

**MEMORANDUM  
DEPARTMENT OF FACILITY SERVICES  
COUNTY OF PLACER**

To: **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Date: **OCTOBER 23, 2012**

From: **MR. JAMES DURFEE / MARK RIDEOUT** 

Subject: **ROYAL GORGE PROPERTY – FUNDING AGREEMENT**

**ACTION REQUESTED / RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Approve a contribution of \$300,000 from Recreation Area #16 Park Dedication Fees (Serene Lakes) to assist the Truckee Donner Land Trust (TDLT) fee title acquisition of the Royal Gorge property near the community of Soda Springs; and,
2. Adopt a Resolution authorizing the Director of Facility Services, or his designee, to negotiate, execute and record a funding agreement and to take all other actions necessary to facilitate this transaction and implement provisions of said agreement; and,
3. Approve a Budget Revision appropriating \$300,000 to the Parks and Grounds Operating Budget from Park Dedication Fees from Recreation Area #16, Serene Lakes Recreation Area, with no net county cost.

**BACKGROUND:** The Trust for Public Lands and TDLT, with the assistance of the Northern Sierra Partnership, have entered into an agreement to purchase the Royal Gorge Cross Country Ski Resort property near Soda Springs, comprising approximately 2,891 acres of land (Property). The Property includes 2,591 acres in Placer County, with the remainder in Nevada County.

The purpose of this acquisition is to permanently protect the natural resources of the Property and create compatible opportunities for public recreation in an area that has been closed to the general public for 50 years. The Property contains headwaters of both the American and Yuba Rivers, and its diverse habitat includes special status plant species and one of the few stands of old growth forest that exists outside of a national park. Additionally, the Property encompasses a 3-mile segment of the "Truckee Route" of the historic 2,000-mile long Overland Emigrant Trail. This trail is of special interest to Parks staff who have long explored opportunities to establish a potential memorial trail that could re-create an experience of the original route, without disturbing artifacts or private property.

Terms of the TDLT agreement include a \$10,500,000 purchase price for the Property, with a deadline to close escrow by December 20, 2012. TDLT is currently fundraising for the acquisition cost, plus an additional \$4,306,000 for Property improvements, ongoing maintenance, and the purchase of additional property in Negro Canyon and around Lake Van Norden. TDLT is in discussion with the US Forest Service regarding their potential future ownership of Lake Van Norden and the surrounding Van Norden Meadows; however, following completion of the transaction TDLT will otherwise hold title to the majority of the Property.

This summer, TDLT requested that Placer County financially participate in the Property acquisition. In September TDLT made presentations to both the Donner Summit MAC and the County Parks Commission detailing its preservation goals and recreation objectives for the Property. On October 4, 2012 the Parks Commission formally considered a funding request. In consideration of the public use opportunities this Property presents, both the Donner Summit MAC and the County Parks Commission recommended that your Board appropriate \$300,000 in Park Dedication Fees from Recreation Area #16, Serene Lakes Recreation Area. These actions also included a recommendation that TDLT dedicate a public trail easement and involve Placer County in developing a plan for public recreation.

Broad support for the TDLT acquisition has been expressed by the local property owner associations of Serene Lakes and the Palisades, and by environmental organizations including Sierra Watch and Mountain Area Preservation. Given the opportunities for preservation and public access, staff also supports participation in this acquisition. If the staff recommendations are approved by your Board, County staff and TDLT will negotiate a funding agreement that details the future conveyance of a proposed 50-foot wide trail easement to interpret the Overland Emigrant Trail, and an associated proposed easement area for recreational staging. To maintain consistency with other TDLT funding partner agreements and regulatory agency requirements, the location and timing of proposed easement dedications will be determined in consultation with TDLT and the US Forest Service.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE:** Financial participation in this acquisition is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15317 and 15325. These sections provide for the transfer of ownership of land to accept easements or fee title interests in order to maintain the open space character of an area and to preserve existing natural conditions and other resources. It can also be seen with certainty that the requested actions of the Board will have no significant impact under Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3). Each of these facts is a separate and independent basis for the Board's determination that the Board actions are exempt from CEQA and does not require further CEQA review. Future trail development will require further review in compliance with CEQA.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The uncommitted fund balance in Recreation Area # 16, Serene Lakes Recreation Area, is \$334,768. Approval of this request would leave a balance of \$34,768. As this expenditure is funded by Park Dedication Fees, there is no net county cost associated with this action.

