

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 1, 2006**

Location: Auburn City Council Chambers
1225 Lincoln Way
Auburn, CA 95603

I. Call to order

Chairman Chrisman called meeting to order at 9:15 a.m., in the Auburn City Council Chambers (1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn CA).

II. Chairman's Report

Chairman Chrisman introduced Beth Pendleton from U. S. Forest Service and Jim Eicher, Acting Field Manager from Bureau of Land Management. Certificates of Appreciation for former Boardmembers Stetson, Waterston and Swickard will be sent following the board meeting. He announced that during this particular meeting the board is going to forego the Sub Region County reports but will put such reports on the agenda for the next meeting.

III. Roll Call:

Members Present: Mike Chrisman, B.J. Kirwan, Bob Kirkwood, Brian Dahle, Byron Sher, Carol Whiteside, Linda Arcularius, Allen Ishida, Kim Yamaguchi, John Brissenden, Louis Boitano, Beth Pendleton, Helen Baumann, and Jim Eicher

Members Absent: Mike Genest and Mike Tollefson.

IV. Approval of December 2, 2005 Meeting Minutes

Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Brissenden seconded a motion to approve the December 2, 2005 minutes, which passed on a voice vote with Boardmember Sher abstaining.

V. Approval of February 23, 2006 Meeting Minutes

Boardmember Kim Yamaguchi suggested changes to the minutes to accurately reflect his intent.

After discussion regarding the minutes and the level of detail to be included, the Board requested that future minutes be more streamlined and reflect actions, significant Boardmember and staff comments and public comments.

The February 23, 2006 minutes will be revised and presented for consideration at the July 20 meeting.

Chairman Chrisman introduced Dave Breninger, Placer County Water Agency. Mr. Breninger gave an overview of the Agency and welcomed the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (“SNC”) to Placer County. Mr. Breninger offered to assist SNC in any way he can.

VI. Executive Officer’s Report

Jim Branham thanked everyone who helped and participated in the field trip on May 31st and the Conservancy’s open house.

- a. Staffing and administrative update:
 - i. Theresa Grace has been hired as an Administrative Assistant;
 - ii. An advertisement has been released for the Program Manager position to be filled by the end of June;
 - iii. He is working to determine appropriate state job classifications to use and considering whether some new SNC classifications should be created;
 - iv. He indicated that Diana Metts and Laurie Keith have been hired as Retired Annuitants.
- b. Budget Update (reference to the table in the meeting materials):
 - i. The proposed budget includes 20.5 positions;
 - ii. Unexpended one time funds in the amount of \$276,000 will be re-appropriated;
 - iii. The Assembly and Senate Subcommittees have approved SNC’s budget.
- c. Legislative Update:
 - i. AB 84 (Leslie) Vehicles: Specialized License Plates is in the Senate Transportation Committee. Discussions between Resources Agency, Department of Motor Vehicles, and Business Transportation and Housing Agency are seeking agreement on language.
- d. Conservancy Logo Project:
 - i. SNC has explored working with the State Arts Council but that does not appear to be an option.
 - ii. SNC will need to prepare and issue a Request for Proposal (“RFP”). This will take a little time, but the project is expected to move forward as the school year begins (fall 2006)

Mr. Branham noted the Conservancy has received requests for letters of support for projects that are consistent with the Conservancy’s mission. After Board discussion, Chairman Chrisman suggested criteria be developed for use in determining when a letter of support by the Executive Officer might be appropriate.

Next Step: **Mr. Branham indicated he will develop proposed criteria for handling such requests for the Board’s consideration.**

VII. Deputy Attorney General's Report

Christine Sproul confirmed that written minutes serve as the official record of the SNC's actions.

An Executive Order issued in March 2006 by Governor Schwarzenegger, regarding the Public Records Act ("PRA"), required each state agency to have guidelines for responding to PRA requests for documents. The SNC has established and posted such guidelines to comply with the Executive Order. Currently legislation is pending [AB 2927 (Leno)] which, if passed, will impose additional requirements for agencies responding to PRA requests

Boardmember Kirkwood inquired as to when Statements of Economic Interest are due. Ms. Sproul indicated she thought the annual statements were due in April and she would work with staff to determine if anyone needed to file a report.

Next Step: Christine Sproul to follow up on the notification to Boardmembers of annual reporting requirements.

