1. **Overview of Assessment Process**

- The assessment process served three purposes: (1) Obtain candid feedback from stakeholders regarding both substantive and procedural issues which they feel LTW will need to address. (2) Build an initial relationship between stakeholders and the NFF Program Manager-Facilitator. (3) Gauge the level of interest of stakeholders in further participation.
- The process provides a qualitative assessment, with efforts made to interview at least one representative of various interest areas, including air quality, biomass, business and tourism and resorts, conservation, cultural resources, fire protection, forest products and contracting, homeowners and private landowners, land management, public utilities, recreation, regulation, transportation and access, and water resources.
- Forty-eight interviews were completed between September and November 2016, approximately two-thirds in person and the remainder by telephone. A list of interviewees is provided at the end of this document.
- Interviews used a standard list of nine questions. Interview notes are confidential. Findings are shared here without attribution, except for those of the Honorable Neil Mortimer, Chairman, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, per his request.
2. **Purpose of Lake Tahoe West**
   1. Acknowledgment that public agencies have had success in slowing degradation of the lake and basin resources, yet concern that historically agencies have focused narrowly on their missions, inflexibly applied regulations, and missed opportunities to reverse degradation, sometimes with notably adverse consequences.
      a. Widespread endorsement for the LTW goal of working across jurisdictions, and ensuring the coherence and compatibility of management efforts when viewed from the landscape scale.
      b. Widespread enthusiasm to move beyond historical characterizations, and instead demonstrate how land management and regulatory agencies can sit at the same table and take action together.
   2. Widespread desire for quantitative economic analyses associated with fire, water resources, and recreation, and associated forest treatments.
   3. Concern about duplicating efforts, about excessive demands on stakeholder time, and weak linkages to the work of some agencies/organizations.
      a. Need for articulation of existing plans and programs across agencies and organizations, such as Area Plans, Tree Mortality Task Forces, Fire Adapted Communities, and the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Management Oversight Group.
      b. Need for clear goals and milestones to justify peoples time.
      c. Need to provide multiple options for participating and/or tracking the effort.
   4. The Washoe Tribe feels that LTW provides an ongoing opportunity to educate people about the cultural significance and ancestry of the lake and the west shore, and to restore cultural resources.
      a. Need for coordination with Washoe Tribe restoration of Meeks Meadow, and to explore opportunities for tribal restoration crews.
   5. Concern that the process may move efficiently through planning, but permitting is likely introduce delays that could and should have been anticipated and avoided.
      a. Need for the *Documentation and Permitting Coordination Team* to play a leading role and provide strategic guidance to the agencies.
   6. Concern that public agency funding remains typically short-term, looking out over two or three years at most, and that an effective restoration effort requires a decade or more to plan, implement, monitor effectiveness, and improve subsequent restoration treatments, and thus make a noticeable difference on the landscape.
      a. Need to develop an interagency funding strategy that looks out over multiple years, and to seek and/or develop opportunities for sustained, multiple-year funding (like Congress’ 2010 Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program).

3. **Fire, Vegetation, and Wildlife**
   7. Widespread recognition of the role of fire in the evolution of basin forests and maintenance of ecosystem functions and biodiversity.
      a. General support for the use of prescribed fire to provide ecological benefits in the basin.
   8. Concern that fuel loads, weather trends in recent decades, and basin topography mean that
agencies cannot only focus on the Wildland Urban Interface when seeking to protect public safety.
   b. Widespread support for the use of prescribed fire to treat fuels (as well as for complementary treatment methods).
9. Widespread desire to carefully explore unconventional treatment types and locations (such as prescribed burning in Stream Environment Zones, and vegetative thinning that creates a mosaic of clumps and openings) and share the associated risks.
   a. Need to model and, when possible, create demonstration sites to pilot treatments and monitor effects.
10. Concern about the scientific justification for removing large trees, and about the impacts of vegetation treatments on endangered species.
   c. Need for joint fact-finding procedure and potentially independent technical review.
11. Tension between legal requirement to protect sensitive species, and desire to look at wildlife more holistically.
   d. Need to work simultaneously at the landscape and project-level scales.
12. Concern that overlapping limited operating periods (LOPs, designed for wildlife protection) severely constraint the ability to conduct restoration treatments, a circumstance which in turn perpetuates the limited availability of equipment, crews, and infrastructure to treat basin forests.
13. Desire to complement mechanical treatment, prescribed fire, and pile burning with alternative uses such as small-diameter restoration byproducts and biomass. Concurrent recognition that biomass-derived electricity continues to face market challenges.
   e. Need to connect with regional efforts to build infrastructure for wood processing and biomass in order to reach an economy of scale.
14. Concern that tree mortality is a significant threat, and that a tree mortality crisis in the basin could overtake LTW’s focus on forest and watershed restoration.
   f. Need to coordinate from the start with regional and basin-wide Tree Mortality Task Forces to ensure compatibility and explain to the public how LTW will improve the resilience of west shore forests to tree mortality.

4. Companion Issues
15. Concern that forest planning and management seldom considers the water infrastructure needed for municipal water supplies and fire suppression.
16. Widespread concern that historically public agencies have not acknowledged recreation as a significant driver of the basin’s culture and economy, have provided relatively little planning funding, and typically have not managed their permitting processes in a way that supports recreation.
   a. Parallel recognition that a small amount of recreation data exists, other than for ski resorts – for example, user demographics, historical use patterns and trends, user desires, economic and non-economic benefits, and market analyses.
17. Widespread desire to recognize recreation as an integral part of the social-ecological landscape of the west shore, and integrate recreation in restoration planning from the start of the process.
   b. At the same time, recognition that not all recreation is compatible with restoration
(for example, the use of non-native plants for more efficient erosion prevention).

