RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL**

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**March 28, 2024**

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

### **DONNER LAKE PEAK VISITATION ASSESSMENT**

The Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC) on behalf of Donner Lake Interagency Partnership for Stewardship (DIPS) seeks to hire a qualified consultant to complete data collection and analysis of peak visitation at Donner Lake during summer 2024 and winter 2024/2025. This will help land managers better understand the local and visitor use patterns in order to manage resources, balance local needs with visitation, and improve experience.

Consulting services to encompass all labor, materials, equipment, facilities, and incidentals required for completion of the scope of work.

The consulting firm shall demonstrate a range of relevant experience and capabilities in visitation studies. The consulting firm must be willing to work with TRWC and our project partners, including, but not limited to public agencies, private associations, and nonprofit stakeholders.

### **PROPOSAL DEADLINE**

Proposals must be received by 5PM on April 25, 2024.

### **PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

Submit proposals in a single PDF to Michele Prestowitz, Project Director, at [mprestowitz@truckeeriverwc.org](mailto:mprestowitz@truckeeriverwc.org).

### **REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Direct all questions to Michele Prestowitz at TRWC at [mprestowitz@truckeeriverwc.org](mailto:mprestowitz@truckeeriverwc.org) or (530) 550-8760 x 4. All requests must be received by 5PM on April 18, 2024.

As needed, addenda to this RFP will be posted on TRWC's website ([www.truckeeriverwc.org](http://www.truckeeriverwc.org)), with notifications sent out through our e-newsletter (sign up for the newsletter on our website).

## **RESPONDING TO MULTIPLE RFPS**

In 2024, TRWC will release several Requests For Proposals (RFP) and Requests For Bids (RFB) for restoration design, construction, environmental compliance, permit assistance, and the like. We appreciate that some firms may wish to respond to multiple RFPs & RFBs. To help with proposal and bid preparation, we offer the following:

- 1. Responding to Multiple RFPs/RFBs.** Firms may respond to multiple RFPs and RFBs. In the vast majority of our projects, a firm will not be prevented from bidding on future work if they participate in current work. In the rare case where this prohibition exists, we will state the prohibition in the current RFP/RFB.
- 2. Lead Firm vs. Subcontracted Firm.** We understand and accept a given firm may be the lead in one response and a subcontractor in another response.
- 3. Respond Uniquely to Each RFP/RFB.** Each of our projects has a unique combination of partners, stakeholders, funders, constraints, opportunities, and timelines. Due to the characteristics of each project, we purposely release separate RFPs/RFBs. Firms must submit a response to each RFP or RFB to be considered. While we appreciate that a firm might be able to offer efficiencies if we combined projects, the unique blend of characteristics of each project prevent us from combining projects more than has already been done.
- 4. Repeating Information Across Multiple Responses.** We understand and accept that information about the firm, its staff, past work, references, work approach, and the like may be repeated, perhaps even word for word, across multiple responses.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### Project Background

For time immemorial, people have been drawn to Donner Lake and its surrounding area. The Washoe Indian origin story puts them in the area from the beginning and they, together with the Southern Maidu (or Hill Nisenan) peoples, occupied, hunted, fished, collected plants, and traded in the area for more than 10,000 years. Beginning in the 1840s, west-bound emigrants traveled through the area. This was followed by extensive road development, the transcontinental railroad, timber harvesting, dam construction, ice harvesting, commercial fisheries, and resort development. Residential subdivisions began as early as the 1910s, with many lots built out by the mid-1960s. By the 1920s the Donner Pass region began to develop into a recreation-based economy.

Today, people continue to be drawn to the significant natural and cultural resources of the Donner Lake area. It is home to thriving commercial businesses and residential neighborhoods and is fundamental to the region's local economy. Much of the area is managed as permanent open space, drawing visitors seeking both nature and activity-based recreation such as hiking and boating in the summer and snowshoeing and backcountry skiing in the winter. It also requires extensive resource management to interpret and preserve the cultural history of the region, protect the myriad of terrestrial and aquatic species and habitat, and enhance and restore the health of the ecosystem. Perhaps, just as important, is how Donner Lake contributes to the area's core identity and sense of place.

There are numerous land managers, water rights holders, and other stakeholders at Donner Lake, leading to complex management considerations. In 2020, the Donner Lake Interagency Partnership for Stewardship (DIPS) was formed to develop and implement a coordinated stewardship plan to protect and enhance the long-term ecological and community health of Donner Lake. This visitation study will help inform planning, plan implementation, monitoring and management at the Lake.

