

March 2-3, 2011  
Town Hall  
549 Main Street  
Placerville, CA 95667



## **March 2, 2010**

### **Board Tour**

**1:15 – 5:00 PM**

Members of the Board and staff will participate in a field trip to explore issues and activities relevant to the Conservancy's mission in the Central Subregion. Members of the public are invited to participate in the field tour but are responsible for their own transportation and lunch. The tour will start at public parking lot on Sacramento Street, Placerville, CA (located next to the US Post Office).

### **Reception**

**5:30 – 7:00 PM**

Following the Board tour, Boardmembers and staff will attend a reception open to the public. The reception will take place at the El Dorado Arts Council located at 459 Main Street, Placerville, CA.

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## **March 3, 2011**

### **Board Meeting**

**9:00 – 1:00 PM**

*(End time of the meeting is approximate)*

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Oath of Office of New Members**
- III. Roll Call**
- IV. Approval of December 2, 2010 Meeting Minutes (ACTION)**
- V. Public Comments**  
Opportunity for the public to comment on non-agenda items.
- VI. Board Chair's Report**
- VII. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**
  - a. Budget and Staffing
  - b. Strategic Plan Update
  - c. System Indicators Update
  - d. Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative Update
  - e. Mokelumne Watershed Environmental Benefits Project Update
  - f. Sierra Day in the Capitol
  - g. Sierra Nevada Water Report
  - h. Geotourism MapGuide Project Update
  - i. Central Subregion Report

**VIII. Deputy Attorney General's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**

**IX. Consideration of the SNC 2011 Action Plan (ACTION)**

The Board will review and may approve a 2011 Action Plan for the organization.

**X. 2010-11 Grant Awards (ACTION)**

The Board will consider, and may adopt necessary CEQA findings and file Notices of Determination for projects SNC 419, the Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project and SNC 322, the Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project; and authorize the grants listed in Attachment A.

**XI. 2011-12 and 2012-13 Grants Program (ACTION)**

The Board will consider and may provide direction to staff on recommendations for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 Proposition 84 Grants Program.

**XII. Boardmembers' Comments**

**XIII. Public Comments**

**XIV. Adjournment**

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Meeting Materials are available on the SNC Web site at [www.sierranevada.ca.gov](http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov). For additional information or to submit written comment on any agenda item, please contact Mrs. Burgess at (530) 823-4672, toll free at (877) 257-1212; or via email at [tburgess@sierranevada.ca.gov](mailto:tburgess@sierranevada.ca.gov). 11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205, Auburn CA 95603. If you need reasonable accommodations please contact Mrs. Burgess at least **five** working days in advance, including documents in alternative formats.

**Closed Session:** Following, or at any time during the meeting, the Conservancy may recess or adjourn to closed session to consider pending or potential litigation; property negotiations; or personnel-related matters. Authority: Government Code Section 11126(a), (c) (7), or (e).

**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**December 2, 2010**  
**Angelo's Hall**  
**11209 State Street**  
**Columbia, CA 95310**



**I. Call to Order**

Board Chair Kirwan called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

**II. Roll Call**

**Present:** Julie Alvis (alternate for Todd Ferrera), Jon McQuiston, Bob Kirkwood, BJ Kirwan, Ted Owens (alternate for Hal Stocker), Bill Nunes, Bob Johnston Paolo Maffei, Bill Haigh, and David Graber

**Absent:** John Brissenden, Brian Dahle, Don Jardine, Cynthia Bryant, and Dan Jiron

**III. Approval of September 2, 2010 Meeting Minutes (ACTION)**

There were no changes to the meeting minutes.

**Action: Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Owens seconded a motion to approve the September 2, 2010 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.**

**IV. Public Comments**

There were no public comments at this time.

**V. Board Chair's Report**

Board Chair Kirwan thanked Boardmember Maffei and the SNC staff involved in putting together the previous day's tour of Phoenix Lake and the Tuolumne Utility District's ditch water supply system, saying it was helpful to see firsthand where the SNC grant money is going.

Kirwan asked the outgoing Boardmembers for their assistance in getting their replacements appointed to the Board as soon as possible, given the important issues and grant approvals coming before the Board at the next meeting.

Boardmember Maffei introduced Tuolumne County Supervisor Dick Pland, who will replace him on the Board next year. Maffei also expressed his thanks to Black Oak Casino and the Native American Tribe in Tuolumne County, which provided sponsorship support for the previous day's tour and reception.

**VI. Election of a Vice Chair for 2011**

Board Chair Kirwan asked for nominations for Vice Chair, and thanked outgoing Boardmember McQuiston for his service to the Board in that capacity. McQuiston nominated Boardmember Nunes for Vice Chair. There were no other nominations.

**Action: Boardmember McQuiston moved and Boardmember Owens seconded a motion to nominate Boardmember Nunes as the 2011 Vice Chair. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **VII. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Executive Officer Jim Branham reported that Mt. Whitney Area Manager Kim Carr and her family have moved to the Lake Tahoe area. Carr will continue to serve in her current role until the end of January. At that time, she will transition into a new role, continuing to oversee the Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative, and will have other duties aligned with the Strategic Plan. Branham said the SNC is thrilled to have Carr continue with the SNC team. He said that the SNC will be seeking a new Mt. Whitney area manager, although the timing is uncertain given the State's hiring freeze.

### **A. Budget and Staffing**

SNC Administrative Services Manager Theresa Parsley presented the current SNC budget and staffing report. She reported that the State Budget for the current fiscal year was signed and the major state employee union (Service Employees International Union) has ratified a contract that gives staff 12 months of relative certainty that there will be no furloughs. She said the restoration of furlough time has brought an increase in staff activity.

While the budget is passed and progress has been made, Parsley said there are no real signs of relief. With \$5 billion in structural deficit this year and \$20 billion anticipated next year, it is hard to know what may happen next. Parsley said the SNC is working to be prepared for any eventuality.

Parsley added that one employee in the Mariposa office will be moving on to a new job outside of State service. The current State hiring freeze does not permit filling vacancies at this time.

### **B. Grants Update**

Grants Program Manager Kerri Timmer reviewed with the Board the direction it had given SNC Grant Administration staff at the previous Board meeting. In summary, the SNC had \$10 million in Proposition 84 The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act funding (Prop. 84) to award in this single round of grant applications. These applications are to be broken up into two categories:

- Category 1 grants are for "on-the-ground" site improvements, site acquisition, with a cap of \$1 million per grant application. Timmer noted the Board has recommended 75 percent of the funding go to Category 1 projects.

- Category 2 grants are for pre-project due diligence, planning, monitoring, preparation for on-the-ground projects, with a cap of \$250,000.

Timmer noted the deadline for the receipt of applications was September 13. A total of 129 proposals were received, 72 of these, totaling approximately \$32 million, were for Category 1. There were 57 applications, totaling approximately \$8 million, for Category 2.

However, 16 applications were deemed ineligible or incomplete and, therefore, were unable to be evaluated. The total amount requested in these 16 applications was \$2.3 million.

The remaining applications are undergoing detailed project evaluation and scoring by external teams of technical experts, Timmer said. Once these teams have completed their reviews, the highest ranked projects will move to SNC staff for review, at which point additional factors, such as geographic distribution and project type diversity, may be considered. The SNC staff review will result in a set of funding recommendations for each Subregion and a prioritized list of recommended projects, regardless of Subregion, for the non-geographic pot.

Boardmember Graber asked who sits on the evaluation panel. Timmer said the panels are built from 12 experts from other agencies with a wide range of expertise including recreation planning, biology, habitat conservation, and water quality. The 12 have been divided into six two-person teams resulting in one team per Subregion.

Timmer noted that in order to get to final recommendations posted in mid-February for Board consideration at the March 2011 meeting, the SNC will be scheduling calls with Board committees in mid-January to discuss staff recommendations.

Boardmember Kirwan assigned the following statewide Boardmembers to their respective committees that will be convening in January:

- Kirkwood – North Central and South
- Johnston – Central
- Brisenden – East and North
- Kirwan – South Central and Region-wide.

Timmer thanked Boardmembers Dahle and Kirkwood for serving on the committee on Decision-Making Tools and Information, which guided staff with this process. She noted the primary recommendations which will be incorporated with this grant cycle include the following:

- Adding the score for each project to the information included in the Board packets; providing more information to the Board about where and how the

line was drawn between those projects that are recommended and those that aren't; and, providing more access to the full application contents for the Board and public as soon as possible after intake.

### **Proposition 84 Grant Program Audit**

Timmer stated the Department of Finance audit report of SNC Prop. 84 grant program has not been released. Auditors reviewed procedures and documentation and completed site visits on a subset of grant projects. An exit interview took place in late September, during which SNC staff and auditors reviewed the initial findings. Timmer said the auditors were generally complimentary about the fact that the SNC regularly updates its major controlling documents, such as the Strategic Plan, Annual Report, Grant Guidelines and Grant Application Packets. They were also impressed with the area staff in terms of knowledge, engagement and availability, both to grantees and the auditors themselves.

Some issues expected to emerge in the audit report include the need to improve grant monitoring over the life of a project (post-funding), a request for more information for prospective applicants regarding the evaluation process and post-award process so they know what to expect if they are awarded grant funds, and work with other agencies to improve the identification and tracking of multiple funding sources that contribute to the same project.

Once the audit report is finalized and received by SNC, there is a 10-day period with which to respond to the formal findings.

### **C. South Central Subregion Report**

Executive Officer Branham introduced Area Representative Brandon Sanders and thanked him for pulling together the logistics for the Board meeting and field tour.

Sanders gave an overview of the South Central Subregion which is comprised of Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne and Mariposa counties. He reported on the demographics of the Subregion including the land ownership throughout the four counties. Sanders reported the following key challenges and significant SNC activities in the Subregion:

#### **SNC Prop. 84 grants/funding**

To date the Subregion has received 25 grants for a total of almost \$2.1 million. Pre-project due diligence grants make up the largest share of funding in the South Central Subregion, though Sanders said the SNC staff is working to see that those grants move toward on-the-ground projects. Through the SNC Prop. 84 Grant Program, direct funding has been provided to planning efforts in Mariposa County, one of the last counties in the Sierra to initiate an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan process. The SNC's Mariposa office also assisted organizations to compete successfully for U.S. Department of Agriculture rural development funding, helping to leverage the investment of funds in the Subregion.

### **Projects**

Introduction of the Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI) and the provision of technical assistance including participation in the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group, the Sustainable Forests and Communities Collaborative, and the Mokelumne Watershed Environmental Benefits Project. Staff have also provided support for the California Strategic Growth Council application, and provided on-going support for the Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide Project, specifically with the Yosemite Gateway Partners. Staff also conducted the very successful Great Sierra River Cleanup in this Subregion and the outcomes of this statewide event was reported.

At the end of the presentation Boardmember Graber noted that the SNC uses the term “monitoring” for both long-term measurement of landscape changes and in connection with project evaluation, and pointed out that in doing so those activities can be confused. He suggested the SNC use a different term for project evaluations.

#### **D. Great Sierra River Cleanup Final Report**

Mt. Lassen Area Manager Bob Kingman reported on the success of the second annual Great Sierra River Cleanup (GRSC), which took place Sept. 25. He said it has become the “signature event” of the SNC. He thanked the SNC staff, particularly Brittany Juergenson, for promoting the event and for training the volunteers who put it together. Approximately 141 tons of trash and recyclables were removed from 22 watersheds and 150 cleanup sites, by 4,034 volunteers who covered 265 river miles.

Kingman said the GSRC was established in coordination with the California Coastal Commission’s statewide Coastal Cleanup Day. Combined, nearly one million pounds of garbage was collected from the two efforts Sept. 25. Kingman noted the GSRC effort comprised nearly one-third of that total, and that it is growing at a rapid pace.

Kingman said the event enjoyed tremendous media exposure, which helps to create an identity for the Sierra. He thanked SNC staff and the local cleanup groups for their efforts in publicizing the event. The event received the support of 12 SNC staff and Boardmembers, five legislative co-sponsors, 12 AmeriCorps volunteers, with 12 financial sponsors. Kingman said the SNC would be seeking more sponsorships for next year’s event, set for Sept. 17, 2011. Overall, 125 organizer partnerships participated this year.

Boardmember Owens asked how the 141 tons of trash were disposed of. Kingman said in-kind sponsorships by companies such as Waste Management provide the dumpsters for the trash.

Boardmember Johnston asked if there were any missing watersheds and who is trying to organize them. Kingman said there were only a few watersheds not participating and that the SNC is actively recruiting for more participation. He said that the original goal of the Coastal Cleanup Day was to have a cleanup in all 58 counties, and the GSRC has increased their participation by 15 counties.

Board Chair Kirwan complimented the artist for the design of the GSRC poster. Kingman said Sierra artist Kathy Dotson has provided the artwork for the posters, and that the SNC is working with the Sierra Nevada Arts Alliance and would like to explore working with other Sierra Nevada artists to create a collector's series of art associated with the event.

#### **E. Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative Update**

Branham reported that all 22 Sierra Nevada county Boards of Supervisors have endorsed the SNC's Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI) Resolution without a single dissenting vote. He added that the first meeting of the SNFCI Regional Coordinating Council took place in Columbia two days earlier. The most significant outcome from the meeting was that the diverse group of representatives, who have rarely worked closely together, came together and began the process of collaboration.

SNFCI project manager Kim Carr said that receiving the endorsement from 120 organizations and 22 county Boards of Supervisors is a big step in building the consensus. The 17 members of the Coordinating Council include three federal agencies, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Forest Service as advisory members. Carr said the Coordinating Council will meet quarterly, and the next meeting will be in March, in Auburn. She thanked Boardmember Kirkwood for volunteering as the SNC Board's liaison to the Coordinating Council.

Carr reported the following actions items and committees that emerged from the meeting:

- 1) The Coordinating Council adopted four documents as an initial set of key technical and reference guides, to be used for common understanding of the issues. Boardmember Kirkwood will serve the Coordinating Council by reviewing and identifying additional documents and information that could be added to this collection.
- 2) The Coordinating Council identified two time-sensitive issues related to federal legislative efforts and a committee was formed to gather more information and develop draft language for letters that the Coordinating Council members could review for consensus and support. The two issues are the reauthorization of the Stewardship Contracting Authority to secure supply and demand for woody biomass; and the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools Bill.

- 3) A working group was formed to develop an inventory of collaborative activities already underway in the Region, and establish a formal link between the Council and the collaborative efforts, to provide support for those projects on the ground.

Taking note of projects and collaborative efforts already underway, Carr pointed out the success of the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group in the northern part of the Stanislaus National Forest as a model for this activity and discussed other such efforts.

Steve Wilensky, Calaveras County Supervisor and Co-Chair of the SNFCI Coordinating Council, commented that the composition and nature of the Coordinating Council could never have come together without the help of the SNC. Wilensky said the narrowly-focused positions that have historically slowed progress in the Sierra are being addressed in a more positive fashion through the Coordinating Council.

Boardmember Nunes said the Coordinating Council focused on practical solutions aimed at producing results. Boardmember Owens asked if there was discussion about strategies to prevent the litigation that has hampered action in the past. Wilensky responded that by having potential litigants in the room and adopting protocols for consensus, while adding robust science and dialogue, should reduce or avoid the threat of litigation.

Branham said the SNC is arranging a meeting with the Quincy Library Group to learn from their experience and better understand how to approach projects in a different manner to foster more agreement at the beginning of the SNFCI effort.

Nunes noted that for those 120 groups who considered endorsing SNFCI, the objective of reducing lawsuits was probably the most attractive element.

Boardmember Maffei discussed the current situation in Tuolumne County relating to wood processing and biomass energy. He said it seemed "absurd" that a cogeneration plant burning woody biomass should be held to the same standards as a coal plant, because the woody biomass would, by definition, burn in the forest eventually.

