



Agenda – TCF Board Meeting

January 7, 2026

11:00 AM

Topic		Attachment	Direction
1.	Opening/Welcome		
2.	Public Comments & Communications		
3.	Approval of November 5, 2025 Minutes	✓	Action
4.	Wild and Scenic® Film Festival On-Tour 2026 Update	✓	Discussion/Action
5.	Future Grant Opportunities for TCF	✓	Discussion/Action

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4. Board Narrative: Decision to Pause Wild & Scenic Film Festival (March 2026)

Purpose

This narrative is intended to document the leadership decision to not hold the Tehama Conservation Fund's Wild & Scenic Film Festival in March 2026, and to explain the strategic reasoning behind this pause. The goal is to ensure transparency, alignment, and continuity in planning for future community engagement events.

Background

The Wild & Scenic Film Festival has traditionally been held in March and serves as an important public-facing event for conservation education, outreach, and relationship-building. It also requires substantial staff capacity in areas such as event coordination, logistics, fundraising/sponsorship outreach, marketing, volunteer management, and administrative compliance.

In prior years, the Festival has been a key community moment and a valuable platform to share conservation messaging and elevate partner organizations. Leadership recognizes and supports the event's value and wants to ensure that when the Festival is held, it receives the full attention and effort needed to deliver a high-quality experience for attendees and stakeholders.

Current Capacity and Workload Considerations

At this time, RCDTC staff capacity is heavily committed to grant deliverables, compliance requirements, reporting, and implementation work associated with multiple active grant awards. Staff are currently operating at full capacity, with workload levels concentrated in time-sensitive deliverables that directly impact project success, funding compliance, and organizational risk exposure.

In evaluating the Festival, leadership considered that preparing for a March event would require significant staff time during the same period when multiple grants must be closed out, deliverables finalized, and reporting and invoicing completed. Given the level of intensity and the importance of these grant commitments, leadership determined that attempting to organize the Festival this year would place staff under additional strain and increase the risk of reduced quality, missed deadlines, or staff burnout.

Strategic Decision

Leadership has decided to cancel the Wild & Scenic Film Festival for March 2026 and postpone any decision about reinstating the event until after March 2026, once key grant closeouts and associated workload pressures have been substantially reduced.

This decision is intended to preserve staff capacity for mission-critical work and ensure that both grant performance and the long-term sustainability of the organization remain strong. The decision also reflects leadership's desire to avoid delivering an event that does not meet the standards expected by the community, sponsors, and partners.

Priority Shift: CWPPP Update

In addition to grant closeout workload, leadership has identified a high-priority need to complete the updated CWPPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan and Projects document). Completing the CWPPP update is a strategic necessity for positioning the region competitively for upcoming rounds of grant funding that are specifically aimed at projects identified within an up-to-date CWPPP.

An updated CWPPP is not only a planning document, but also a key eligibility and scoring factor across multiple wildfire resilience and forest health funding programs. Leadership believes that completing this update now will strengthen future grant applications, improve coordination with partners, and accelerate implementation of projects that align with community-identified priorities.

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Commitment to Future Engagement

Leadership recognizes that the Festival contributes meaningfully to community outreach and organizational visibility. This decision is not a permanent cancellation, but rather a strategic pause to ensure the event can return at a time when staff have sufficient capacity to plan and deliver it successfully.

Between now and March 2026, leadership will explore lighter-touch outreach opportunities that support community engagement and conservation messaging without requiring the same level of staff time and logistical investment as the Film Festival.

Next Steps / Review Timeline

- Leadership will revisit the Wild & Scenic Film Festival decision after March 2026.
- Staff will prioritize grant closeouts and compliance deliverables through the end of the current grant cycle.
- Staff and partners will prioritize completing the CWPPP update to support the next round of grant funding and project implementation.
- Leadership will assess future Festival feasibility based on staffing capacity, funding opportunities, and organizational priorities at that time.

Conclusion

Leadership has made this decision to ensure Tehama Conservation Fund and RCDTC remain focused on the work that most directly advances on-the-ground conservation outcomes and wildfire resilience. By prioritizing grant performance and the CWPPP update, the organization is investing in the foundation needed to bring larger conservation projects to fruition and strengthen future funding competitiveness, while preserving the ability to return the Wild & Scenic Film Festival as a high-quality community event once capacity allows.

5. Board Narrative: Tehama Conservation Fund at a Crossroads for Grant Strategy and Organizational Direction

Purpose

This narrative is intended to initiate a board-level discussion regarding the future direction of the Tehama Conservation Fund (TCF) as it relates to grant development, grant management structure, organizational capacity, and long-term strategic role alongside the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County (RCDTC). TCF is at a crossroads where intentional decisions are needed to determine how the organization can best serve its mission and add value to conservation and wildfire resilience work in our region.

Why This Discussion Is Needed Now

TCF has an opportunity to evolve from its current role into a more active and strategic entity that helps secure and manage funding for conservation, forest health, and wildfire resilience projects. The board is being asked to consider what role TCF should play in the next phase of this work, and whether TCF should expand or adjust its focus in a way that strengthens outcomes, improves operational efficiency, and enables higher-impact project delivery.