18. Concern that the importance of the basin and west shore for recreation in central California will only increase with climate change, yet many trails and campgrounds are already experiencing impacts from high amounts of users.

19. Widespread recognition of the strong ties between recreational access to public lands and transportation. Parallel concern that well-intentioned efforts to manage transportation have negatively impacted recreational access and reduced the public benefits derived from west shore forests.
   c. Need to regularly communicate and coordinate with dedicated recreation and transportation forums and planning efforts in the basin.

20. Widespread interest in finding ways that forest restoration can improve recreation opportunities and experiences, such as increased skier access and improved visual qualities.

5. Communication

21. Concern that to obtain public support, public agencies need to better tell the story of how restoration projects will produce tangible benefits for the west shore’s environment, communities, and economy – for example, reduce smoke impacts to public health, make the snowpack more durable, withstand droughts, mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, protect wildlife, and safeguard the clarity of the lake.

22. Generally low public acceptance of fire and smoke, which is partly linked to concerns about burn piles that remain untreated for multiple years, as well as of biomass.
   d. Need for proactive public communication and education (including visual materials) about historical forest conditions, how vegetation regrows after thinning, prescribed fire compared with uncontrollable wildfire, biomass treatment emissions, and other topics.

23. Wide array of potentially interested parties, low visibility of many public agencies, history of mobilization against the activities of public agencies, and sense of private rights to use of public lands.
   e. Need for proactive public communication and education about the purpose of Lake Tahoe West, including anticipating concerns around public safety, regulation, and access.
   f. Need to take stakeholders up on their offers to provide access to their existing communication mechanisms and networks. (Note that the Calendar of Activities includes a communication plan.)

24. Desire for LTW to provide a general model that can be applied to other parts of the basin.
   g. Need to periodically brief public officials, agencies, and associations on other shores, including in Nevada, so they are familiar with the process and can anticipate engaging in the future.

25. Concern about the ability of public agency boards to go in a different direction than executives and stakeholders.
   h. Need to regularly brief public agency boards, as well as the boards and memberships of other organizations concerned about the west shore.

26. Widespread concern that many populations are hard to reach, including second-home owners, vacation renters, day-trippers, and part-time residents.
i. Need to meet people where they are, including community events, annual homeowner association meetings, and town halls hosted by county supervisors.

j. Need to pilot new information communication mechanisms, such as partnerships with online and local rental property companies, and short social media videos.

6. **List of Interviewees**

1. Amy Berry, Tahoe Fund
2. Andy Wirth, Casey Blann, and Mike Livak, Squaw Valley Ski Holdings
3. Ben Fish and Chris McNamara, Tahoe Area Mountain Bike Association
4. Brendan Ferry, County of El Dorado, Long Range Planning Division
5. Brett Storey, Placer County
6. Carl Hasty, Tahoe Transportation District
7. Chris Anthony, CAL FIRE, Amador-El Dorado Unit
8. Cindy Gustafson, Tahoe City Public Utilities Department
9. Cindy Ochoa, Tahoe Area Sierra Club
10. Darcie Goodman Collins, League to Save Lake Tahoe
11. Dave Johnston and Candice Thomas, El Dorado County Air Quality Management District
13. David Reichel, Tahoe Backcountry Alliance
14. Derek Taylor, Tahoe Cedars Property Owners Association
15. Devin Middlebrook, Tahoe Regional Young Professionals
16. Doug Barr, California Off-Road Vehicle Association
17. Edward Miller, Meeks Bay Fire Protection District
18. Erik White, Yu-Shuo Chang, and Bruce Springsteen, Placer County Air Pollution Control District
19. Heidi Hill Drum, Tahoe Prosperity Center
20. Jacques (Jack) Landy, US Environmental Protection Agency
21. Jeff Brown, UC Berkeley Central Sierra Field Research Stations
22. Jeff Dowling, CAL FIRE, Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit
23. Jeff Holland, CTL Forest Management
24. Jennifer Quashnick, Friends of the West Shore
25. John Falk, Tahoe Sierra Realtors Association
26. John McEldowney, Placer County Office of Emergency Services
27. Kelley Barker, California Department of Fish & Wildlife
28. Kevin Mitchell, Homewood Mountain Resort and Homewood High and Dry Marina
29. Kim Boyd, Tahoe Resource Conservation District
30. Laura Whitney, US Army Corps of Engineers
32. Lisa Wallace, Truckee River Watershed Council
33. Lolly Kupec, Wild West Communications
34. Lynn Nolan, Tahoe Sierra Regional Water Mgmt. Group and Lake Tahoe Fire Prevention Partnership
35. Mike Brown, R&R Partners
36. Mike Schwartz, North Tahoe Fire Protection District
37. Monte Kawahara, Bureau of Land Management
38. Morgan Fessler, Tahoe Rim Trail Association
39. Honorable Neil Mortimer, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
40. Norma Santiago, Former District 5 Supervisor, County of El Dorado
41. Peter Kraatz, Placer County Department of Public Works
42. Rob Weston, West Shore Association
43. Robert Kronkhyte, Interested resident
44. Ron Treabess, North Lake Tahoe Resort Association
45. Rosemary Stefani, US Bureau of Reclamation
46. Sean Russell, Rubicon Trail Foundation
47. Stacie Lyans, Tahoe City Downtown Association
48. Steve Teshara, Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce
49. Steven Glazer, Tahoe Swiss Village Utility
50. Sue Britting and Craig Thomas, Sierra Forest Legacy
51. Sue Novasel, District 5 Supervisor, County of El Dorado