Owens said in Sierra County the co-generation plant operated by Sierra Pacific Industries in Loyalton has had a difficult time staying open due to the sporadic supply of woody biomass. They have had to close at times, or have had to ship urban waste from the valley up to the plant to keep it going.

Boardmember Kirkwood said that while the SNC has no authority over utility rates, it could identify an opportunity to discuss this idea with another state agency or with the Public Utilities Commission.

**F. Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council Update**

Executive Officer Branham said the SNC has taken a significant step forward in the process of working with the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council (Stewardship Council) to perform ongoing services to support implementation of their Land Conservation Plan, and introduced Mt. Lassen Senior Area Representative Linda Hansen for her report.

Hansen said the SNC and the Stewardship Council have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to guide the negotiation of specific contracts pertaining to: 1) the SNC serving as the covenant holder on watershed lands donated to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS); and 2) the SNC carrying out certain other roles with respect to conservation easements on donated lands. The delegation was approved with the understanding that the negotiated contracts would be subject to SNC Board approval at a later date.

The Stewardship Council also approved the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) as the prospective donee of fee title for five parcels encompassing 770 acres, as well as several other parcels to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Stewardship Council is still assessing which, if any, additional lands might be donated to the various USFS units.

Branham offered updates on several items that were addressed during the September 2010 Board meeting, and actions taken on them in the meantime.

Frank Stewart, who serves on the Board of Directors with the California Fire Safe Council, had asked the SNC to set aside Prop. 84 money to fund Fire Safe Council efforts. Branham reported that the requirements of Prop. 84 does not allow for that, and that the SNC has a meeting set with various partners designed to brainstorm the solutions. He added the SNC will also have meetings with various fire safe councils to hear their additional issues as well.

Branham reported that Julie Osburn from Friends of Independence Lake expressed concerns related to the SNC's management of its grant with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) on the Independence Lake Watershed Acquisition, specifically related to Americans with Disabilities Act compliance and actions to avoid introduction of aquatic invasive species into the lake. Branham said SNC staff met with TNC to understand what is currently being done and what will be done, including discussions related to their grant agreement. Staff also met with Friends of Independence Lake to reassure them that we would monitor the situation and that TNC intends to address those elements of the agreement in their long term efforts.

Boardmember Nunes said he was contacted by Friends of Independence Lake and noted that they were appreciative of SNC efforts and attitude, and were satisfied that TNC is resolved to live up to the commitments they made in their grant application.

**VIII. Deputy Attorney General's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**

Christine Sproul, Deputy Attorney General, complimented SNC Mt. Lassen Area Senior Representative Linda Hansen and Jim Branham for establishing an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Stewardship Council. She also thanked the legal counsel for the U.S. Forest Service, Joshua Rider ; the Pacific Forest & Watershed Lands Stewardship Council, David Moyce; and John Gussman with the California Tahoe Conservancy for their efforts in guiding the process. Sproul informed the Board that she is retiring at the end of the year but offered to assist the Board in any way she could.

Board Chair Kirwan and Branham thanked Sproul for her dedication and "results-oriented" approach to providing legal counsel to the SNC Board.

**IX. 2011 Board Meeting Schedule (INFORMATIONAL)**

Executive Officer Branham noted that the Board has now met in 17 of the 22 Sierra counties. He requested that the meeting schedule be altered due to potential weather and travel conditions. The 2011 meeting schedule was recommended, with the proposed counties for the Subregional rotation.

March 2-3	Central Subregion (El Dorado County)
June 1-2	North Subregion (Lassen or Modoc)
September 7-8	East Subregion (Inyo)
December 7-8	South Subregion (Madera)

**Action: Boardmember Owens moved and Boardmember Kirkwood seconded the staff recommendation for the 2011 Board meeting schedule, as modified. The motion passed unanimously.**

**X. Strategic Plan Areas of Focus (ACTION)**

Assistant Executive Officer Joan Keegan provided a retrospective of what actions have been taken so far, listing the proposed "areas of focus" for the Plan, adding that those focus areas were filtered through the following four categories:

- 1) alignment with SNC statutory authority;
- 2) previous Board direction and resulting expertise and momentum; (i.e. SNFCI)
- 3) input from stakeholders and staff; and
- 4) the need to be realistic about resource limitations.

Keegan proposed two alternative sets of focus areas for the Board to choose from:

- Alternative 1: Forests, watersheds, agricultural lands, tourism & recreation, organizational effectiveness.
- Alternative 2: All above plus a focus on healthy and sustainable communities. This would be a more concentrated effort of advocacy and education related to land use planning and “smart growth” opportunities.

Keegan outlined the next steps that will lead to a final plan to be considered by the Board in September 2011.

She reported that the staff recommendation is Alternative 1 with actions built to incorporate the following within each area of focus:

- Advocacy and education
- Funding efforts
- Regional Identity building
- Supporting local capacity building
- Convening at a regional level around these issues to discuss policy issues across the range or identifying potential need for new science
- Specific cross-cutting issues such as climate change

Boardmember Nunes asked how the areas of focus will advance the economic and environmental well-being, as called out in the legislative findings and declarations in the governing statutes that created the SNC.

Keegan said this issue, as well as many others, will be inherently encompassed in all the areas of focus.

Nunes said he supported Alternative 1, because the SNC was developed with the understanding that it was not going to be involved in land use planning at the local level.

Boardmember Owens also supported Alternative 1, saying the SNC should not run a risk of stepping into an area that might jeopardize the good will that has been built by crossing over jurisdictional issues. He suggested that the SNC could have a conflict of interest in making decisions through its grant program that could be used to influence local land use planning decisions.

Boardmember Johnston said he supported Alternative 2 so that the SNC could help Sierra Nevada counties to secure grants and other funds for planning. He said he does not see this as interfering with the way counties do their land use planning.

Keegan said that under the SNC's existing Prop. 84 grant program it would be hard to fund activities related to land use planning, but it might be able to consider that type of project under a new bond program. She indicated that the SNC could try to find other monies for these purposes, but that it seems like a better fit to address the

issue of planning within the other areas of focus, especially considering the SNC's limited resources.

Boardmember Kirkwood said he was surprised to see Alternative 2 since it could take SNC into the most controversial area of local land use planning. However, he felt there were two areas where the SNC could work with other state agencies on behalf of the Sierra: AB 32—The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, and the California Strategic Growth Council. He suggested that those two roles should be captured in the areas of focus. He further requested that the plan distinguish between programmatic objectives and institutional objectives, as is in the previous Strategic Plan.

Boardmember Alvis said that California Strategic Growth Council makes its first recommendations for Prop. 84 awards this week, and there are still 2-3 additional rounds of grants available for land use planning support in the Region.

**Public Comment:**

Rick Breeze-Martin, resident of Tuolumne County encouraged the Board to consider Alternative 2. He said the issue of healthy and sustainable communities is bigger than “smart growth” and shouldn't be limited to the idea of local planning. He said tourism and recreation are very important, and one of the largest economic activities in the Sierra. Breeze-Martin said the SNC should support local planning if counties request that help.

Keegan said the definition of healthy and sustainable communities was a result of the Board workshop, not something that staff came up with it on its own. Keegan suggested another way to address this matter was to insert language in the Plan to make it very clear that it emphasizes healthy and sustainable communities—as well as the environment, and social issues—no matter what the areas of focus are.

**Action: Boardmember Owens moved and Boardmember Kirkwood seconded the staff recommendation of Alternative 1 for the Strategic Plan Areas of Focus. Boardmember Johnston opposed staff recommendation. The motion passed.**

**XI. 2011-12 Grant Program (INFORMATIONAL)**

Program Manager Kerri Timmer addressed the Board about the remaining grant dollars available from Prop. 84.

Timmer said of the \$54 million allocated to the SNC, \$10 million remains. She said the SNC wants to be strategic about awarding those funds, and at the same time recognize the effort, time and money that applicants spend in preparing their proposals.

Timmer said suggestions might include the existing competitive process, or looking for projects that align with the strategic planning effort, or current initiatives, such as

SNFCI. This would require another level of criteria beyond Prop. 84. Alternatively the SNC could abandon the competitive process and instead choose partners it wants to work with. Another alternative would be a hybrid where the SNC sets aside a portion of the \$10 million to do a little of both.

In considering this change in the award process, Timmer asked the Board for guidance in four areas:

- 1) Does the Board want to keep some degree of Subregional allocation in the awards?
- 2) Are there other parameters the Board would want to consider for a more directed approach?
- 3) Would the Board want to consider awarding fewer projects with larger dollar amounts?
- 4) Considering the delay of the water bond ballot measure until 2012, does the Board want to spread out the remaining funds over a longer period of time?

Boardmember Kirkwood said many other boards, including the California Coastal Conservancy, tie their grants much more closely to proposals that align with their programmatic efforts.

Boardmember Graber said it is time to be strategic and to select projects that are both more compelling and visible in the Sierra. He added that expanding the timeframe to ensure that that happens would be appropriate.

Boardmember Johnston agreed that the time frame should be extended, given that the new bond measure has been pushed out to the 2012 ballot. Branham added that the soonest the SNC would see any funding from that bond, should it pass, would be fiscal year 2013-14.

Johnston asked if the goal of achieving one or more of the SNC program objectives is already in the evaluation process. Timmer said proposals that align with program objectives are given some weight in the current process, and are further limited in that they have to be tied to Prop. 84 requirements of watershed health.

Kirkwood said the Board should not start with the assumption that the same competitive bid and scoring process be used. He suggested a much tighter Request For Proposal, similar to what other state conservancies do.

Boardmember Owens asked if the SNC would run the risk of being accused of being a staff-driven organization rather than one that considers ideas that emanate "organically" from within the Region. Kirkwood said that as long as the Board is active in setting priorities and the Strategic Plan, and is active in hearing from people in the Region, its current efforts, processes, focus would protect it from that danger.

Johnston suggested trying out any new process with the funds that are not tied to a given Subregion. Timmer asked if the funding should be spread out over two years.

Boardmember Nunes said he does not have a problem with spreading the funds over two years, and asked if SNFCI would qualify as programmatic areas we could focus on? Timmer said that yes, SNFCI would. Owens said he also agreed with the two-year funding idea. Board Chair Kirwan asked if the Board had reached consensus on directing staff to spend no more than half the funds over the next two years. The response from the Board was "Yes."

Kirwan asked if the Board wanted to use at least a portion of the funds in a programmatic focus. Kirkwood said there was plenty of time to consider that in the future, and suggested the Board allow staff the opportunity to refine options of how the SNC may go about tying grants to programmatic efforts, and bring those options back to the Board for further consideration.

Boardmember McQuiston said he wanted to make sure that the program is not changed too much too quickly because it has received so much buy-in from the local communities. He said he wants to see a "balanced" approach where the program is responsive to, and aligned with, the needs of the communities.

Kirwan reminded the Board that there has been a lot of conversation over the years about the 60/40 split of funds, where 60 percent would be allocated evenly to each of the Subregions, and the remaining 40 percent would be allocated throughout the entire Region.

Kirkwood said he would rather not make a decision about that at this meeting, and would prefer to let staff work on alternatives for a future Board meeting.

Branham said staff direction currently calls for the funds to be distributed equitably over time, regardless if there is a strict 60/40 split. He said the SNC will take that to heart as it looks at these alternatives. Owens said that over time the Board will be able to analyze the effectiveness of the 40 percent and its distribution, which might influence, down the road, other project applicants within a Subregion, but it doesn't prohibit them from competing for the 60 percent within the Subregion. Therefore, he feels the Board can maintain equity and meet the intent of the statute.

Kirwan asked for volunteers for a Grant Program Subcommittee. Boardmembers Owens and Graber volunteered.

## **XII. Boardmembers' Comments**

Executive Officer Branham presented gifts to the out-going Boardmembers McQuiston, Maffei, and Jardine, and thanked them for their service.

Board Chair Kirwan thanked the outgoing members for their service to the SNC Board and asked if they would like to make any parting comments.

Boardmember McQuiston said the SNC is a great organization with a great mission. He assured the Board that if Kern County could do anything to assist with the mission, to let him know.

Boardmember Maffei said it has been an "honor and a privilege" to serve on the Board as the representative from Tuolumne County, and to be able to bring the issue of "smart growth" to the table. He added that the SNC has been able to reduce conflict in the Sierra Nevada Region, while encouraging people to come together to find common goals. He said he appreciates being involved, and thanked the Boardmembers and SNC staff for their work.

**XIII. Public Comments**

Jerry Tanhauser, President of the Highway 108 Fire Safe Council, thanked the Board for coming to Tuolumne County and presented the Council's publication, "Living with Fire in Tuolumne County," which includes information about the issue of "defensible space." He invited the Board to take the publication, share with others, and think about how the SNC might help to re-print this publication. He said a 10,000 copy print run lasts about two years, and can be used for any local area.

**XIV. Adjournment**

Board Chair Kirwan adjourned the meeting at 11:55.

### **Background**

Things are unfolding slowly related to the potential impacts of the State budget crisis on the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC's) budget and staffing levels. The Governor's proposed 2011-12 budget was released on January 10, 2011, and in its current form did not bring any significant surprises regarding the SNC's budget. However, we continue to watch for additional actions and reactions as the Governor and the Legislature grapple with the difficulties of closing a \$28 billion general fund deficit. We are also watching the bond discussions closely, since the negative impact of future planned bond sales on debt service obligations is impacting the State's plans for the next bond sale, and has already delayed the Spring sale to Fall.

### **Current Status – Budget**

The SNC fiscal year 2010-11 budget was affected beginning in November due to the SEIU labor contract negotiations completed last Fall. The combined effect of the end of the 3-day-per-month furloughs and implementation of the personal leave program adjusted the categories of salaries and wages and staff benefits up by 7 percent, resulting in a budget cut of nearly \$200,000. These changes were absorbed by making adjustments in the operating and expenses area of the budget.

Governor Brown recently released [Executive Order B-1-11](#) requiring departments to "...document and review all authorized cell phone and smart phone procurement and related phone, data, internet and other usage plans for and by their employees and identify and implement...cuts sufficient to meet or exceed a 50 percent reduction in the number of cell phones and smart phones..." More recently Governor Brown issued [Executive Order B-2-11](#), which sets similar goals for assessing vehicle use and reducing unnecessary state-owned vehicles. The SNC will comply fully with these orders. SNC closely monitors its assignment and management of equipment, including all wireless devices and vehicles. The SNC reduced its vehicle fleet during the 2009-10 fiscal year and it is unclear at this time how additional reductions might affect SNC operations and activities.

### **Current Status – Staffing**

As previously reported to the Board, effective February 1, 2011, Kim Carr assumed new duties as our Sustainable Initiatives Coordinator, focusing initially on the Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI) and the Mokelumne Watershed Environmental Benefits Project. This new emphasis will allow us to make even more progress on these important initiatives. At the same time, Julie Bear, Mt. Whitney Area Senior Representative, stepped up to serve as Acting Mt. Whitney Area Manager, until we are able to complete the process to fill the position permanently. We appreciate Julie's willingness to accept this role and know that she will do her usual outstanding job during these very busy and challenging times.