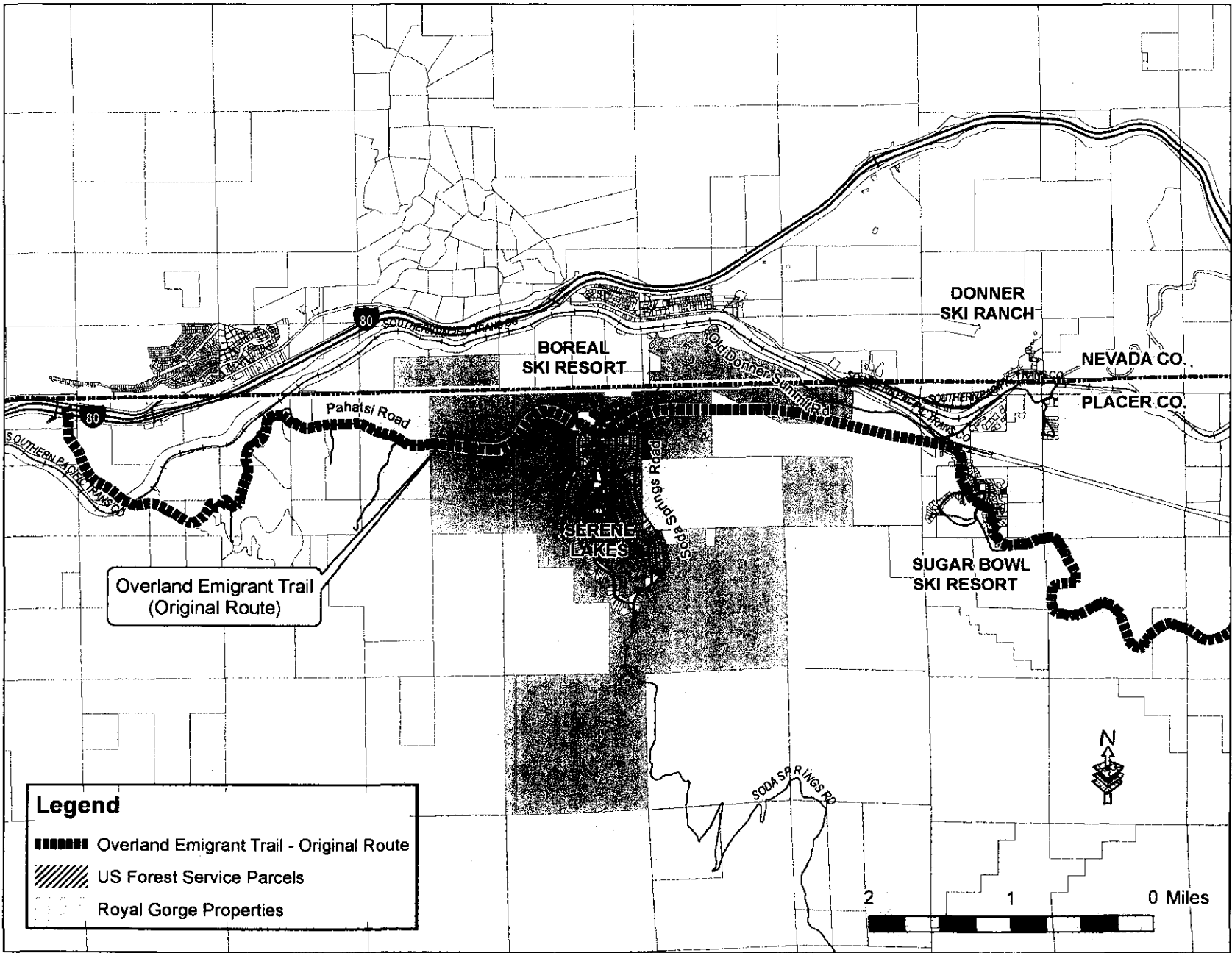
JD/MR/AF

ATTACHMENTS: EXHIBIT A – ROYAL GORGE PROPERTY DEPICTION  
RESOLUTION  
BUDGET REVISION

CC: COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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Exhibit A  
Royal Gorge Property Depiction