As grant programs become more competitive, more complex, and more administratively demanding, organizations must continually assess whether their existing structures are the best fit for the scale and type of work required. TCF is in a position to be part of that solution, but only if the board provides clarity on direction and acceptable levels of growth, responsibility, and risk.

Potential Strategic Directions for Consideration

Leadership has identified several potential pathways for TCF to increase its value and effectiveness. These are presented as discussion options, not predetermined decisions.

1) Utilize TCF as a Dedicated Applicant for CAL FIRE Grants

One of the most immediate opportunities is to position TCF as a primary applicant for select CAL FIRE grant programs. This approach could bring several benefits:

- **Demonstrate broader diversification of CAL FIRE funding recipients** by increasing nonprofit participation, which aligns with statewide priorities around equitable and diversified delivery capacity.
- **Create a grant pipeline where TCF serves as the applicant and fiscal lead**, with RCDTC serving as a key implementation partner or subcontractor.
- **Potentially reduce current invoicing and compliance bottlenecks faced by RCDTC**, particularly on projects with extensive billing documentation requirements.
In this model, RCDTC's role could shift toward implementation services under a subcontract agreement, reducing the volume and complexity of direct invoicing and administrative burden that exists today when RCDTC is the primary grantee.

This concept could allow RCDTC to focus more on what it does best (project implementation, landowner engagement, and technical delivery), while TCF manages a portion of the grant administration and fiscal sponsor functions.

2) TCF Taking on Higher Liability and Administrative Responsibility for More Complex Projects

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A second strategic direction is for TCF to intentionally take on greater responsibility and liability for technically complex and administratively demanding projects, providing a mechanism to support RCDTC while also allowing important projects to move forward. This could include:

- Serving as the applicant and fiscal entity on projects with high compliance complexity
- Holding contracts and managing reporting and fiscal tracking
- Providing risk buffering for RCDTC on projects that involve technical complexity, multi-partner coordination, or increased regulatory requirements

This would require the board to consider TCF's capacity, insurance, governance readiness, and risk appetite. However, it could meaningfully increase the region's ability to pursue larger and more impactful funding opportunities while protecting RCDTC from being overloaded by administrative demands.

3) Expanding TCF's Geographic Footprint Beyond Tehama County

Another potential direction is to expand TCF's footprint beyond Tehama County. Unlike an RCD, which naturally operates within a defined local sphere of influence, a nonprofit has flexibility to work across county lines and partner with multiple districts, agencies, and collaboratives.

This approach could increase:

- **TCF's competitiveness in statewide grant programs**, especially those encouraging regional collaboration and landscape-scale work
- **The organization's relevance and funding opportunities**, by operating where the need and funding alignment is strongest
- **The ability to build a multi-county program model**, similar to the Lassen Fire Safe Council, which now works across multiple counties and has become a regional leader in wildfire resilience and forest health project delivery

Expanding beyond Tehama County would be a significant evolution and would require board guidance on the level of growth desired, the boundaries of expansion, and how TCF's mission identity would be maintained while working in broader geographies.

Key Considerations for the Board

Each of these strategic directions would require board input on key questions:

- What is TCF's intended role alongside RCDTC over the next 3–5 years?
- Does the board want TCF to remain primarily supportive, or to become a primary grant applicant and implementation coordinator?
- What level of organizational growth is acceptable, and what staffing or administrative capacity would be needed to support it responsibly?

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- What risk and liability is the board willing for TCF to assume, and what safeguards (policies, insurance, fiscal controls) would need to be in place?
- How can TCF best complement RCDTC's strengths while reducing administrative friction and improving grant delivery outcomes?

Recommendation: Begin a Board-Guided Strategic Conversation

Leadership believes that TCF is positioned for a strategic pivot and that continuing "business as usual" risks leaving opportunities on the table. The board is being asked to provide direction on whether TCF should:

1. Become a more active grant applicant and fiscal lead, particularly for CAL FIRE programs
2. Assume a greater role in complex project delivery and liability
3. Expand into a multi-county, regional nonprofit model
4. Or pursue a hybrid strategy that combines elements of these approaches

Proposed Next Steps

To support an informed decision, leadership recommends:

- A facilitated board discussion to identify priorities and preferred direction
- Development of a short strategic plan (or "TCF Growth & Grant Strategy Memo") that includes:
 - Potential organizational models (status quo, moderate growth, expanded role)
 - Estimated staffing and administrative needs
 - Risk management needs (insurance, contracting processes, fiscal controls)
 - Potential partners and geographic priorities
 - A 12–24 month implementation roadmap
- Board direction on whether leadership should begin pursuing grants under a new model beginning in the next CAL FIRE grant cycle

Conclusion

TCF is at a crossroads, and leadership believes there is meaningful opportunity to expand its role in a way that strengthens conservation and wildfire resilience outcomes, improves administrative efficiency, and increases regional competitiveness for grant funding. The purpose of this narrative is to begin a board-guided discussion about what TCF should become, and how boldly we want to pursue that vision.

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