**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.

**2010-11 SNC EXPENDITURES AND ENCUMBRANCES  
 As of December 31, 2010**

<b>State Operations</b>				
<i>Personal Services</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Expended</i>	<i>Balance</i>	<i>% Spent</i>
SALARIES AND WAGES	1,729,462	794,967	934,495	46%
STAFF BENEFITS	577,253	277,686	299,568	48%
<b><i>Personal Services, Totals</i></b>	<b>\$2,306,716</b>	<b>\$1,072,653</b>	<b>\$1,234,063</b>	<b>47%</b>

<i>Operating Expenses &amp; Equipment</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Expended</i>	<i>Balance</i>	<i>% Spent</i>
GENERAL EXPENSE	194,503	76,288	118,215	39%
TRAVEL - IS	155,173	16,067	139,106	10%
TRAVEL - OS	2,612	-	2,612	0%
TRAINING	20,000	3,974	16,026	20%
FACILITIES	261,380	115,727	145,653	44%
UTILITIES	9,733	5,937	3,796	61%
CONTRACTS- INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT	1,153,071	101,856	1,051,215	9%
CONTRACTS- EXTERNAL	199,870	27,470	172,400	14%
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	60,000	32,841	27,159	55%
CONSOLIDATED DATA CENTER	-	-	-	0%
EQUIPMENT	-	-	-	0%
OTHER ITEMS OF EXPENSE	16,116	6,159	9,957	38%
PRO RATA (control agency costs)	201,844	100,922	100,922	50%
<b><i>Operating Expenses &amp; Equipment, Totals</i></b>	<b>\$2,274,302</b>	<b>\$487,242</b>	<b>\$1,787,060</b>	<b>21%</b>

<b>Local Assistance</b>				
<i>Appropriation</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Expended</i>	<i>Balance</i>	<i>% Spent</i>
NO APPROPRIATION FOR FY 2010/11	-	-	-	0%

	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Expended</i>	<i>Balance</i>	<i>% Spent</i>
<b><i>State Operations</i></b>	<b>4,581,018</b>	<b>1,559,895</b>	<b>3,021,123</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b><i>Local Assistance</i></b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>SNC EXPENDITURES, TOTALS</b>	<b>\$4,581,018</b>	<b>\$1,559,895</b>	<b>\$3,021,123</b>	<b>34%</b>

### Background

In July 2006, the Board adopted a five-year Strategic Plan (Plan) for the SNC, which it subsequently revised at its December 2008 meeting. With a few exceptions, all of the actions contained in the Plan have been or are being accomplished or have been deemed to be ongoing activities of the SNC and have been built into our day-to-day operations.

In June 2010, the Board endorsed a process for the creation of a new Strategic Plan by September 2011. The process began with a Board workshop in June 2010 where Boardmembers and stakeholders brainstormed potential areas of focus for the new Plan. Following the Board workshop, a survey was sent out to SNC stakeholders and meetings held with SNC stakeholders and staff regarding potential areas of focus for the Plan. Based on this input, the Board adopted a set of nine potential areas of focus for the Plan at its meeting in September 2010.

Subsequently, staff gathered additional information and input on these nine potential areas of focus including information on work being done by other organizations in the Region within each potential area of focus, an assessment of potential sources of funding to support activities within each area, and potential roles and objectives for the SNC within each potential area of focus. Based on this additional information and in accordance with the factors listed below, the Board adopted five areas of focus for the SNC's new Strategic Plan at its meeting in December 2010:

- The statutory authority and program areas prescribed in the SNC's enabling legislation.
- Previous Board direction regarding where staff should direct their efforts and the resulting expertise and momentum that has developed within the organization in certain areas.
- Input from stakeholders and staff regarding where the SNC should focus over the next three years.
- The need to adopt a realistic set of focus areas for the new Plan given the limited resources of the organization and size and breadth of the Region and the issues that need to be addressed.

The five areas of focus adopted by the Board are:

- **Healthy Forests**—*Foster collaboration locally and Regionally in an effort to support a cohesive, economically viable, and sustainable approach to restoring forest ecological health, reducing fire risk and creating jobs consistent with SNC's Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI).*
- **Watershed Protection and Restoration**—*Increase the long-term health and sustainability of watersheds in the Sierra Nevada, resulting in improved water quality, increased natural storage of water and improved habitat conditions.*
- **Agricultural Lands**—*Support the preservation of sustainable agricultural lands in the Region by providing Regional identity and coordination, supporting*

*research and needed infrastructure, addressing potential threats and continued support for conservation easements.*

- **Tourism and Recreation**—*Increase the level and diversity of sustainable tourism and recreation throughout the Sierra Nevada including use of public lands.*
- **Long-term Effectiveness of the SNC**—*Ensure the long term effectiveness of the SNC by securing sustainable sources of funding for our work, continuing to build the credibility of the organization, and continually assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of our operations.*

### **Current Status**

At the time this staff report was written, staff were preparing to hold six workshops throughout the Region to gather input from stakeholders regarding the objectives and actions the SNC should pursue within the first four areas of focus. The workshops will be held in Auburn, Susanville, Visalia, Bishop, Chico, and Sonora. A mechanism is also being put in place for stakeholders to provide additional input via our Web site. In addition, meetings will be held with staff and key stakeholders as part of the process of developing a first draft of the Plan, which will be presented to the Board in June.

### **Next Steps**

At the March Board meeting, staff will report on the results of the Strategic Plan workshops, meetings, and input gathered via the Web site. Based on all of this input, staff will prepare a first draft of the Strategic Plan to present to the Board in June. This will be followed by a public comment period and the presentation of a final draft Plan for adoption by the Board at its meeting in September 2011.

### **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. The Board may consider whether there is a need to appoint a new member to the Board subcommittee overseeing this effort since one of the members of the subcommittee no longer sits on the Board.**

### **Background**

The SNC 2006 Strategic Plan identifies the need to develop System Indicators to measure progress in improving the environmental, economic and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada region. At its meeting in October 2008, the Board adopted a set of nineteen indicators (see chart on next page) to be used by the SNC staff and Board, and externally by SNC partners and other interested parties to promote:

- ✓ Regional Understanding—provide tools to understand the state of the Sierra Nevada and how it's changing, as well as to appreciate and communicate the importance of the Region and the risks that it faces.
- ✓ Sound investments—help to assess investments in the Region, understand the impact of those investments, and determine where and how to invest in the future based on past results.
- ✓ Strategic Planning—provide information that will support sound decisions about future direction.
- ✓ Reporting—provide regularly collected data that can be used to report results of SNC efforts and the efforts of its partners.

The Board directed staff to move forward with implementation of these indicators and authorized staff to make changes as needed, asking that staff report to the Board on these changes. Therefore, the list on the following page shows the original set of System Indicators adopted by the Board and the changes required based on current availability of data.

### **Current Status**

As anticipated in discussions at previous Board meetings, it has proven to be very difficult and time consuming to gather data that coincide with the boundary of the Sierra Nevada Region, despite the assistance of a consultant with expertise in indicators projects in other areas. The primary challenge is the fact that the SNC boundary does not adhere to the county or other boundaries often used to report information. In some instances, a complete set of data is simply unavailable across the Region, so that incomplete or proxy data must be used. Further, some indicators have required the creation of a new methodology for gathering, combining and analyzing data since no established methodology existed in the Region or anywhere else.

Despite these challenges, staff has used information gathered by the consultant and is in the final stages of putting together draft analyses and findings for each of the System Indicators. These draft analyses and findings will be made available for review on the SNC Web site. In addition, the SNC will reconvene the project's Advisory Committee of outside stakeholders and experts to provide input on the draft analyses and findings.

## Sierra Nevada System Indicators

### Human Population

Demographics of Residents (ages, gender, educational attainment, ethnicity, etc)

Gross Domestic Product

Median Income

Employment and Income by Economic Sector (Sources of Income Added)

Business Churn (New Indicator)

Green Business Establishments and Employment (New Indicator)

~~Access to High Speed Internet~~ Data not available Sierra-wide; this indicator will not be reported.

Acres of Land Conserved

Acres of Working Landscapes

Travel and Tourism Spending

Air Quality (PM 10, PM 2.5)

Air Quality (Ozone)

~~Acres Treated for Fuels Reduction by Risk Category~~ (Now Fire Threat) Data not available Sierra-wide. Alternatively, fire threat throughout the Sierra will be provided as acres per fire threat category such as no fire threat, low, moderate, very high, high and extreme.

Public/Private Lands Forest Health

Percent Change in Temperature, Precipitation and Snow Pack

~~Total Quantity and Value of Water Exports~~ Data not available to address total quantity and value of water exports; this indicator will not be reported.

~~Carbon Storage and Net Annual Sequestration on Public and Private Forests~~ Data is not available regarding net annual sequestration. Above ground carbon storage will be reported per subregion and major vegetation type (forest, oak woodlands, and grasslands) and can be tracked over time.

MWH of Energy Produced by Renewable and Distributed Energy Sources

Water Quality – Impaired Water Bodies (Delayed until August 2011) Data regarding water quality is expected from the Region Water Quality Control Board by mid summer. After these data are received, the Indicator will be reported as water bodies impacted per subregion per impairments as well as stream miles and acres of impacted ponds and lakes.

Change in Habitat – Wildlife Habitat Relationship

**Next Steps**

Staff will post a draft report on Sierra Nevada System Indicators to our Web site in June to provide an opportunity for public comment before bringing a final draft report to the Board at the September meeting.

**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 for completing the Sierra Nevada System Indicators report.**

### **Background**

At the June 2010 meeting the Board unanimously approved the Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Resolution. Through the Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI), the SNC is fostering local and Regional collaboration to support a cohesive, economically viable, and sustainable approach to reducing fire risk, creating jobs, and protecting our valuable forest and watershed resources. SNFCI has strong coordination with federal agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Park Service (NPS) and resource-oriented state agencies.

The SNC has formed a Regional Coordinating Council to work on Regional and statewide issues that will influence the success of local forest efforts. SNC Board Vice Chair Nunes and former Board Vice Chair Wilensky are co-chairing the Regional Coordinating Council, and Boardmember Kirkwood along with Boardmember Nunes are serving as the Board liaisons to the Initiative. Other members include representatives from the woods products industry, local government, environmental and conservation organizations, community groups and water interests.

The primary federal land managers will participate in an advisory role including: USFS, BLM and NPS. The primary focus of the council is policy, investment, emerging technology, and science and research. The Coordinating Council has already suggested broadening the participation to include agricultural/ranching interest, tribal entities and the Board of Forestry. SNC staff and the Coordinating Council are following up with these suggestions.

One critical SNFCI element is SNC support for local efforts aimed at convening diverse stakeholders to identify common visions and strategies that result in ecologically healthy forests, fire-safe communities, local job creation, and retaining existing industrial and commercial infrastructure, while fostering new infrastructure as needed. On-the-ground manifestations of the SNFCI include local collaborative groups such as the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG) and the Sustainable Forests and Communities Collaborative (SFCC), and groups formed to address more specific projects such as fuels reduction project design. Some of these groups are largely supported by SNC staff in terms of meeting logistics, facilitation, drafting funding proposals and project development efforts. The work of the SNFCI Regional Coordinating Council will do a great deal to reduce barriers to the implementation of local, on-the-ground projects by providing support and feedback to local forest collaboratives based on their needs as communicated via effective two-way communication about Regional issues affecting local efforts.

### **Current Status**

The inaugural SNFCI Regional Coordinating Council meeting was held in December 2010. The primary outcomes of the meeting include:

- The Coordinating Council deciding to operate on a consensus basis with the option for a member of the Coordinating Council to abstain.

- The Coordinating Council decided to meet on a quarterly basis and initially in Auburn for the March and June meetings, after which Coordinating Council members will re-assess. Site visits and project tours may be incorporated into future meetings as well.
- The Coordinating Council deciding that they will agree to use specific documents as “reference documents,” understanding that the groups represented do not necessarily subscribe to every aspect of the documents. Members were asked to submit other documents that could be useful to SNC staff for consideration by the full Coordinating Council. A workgroup to review and consolidate critical portions of relevant documents was proposed, with Bob Kirkwood volunteering to serve on this committee.
- A working group consisting of Mike DeBonis, Eric Holst, and Steve Wilensky was formed to develop position papers supporting the reauthorization of stewardship contracting authority and the Secure Rural Schools Act. SNC staff is drafting these papers with the working groups support and will circulate these to the Council in advance of the March meeting to be considered for adoption at this time.
- Another working group is addressing local forest collaboratives working group will evaluate existing forest collaborative efforts around the Sierra Nevada, identify the current stage of the groups’ development and identify their needs and primary concerns to identify specific actions the Coordinating Council and SNFCI partners can take to address these needs and issues. The group members consist of Craig Thomas, Bill Nunes, Mike Chapel, Frank Stewart, Steve Wilensky, Jonathon Kusel, and Jim Branham and will be facilitated by Kim Carr. The group intends to report out at the March meeting with an overview of need expressed and potential actions the council can take in support of these efforts.

The primary topics to be addressed during the March meeting include: a presentation highlighting the most creative elements and implementation-oriented activities within our local collaborative efforts and reports from the local forest collaborative working group on progress and potential actions for the Coordinating Council. The Coordinating Council will review and potentially adopt policy positions on reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools Act and the stewardship contracting authority. In addition, the Coordinating Council will consider a proposal to establish a documents library to guide the Coordinating Council’s work. The group plans to discuss long-term funding and resources to actively manage the Sierra Nevada forests and restore the watersheds.

At this point, more than 140 organizations and individuals have signed on to endorse the resolution. This group includes Boards of Supervisors representing the twenty-two counties making up the SNC’s jurisdictional area. Since the December Board meeting, several key stakeholders have added their endorsements, including the:

- American River Conservancy
- Sierra Economic Development Corporation

- CA State Fire Safe Council
- The Sierra Fund
- Mountain Counties Water Resources Association
- Association of California Water Agencies
- (Expect) CA RC&D Association

SNC staff will develop electronic newsletters quarterly in order to provide regular communications about the most recent updates on the Initiative progress to the resolution signatories, local forest collaborative participants, SNFCI Regional Coordinating Council members, SNC Boardmembers and other interested groups. There will also be communications more frequently than quarterly to share major updates to these interested groups. SNC staff produced and distributed the first electronic newsletter this past month.

In addition, a specific outreach plan has been developed for Tribal Nations and organizations through SNC staff collaboration with key partners with strong ties to the Tribal Entities in the Sierra Nevada. This plan includes communications specially crafted to address Tribal needs and concerns, as well as one-on-one local relationship building between local SNC staff and Tribal leadership designed to help the SNC better serve Tribes locally and Regionally through SNFCI.

The SNC is assessing available data relating to the supply of woody biomass on public lands and developing an inventory of existing facilities and their volume capacities within the Sierra Nevada. This information will serve to begin development of a “regional blueprint” that can help ensure a balance of lumber mills, biomass to energy facilities, small wood and other value added products facilities, appropriately scaled and geographically distributed. This strategy will help target SNFCI efforts toward areas of greatest need. Staff continues to network with established groups with common goals to involve them in the initiative and evaluate specific support SNC may be able to offer them.

Through the efforts of a development consultant hired by SNC to support the local collaboratives, a USDA Rural Development grant has been awarded to promote the establishment of small biomass processing businesses in targeted low-income areas of the Sierra Nevada Region, creating a diverse and stable market for the utilization of woody biomass which will create jobs, stimulate rural economies, and increase the economic feasibility of sustainable fuels reduction efforts which are needed for fire safety and forest health. In addition, two local collaboratives, the SFCC and ACCG, have each been awarded grants from the National Forest Foundation to provide capacity building support to sustain the organizations for the long term. As a result of one of these grants, the SFCC has established a Core Leadership Group that is working with highly qualified facilitation and program development trainers to develop a skilled, well-balanced leadership team to build greater capacity and independence in the SFCC over the long-term.

### **Next Steps**

Staff will continue working with the Regional Coordinating Council, which will establish short and long-term goals as well as draft an implementation plan and consider measureable outcomes. SNC staff is continuing to establish more consistent and diverse communications to stakeholders. The first electronic SNFCI newsletter was distributed in last month to endorsers of the resolution and other key stakeholders. Newsletters will be developed and circulated about 3 – 4 times per year. Staff will also continue to upgrade the SNFCI webpage with more photos, graphics and general information.

Staff will continue to engage federal land management agencies with SNFCI through the Regional Coordinating Council as well as the local collaboratives, recognizing that these agencies are ultimately responsible for management decisions on these public lands. As appropriate, additional resources will be focused on such items as support for market analysis/biomass utilization, business plan development and support for the Coordinating Council. Additional opportunities will be actively sought to submit applications for funding to support both local and Regional SNFCI activities.