### Project Need

Donner Lake is actively used by full-time and part-time residents and day-use and overnight visitors. There are approximately 1,500 full-time residents at Donner Lake itself, but the area also draws local residents from Donner Summit and the Town of Truckee. Visitors are primarily coming from the Bay Area and Sacramento, and the Northern California and Northern Nevada regions and generally reflect a much broader demographic diversity than local residents. Public utility data indicates that visitation to Donner Lake can double or even triple the population during summer and winter holiday weekends.

Peak usage patterns are driven by the following recreational activities:

- **Summer:** Primary activities include camping, picnicking, boating, fishing, water-skiing, swimming, climbing, hiking and biking. Summer usage is heaviest around the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and continues through the month of August. Popular destinations include East End Beach, Donner Lake Lagoon, Lakeside Interpretive Trail, China Cove, the Pioneer Monument and Museum, and campgrounds in Donner Memorial State Park managed by California State Parks; West End Beach, Donner Boat Ramp, Shoreline Park, and 37 public piers managed by the Truckee Donner Recreation and Park District; Tahoe Donner Beach Club Marina managed by the Tahoe Donner Association; and Summit Canyon Trail and Donner Lake Rim Trail managed by the Truckee

Donner Land Trust. All of the above lead to significant impacts from traffic and parking along Donner Pass Road managed by the Town of Truckee.

- **Winter:** Primary activities include backcountry and cross-country skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, and general snow play. Winter usage is driven by local snow conditions typically between late December and March. Specific peaks occur on holidays between Christmas and New Years, MLK weekend, and President's Day. Popular destinations include Summit Canyon, Billy Mack Canyon, and Johnson Canyon managed by the Truckee Donner Land Trust; and Lakeside Interpretive Trail, Snowshoe Adventure Trail, and Nature Trail in Donner Memorial State Park managed by California State Parks. The above result in heavy seasonal traffic along Donner Pass Road and parking in the neighborhoods on the West end of Donner Lake primarily managed by the Town of Truckee.

More recently, pressures on Donner Lake and similar destinations have intensified, putting significant strain on local resources. These include both global and local stressors, such as climate change, population growth, increased recreation, and development. Each of these factors is likely to have cascading and complex effects on Donner Lake, its natural and cultural resources, the neighboring community, and overall user experience. A recent survey completed by Visit Truckee Tahoe identified Donner Lake as the top area of resident concern.

There is a need to understand the local and visitor use patterns in order to manage resources, balance local needs with visitation, and improve experience. Though anecdotal information is available for Donner Lake, a more comprehensive user study is needed.

#### Existing Studies and Previous Work

- [Draft 2023 State of Donner Lake](#) (March 2024, DIPS Core Team, UNR Global Water Center)
- [2022 Donner Lake Interagency Partnership for Stewardship \(DIPS\) Stewardship Plan](#) (November 2022, DIPS Core Team)
- [Recreation and Resiliency in Nevada County: Strengthening Our Communities & Safeguarding Nature](#) (March 18, 2024, Design Workshop, Sierra Business Council, Dudek, Steve Randall, Quantified Ventures)
- [Economic Impact of Travel in Truckee](#) (October 2023, Visit Truckee-Tahoe, Dean Runyan and Associates)
- [Summer Outdoor Recreation and Quality of Life Survey](#) (June 2023, Visit Truckee-Tahoe, FlashVote)

#### **WORK TO BE COMPLETED**

The goal of the Donner Lake Recreational Use Assessment is to provide the data and analysis needed to direct overall stewardship and management at Donner Lake. This includes understanding (1) user volume, behavior, characteristics of demand, and experience; (2) direct and indirect economic and environmental impacts of use at Donner Lake.

The assessment will provide results containing the following data:

- Visitation counts – User estimates, party size, attractions visited.
- Visitor Profile – Residency, demographic, economic, and motivational profiles of users

- Seasonality – How the user profile changes by season.
- Destination awareness and overall perceptions of the area.

Based on best available science, we are open to combining both novel (i.e. metadata, credit card spending, cell phone data, etc.) and traditional data sources (e.g. trail counters, intercept surveys, interviews, etc.) in a cost-effective manner to provide a comprehensive picture of user volume and experience in the area.