VIII. Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council Overview

Jayne Battey, Executive Director of the Stewardship Council, noted the mission of the Stewardship Council is to protect and enhance the PG&E's watershed lands and uses, and to invest in efforts to improve the lives of young Californians through connections with the outdoors. The Stewardship Council was created as result of the settlement of PG&E's bankruptcy case and is funded by PG&E, with \$10 million a year for a 10 year funding cycle, with \$7 million each year dedicated to land management and conservation programs, and \$3 million to the youth programs annually. .

The Stewardship Council is charged with protection of habitat areas, cultural and historical resources, on over 50, 000 acres of woodland areas and high recreation-value areas and expects to develop conservation easements to protect these resources on PG&E lands. Also included in the mandate are farming practices, grazing, and open space areas. The council's territory consists of lands held by PG&E in portions of 22 counties, 1,100 parcels and over 141,000 acres. The Board consists of 18 members from various groups; private industry, forestry, conservancies, farming and regulatory agencies. Board decisions are made by consensus.

Boardmember Sher asked if the Sierra Nevada Conservancy could be responsible for holding some of the conservation easements to be created by the Stewardship Council. Chairman Chrisman indicated that would be a possibility, and asked staff to continue to communicate with the Stewardship Council to identify opportunities for cooperation.

IX. SNC Data Inventory Project

Jim Branham gave an overview of the project, which started last year, and referred to a memo from Sierra Connections in the meeting materials, with a list of recommendations on the project. One of the overarching challenges is keeping the data up-to-date.

Kerri Timmer and Janet Cohen from Sierra Connections gave an interactive demonstration of the Data Inventory Project online, using information in the data base that has been placed into several different categories consistent with the SNC's mission.

Discussion of the project covered potential data gaps, the difference between information in this data base versus other search engines (this data base compiles information in one place) and ways in which maintenance could occur. It was suggested that once information is available on the website, the SNC work with various stakeholders to determine other information that is available and ways to keep information updated.

Mr. Branham indicated the next step would be to have this data base accessible on the SNC website. The SNC and the Resources Agency will monitor activity and tabulate the number of hits and the data searched.

X. Strategic Plan

Mr. Branham thanked the strategic plan team for all of the hard work put into this strategic plan process and the sub region workshops. Boardmember Kirwan gave the history of the process, starting with a decision on the template to be used, followed by a first draft that benefited from the 2005 workshops. A series of six public workshops were held in April and May of this year to solicit comment. The workshops were well attended and provided valuable feedback. Based on that input, the team prepared a number of modifications to the draft strategic plan.

Mr. Branham reviewed the strategic plan, a workbook used in the workshops, a memo from Boardmembers Brissenden and Kirwan, and a summary of proposed modifications to the draft strategic plan. Mr. Branham discussed the proposed changes in the following areas:

Vision statement: comments included being more specific regarding natural resources; legislation uses the term "living resources". Also addressed was the importance of capturing the importance of the Sierra Nevada to the rest of the state and the integration of the economic and environmental issues as a whole.

Boardmember Arcularius requested the addition of the word productive, to show that the Sierra Nevada's are not only "...visited and treasured" but productive.

Mr. Branham asked Boardmembers to contact him within the next week, while revisions are being completed, if they had specific comments on wording, content or substance.

The Mission Statement: comments included the importance of collaboration, suggestions of a more succinct statement, a request for a more action-oriented statement and that it reflect the importance of the region to the entire state.

Boardmember Whiteside requested the word "social" be added, noting that the classic definition of sustainability includes social, economic, and environmental; and leaving out social leaves out the human. Boardmember Sher stated the way the original mission statement using the word "is" speaks to the future and should be left in. Boardmember Arcularius stated we are not achieving anything in the mission statement and that it needs to initiate action.

Recommendations were also made in the areas of clarifying partners in carrying out our mission, strengthening the role of coordination between agencies and acting as a "facilitator," improving communication and education efforts, and more clearly integrating economic and environmental aspects.

Organizational Goals: Mr. Branham described modifications recommended in this area. Boardmember Baumann asked the Board to keep in mind that local governments may be concerned with the "support" of regional land use planning. This is an opportunity to collaborate with the local governments on planning. Boardmember Arcularius recommended adding "local" to goal 3.3.

Boardmember Whiteside stated time is important when discussing a "balanced Program" and suggested including a clear statement it will take time to achieve this objective (Organizational Goal 5).

Boardmember Ishida raised the issue of the Conservancy taking a position of advocating for counties in addressing law enforcement costs relating to federal lands. Chairman Chrisman agreed that the SNC provides a forum to discuss issues such as this.