Through logistical support, facilitation and general guidance, SNC staff will continue to encourage local collaboratives to move continually towards on the ground projects with quantifiable results. Staff will also look for additional opportunities to support local efforts in new areas of the Sierra Nevada.

### **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.**

### **Background**

The Sierra Nevada natural environment provides many benefits that are valuable to society, such as a clean and reliable water sources, carbon storage in soils and trees, sustainable fish populations, and opportunities for recreation. In many cases, these benefits can be achieved at a fraction of the cost of man-made solutions, which typically involve extensive infrastructure investment. Furthermore, infrastructural solutions may only address one benefit, where as restoring or improving environmental functions can provide multiple benefits. For example, meadow restoration projects can improve water quality, increase natural water storage capacity, improve habitat and create local jobs. The Mokelumne River Watershed provides an opportunity to evaluate and quantify the benefits for a particular watershed using a landscape approach. Using this information it is possible to determine if an environmental market or other investment opportunities are feasible. The diverse ecosystems and land uses across the Mokelumne Watershed are representative of many Sierra watersheds, providing a framework that could be used across the Region. The Mokelumne River, whose headwaters begin in the Sierra Nevada mountain range and empty into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, provides 90 percent of East Bay Municipal Utility District's water supply, which serves 1.4 million California residents. Additionally, the Mokelumne Watershed has well-established, inclusive stakeholder groups throughout the watershed.

The proposed goal of the project is to provide private and public land managers in the Mokelumne Watershed incentives and investment to maintain and implement conservation practices that ensure watershed sustainability.

The following objectives are being considered for the Project:

- Educate landowners, decision-makers, watershed beneficiaries and others about the environmental benefits provided by the Mokelumne watershed and the importance of sustaining those benefits. Create new opportunities for public and private investments to restore, protect and enhance the watershed and to support the local economy, job creation and thriving communities.
- Provide a performance-based environmental accounting system so that public and private land managers can consistently track environmental improvements, creating a meaningful understanding of how conservation efforts in the upper and lower watershed benefit local communities, water users, hydroelectric power generators, and the California economy.
- Establish a broad-based collaborative program to ensure a result that is appropriate for local conditions and supported by local communities.
- Consider how this approach is "transferable" to other Sierra watersheds.

The upper Mokelumne watershed faces challenges common in much of the Sierra Nevada Region – high risk of catastrophic fire, potential significant development pressures, and a lack of economic vitality and diversity. Much of the forests consists of dense stands with minimal age and species diversity. These conditions limit necessary habitat, create large fire risk, make the forest susceptible to diseased and dying trees

and use a greater amount of water than healthy forest stands. In addition, many of the meadows are encroached upon by thick stands of trees, the banks are channelized and incised and they have lost much of their capacity to store water.

Below Camanche Dam in the lower watershed, the pressing issues center around the Mokelumne River itself. Similar to other parts of the Central Valley, this area is home to highly viable agriculture lands that face potential loss of land due to flood risk, creating the need for levee and streambank erosion control, prevention of channel incisement and reduction of water allocations. The Mokelumne River is home to one of 18 historical populations of the Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon and two of 81 historical independent populations of the Central Valley steelhead trout. Habitat and long term sustainability for these species are affected by dams, water diversions, flood control, and hydropower generation. As an inflow tributary to the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta ecosystem, the Mokelumne River will have to meet the new flow criteria being developed by the State Water Resources Control Board and the California Environmental Protection Agency to protect habitat for listed species.

One kind of payment program that has already been implemented in other parts of the country and will be evaluated for the Mokelumne Watershed is a drinking water protection program. This approach enables downstream beneficiaries to appropriately contribute directly to their source water protection. This investment could eliminate the need to build or retrofit costly treatment facilities that require start-up capital as well as ongoing operations and maintenance costs. Additionally, co-benefits, such as improved wildlife habitat, clean air, and other improvements can result from the types of actions both private and public land managers take to protect the upper watershed. These programs exist in at least three areas of the country as agreements between the public land managers and New York City, Santa Fe, New Mexico and Denver, Colorado.

### **Current Status**

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Environmental Defense Fund, and Sustainable Conservation are the project organizers, with consultant support, to develop the project. Environmental Defense Fund, a non-profit organization, runs the Center for Conservation Incentives, which focuses on increasing environmental stewardship on working lands through leveraging market-based incentives and other innovative financial tools. Sustainable Conservation, another non-profit works closely with private land owners in the Central Valley to incentivize sustainable land practices.

The core group is convening a working group of diverse, local decision-makers to develop this initiative. Together the core group brings a rare combination of knowledge of the existing conditions and restoration needs in the Mokelumne watershed and expertise of environmental markets and other financial tools used to incentivize sustainable land management practices.

Watershed stakeholders are engaged each step of the way by utilizing representatives from existing watershed stakeholder groups that will be dedicated to providing feedback on products in development, as well as act as liaisons to other interested groups for information exchange and progress reports. The working group, consisting

of about 20 members, is convening every 6 – 8 weeks and will continue this over the next two years. The working group consists of representatives from the Forest Service (Region 5 and local forest representatives), local governments, PG&E, East Bay Municipal Utility District, local watershed groups and environmental interests, private land owners, the Resource Conservation District, and the larger municipalities.

The project has secured about \$45,000 for consulting services to support the program plan development, compile watershed conditions information and facilitate the working group to identify watershed needs and opportunities. EDF has been the primary funder to date with the Nature Conservancy contributing as well. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) convened a two-day workshop with working group members to develop a business plan identifying key components of the project that NFWF could fund. NFWF staff intend to present a funding recommendation to their Board in later March.

In December, the Core Group submitted a funding pre-application to the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Conservation Innovation Grants Program. The pre-application was accepted and the group has been invited to submit a full application in early March. If this request is awarded, the project will have most of the funds needed to complete the program design by developing the tools necessary to support the program.

Conservancy staff has committed a considerable amount of time to the project by identifying representation for the upper watershed on the working group, helping to identify primary issues and opportunities, conducting presentations to key groups around the watershed and helping to identify project funders. The Conservancy will provide funds to support the development of a communications strategy and implementation of the strategy to continue to build support for the project to ensure successful implementation.

The process for creating a pilot incentive program consists of four stages: (1) resource analysis and program scope decisions; (2) program design; (3) program launch; and (4) ongoing program operation. The project is currently in the resource analysis and program scope stage and will conclude this in the next few months. Feasibility of the future stages will be evaluated after each phase.

The working group has evaluated the current watershed conditions and major environmental issues facing the communities. The group has decided to focus on water quality and water quantity and reliability since so many of the environmental issues impact and are impacted by water. The group is now evaluating existing data to identify areas and producers of resources/benefits, resource distribution and opportunities to increase and/or improve resources through financial investment. For example, fuels treatment projects reduce catastrophic fire risk and high levels of sedimentation that occur following large, damaging fires. Furthermore, water conservation and meadow restoration increase water supply. A performance-based incentive system needs to be developed to incentivize and fund these resource management practices.

### Next Steps

The primary steps of this first project phase that are underway or have been completed include:

- Forming the working group and identifying other key partners and funders;
- Utilizing the stakeholder-driven process to decide which benefits provided by the watershed are best suited for a performance-based incentive system (water quality and water quantity);
- Preliminary review of existing data to identify areas and producers of resources/benefits, resource distribution and opportunities to increase and/or improve resources through financial investment; and
- Engaging the potential payers for the benefits, identifying investment opportunities to improve and restore the watershed and working to solidify the payers commitment to participate in the program design.

The second phase involves detailed program design and this is scheduled to occur in the next few months. The primary work will involve designing a work plan that guides the program development, including:

- Tools to calculate the benefits from implementation of conservation practices
- Specific entity roles for the ongoing operations of the program
- Verification, monitoring and adaptive management protocols
- Training sessions for the program managers in order to ensure a strong program launch

The third phase is the program launch and finally phase four involves the on-going program operation and reporting. The program launch is scheduled for 2012 but this will depend on securing the community and funding support for the project.

### 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.**

**Background**

Sierra Day in the Capitol, an informative and awareness-raising event, has become an annual occasion to bring diverse groups of individuals and organizations together in Sacramento to provide information to State legislators and their staff on important issues and opportunities involving the Sierra Nevada. For years the event was organized under the auspices of two Sierra-wide organizations, The Sierra Fund and Sierra Nevada Alliance. Although the SNC has participated in prior years, last year was the first time the SNC played a role in coordinating the collective efforts of the partner groups to organize the day's events.

**Current Status**

Sierra Day in the Capitol is scheduled for April 6<sup>th</sup> this year. We are once again working with a broad array of partners and anticipate that the number of participants from last year's event will grow. A significant and exciting change for this year's event is the decision of the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association to combine their annual day at the Capitol with Sierra Day in the Capitol, resulting in a stronger showing of unanimity about the importance of the Region to the rest of the State.

The following organizations continue to support this event and have confirmed sponsoring this year:

The Sierra Fund  
Sierra Nevada Alliance  
Sierra Business Council  
Sierra-Cascade Land Trust Council  
Mountain Counties Water Resources Association  
Trust for Public Land

Many sponsors from last year, and some new additions, have indicated they will participate again this year as well. We will continue to cultivate old and new partners.

The anticipated focus of the day's activities, pending confirmation with the organizing committee, will be educating California's decision-makers about the importance of the water resources from the Sierra Nevada to the State of California. The Sierra Nevada Water Report, being developed by the Water Education Foundation (WEF) with funding from the SNC, will provide pivotal talking points for participants to explore during the legislative visits. WEF is an impartial, nonprofit organization whose mission is to create a better understanding of water resources and foster public understanding and resolution of water resource issues through facilitation, education and outreach.

In addition to team meetings with individual legislators and staff, we are working to secure display space on the long wall outside the Governor's office, as well as in the shadowbox across from the Governor's Office, as we did last year. We anticipate

developing maps and other display materials to help illustrate how water from the Sierra ends up in urban taps, valley agricultural fields and coastal ocean tides.

Sierra Day culminates in a reception at the Stanford Mansion, to be followed immediately by the Sierra Business Council's annual Visionary Awards event.

**Next Steps**

The sponsoring organizations have formed a steering committee to oversee development of the day's events and materials. Various members of the committee will also be taking on the tasks associated with putting together the materials and activities for the day.

**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 on how to make this year's Sierra Day in the Capitol a great success. Boardmembers are encouraged to sign up for the day's event on the registration sheet provided.**

### **Background**

The importance of the Sierra Nevada Region to California's water needs is often misunderstood and/or underappreciated. As policy discussions occur, such as those surrounding last year's water bond debate, it is common for policy makers and others to have a "disconnect" between California's primary watershed and downstream benefits. This often results in inadequate investment and policy that does not address the Region's needs.

### **Current Status**

In an attempt to make educational information available to policy makers, the media and public, the SNC contracted with the Water Education Foundation (WEF) to produce a publication detailing the Sierra's water contribution to California and the various issues affecting water quality and quantity. WEF is an impartial, nonprofit organization whose mission is to create a better understanding of water resources and foster public understanding and resolution of water resource issues through facilitation, education and outreach. While WEF has produced reports on a number of key water issues, they have not produced material with a Sierra Nevada focus.

In order to ensure the credibility of the document, WEF maintained final editorial control of the report, although the SNC and various other stakeholders had an opportunity to comment and provide information.

### **Next Steps**

It is anticipated that the Sierra Nevada Water Report will be released in conjunction with Sierra Day in the Capitol. The SNC intends to work with WEF in disseminating the report and a companion Sierra Water Facts booklet during Sierra Day and beyond.

### **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 on how to use the final report would be welcome.**

### **Background**

In early 2009 Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) partnered with the Sierra Business Council (SBC) and the National Geographic Society to develop the Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide Project. The MapGuide Project consists of an interactive Web site to highlight unique and authentic tourism destinations in the Sierra Nevada. The project supports the SNC's mandate to enhance tourism in the Sierra Nevada Region while also promoting the preservation of cultural and heritage resources.

The project has been divided into four phases covering the entire Sierra Nevada Region including three counties of western Nevada. Funding for the project has come from the SNC (\$106,000), SBC, the Morgan Family Foundation, El Dorado County, and the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA). Thousands of hours have also been contributed to the project by volunteers serving on the geocouncils and locals who have nominated tourism assets for inclusion on the map. Total committed funding for the project to date is approximately \$485,000. Additional investments totaling approximately \$140,000 are needed to complete the project.

Phases one and two of the project (The Yosemite Gateways and Byways and the Tahoe Emigrant Corridor) have been completed and are live on the web at ([www.sierranevadageotourism.org](http://www.sierranevadageotourism.org)). Web site viewing metrics are monitored on a regular basis to help gauge project success and for use by businesses and tourism professionals in the region. The Board was last updated on the progress of the project in June 2010.

### **Current Status**

The Southern Sierra nomination phase was opened on January 19, 2011 to solicit asset nominations for Madera, Fresno, Tulare, and Kern counties. Three separate media events were held to highlight the opening of the nomination period, which will conclude on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Community members and project supporters in the Southern Sierra phase have been very active and are helping to plan and host several nomination workshops over the course of the nomination period.

### **Next Steps**

The final nomination phase for the Sierra Cascade region is scheduled to begin in June and extend through September. The Sierra Cascade phase will be soliciting nominations from Sierra, Plumas, Yuba, Butte, Tehama, Lassen, Shasta, and Modoc counties. All concentrated nomination phases are scheduled to be completed and reviewed by November 2011.

The project management partners and the Sierra Nevada-wide Geocouncil will continue to develop marketing strategies and related programs to benefit communities in the region and enhance the quality of tourism opportunities in the region.

**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.**

### **Background**

The Central Subregion of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) includes all of Nevada County and portions of Yuba, Placer and El Dorado Counties with a total population of approximately 400,000 residents. It is the most densely populated Subregion in the Sierra Nevada and portions are subject to severe growth pressures. The Subregion contains all or portions of the major watersheds of the Yuba, Bear and American Rivers. Two main transportation corridors Interstate 80 and Highway 50 and arterials Highways 70 and 49, transect and bisect the Subregion's four counties from east to west and from north to south, respectively. These transportation corridors effectively open up the Central Subregion to access from the densely populated urban centers of Sacramento, Reno and cities of the Bay Area.

Despite the area's urban influences, the four county Subregion remains primarily rural, ranging from the oak savannahs of the low-elevation foothills to the crest of the Sierra Nevada range and beyond. Small communities are distributed throughout the counties of the Central Subregion, with larger urban centers such as Auburn and Placerville located along transportation corridors. The majority (64%) of land in the lower elevations of the Subregion is privately owned, while the remainder (36%) of publicly-owned lands dominates the higher elevations.

Historically, the Subregion was explored by emigrants from the east who were pursuing the dream of riches in gold to be mined from the creeks and rivers of the foothills and mountains. Today, many resident families can tie their past to these pioneers. Ranching, farming and small homesteads still dominate the landscape as you traverse the Subregion. Area residents enjoy four distinct seasons and the countryside attracts millions of visitors each year to quaint historically-renovated main streets, locally grown foods, and world class recreational opportunities such as skiing, river rafting, kayaking, fishing, agritourism, popular historic attractions and parks.

Two SNC program staff members and the Mt. Lassen Area Manager serve constituents and partners in the Subregion. The SNC has developed many effective relationships with organizations in the sub region, and will continue to conduct more outreach in the years to come.

### **Current Status**

SNC has funded a number of Proposition 84 grants in the Central Subregion reflecting a variety of watershed and landscape needs. To date, organizations in the Central Subregion have received approximately \$7.8 million in funding for 37 projects. The range of projects include conservation of working landscapes and open space protection; meadow, riparian and salmonid habitat restoration, mercury remediation and erosion control, and fuels reduction to avoid catastrophic fire. In September of 2010, 26 applications were received from organizations in the Central Subregion. Of those applications 8 were for site improvement or restoration projects, 5 for acquisition or conservation easements, and 13 for pre-project planning and due diligence activities.

