



GREAT REDWOOD TRAIL AGENCY

MEETING DATE: April 3, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 4. Executive Director's Report

FROM: Elaine Hogan

RE: Executive Director's Report

STAFFING & TRAINING:

We are continuing to build the management structure of the agency. In February we opened the recruitment for a Financial Development Manager. Interviews were conducted in early March. Our new Financial Development Manager is Tyler Egerer. This position will help maintain sound financial practices, ensure compliance with governmental accounting standards, and develop sustainable funding strategies. It will be essential for day-to-day financial operations as well as long term strategic planning.

We will be conducting field work from April 7 - 11 in the Eel River Canyon, accessing the right-of-way by raft in collaboration with Six Rivers Rafting. This is a great opportunity for staff and board members to see remote areas of our right-of-way and other GRTA-owned property. We have invited a team of experts in various fields to join us and share their expertise. In addition to four staff and two board members, we will have 10-12 additional guests including an engineer, geologist, historian, tribal cultural resource expert, fisheries biologist, backcountry trail planners, a watershed restoration specialist as well as current and potential trail development partners. We have new field equipment that we will be testing to gather data to help inform our daily operations as well as future planning and collaboration opportunities in these areas. Fieldwork to see GRTA-owned property is an essential part of our work, as it helps us understand the data and public comments that have been received during the initial overall planning for this project that have been collected through the feasibility study, and master planning and EIR processes.

Operations Manager, Bridget Nichols, and I will be traveling to Pomona April 21 - 25 to attend the California Trails and Greenways Conference. We will join leading trail experts for training and discussions on the latest advances in trail design, construction, maintenance, interpretation, volunteerism, and management. I will be attending a supplemental half-day training session on CEQA for Trails and Bridget will attend a half-day Trail Assessment & Maintenance session that is pertinent to her role as GRTA's Operations Manager.

FINANCIAL:

We have two fiscal years that are ready to be audited. The new Financial Development Manager will work closely with me to identify a new auditor and complete the auditing

process.

In January, we were notified the Sonoma County will not be renewing our contract for payroll services next fiscal year. Since then, we have been reviewing their policies for establishing an external bank account for payroll purposes and researching viable options. We have been communicating extensively with Sonoma County fiscal staff to ensure a smooth transition and establish new processes for the new payroll system to coordinate with our banking system that Sonoma County manages. In May, we expect to bring a proposal forward with a recommendation for the board to consider delegating authority to me to open a bank account for payroll and other purposes as allowed by Sonoma County's policy on external bank accounts and to implement a new payroll and timekeeping system.

At the May board meeting we expect to have a draft budget for next fiscal year for the Board's consideration. We will hear the board's suggestions for items to include in our operational budget in a subsequent agenda item.

PEIR & MASTER PLAN:

Work continues on our Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) as part of the CEQA process. After receiving an administrative draft in February, we are working with our team of consultants from Alta Planning & Design and Ascent Environmental to finalize a draft for public circulation. Tribal consultation under AB 52 continues. We are making changes to the draft Master Plan based on public comment and further studies that have been done as part of environmental review. Our timeline for releasing the public draft of the PEIR has been extended. We will update the Board and public when we have an anticipated date to release the draft PEIR for public comment and for circulation to responsible agencies. We still anticipate presenting the final Master Plan and PEIR for the Board's approval before the end of the year.