Program Goals: Mr. Branham explained that each program goal has specific actions identified necessary to achieve the stated goal. The precise legislative language written on the seven areas was used when writing the goals.

Boardmember Kirkwood recommended plainly stating this in the plan.

Chairman Chrisman suggested the term “work with” be replaced with more action-oriented terms, with specific outcomes.

Boardmember Sher suggested that “funding” (under Organizational Goals) is not stated as a goal. This language needs to be clarified to state the clear intent, more along the lines of increasing funding. He also indicated that goal four seems to be missing the words “...develop in collaboration. . . “ and that sub-regional difference vs. regional differences needs clarification in Goal 4.2.

Boardmember Kirkwood, questioned whether there was a way to focus on “shoulder seasons, times when tourism is down. Mr. Branham indicated that this was a good idea, and noted also that many comments had been received indicating increased tourism and recreation must be consistent with resource protection objectives and community infrastructure.

Boardmember Whiteside stated that the numbering of goals may suggest priority and recommended a different means of identifying goals, such as by letter or bullet point.

To address working landscapes Mr. Branham indicated the need to communicate with the land owners and work with other partners such as land trusts and government entities. Boardmember Arcularius expressed concern that it is not the Conservancy’s role to “seek” out individuals, but rather to work with others and to stress that these programs are voluntary. Boardmember Kirkwood added that local land trusts have spent a great deal of time creating relationships; we would not want to impede their outreach. Mr. Branham added that we need to figure out where the opportunities exist and where the SNC could add value.

Boardmember Kirkwood suggested that language such as “Identify and support possible transfer of lands between private and public owners” be added under Program Goal 3. He also indicated that it is important to identify the role upper watersheds play in temporary natural storage of water and sediment reduction, and to articulate that the SNC encourages the management of lands for these purposes.

Next Step: A revised Strategic Plan, based on the Board’s suggested modifications, will be developed and released for public comment, with a final draft strategic plan to be presented to the Board at the July 20, 2006 meeting.

XI. Board Members' Comments

Boardmember Ishida stated the location of the next meeting is Visalia, at the Board of Supervisors Chambers on July 20 and that a field trip will be held on the afternoon of July 19th.

Boardmember Whiteside would like to add two things to be considered for future board meeting agendas: First, the Governor's Partnership of the San Joaquin Valley involving land use and transportation; and, second, the encouraging communities to think broadly about land use and conservancy programs, including strategies to work proactively with the wildlife agencies.

Chairman Chrisman suggested that the field trip on July 19 include review of a proposed new community in the foothills. Tulare County has had a foothill growth management plan, to direct growth away from farmland; what are the tradeoffs, is this development in the best interest of the county? He indicated that this type of development illustrates some issues that will come to the Board up and down the Sierra.

Boardmember Ishida commented that an issue with development in the foothills is the availability of ground water.

Boardmember Whiteside, noted suggestions from wildlife agencies to build to the west of the Valley, apparently believing that this would have less of an impact on resources. However, there is no water there, which will increase growth pressure on the foothills.

Boardmember Yamaguchi asked how development to the west would satisfy the housing needs of communities on the east side of the valley, such as in Tehama and Butte Counties and stressed the importance of considering local needs.

Mr. Branham referenced a chart in the meeting materials identifying the ownership patterns in the region.

Mr. Branham gave an update on the Sierra Cascade Grant Program reported at the last meeting:

- 23 projects submitted
- \$43 million total requests
- \$89 million with matching funds
- 12 simple purchases
- 9 conservation easements
- 2 combinations
- Grants are to be awarded in September or October

Boardmember Arcularius asked if there was a way to add lands under conservation easements to the ownership chart. Chairman Chrisman commented on the need for such information and noted that legislation had been introduced at one time to identify and track conservation easements.

XII. Public Comments

Izzy Martin, The Sierra Fund, expressed thanks for the reception the previous evening and commended the board for its work, particularly regarding the Strategic Plan. She noted that the Senate Transportation committee would soon be hearing AB 84 (Leslie), a bill to authorize the creation of a Sierra Nevada Conservancy license plate.

Julie Leimbach, Sierra Nevada Alliance, thanked the supervisor-Boardmembers for meeting she indicated support for the proposed revisions to the strategic plan discussed during the meeting and agreement with the concept of beefing up the conservation piece, along with links to the economic principles.

XIII. Adjournment

Chairman Chrisman adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.