Fire and fuels management and loss of the natural resource industry are two key issues being addressed by stakeholders in the Central Subregion. Overly dense forests on both public and private lands are extremely vulnerable to catastrophic wildfire and the proximity of these high danger fire areas to population centers creates enormous concern for residents and local agencies, as well as threatening water quality and habitat throughout Central watersheds. Collaborative stakeholder groups in Nevada, Yuba, and Placer Counties are in various stages of identifying economically feasible opportunities to utilize biomass removed from these forests to create energy and new jobs. All four counties in the Subregion have become signatories of SNC's Sierra Nevada Forest and Communities Initiative (SNFCI) and SNC staff continues to support the efforts of stakeholders by facilitating and attending meetings.

A steady stream of visitors from the densely populated urban centers of Sacramento, Reno and cities of the Bay Area are attracted to the Central Subregion's abundant tourism and recreational opportunities. Not surprisingly nearly 800 nominations were received for the Tahoe Emigrant Corridor Phase of the Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide Project. These nominations highlight everything from local farmers markets to historic driving tours and are intended to draw visitors to a number of local attractions in the counties of the Central Subregion.

Other Central Subregion items SNC staff are monitoring or participating in include: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) 2013 relicensing projects; Tribal Water Summit planning; participation in the annual Great Sierra River Cleanup; abandoned mine lands mitigation efforts; and conducting legislative area tours.

### **Next Steps**

The Central Subregion has demonstrated strong support for SNC initiatives and programs, including the SNFCI and Geotourism. Staff will continue to interact with representatives and partners in the Central Subregion to provide resources, services, and expertise.

### **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.**

### **Background**

The SNC is in the process of developing a new Strategic Plan to guide our actions over the next three to five years. Each year following adoption of the new Plan by the Board in September 2011, staff will bring an Action Plan to the Board that describes the actions proposed to be undertaken each calendar year in accordance with the Plan.

Although the actions described in the SNC's existing Strategic Plan have virtually all been completed or have been incorporated into ongoing activities of the organization, the SNC has a number of projects and activities planned for 2011. Staff has previously presented information to the Board on most, but not all, of these projects and activities.

### **Current Status**

The draft Sierra Nevada Conservancy 2011 Action Plan (Attachment A) lists the major projects and activities staff proposes to undertake in 2011. Each item is followed by a short description and proposed set of performance measures for the project. Given the uncertainty of the state's budget situation, the SNC may need to modify plan to reflect resources available to implement it.

### **Recommendation**

**Staff recommends that the Board approve the proposed Sierra Nevada Conservancy 2011 Action Plan after providing review and input. Staff will report regularly on progress in implementing the Action Plan.**

-- Draft --

## Sierra Nevada Conservancy 2011 Action Plan

The following represent the major initiatives and activities to be undertaken by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) during calendar year 2011.

### Grant Program

The SNC will award approximately \$10 million in grants at the March Board meeting. The SNC will also determine the approach to be used in awarding the remaining \$10 million in Proposition 84 grant funds over the next two fiscal years, 2011-12 and 2012-13. And finally, the SNC will develop processes necessary to comply with new reporting requirements related to bond expenditures and future bond sales.

Performance Measures: Award \$10 million in grants to high benefit projects; develop grant guidelines and issue RFP for distribution of at least half of the remaining Proposition 84 funds (~\$5 million); meet all reporting deadlines and garner continued recognition by the Natural Resources Agency for timely and complete reporting.

### Strategic Plan

The SNC will hold workshops throughout the Region to gather input on the development of its new Strategic Plan as well as providing stakeholders with the opportunity to provide input via our Web site. A first draft of the new Strategic Plan will be provided to the Board in June, followed by a public comment period. A final draft Plan will be presented to Board for review and approval at the September 2011 meeting.

Performance Measures: Participation in workshops and/or online input from at least 100 people, representing a wide variety of interests; Board adoption of the Plan in September followed by the development of 2012 Action Plan for the SNC to be adopted by the Board in December.

### External Outreach

The SNC will continue building relationships with key constituents, stakeholders and decision-makers outside of the Sierra Nevada Region to increase their understanding of, and support for, the Sierra, including the benefits of the Region to the State and the need for increased investment in the Region. To that end, the SNC will be an active first-time member of the State Agency Steering Committee for the 2013 Update of the State Water Plan, including convening and coordinating Regional participation in the update process; continue to meet with key members of the new administration, the legislature and key Valley, urban and other stakeholder groups outside the Sierra.

Performance Measures: Conduct a minimum of 15 individual meetings with key legislators, decision-makers and other stakeholders from outside the Region; organize

participation by regional stakeholders in at least three DWR Water Plan Update venues; establish quarterly meetings with “sister” State agencies, such as other conservancies and the Wildlife Conservation Board, to coordinate efforts at the State level.

### **Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative**

The SNC will continue to coordinate implementation of the Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI), working closely with the SNFCI Regional Coordinating Council. The goals of SNFCI are to support the implementation of fuels reduction and sustainable forest management practices, incubate local economic opportunities to utilize forest biomass to create jobs and improve Sierra community social well-being. The Initiative involves strong coordination with local forest collaboratives and will work with the SNFCI Regional Coordinating Council to support these efforts.

Performance Measures: Achieve support of SNFCI Regional Coordinating Council for 3 or more policy positions on key issues; continue, and or, initiate support of 4 or more local collaborative efforts; identify at least 3 tangible on the ground outcomes resulting from SNFCI efforts.

### **Great Sierra River Cleanup**

The SNC will coordinate the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Great Sierra River Cleanup in September 2011. This event has become the flagship event for the SNC. In 2010, more than 4,000 volunteers joined together to remove approximately 141 tons of trash and recyclables from rivers throughout the Sierra Nevada.

Performance Measures: Successfully plan and implement event; increase number of participants by 25 percent; increase sponsorship by 100 percent.

### **Geotourism**

The SNC will continue to coordinate with the Sierra Business Council, National Geographic and numerous local partners in completing the Sierra Nevada Geotourism Project phases in the Southern Sierra and the Sierra Cascade areas. The project also intends to launch a mobile phone application early in the year.

Performance Measures: Complete all nomination phases and make a free downloadable mobile phone app available. Aim for a minimum of doubling the amount of web-traffic visiting the site on a monthly basis. Complete research study to assess Web site impact and response in communities.

### **Sierra Day in the Capitol**

The SNC will coordinate efforts to bring a broad array of stakeholders together to visit the State Capitol. The purpose of the day is to educate legislators, staff and

administration officials on the importance of the Sierra Nevada Region, with an emphasis on the Region's contribution to the state's water supply. This year's event is scheduled for April 6.

Performance Measures: Increase participation in the event by 20 percent; with a focus on broadening the range of interests represented; increase the number of sponsoring organizations by 10 percent.

### **Sierra Nevada Water Report**

A Sierra Nevada Water Report will be released in March of 2011, articulating and emphasizing the importance of the Sierra Nevada as it relates to the Region's contribution to the state's economic and environmental well being. An additional Water Fact Booklet will be published and Sierra Nevada Water Seminars will be provided at the State Capitol. The SNC plans to launch the report as part of Sierra Day in the Capitol and will work to distribute the report and booklets to policy makers, media and the public.

Performance Measures: Publish report and distribute up to 1,000 copies of the report and 500 copies of the booklet to key stakeholders and public; post information on SNC Web site; 25 people in attendance at water seminars.

### **Mokelumne Watershed Environmental Benefits Project**

The purpose of the program is to conduct a watershed-scale analysis to identify opportunities to engage the managers of the watershed's ecosystem services and the numerous beneficiaries of these services, into a process to protect and restore the watershed's health. A primary approach is to provide private and public land managers in the Mokelumne Watershed support and incentives to implement water and land management practices that ensure watershed sustainability. The project is in the planning stages.

Performance Measures: At least 85 stakeholders engaged in the project; at least two organizations providing direct resources to the project, totaling at least \$1 million; complete program plan and communications plan.

### **Sierra Nevada System Indicators**

The SNC will publish a Sierra Nevada System Indicators Report to measure progress in improving the environmental, economic and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region. These Indicators will be used by the SNC staff and Board, and externally by SNC partners and other interested parties to promote Regional understanding, make sound investments, guide strategic planning, and help us to gauge the results of our efforts. Continued research and development of some of the indicators will continue after issuance of the draft report, planned for June.

Performance Measures: Complete the Sierra Nevada System Indicators Report and post information on the SNC Web site; complete data collection and analysis for remaining System Indicators; use data and findings in decision-making processes at the SNC as well as educating other stakeholders regarding their uses.

**Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council**

Continue discussions for the development of certain future agreements between the SNC and the Stewardship Council based on the authority given to the Executive Officer by the Board in September, 2010. The scope of work and the compensation to be provided for duties will be set forth in the negotiated agreements. A funding mechanism will be put in place to allow transfer of funds from the Stewardship Council to the SNC for duties performed under the agreements. In addition, a specific scope of work for the "Plan to Monitor the Physical and Economic Impacts of the Land Conservation Commitment" will be completed.

Performance Measures: Execution of any necessary changes to the existing memorandum of understanding between SNC and Stewardship Council to reflect additional agreed upon tasks; completion of necessary agreements to carry out identified tasks; and, establishment of special deposit account to pay for related work.

### **Background**

In November 2006, California voters passed Proposition 84, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coast Protection Bond Act of 2006, which included \$54 million for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), with approximately \$50 million to be granted to eligible projects throughout the Region.

In its first two years of grant making (fiscal years 2007-08 and 2008-09), the SNC authorized 207 projects for a total of just over \$30 million. Based on the intent of the bond act, all projects authorized under Proposition 84 are geared toward protecting or restoring rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water and other natural resources.

Unfortunately, in the middle of the second year (December 2008) the State's worsening fiscal crisis caused the Governor to freeze spending on all projects funded by General Obligation Bond sales, including programs funded under Proposition 84. Agencies were also prohibited from authorizing any new projects. The SNC Board had already authorized 32 grant projects prior to the freeze; but we were not able to execute the grant agreements for these projects, so they were, in essence, frozen as well.

Faced with the expiration of applications caught up in the freeze, the SNC consulted with other agencies and determined that we could bring forward conditional recommendations for a small subset of FY 2008-09 applications that had been received and evaluated prior to the freeze. As a result, the SNC Board acted in December 2009 to conditionally authorize 14 more projects – subject to the availability of new bond funds.

Good news started flowing again in early 2010, as the State Treasurer's Office was able to conduct two highly successful bond sales in March of that year. These two sales generated enough funding to allow existing and conditionally authorized projects to move forward and new projects to be authorized.

With approximately \$20 million remaining in unallocated Proposition 84 grant funds, the Board directed staff to expend \$10 million in FY 2010-11, with \$1 million allocated to each Subregion (for a total of \$6 million) and \$4 million to be awarded without strict regard to geographic location. Eligible projects for the current year include acquisition and site improvement or restoration projects (Category One) and pre-project activities associated with specific future on-the-ground projects (Category Two). The SNC released its current FY 2010-11 grant program solicitation in the summer of 2010, with a deadline of September 13, 2010, for receipt of applications.

### **Current Status**

#### **Summary of FY 2010-11 Applications Received**

The SNC received 129 applications requesting a total of \$40,070,949. Staff completed intake activities on the applications and immediately began reviewing them for applicant eligibility and completeness. Of the applications received, 16 were deemed ineligible

and/or incomplete, meaning that a total of 113 applications moved forward for more detailed evaluation. The total dollar amount requested for eligible applications was \$37,763,601.

#### Evaluation and Recommendation Process

Eligible and complete applications were forwarded for detailed review and initial scoring by individual teams of technical evaluators – a single two-person team for each Subregion. The 12 evaluators were technical experts who either currently work for or have retired from other agencies, with expertise in subjects such as wildlife biology, water quality, forestry and fire and working landscapes.

Initial evaluator scores were used to rank the applications from high to low within each Subregion. Once ranked within each Subregion, SNC Program Staff reviewed the applications, applying their knowledge to ensure the evaluations did not miss or misinterpret key information. Staff then considered applications in light of geographic and project type distribution and identified which projects from the “high” category provided the greatest benefit and therefore should be recommended for funding out of each \$1 million Subregional pot. The remaining high-ranked projects in each Subregion were then grouped together for purposes of identifying which ones should compete for funding from the non-geographic pot of \$4 million.

It should be noted, that despite trying to standardize scoring by training evaluators on what to look for in the applications and where to find information related to the evaluation criteria, as well as providing a detailed scoring rubric, there ended up being wide variations in how the six technical evaluation teams scored their projects. The differences in technical evaluator scores didn’t affect the ability to make recommendations within each Subregion, since the projects were ranked from high to low and only had to “compete” for recommendation against each other within their Subregion. But the numerical scoring disparities between Subregions created a challenge when it came to merging and prioritizing all remaining projects for consideration in the non-geographic pot. To address these differences, staff “normalized” scores across Subregions, using a “bell curve”-type formula developed based on all scores in all Subregions. It is these normalized scores that make up the final scores on which the recommendations were made.

#### Projects Recommended for Funding

##### Central Subregion: \$1,000,000

Two projects are being recommended in the Central Subregion: one to a nonprofit organization and one to a local water agency, for a total of \$1,000,000. The two projects strongly support SNC’s program goals and Proposition 84 objectives. One project is an acquisition in Placer County protecting 2,300 acres in the Bear River Watershed that directly supports regional recreational and habitat connectivity, while the other in El Dorado County will restore a heavily

impacted recreation area and riparian zone and address erosion and drainage of contaminants into a major drinking water source.

North Subregion: \$1,000,000

Three projects are being recommended in the North Subregion: to a nonprofit organization, a Fire Safe Council and a Resource Conservation District, for a total of \$1,000,000. Funding these projects will result in completion of the pre-project work necessary for the fee title purchase of 286 acres of sensitive habitat and wetlands near Susanville, restoration of approximately 2,415 acres of meadow and riparian habitat in Lassen County, and restoration of watershed functions in the sagebrush steppe habitat in both Lassen and Modoc Counties through the removal of invasive juniper on 625 acres. All three projects meet SNC program areas and support Proposition 84 objectives.

North Central Subregion: \$1,000,000

Five projects are being recommended for funding in the North Central Subregion to nonprofit organizations for a total of \$1,000,000. Funding these projects will result in a conservation acquisition of 2,995 acres in the Little Truckee River Watershed in Sierra County, advance pre-project planning for a 2,730 acre watershed acquisition in Tehama County, development of a management and protection plan for springs in the Mohawk Valley in Plumas County, acquisition of 2,720 acres of a working forest in Sierra County, and complete due diligence for the acquisitions of four properties in Butte County that will leverage linkages between protected areas and watersheds.

East Subregion: \$1,000,000

Three projects are being recommended in the East Subregion to two different nonprofit organizations for a total of \$1,000,000. These projects will result in completion of pre-acquisition activities for the outright donation of 425 acres near Bridgeport Valley for conservation purposes, acquisition of a conservation easement on a 600 acre working landscape in Mono County and completion of a restoration project to re-establish the natural form and function of Markleeville Creek through the site of a former U.S Forest Service Guard Station.

South Subregion: \$993,000

Three projects are being recommended for funding in the South Subregion to two Resource Conservation Districts and one nonprofit organization for a total of \$993,000. The projects will complete the environmental compliance for meadow restoration and repair in the Willow Creek Watershed, complete fuels treatment on 240 acres in the Grand Bluff Forest and place a conservation easement on

1,362 acres of the historic Topping Ranch, which is located on Kennedy Table in Madera County.

