

### **Background**

A priority area of activity for SNC staff is the development and implementation the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) (see Agenda Item IX). In addition to activities in support of the WIP, staff continues to engage in legislative/policy and outreach/communications tasks with goals of raising the profile of the Sierra Nevada, and educating legislators and key-decision makers about the value our Region has to the entire state.

### **Current Status**

#### **Meetings and Legislative Actions**

In July, the Governor signed AB 985 authored by Assembly Member Brian Dahle. This SNC-sponsored measure establishes a deeper relationship between the SNC and the State Legislature by authorizing each house to identify two members to serve as liaisons to the SNC and its Board. Staff is now strategizing with Mr. Dahle and others to identify potential legislators for these positions. The law takes effect January 1, 2016 and we hope liaisons will be identified shortly thereafter.

ACR 22, also by Assembly Member Brian Dahle, will establish the third week of September as Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week. The resolution drew 75 co-authors in the Assembly, and is pending passage in the State Senate, after which it will be recorded by the Secretary of State. This resolution and the establishment of Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week will support the Great Sierra River Cleanup and provide SNC with a means of communicating Sierra challenges and opportunities with not only members of the Legislature, but also the public-at-large in the years ahead.

Special thanks go out to Assembly Member Brian Dahle and his staff for their continued support, and also to SNC Legislative Affairs Coordinator Brandon Sanders for his work in developing and successfully advancing these measures on behalf of the SNC.

Formalizing our relationship with the Sierra Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Partnership (CAMP) being led by the Sierra Business Council, SNC signed on as an ex-officio (non-voting) member of the Sierra CAMP Steering Committee in August. Sierra CAMP is working toward a climate-adapted and resilient Sierra Nevada through a collaborative process being supported by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), the Local Government Commission, and the Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation (ARCCA). SNC Boardmember Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery is actively involved in this effort. This is a unique opportunity to connect urban leaders to Sierra Nevada issues, and to demonstrate how what happens in the Sierra directly affects beneficiaries downstream.

#### **Outreach and Communications**

Staff continues to focus on supporting the communications needs of the WIP, and on keeping SNC activities highlighted on social media.

In late June, staff worked with the U.S. Forest Service and California Natural Resources Agency to have a portion of the Sierra Nevada Region included in [the designation of the California Headwaters as a Resilient Lands and Waters Region](#). President Obama's Priority Agenda for Enhancing the Climate Resilience of America's Natural Resources (released in October 2014) called for the identification of place-based, landscape-scale resilience strategies. The Resilient Lands and Waters Initiative works to identify regions where:

1. The selected lands and waters face a wide range of climate impacts and other ecological stressors related to climate change, including drought, wildfire, sea level rise, species migration, and invasive species.
2. The selected lands and waters have existing collaborative partnerships in place that can work together to prepare for and prevent these and other threats, and ensure that long-term conservation efforts take climate change into account.

While this designation didn't result in new funding for the Region, it did shine a light on the importance of the Sierra to California, and supported the work we strive to accomplish through the WIP. In addition, the regional planning work occurring through the WIP will feed into the report required by the Resilient Lands and Waters designation which will identify an initial list of priority areas for conservation, restoration, or other investments, to build resilience in vulnerable regions, enhance carbon storage capacity, and support management needs.

Additional information on the CA Headwaters Region and the Resilient Lands & Waters Initiative are available on the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association's web site](#). The press release and a recording of the media call hosted in June are available on the [USDA's web site](#). A number of comments from partner organizations are also posted on the [USDA's web site](#).

### **Great Sierra River Cleanup**

The 7<sup>th</sup> annual Great Sierra River Cleanup (GSRC) will occur on Saturday, September 19. At the time of this writing, we have more than 66 organizations committed to cleaning up our Sierra waterways, representing the entire range of the Sierra Nevada Region. Additionally, all of our sponsors this year are return sponsors, including the California Conservation Corps (CCC), Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), and Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI). The CCC is supporting the 2015 Most-Unusual-Item contest with prizes donated by Danner Boots and Mountainsmith.

A new outreach approach implemented this year includes asking Sierra Nevada Region Boards of Supervisors to help support the event and communicate their commitment to their constituents. Several Supervisors from the Region have agreed to post GSRC news and updates in newsletters, event calendars, and email blasts with links back to the GSRC website. We also have a handful of Supervisors interested in participating in cleanups in their areas!

GSRC legislative and media outreach efforts in support of the event will focus primarily on the Watershed Protection Week Resolution ([ACR 22](#)). Staff will promote the event via news releases and a social media campaign calling for volunteers, thanking sponsors, and sharing day of cleanup results, pictures, and winners of the contest.

***GSRC is only 16 days away!*** If you haven't signed up for a cleanup in your area contact Theresa Burgess and she can help get you registered. Results from this year's cleanup will be distributed via email the week of September 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Next Steps**

Staff will continue to identify and implement legislative, outreach, and communications activities in support of Sierra Nevada Conservancy programs and activities. Specific activities will include continued active participation in the Forest Carbon Action Team (FCAT) - a working group being led by CAL FIRE to develop policy recommendations for spending Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) monies in the forest sector. Staff will also be engaged with partners in the update of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Investment Plan, which will guide investment for the next three fiscal years.

### **Recommendation**

**This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.**