We are seeking the following services from a consultant team:

- Launch meeting: Meet with TRWC to confirm and clarify a) the primary objectives of the assessment, b) data collection methodologies and instruments, c) reporting format, and d) other pertinent issues.
- Summer data collection and findings: Complete data collection and analysis of summer usage at Donner Lake. Present findings to DIPS and solicit feedback, questions, and comments from stakeholders.
- Winter data collection and findings: Complete data collection and analysis of winter usage at Donner Lake. Present findings to DIPS and solicit feedback, questions, and comments from stakeholders.
- Assessment Report: Final assessment report will include the data requested above, detailing work performed, findings, and recommendations.
- Project management and Coordination: The Consultant will manage tasks presented in this scope of work including meetings, data collection, preparation and submittal of deliverables, and coordination with TRWC and project team members, as required.

#### Deliverables

- Project launch meeting convened by TRWC
- Final data collection instruments
- Participation in and presentation to two stakeholder meetings convened by TRWC
- Final assessment report
- Digital copies of all data collection and analysis
- Quarterly invoices and progress reports

#### Expected Project Schedule

Task	Completion Date
Proposals due	April 25, 2024
Interviews	May 9, 2024
Contract award (expected)	May 14, 2024
Project launch meeting	June 1, 2024
Final data collection instrument	June 30, 2024
Summer findings	September 2024
Winter findings	March 2025
Final assessment report	April 2025

Quarterly invoicing and reporting	March 25, June 25, September 25, December 15
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### Budget

The maximum budget for the project is \$30,000.

### **PROPOSAL FORMAT**

Please limit proposals to 20 pages or less. Concise writing and graphics are greatly appreciated.

#### Detailed Work Plan

Scope: Define specifically the scope of services to be provided to complete the above described tasks. The consultant may elect to suggest modifications to the scope or schedule above. Include estimated time schedule of the major tasks to be accomplished.

Objectives: Identify and discuss briefly the specific objectives you will achieve through the conduct of the services within the project, as defined and specified above.

Detailed work approach: Discuss in detail each of the activities you will conduct to achieve the scope and objectives defined and identified above. Please specifically address work components outlined above and elaborate as needed. Modifications to the components listed in the work statement can be included. Technical merit and details of work proposed will be heavily weighted in proposal evaluation.

#### Cost Proposal

Personnel costs: Itemize by task to show the following (include subcontractors):

- Name and title
- Estimated hours per staff person, per task
- Rate per hour
- Total cost per task

Support costs: supplies, printing, postage, etc.

Travel: Travel expenses directly related to the contract services. Mileage must be charged at the current IRS rate and per diem at State of California rates.

Other costs: Show costs and expenses that do not fall within the other categories.

General overhead and administrative charges not allowed.

#### Background and References

Include experience in recreational use studies. Provide detail on experience in research design, data collection, data analysis, and data visualization and presentation. List specific projects that demonstrate this experience and include discussion of performance.

Include a duty statement and resume of each key person to be assigned to the project, by name and title, with experience in pertinent fields. If subcontractors will be used, include a description of those persons or firms including a description of their qualifications.

Provide a minimum of three references for similar projects, with name and phone number.

#### Proposal Evaluation

Proposals that meet the specified qualifications will be evaluated for cost effectiveness, data collection and analysis methodology, value added to project design and development, and experience.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1: Figures
- Attachment 2: [Draft 2023 State of Donner Lake](#)
- Attachment 3: [2022 Donner Lake Interagency Partnership for Stewardship \(DIPS\) Stewardship Plan](#)
- Attachment 4: [Recreation and Resiliency in Nevada County: Strengthening Our Communities & Safeguarding Nature](#)
- Attachment 5: [Economic Impact of Travel in Truckee](#)
- Attachment 6: [VTT Resident survey](#)

# Donner Lake Peak Visitation Assessment

Figure 1. Regional Map



Study Area

Sub-Basin Boundary

Protected Land

Urban Areas



Truckee River  
Watershed Council

Collaborative solutions to protect, enhance and restore the Truckee River Watershed

[www.truckeeriverwc.org](http://www.truckeeriverwc.org)

Map created by  
GreenInfo Network  
[www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org)  
November 2014



**Figure 2. Donner Lake Study Area**



DONNER LAKE INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIP FOR STEWARDSHIP

**DIPS**