South Central Subregion: \$1,000,000

Four projects are being recommended for funding in the South Central Subregion to nonprofit organizations for a total of \$1,000,000. These projects will conduct pre-project activities for the acquisition of Ackerson Meadows, a 415 acre privately owned meadow, conduct environmental compliance and pre-project due diligence work to restore four meadows and their associated streams in the Clavey Watershed, complete invasive species removal on 80 acres of riparian habitat along the Upper Merced River, and purchase a conservation easement on a 5,868 acre working landscape west of Copperopolis in an area experiencing rapid conversion pressure.

Non-Geographic Recommendations: \$4,007,000

A total of nine additional projects are recommended to be funded solely from the non-geographic pot. These are summarized below. Eight other projects have been recommended for some part of their funding to come from the non-geographic pot; however, projects with split funding were summarized above within the Subregion where each is located.

In the Mt. Lassen Area, full non-geographic funding will support three projects; one to a nonprofit organization, one to a Resource Conservation District, and one to the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The recommended projects are all due diligence projects that would address impacts such as legacy mining contamination, erosion/sediment problems in heavily impacted areas, and forest and floodplain management issues in major watersheds.

Six projects in the Mt. Whitney Area are being recommended for funding completely out of the non-geographic pot, to one utility district, a Resource Conservation and Development Council, three nonprofit organizations and the USDA-Sequoia National Forest. These projects will acquire property to protect Mariposa's public water supply and create a preserve and recreational trail; complete the planning, design, and environmental compliance for reusing wastewater at the Lone Pine High School Farm and in the community of Lone Pine; complete the assessment and design work for a restoration project on the Hope Valley Meadow; provide pre-project planning and environmental review to prepare a joint NEPA-CEQA document for a restoration project at Long Meadow; acquire a 15,000 acre working landscape in the Southern Sierra, which also provides a vital linkage for wildlife; and conduct pre-project activities for the acquisition of conservation easements on four ranches in the Southern Sierra foothills.

**California Environmental Quality Act Compliance**

SNC worked with the Department of General Services' Environmental Services Section and the State Attorney General's office to review project proposals for compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements. A total of 12 projects being recommended do not require CEQA documentation due to the nature of the proposed actions, and have been included in a memo prepared for the SNC.

Fifteen projects being recommended require the SNC to complete a Notice of Exemption (NOE) and file the NOE with the State Clearinghouse. NOEs have been prepared for review and will be filed upon Board approval.

Before approving the Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project (SNC 419), the SNC must consider the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP) prepared and adopted by the California Department of Fish and Game, and adopt necessary CEQA findings. If the Board approves the project after adopting the CEQA findings, it will also authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Determination (NOD) with the State Clearinghouse.

Before approving the Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project (SNC 322), the SNC must consider the Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR), Subsequent Project Initial Study (confirming that the project's impacts are addressed by the MEIR), and the MMP prepared and adopted by the El Dorado Irrigation District, and adopt necessary CEQA findings. If the Board approves the project after adopting the CEQA findings, it will also authorize the Executive Officer to file a NOD with the State Clearinghouse.

For both of these projects the SNC is serving as a Responsible Agency in accordance with CEQA Guidelines. The environmental documents are on file at the offices of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, 11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205, Auburn, CA 95603.

**Recommendation**

**Staff recommends that the Board (a) adopt necessary CEQA findings and file a Notice of Determination (NOD) for project SNC 419, the Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project; (b) adopt necessary CEQA findings and file a NOD for project SNC 322, the Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project; (c) and authorize the grants listed in Agenda Item X, Exhibit A. Staff additionally recommends that the Board authorize staff to enter into the necessary agreements and direct staff to file the appropriate CEQA documentation with the State Clearinghouse.**

**Agenda Item X Exhibit A**  
**COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ALL RECOMMENDED APPLICATIONS \$10 Million**  
**March 3, 2011**

Score	Subregion	Project #	Project Title	Applicant Organization	Application Type	Fund From	Total
100.0	South Central	<a href="#">379</a>	<a href="#">Upper Tuolumne and Stanislaus Watersheds Meadows Restoration</a>	Tuolumne River Preservation Trust	Category Two	Subregion	\$151,156
100.0	South Central	<a href="#">427</a>	<a href="#">Ackerson Meadows: Keystone Habitat for Great Gray Owls</a>	American Rivers	Category Two	Subregion	\$65,000
99.0	North	<a href="#">362</a>	<a href="#">Barry Property Pre-planning</a>	Lassen Land and Trails Trust	Category Two	Subregion	\$66,438
98.2	South Central	<a href="#">410</a>	<a href="#">Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor</a>	Upper Merced River Watershed Council	Category One	Subregion	\$192,270
97.4	South Central	<a href="#">361</a>	<a href="#">Rodden Ranch Conservation Easement</a>	The Trust for Public Land	Category One	Subregion / Non-geo	\$1,000,000
96.7	North Central	<a href="#">394</a>	<a href="#">Deer Creek-Mill Creek Acquisition: Pre-Project Planning</a>	Western Rivers Conservancy	Category Two	Subregion	\$125,000
95.6	Central	<a href="#">331</a>	<a href="#">Bruin Ranch Property Acquisition</a>	Placer Land Trust	Category One	Subregion / Non-geo	\$1,000,000
95.3	South Central	<a href="#">443</a>	<a href="#">Stockton Creek Preserve and Trail</a>	Mariposa Public Utility District	Category One	Non-geo	\$1,000,000
94.7	Central	<a href="#">322</a>	<a href="#">Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration</a>	El Dorado Irrigation District	Category Two	Subregion / Non-geo	\$153,466
94.3	South	<a href="#">348</a>	<a href="#">Grand Bluffs Forest 2011-2012</a>	Sierra Resource Conservation District	Category One	Subregion	\$92,472
94.2	Central	<a href="#">421</a>	<a href="#">Complying with CEQA for Forest Management: Natural &amp; Cultural Resource Surveys in Coldstream Canyon - Donner Memorial State Park</a>	California Department of Parks and Recreation	Category Two	Non-geo	\$59,816
93.1	East	<a href="#">387</a>	<a href="#">Cinnamon Ranch Agriculture and Resource Protection Project</a>	Eastern Sierra Land Trust	Category One	Subregion	\$735,000
92.9	East	<a href="#">365</a>	<a href="#">Markleeville Creek Restoration Project</a>	Alpine Watershed Group	Category Two	Subregion / Non-geo	\$220,700
92.6	North Central	<a href="#">368</a>	<a href="#">Sierra Crest Working Forest Conservation Easement Phase III</a>	The Trust for Public Land	Category One	Subregion	\$540,000
92.4	North Central	<a href="#">371</a>	<a href="#">White Sulphur Springs Ranch Hydrologic and Spring Protection Plan</a>	Mohawk Valley Stewardship Council	Category Two	Subregion	\$75,000
92.3	South	<a href="#">346</a>	<a href="#">Topping Ranch Conservation Easement</a>	Sierra Foothill Conservancy	Category One	Subregion	\$875,890
91.8	East	<a href="#">448</a>	<a href="#">Lone Pine Water Reclamation Feasibility Study</a>	Mojave Desert-Mountain Resource Conservation and Development Council	Category Two	Non-geo	\$121,440
91.7	Central	<a href="#">327</a>	<a href="#">Camp Sacramento Erosion Control and Habitat Improvement Project</a>	El Dorado County Resource Conservation District	Category Two	Non-geo	\$144,300
91.6	North Central	<a href="#">325</a>	<a href="#">Webber Lake and Lacey Meadow Acquisition</a>	Truckee Donner Land Trust	Category One	Subregion / Non-geo	\$1,000,000
91.6	North Central	<a href="#">446</a>	<a href="#">Little Chico Creek Appraisal Project</a>	Northern California Regional Land Trust	Category Two	Subregion	\$20,000
91.4	East	<a href="#">425</a>	<a href="#">Mono County Land Donation and Exchange</a>	Eastern Sierra Land Trust	Category Two	Subregion	\$61,814
91.3	South	<a href="#">317</a>	<a href="#">Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project</a>	Coarsegold Resource Conservation District	Category Two	Subregion / Non-geo	\$60,764
91.2	North	<a href="#">419</a>	<a href="#">Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project</a>	Pit Resource Conservation District	Category One	Subregion / Non-geo	\$1,000,000
90.8	East	<a href="#">420</a>	<a href="#">Hope Valley Meadow Restoration</a>	American Rivers	Category Two	Non-geo	\$129,000
90.3	South	<a href="#">412</a>	<a href="#">Pre-acquisition Work on Four Strategic Land Conservation Projects</a>	Sequoia Riverlands Trust	Category Two	Non-geo	\$198,500
90.3	South	<a href="#">434</a>	<a href="#">Rudnick Ranch Acquisition</a>	The Nature Conservancy	Category One	Non-geo	\$500,000
90.3	South	<a href="#">358</a>	<a href="#">Long Meadow Restoration Project</a>	USDA Forest Service-Sequoia National Forest	Category Two	Non-geo	\$72,320
90.2	Central	<a href="#">407</a>	<a href="#">Humbug Creek Watershed Assessment and Management Plan</a>	The Sierra Fund	Category Two	Non-geo	\$197,592
90.1	North	<a href="#">399</a>	<a href="#">South Ash Valley Watershed Restoration Project</a>	Lassen County Fire Safe Council	Category One	Subregion / Non-geo	\$142,062
<b>Grand Total</b>							<b>\$10,000,000</b>

This list is organized by Project Score regardless of Subregion or funding pot.

If you click on the Project Number, the link will open the Staff Project Summary.

If you click on the Project Title, the link will open the full application. Note - the full application files are large PDF files that may take a while to open.

Category One projects are Acquisition or Site Improvement/Restoration projects.

Category Two projects are Pre-project Planning projects.

Agenda Item X Exhibit B

ALL SUBREGIONAL RECOMMENDED APPLICATIONS \$5.993 Million

March 3, 2011

Subregion	Score	County	Project #	Project Title	Applicant Organization	Application Type	Total
<a href="#">Central</a>	95.6	Placer	<a href="#">331</a>	<a href="#">*Bruin Ranch Property Acquisition</a>	Placer Land Trust	Category One	\$850,000
	94.7	El Dorado	<a href="#">322</a>	<a href="#">*Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration</a>	El Dorado Irrigation District	Category Two	\$150,000
<b>Central Total</b>							<b>\$1,000,000</b>
<a href="#">North</a>	99.0	Lassen	<a href="#">362</a>	<a href="#">Barry Property Pre-planning</a>	Lassen Land and Trails Trust	Category Two	\$66,438
	91.2	Lassen, Modoc	<a href="#">419</a>	<a href="#">*Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project</a>	Pit Resource Conservation District	Category One	\$823,562
	90.1	Lassen	<a href="#">399</a>	<a href="#">*South Ash Valley Watershed Restoration Project</a>	Lassen County Fire Safe Council	Category One	\$110,000
<b>North Total</b>							<b>\$1,000,000</b>
<a href="#">North Central</a>	96.7	Tehama	<a href="#">394</a>	<a href="#">Deer Creek-Mill Creek Acquisition: Pre-Project Planning</a>	Western Rivers Conservancy	Category Two	\$125,000
	92.6	Sierra	<a href="#">368</a>	<a href="#">Sierra Crest Working Forest Conservation Easement Phase III</a>	The Trust for Public Land	Category One	\$540,000
	92.4	Plumas	<a href="#">371</a>	<a href="#">White Sulphur Springs Ranch Hydrologic and Spring Protection Plan</a>	Mohawk Valley Stewardship Council	Category Two	\$75,000
	91.6	Butte	<a href="#">446</a>	<a href="#">Little Chico Creek Appraisal Project</a>	Northern California Regional Land Trust	Category Two	\$20,000
	91.6	Nevada, Sierra	<a href="#">325</a>	<a href="#">*Webber Lake and Lacey Meadow Acquisition</a>	Truckee Donner Land Trust	Category One	\$240,000
<b>North Central Total</b>							<b>\$1,000,000</b>
<a href="#">East</a>	93.1	Mono	<a href="#">387</a>	<a href="#">Cinnamon Ranch Agriculture and Resource Protection Project</a>	Eastern Sierra Land Trust	Category One	\$735,000
	92.9	Alpine	<a href="#">365</a>	<a href="#">*Markleeville Creek Restoration Project</a>	Alpine Watershed Group	Category Two	\$203,186
	91.4	Mono	<a href="#">425</a>	<a href="#">Mono County Land Donation and Exchange</a>	Eastern Sierra Land Trust	Category Two	\$61,814
<b>East Total</b>							<b>\$1,000,000</b>
<a href="#">South</a>	94.3	Fresno	<a href="#">348</a>	<a href="#">Grand Bluffs Forest 2011-2012</a>	Sierra Resource Conservation District	Category One	\$92,472
	92.3	Madera	<a href="#">346</a>	<a href="#">Topping Ranch Conservation Easement</a>	Sierra Foothill Conservancy	Category One	\$875,890
	91.3	Madera	<a href="#">317</a>	<a href="#">*Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project</a>	Coarsegold Resource Conservation District	Category Two	\$24,638
<b>South Total</b>							<b>\$993,000</b>
<a href="#">South Central</a>	100.0	Tuolumne	<a href="#">379</a>	<a href="#">Upper Tuolumne and Stanislaus Watersheds Meadows Restoration</a>	Tuolumne River Preservation Trust	Category Two	\$151,156
	100.0	Tuolumne	<a href="#">427</a>	<a href="#">Ackerson Meadows: Keystone Habitat for Great Gray Owls</a>	American Rivers	Category Two	\$65,000
	98.2	Mariposa	<a href="#">410</a>	<a href="#">Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor</a>	Upper Merced River Watershed Council	Category One	\$192,270
	97.4	Calaveras	<a href="#">361</a>	<a href="#">*Rodden Ranch Conservation Easement</a>	The Trust for Public Land	Category One	\$591,574
<b>South Central Total</b>							<b>\$1,000,000</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>							<b>\$5,993,000</b>

\* Projects are being recommended for funding from both the Subregional and the Non-geographic pots.

\* Project descriptions for projects funded solely from the Subregional pot or with split funding will appear following Exhibit B organized by Subregion.

\* Project descriptions for projects funded solely from the non-geographic will appear following Exhibit C.

If you click on the Subregion, the link will open all of the Staff Project Summaries for that Subregion.

If you click on the Project Number, the link will open the Staff Project Summary.

If you click on the Project Title, the link will open the full application. Note - the full application files are large PDF files that may take a while to open.

Category One projects are Acquisition or Site Improvement/Restoration projects.

Category Two projects are Pre-Project Planning projects.