**Legend**

- Overland Emigrant Trail - Original Route
- US Forest Service Parcels
- Royal Gorge Properties

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**Before the Board of Supervisors  
County of Placer, State of California**

**In the matter of: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CONTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR THE ACQUISITION OF THE ROYAL GORGE PROPERTY TO THE TRUCKEE DONNER LAND TRUST AND DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO THE DIRECTOR OF FACILITY SERVICES TO TAKE ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO FACILITATE THIS TRANSACTION.**

**Resol. No** \_\_\_\_\_

The following **RESOLUTION** was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held \_\_\_\_\_, 2012, by the following vote on roll call:

Ayes:  
Noes:  
Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Board of Supervisors

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of said Board

**WHEREAS**, the Truckee Donner Land Trust (TDLT) is under contract to purchase a fee title interest in approximately 2,891-acres of real property known as the Royal Gorge Cross Country Ski Resort Property near Soda Springs, and referred to as Placer County APN's 069-010-018; 069-210-001; 069-020-011, 027, 055, 056, 058, 059, 067, 068, 071, and Nevada County APN's 47-440-20, 21; 47-010-13 (Property); and,

**WHEREAS**, the Property possess significant conservation, habitat, and public recreation values; and,

**WHEREAS**, TDLT has requested Placer County's financial participation in the Property acquisition, and funding is available from Park Dedication Fees collected in this area; and,

**WHEREAS**, a material consideration for the County's contribution is the TDLT commitment to grant a 50-foot wide multi-purpose trail easement for a proposed trail across the Property, with an associated proposed easement area for recreational staging, which shall be located in consultation with TDLT and the US Forest Service; and,

**WHEREAS**, the County wishes to contribute funds in the amount of \$300,000 to TDLT's purchase of the Property in consideration of TDLT's commitment to maintain the conservation and public recreation values of this Property; and,

**WHEREAS**, TDLT has agreed to enter into a Funding Agreement for this Property memorializing its commitment.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Supervisors does hereby authorize funding in the amount of \$300,000 from Area #16 Park Dedication Fees to TDLT for acquisition of the Property and delegates authority to the Director of Facility Services to negotiate, execute and record a Funding Agreement with the TDLT, and to take all other actions necessary to facilitate this transaction and implement the provisions of the Funding Agreement, including the recordation and acceptance of proposed multi-purpose trail and recreational staging easements over the Property.

PAS DOCUMENT NO.

Facility Service to do journal to transfer cash

**BUDGET REVISION**

**POST DATE:**

DEPT NO.	DOC TYPE	Total \$ Amount	TOTAL LINES
12	BR	600,000.00	2

Cash Transfer Required: Fund 399/Subfund 016

Reserve Cancellation Required

Establish Reserve Required

Auditor-Controller

County Executive

Board of Supervisors

ESTIMATED REVENUE ADJUSTMENT										APPROPRIATION ADJUSTMENT											
DEPT NO.	T/C	Rev	Fund	Sub Fund	OCA	PCA	OBJ 3	PROJ.	PROJ. DTL	AMOUNT	DEPT NO.	T/C	Rev	Fund	Sub Fund	OCA	PCA	OBJ 3	PROJ.	PROJ. DTL	AMOUNT
12	006		100		997425	97425	8780			300,000.00	12	014		100		997425	97425	4161			300,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>										300,000.00	<b>TOTAL</b>										300,000.00

REASON FOR REVISION: TO APPROPRIATE EXPENDITURES AND OFF-SETTING REVENUES IN THE PARKS & GROUNDS BUDGET FROM THE PARK DEDICATION  
 FEE AREA #16, SERENE LAKES, AS CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE ACQUISITION OF THE ROYAL GORGE PROPERTY.

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Prepared by Valerie Bayne Ext 6803  
 Department Head Valerie Bayne  
 Board of Supervisors \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 10/23/12  
 Page: \_\_\_\_\_

Budget Revision # \_\_\_\_\_ FOR INDIVIDUAL DEPT USE