Agenda item X Exhibit C

ALL NON-GEOGRAPHIC RECOMMENDED APPLICATIONS \$4.007 Million

March 3, 2011

Score	Subregion	County	Project #	Project Title	Applicant Organization	Application Type	Total
97.4	South Central	Calaveras	<a href="#">361</a>	<a href="#">*Rodden Ranch Conservation Easement</a>	The Trust for Public Land	Category One	\$408,426
95.6	Central	Placer	<a href="#">331</a>	<a href="#">*Bruin Ranch Property Acquisition</a>	Placer Land Trust	Category One	\$150,000
95.3	South Central	Mariposa	<a href="#">443</a>	<a href="#">Stockton Creek Preserve and Trail</a>	Mariposa Public Utility District	Category One	\$1,000,000
94.7	Central	El Dorado	<a href="#">322</a>	<a href="#">*Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration</a>	El Dorado Irrigation District	Category Two	\$3,466
94.2	Central	Placer	<a href="#">421</a>	<a href="#">Complying with CEQA for Forest Management: Natural &amp; Cultural Resource Surveys in Coldstream Canyon - Donner Memorial State Park</a>	California Department of Parks and Recreation	Category Two	\$59,816
92.9	East	Alpine	<a href="#">365</a>	<a href="#">*Markleeville Creek Restoration Project</a>	Alpine Watershed Group	Category Two	\$17,514
91.8	East	Inyo	<a href="#">448</a>	<a href="#">Lone Pine Water Reclamation Feasibility Study</a>	Mojave Desert-Mountain Resource Conservation and Development Council	Category Two	\$121,440
91.7	Central	El Dorado	<a href="#">327</a>	<a href="#">Camp Sacramento Erosion Control and Habitat Improvement Project</a>	El Dorado County Resource Conservation District	Category Two	\$144,300
91.6	North Central	Nevada, Sierra	<a href="#">325</a>	<a href="#">*Webber Lake and Lacey Meadow Acquisition</a>	Truckee Donner Land Trust	Category One	\$760,000
91.3	South	Madera	<a href="#">317</a>	<a href="#">*Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project</a>	Coarsegold Resource Conservation District	Category Two	\$36,126
91.2	North	Lassen, Modoc	<a href="#">419</a>	<a href="#">*Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project</a>	Pit Resource Conservation District	Category One	\$176,438
90.8	East	Alpine	<a href="#">420</a>	<a href="#">Hope Valley Meadow Restoration</a>	American Rivers	Category Two	\$129,000
90.3	South	Kern	<a href="#">412</a>	<a href="#">Pre-acquisition Work on Four Strategic Land Conservation Projects</a>	Sequoia Riverlands Trust	Category Two	\$198,500
90.3	South	Kern, Tulare	<a href="#">434</a>	<a href="#">Rudnick Ranch Acquisition</a>	The Nature Conservancy	Category One	\$500,000
90.3	South	Tulare	<a href="#">358</a>	<a href="#">Long Meadow Restoration Project</a>	USDA Forest Service-Sequoia National Forest	Category Two	\$72,320
90.2	Central	Nevada	<a href="#">407</a>	<a href="#">Humbug Creek Watershed Assessment and Management Plan</a>	The Sierra Fund	Category Two	\$197,592
90.1	North	Lassen	<a href="#">399</a>	<a href="#">*South Ash Valley Watershed Restoration Project</a>	Lassen County Fire Safe Council	Category One	\$32,062
<b>Grand Total</b>							<b>\$4,007,000</b>

\* Projects are being recommended for funding from both the Subregional and the non-geographic pots.

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\* Project descriptions for projects funded solely from the non-geographic pot will appear following Exhibit C.

If you click on the Project Number, the link will open the Staff Project Summary.

If you click on the Project Title, the link will open the full application. Note - the full application files are large PDF files that may take a while to open.

Category One projects are Acquisition or Site Improvement/Restoration projects.

Category Two projects are Pre-Project Planning projects.

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program Safe Drinking Water,  
Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act of  
2006 (Proposition 84)**

**Applicant:** MARIPOSA PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

**Project Title:** STOCKTON CREEK PRESERVE AND TRAIL

**Subregion:** SOUTH CENTRAL

**County:** MARIPOSA

**SNC Funding:** \$1,000,000.00

**Total Project Cost:** \$1,088,888.00

**Application Number:** 443

**Final Score:** 95.3

**PROJECT SCOPE**

This project will allow the Mariposa Public Utility District (MPUD) to acquire a critical portion of the Stockton Creek watershed. Stockton Creek is a seasonal stream located in the Sierra foothills within Mariposa County, approximately one mile northeast of the town of Mariposa. Located within the watershed is the Stockton Creek dam and reservoir built in 1950 to supply water to the community of Mariposa. The Stockton Creek reservoir is still the primary source of drinking water for MPUD. The watershed itself is an important natural and recreational resource for the community.

The health of the Stockton Creek is integral to the protection of the public water supply. The proposed project is consistent with Proposition 84 goals and objectives, as well as a wide range of SNC goals. It will create a much-needed recreational outlet for the community and make Mariposa a more attractive destination to visitors. The vegetation management proposed will restore and maintain the natural condition of the project area. The project will also reduce the risk of natural disasters, such as wildfire, as this area is in great need of fuel modification, which is part of the management proposed for the acquisition area. Improved water quality will be realized with initial project fuel modifications and continued vegetation management. This project involves the following APNs: # 012-011-001; # 012-150-054; # 012-150-031; and a portion of # 012-150-056. Estimated total amount of resources leveraged for this project is \$88,888.

## PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Complete property survey, property & easement descriptions	August 2011
Complete Management Plan	August 2011
Complete lot line adjustments	November 2011
Submit six month report to SNC	November 2011
Final agreement with property owner, title search, escrow and title transfer	January 2012
MPUD Board establish project policies	February 2012
Complete trail development and construction; Implement road Access Improvements and erosion control measures	April – June 2012
Submit twelve month report to SNC	May 2012
Vegetation survey & forester recommendations/ Fire hazard/fuel modification	July-September 2012
Boundary signs erected	October 2012
Trailhead stations installation	November 2012
Submit 18 month report to SNC	November 2012
Public Notification	December 2012
Agency & public project introduction	February 2013
Submit Final Report to SNC	April 2013
<b>FINAL PAYMENT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST</b>	<b>June 1, 2013</b>

## PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Property Purchase in fee	\$1,000,000.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,000,000.00</b>

## PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS

- Sierra Business Council
- Sierra Foothill Conservancy
- CAL FIRE
- Mariposa County Board of Supervisors
- Yosemite Area Audubon Society
- Mariposans For The Environment And Responsible Government
- California Department of Public Health

## **PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC staff.

- Linear Feet of Stream Bank Protected or Restored
- Number of New Recreation Access Points
- Number of Significant Sites Protected or Preserved
- Acres of Land Conserved
- Acre Feet per Annum of Water Supply Conserved or Enhanced
- Feet of Trail/Path Constructed or Improved
- Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments

## **6. PROPOSED STOCKTON CREEK PRESERVE AND TRAIL SUMMARY**

The Mariposa Public Unity District (MPUD) is seeking funding from Sierra Nevada Conservancy through the Proposition 84 Grant Program for the fee title acquisition of a critical portion of the Stockton Creek Watershed. Stockton Creek is a seasonal stream located in the Sierra foothills within Mariposa County, approximately one mile northeast of the town of Mariposa. The creek flows from approximately November to June. Elevations of the watershed start at a high point of 3650' to the lowest point of 1770' at the confluence of Mariposa Creek over a distance of about six miles. The Mariposa Creek is a tributary to the San Joaquin river.

Located within the watershed is the Stockton Creek dam and reservoir built in 1950 to supply water to the community of Mariposa. The Stockton Creek reservoir is still the primary source of drinking water for MPUD. The watershed itself is an important natural resource for the community. The land area within the watershed is primarily undeveloped with some residential development on larger parcels (greater than 20 acres). A large percentage of the watershed is made up of larger tracts of land which until recently were under the ownership of a few individuals.

There are two very large tracts of land within the Stockton Creek watershed for which MPUD and conservation partners have previously sought conservation strategies in the 1990's for approximately 2300 acres Land then owned by a single entity. The new owner is very supportive of a conservancy project for this area and is entering into an option agreement to sell the property for this purpose The land owner does wish to sell the property and has recently been contacted by several buyers who are interested in purchasing the property for development. The zoning and proximity of the land to the town of Mariposa make the property ideal for residential and like commercial development.

The land area proposed for this acquisition has an immediate need for some management and mitigation of extensive damage to the native vegetation. In 2000 the property owner proceeded with a vegetation management project which he thought would reduce wildfire hazard and produce an "open, park-like appearance". Basically, the project included poisoning of live oak on approximately 800 acres of land, then the dead trees were to be harvested for firewood and the left over brush was to be stacked and burned. Unfortunately, the first phase (tree poisoning) was all that was done. Now the wildfire and erosion hazards are far greater than before. The attached photos show the extent of damage from this incomplete project.

A wild land fire in 2004 burned from the east side of the Mariposa Town area through the Stockton Creek watershed. This incident was a clear reminder for the importance of watershed management. The runoff period after the fire resulted in more than double the amount of "naturally" occurring contaminants in the town water supply. As an example the total organic carbon (a precursor to disinfection byproducts which are considered a health risk) increased to background levels immediately after the 2004 fire

MPUD established in 1947 has an obvious interest in maintaining the Stockton Creek watershed in its natural state. MPUD owns and operates the Stockton Creek dam and reservoir. In addition to collecting and storing water runoff from the local watershed, the Stockton Creek reservoir is an important component to the Saxon Creek water project which provides for a small diversion of water from the Merced River. It is important that the integrity of the Stockton Creek watershed be maintained for the long term to protect the public water supply

The concept of the conservancy project will include the consideration of the following tasks and management:

Vegetation, Fire Hazard, Erosion Control:

Complete the vegetation management project started by the previous land owner (now deceased). Work with the California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal-fire) to plan and carry out the removal of the dead vegetation. Calif. Dept. of Corrections (CDC) crews under direction of Cal-Fire, can be utilized to actually perform the field work for this task. The local USDA Soil Conservation Service staff will assist in the design and implementation of erosion control measures. Cal-fire is also willing to provide staff qualified in forest management and fire safe planning.

Historic Archaeological Resources

In 1991 MPUD commissioned a Cultural Resource investigation of the then proposed Saxon Creek Project pipe line. Portions of the pipe line are within the Stockton Creek watershed. The investigation located three archaeological and historic resource sites that are within the area of the proposed Stockton Creek Conservancy project area. Although the exact locations of the sites are confidential, MPUD maintains the initial survey information and will be able to better provide for the protection of these historic sites.

Recreation:

Even though the community of Mariposa is located in the Sierra foothills, there are no natural areas designated for public recreational use nearby. Many people currently walk or jog along a water line easement between the Stockton Creek dam and the water treatment facility. This practice is technically a trespass. MPUD proposes to facilitate a volunteer watershed group to prepare and maintain hiking trails in the conservancy area. Again the CDC/Cal-Fire crews can be utilized to construct some of the trails. Special trails for mountain bike use will be considered. It is not intended that any area will be open to motorized recreational vehicles.

At this time, MPUD is the lead agency for the proposed project. The District is consulting with Sierra Foothill Conservancy to investigate the feasibility of a conservancy project in the Stockton Creek watershed. Now is the time to pursue the long term protection of this watershed while the landowners are willing to sell the land for conservation. In the alternative, the land may be developed with roads, structures, on-site septic systems and concentrated farm animal pens. If conservation measures are implemented early the benefits will include:

- Recreation such as hiking and biking
- Watershed enhancement and reversal of existing watershed degrading projects
- Protection of public water supply as well as cost savings in future treatment of public water supplies
- The watershed is in the prime elevation zone for the valley elderberry long horn beetle a protected species
- Protection of identified historic archaeological sites.
- Fire hazard mitigation
- Preserve open space

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program  
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,  
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

**Applicant:** CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

**Project Title:** COMPLYING WITH CEQA FOR FOREST MANAGEMENT: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEYS IN COLDSTREAM CANYON- DONNER MEMORIAL STATE PARK

**Subregion:** CENTRAL SIERRA

**County:** PLACER

**SNC Funding:** \$59,816.50

**Total Project Cost:** \$135,116.00

**Application Number:** 421

**Final Score:** 94.2

**PROJECT SCOPE**

This project will complete the wildlife, vegetation, and archaeological surveys needed to satisfy CEQA compliance for forest management and floodplain restoration projects on 125 acres at Donner Memorial State Park in Placer County. The surveys and studies completed will provide for full CEQA compliance for forest management projects as well as for partial compliance for the floodplain restoration project. Both projects are critical for managing State Parks for forest health, fire safety and watershed restoration. The Coldstream Canyon Watershed Assessment was completed in 2007 and both forest management and floodplain restoration were identified as methods to address key management issues. Obtaining environmental clearance for implementation of these projects will result in habitat and water quality improvement in Cold Creek, a tributary to the Truckee River.

This project meets 3 SNC Program Goals:

- Protecting and conserving the Region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources by conducting much needed surveys and updating

records of such environmental resources at lower Coldstream Canyon in Donner Memorial State Park

- Reduce the risk of a wildfire disaster through implementation of precise forest management for fuels reduction and forest stand structure enhancement
- Protect and improve water quality through implementation of the lower Coldstream Canyon floodplain restoration design.

This grant leverages approximately \$15,300 of in-kind contributions from California State Parks and an additional \$75,300 in funding committed to the projects.

### PROJECT SCHEDULE

<b>DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
Wildlife, vegetation, and archeological surveys completed	May 2011 – November 2013
Progress Report	December 31, 2011
Year 1 northern goshawk and California spotted owl protocol surveys completed	March 2012 – September 2012
Progress Report	June 30, 2012
Year 1 natural resources (wildlife, botanical, and cultural) Summary report and CEQA documentation completed Progress Report	December 2012
Willow flycatcher and Year 2 northern goshawk and California spotted owl protocol surveys completed; Mountain beaver visual surveys completed	March 2013 – September 2013
Progress Report	June 30, 2013
<b>FINAL PAYMENT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST</b>	<b>December 31, 2013</b>

### PROJECT COSTS

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>TOTAL SNC FUNDING</b>
Personnel expenses for completion of surveys	\$35,760.00
Archaeological surveys	4,950.00
Survey equipment	3,500.00
Travel	3,300.00
Printing supplies	500.00
Performance measure reporting	4,680.00
Administrative costs	7,126.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$59,816.00</b>

## **PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS**

- United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Truckee Ranger District, District Ranger
- Truckee River Watershed Council, Executive Director

## **PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC staff.

- Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments
- Percent of Pre-Project and Planning Efforts Resulting in Project Implementation
- Measurable Changes in Knowledge and Behavior

## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

**County:** Placer County

**Applicant:** California Department of Parks and Recreation

**Project Title:** Complying with CEQA for Forest Management: Natural and Cultural Surveys in Coldstream Canyon- Donner Memorial State Park

## **PROJECT GOAL**

California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) intends to implement both forest management and floodplain restoration in Coldstream Canyon at Donner Memorial State Park. In order to commence on these projects, Parks must comply with CEQA regulations and conduct invaluable and much needed wildlife, vegetation, and archeological resource studies in the Park. The primary project will focus on forest management and forest stand structure enhancement in Coldstream Canyon. Additionally, the surveys will be used for CEQA compliance for the already planned and designed floodplain restoration in the lower reaches of Cold Creek in Donner Memorial State Park. The surveys needed for CEQA compliance undoubtedly meet the end project goals for benefitting environmental and economic resources in the region, including watershed-wide restoration and habitat and water quality improvements in the Park.

## **PROJECT SCOPE**

The extent of the work to be completed by funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) will be restricted to conducting wildlife, vegetation, and archeological surveys needed for CEQA compliance for future projects in Coldstream Canyon within Donner Memorial State Park. The surveys will support all CEQA documentation needed for both forest management on 125 acres in the Canyon, and for an already designed floodplain restoration project at the lower reaches of the Canyon on State Parks property. All wildlife and botanical surveys will be completed by State Parks employees, the archaeological surveys will be conducted by a contract crew. There have been wildlife surveys completed in the past, but State protocol requires that these surveys are obtained within three years of planned operations, such as forestry projects and watershed restoration. There have been successful nesting species of concern, such as goshawk and spotted owl in the past at Donner Memorial State Park.

State Parks has partnered with the Truckee River Watershed Council on the floodplain restoration project. It is anticipated that partners and the public will have access, as needed and allowed, to utilize the recorded data from the surveys for regional cooperative efforts.

## **LETTERS OF SUPPORT**

Truckee River Watershed Council  
Tahoe National Forest- Truckee Ranger District (USFS)

**SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE**

<b>DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
Wildlife, vegetation, and archeological surveys completed per CEQA compliance for forest management projects on 125 acres, and completed surveys for Coldstream Canyon floodplain restoration project all in Donner Memorial State Park	Start surveying May 2011, complete surveys by November 2013
Year 1 northern goshawk and California spotted owl protocol surveys	Mar 2012 – Sep 2012
Year 1 Natural Resources (wildlife, botanical, and cultural) Summary report and CEQA documentation	Dec 2012
Willow flycatcher and Year 2 northern goshawk and California spotted owl protocol surveys; Mtn. beaver visual surveys	Mar 2013 – Sep 2013
Final Report	December 2013

**SNC PROJECT COSTS**

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>TOTAL SNC FUNDING</b>
Direct Costs	\$47,510.00
Indirect Costs	\$5,180.00
Administrative Costs	\$7,126.50
Other Project Contributions	(\$75,300.00)
<b>SNC GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$59,816.50</b>

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program  
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,  
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

**Applicant:** MOJAVE DESERT-MOUNTAIN RESOURCE  
CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

**Project Title:** LONE PINE WATER RECLAMATION FEASIBILITY  
STUDY

**Subregion:** EAST SIERRA

**County:** INYO

**SNC Funding:** \$121,440.00

**Total Project Cost:** \$125,040.00

**Application Number:** 448

**Final Score:** 91.8

**PROJECT SCOPE**

This project will complete the pre-implementation activities for reusing wastewater from the Lone Pine Community Services District at the high school and in the community of Lone Pine in Inyo County. It will consist of three phases, the first to study the feasibility of:

- Using wastewater for irrigating pastureland on the school farm to raise livestock
- Reducing landscape irrigation with potable water at the park, hospital, and other community sites
- Expanding the community garden program

The second phase is to prepare the engineering and design documents and the final phase is to complete the required permitting and environmental compliance to implement the project. When implemented, the project will improve and protect local water resources, provide local foods, and offer students diverse learning opportunities. UC Cooperative Extension will provide technical assistance including soil analysis and horticulture methodology review and the U.S. Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Services will ensure the application of best practices related to grazing. The Lone Pine Economic Development Corporation will assist in community outreach

and awareness activities while Lone Pine High School will provide support and resources for the implementation phase.

### PROJECT SCHEDULE

<b>DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
Develop RFP for Feasibility Study	July 2011
Submit 6 month progress report	November 2011
Complete Feasibility Study	December 2011
Submit 12 month progress report	May 2012
Complete Engineering & Design Reports	July 2012
Submit 18 month progress report	November 2012
Submit 24 month progress report	May 2013
Complete CEQA and Permits	July 2013
Complete Final Report	September 2013
<b>FINAL PAYMENT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST</b>	<b>October 30, 2013</b>

### PROJECT COSTS

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>TOTAL SNC FUNDING</b>
Feasibility Study – Contract Labor	\$30,000.00
Engineering Report – Contract Labor	30,000.00
Permitting and CEQA – Contract Labor	30,000.00
Supplies- Testing	13,000.00
Mileage	100.00
Meeting expenses	500.00
Outreach materials	2,000.00
Administration	15,840.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$121,440.00</b>

### PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS

- Lone Pine Economic Development Corporation
- Lone Pine Unified School District
- Lone Pine High School

### PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC staff.

- Percent of Pre-Project and Planning Efforts Resulting in Project Implementation

## PROJECT SUMMARY

**County:** Inyo

**Applicant:** Desert Mountain Resource Conservation and Development Council

**Project Title:** Lone Pine Water Reclamation Feasibility Study

### PROJECT GOAL

Desert Mountain RC&D Council is partnering with Lone Pine Economic Development Council, Lone Pine High School and Lone Pine Community Services District to complete a feasibility study/environmental review on reusing wastewater for the Lone Pine Community, particularly at the high school in conjunction with their Future Farmers of America Program. This project is consistent with Proposition 84 requirements to protect and restore water sources and their associated lands by reusing the limited water in the Sierras for beneficial use. This project is also consistent with Sierra Nevada Conservancy Goals to protect/restore the Region's physical resources, improve water quality, and assist the regional economy through SNC funds. This study will explore what additional treatment is necessary for reusing the water which will protect the resource as well as improve the quality. The study will explore piping the water for use by the local high school for raising livestock for the local community to eat, establishing a community garden and reducing potable water use for irrigation as well.

### PROJECT SCOPE

This project is for the planning phase of reusing wastewater from the Lone Pine Community Services District at the Lone Pine High School and within the community. This project has three phases. The first phase is a study to look at the feasibility of using the wastewater for irrigating pasture, reducing lawn irrigation with potable water, and expanding a community garden. The second phase, if the project is considered feasible, is to complete the necessary engineering documents. The last phase is to complete the required permitting and environmental review to complete the project.

The feasibility study will review the existing wastewater system and compare it to the state and local regulations for water reclamation. It will review the existing and potential uses of reclaimed water and determine what upgrades would be needed, both of the wastewater facility as well as the necessary piping. The potential uses for water include using the wastewater for pastureland on which the high school students will raise livestock as food for the local community. The water may also be used on the high school grounds to expand the existing garden to create a local community garden for use by the community and students for a local food source. Other potential uses of the reclaimed water include irrigation for landscape such as at the park, churches, apartments and hospital. The study will include the basic engineering needed to determine whether or not the project is feasible. The majority of the work if the project is feasible will be completed by the high school students as part of their class work which will give the students hands on experience. The study will look at using a solar pump, to be done by the students as experience to increase interest in working in the renewable field. If the project is feasible and moves forward, the students will install the irrigation line to the existing school property. The study will also outline the next steps for completing the project including environmental review and permitting required.

Once the study is complete, based on the results, the remainder of the funding will be used to

complete the engineering design and environmental review. The engineering design will encompass the upgrades for the wastewater treatment plant as well as the piping needed to deliver the water.

This project will improve and protect the local water resource, provide local food sources, provide opportunities for students to learn skills for the future, and improve the local economy. This project is supported by many local partners as you can see by the letters of support. The UC-Cooperative Extension will provide technical assistance with the gardening aspects as well as soil analysis. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service will provide technical assistance to ensure the grazing aspects are thoroughly considered. Lone Pine Economic Development Corporation will assist in outreach to ensure support and understanding by the local community. Lone Pine High School will provide support and information on water uses and potential in-kind donations for the implementation of the project. Lone Pine Community Services District will be the ultimate provider of the water.

### LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Lone Pine Community Services District  
Lone Pine High School

Lone Pine Economic Dev. Corporation

### SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Develop RFP for Feasibility Study	July 2011
Feasibility Study	December 2011
Progress Report to SNC	December 2011
Engineering Report	July 2012
Progress Report to SNC	June 2012
Progress Report to SNC	December 2012
Progress Report to SNC	June 2013
CEQA and Permitting	July 2013
Final Report to SNC	September 2013

### SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Feasibility Study – Contract Labor	\$30,000
Engineering Report – Contract Labor	\$30,000
Permitting and CEQA – Contract Labor	\$30,000
Supplies-Testing	\$13,000
Mileage	\$100
Meeting Expenses	\$500
Outreach Materials	\$2,000
Administration	\$15,840
<b>SNC GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$121,440</b>

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program  
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,  
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

**Applicant:** EL DORADO COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**Project Title:** CAMP SACRAMENTO EROSION CONTROL AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

**Subregion:** CENTRAL SIERRA

**County:** EL DORADO

**SNC Funding:** \$144,300.00

**Total Project Cost:** \$149,512.56

**Application Number:** 327

**Final Score:** 91.7

**PROJECT SCOPE**

Camp Sacramento is located on Highway 50 in El Dorado County, at the 6,400 ft elevation level. The Camp properties, consisting of high meadow and mixed Sierran forest, are located directly on the banks of the South Fork of the American River. After years of high public/recreational use, the soils around the cabins and close to the river are eroding into the meadow and into the river. This project finalizes a survey to evaluate existing conditions and locations for needed measures and design, completes all necessary NEPA and CEQA processes and contracts for the needed engineering specifications for planned roads and erosion control measures to restore impacted areas.

**PROJECT SCHEDULE**

<b>DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
NEPA	May 2011- June 2011
CEQA	June 2011
Survey of Camp	July 2011- August 2011

Survey of Cabins	July 2011-August 2011
Engineering (for erosion control)	August 2011-September 2011
Engineering (for roads)	August 2011-September 2011
Six Month Progress Report	December 2011
<b>FINAL REPORT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST</b>	<b>March 1, 2012</b>

### PROJECT COSTS

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>TOTAL SNC FUNDING</b>
Staff/Personnel Expense- Project Related Wages/Benefits	\$3,000.00
Contracts/Consultants- Project Related	124,000.00
Fees- Appraisal/Permits/CEQA/Easement	5,000.00
Printed Materials- Project Related Publications, Communications, Public Outreach	7,500.00
Performance Measure reporting	1,200.00
Administrative Costs	3,600.00
<b>SNC GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$144,300.00</b>

### PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS

- El Dorado National Forest
- City of Sacramento, Department of Parks and Recreation
- Friends of Camp Sacramento

### PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC staff.

- Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments
- Percent of Pre-project and Planning Efforts Resulting in Project Implementation
- Measurable Changes in Knowledge or Behavior

## PROJECT SUMMARY

**County:** El Dorado

**Applicant:** El Dorado County Resource Conservation District

**Project Title:** Camp Sacramento Erosion Control and Habitat Improvement Project

### PROJECT GOAL

Erosion from camp during rainfall events and snowmelt is a contributor of suspended sediment to the South Fork American River (SFAR). The erosion comes from unpaved and compacted roads, denuded slopes, and disturbed areas in camp. Over the years of operation, campers have formed trails and driving areas have expanded that have left some areas of the camp denuded of low-growing shrubs that help break-up raindrop impact and reduce erosion. This has led to runoff carrying sediment to the river resulting in a water quality impact to the SFAR. The project plans to address the erosion problems through several approaches. The goal of the application for this project is to complete the necessary environmental compliance and planning documents to be 'shovel ready'.

This project addresses several SNC goals. It will provide increased opportunity for tourism and recreation and undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public by improving an existing recreation destination on Forest Service lands that is visited by user groups every year, improvements will also attract more users. It will protect, conserve, and restore the regions physical and living resources by reducing the loss of soil resources and the pollution of sediment to the SFAR. In addition, the project will restore denuded plant resources that will help with the erosion problems and attract more wildlife. These actions will also contribute to the Proposition 84 goals of protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources.

### PROJECT SCOPE

This grant will complete the necessary NEPA and CEQA processes, finalize a survey of the camp to evaluate existing conditions and locations for needed measures, and contract the needed engineering specifications for the planned roads and erosion control measures. Project partners include the City of Sacramento Parks and Recreation Department, Friends of Camp Sacramento and the United States Forest Service.

### LETTERS OF SUPPORT

United States Forest Service, Eldorado National Forest  
City of Sacramento  
Friends of Camp Sacramento

### SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
INCLUDE SPECIFIC TASKS IDENTIFIED IN SCOPE AND	ASSUME START

ALL REPORTS, ETC.	DATE 60 DAYS AFTER SNC BOARD AUTHORIZATION
NEPA	May 2011 – June 2011
CEQA	June 2011
Survey of Camp	July 2011 – August 2011
Survey of Cabins	July 2011 – August 2011
Engineering (for erosion control)	August 2011 – September 2011
Engineering (for roads)	August 2011 – September 2011

### SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Staff/Personnel Expense - Project Related Wages/Benefits	\$3,000.00
Contracts/Consultants - Project Related	\$124,000.00
Fees - Appraisal/Permits/CEQA/Easement	\$5,000.00
Printed Materials - Project related Publications/Communications/Public Outreach	\$7,500.00
Performance Measure reporting	\$1,200.00
Administrative Costs	\$3,600.00
<b>SNC GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$144,300.00</b>

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program Safe Drinking Water,  
Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act of  
2006 (Proposition 84)**

**Applicant:** AMERICAN RIVERS  
**Project Title:** HOPE VALLEY MEADOW RESTORATION  
**Subregion:** EAST SIERRA  
**County:** ALPINE  
**SNC Funding:** \$129,000.00  
**Total Project Cost:** \$178,000.00  
**Application Number:** 420  
**Final Score:** 90.8

**PROJECT SCOPE**

This project will result in a permit-ready restoration plan which will restore a 1,600 acre highly visible and significant meadow in Alpine County with high levels of recreational use, historic and cultural values. The Hope Valley Meadow Project is designed to proceed in four successive steps: 1) Assessment and Conceptual Restoration Design; 2) Technical Restoration Design; 3) Permitting; and 4) Implementation and Adaptive Management. Funding is requested for steps one and two with \$49,000 in additional resources being leveraged to complete this project.

**PROJECT SCHEDULE**

<b>DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
Finalized workplan and budget	June 2011
Execute subcontracts/grants with project partners	July 2011
Final assessment protocol and management plan	July 2011
Final meadow assessment technical memo	December 2011
Submit progress report to SNC	December 2011
Develop conceptual models and limiting factors	January 2012
Develop climate change scenarios	February 2012
Finalize meadow conceptual designs	June 2012

Submit progress report to SNC	June 2012
Finalize project maps	November 2012
Complete detailed design drawings	December 2012
Submit progress report to SNC	December 2012
Finalize technical design plan and maps	March 2013
Submit final report to SNC	June 2013
<b>FINAL PAYMENT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST</b>	<b>June 30, 2013</b>

### PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Staff/Personnel Expense/ Wages/Benefits and Occupancy	\$ 41,044.28
Travel/Meeting Expense - Project Related	1,850.00
Sub-grants/Contracts/Consultants - Project Related	65,765.00
Materials/Supplies - Project Related	570.00
Equipment Leases/Purchases - Project Dependent	2,537.91
Outreach/Education	2,500.00
Performance Measure reporting	2,942.95
Administrative Costs	11,789.86
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$129,000</b>

### PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS

- Drew Goetting, Restoration De4sign Group
- Rodney Siegel, Institute for Bird Populations
- Debbie Waldear, Friends of Hope Valley
- Sarah Green, Alpine Watershed Group

### PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC staff.

- Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments

## 6. Project Summary

**County:** Alpine County

**Applicant:** American Rivers

**Project Title:** Hope Valley Meadow Project

### PROJECT GOAL

Offered by a diverse and strong partnership including American Rivers, Alpine Watershed Group, Institute for Bird Populations, Restoration Design Group, and Friends of Hope Valley, the overall goal of the Hope Valley Meadow Project is to restore the full range of ecosystems services provided by this 1,600 acre highly-visible and well-known meadow. More specifically, implementation of the full project will contribute to Proposition 84 goals by: 1) increasing water storage capacity; 2) lowering downstream water temperatures, 3) decreasing sediment, and 4) increasing riparian and aquatic habitat.

### PROJECT SCOPE

The Hope Valley Meadow Project is designed to proceed in four successive steps: 1) Assessment and Conceptual Restoration Design; 2) Technical Restoration Design; 3) Permitting; and 4) Implementation and Adaptive Management. We request funding from SNC for steps I and II of this project for which the following objectives apply:

- Build capacity of local stakeholder groups to be an integral part of the development and implementation of restoration
- Conduct a comprehensive and systematic assessment of meadow attributes to determine hydrologic and ecological function and overall meadow condition
- Initiate and complete conceptual restoration design based on the assessment
- Draft permit-ready technical restoration designs for Hope Valley Meadow

This project is requesting \$129,000 from SNC and will provide a match of \$49,000 for a total project cost of \$178,000. We have applied to NFWF for this match grant funding. The project team is fully capable of all aspects of project management to ensure successful implementation. American Rivers will provide overall project management and coordination, as well as technical expertise in the assessment and design process with the assistance of Restoration Design Group and the Institute for Bird Populations. Friends of Hope Valley and the Alpine Watershed Group will involve citizen monitors in the assessment and monitoring tasks, and will also lead stakeholder input sessions. The project will also involve the California Department of Fish and Game, and the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest who are supportive of the project and the primary owners and managers of the meadow.

### LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Drew Goetting, Restoration Design Group  
 Rodney Siegel, Institute for Bird Populations  
 Debbie Waldear, Friends of Hope Valley  
 Sarah Green, Alpine Watershed Group

### SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Finalized Workplan and Budget (Task 1)	June 30, 2011
Signed Subcontracts/grants with Project Partners (Task 1)	July 30, 2011
Biannual Financial and Performance Reports (Task 1)	December 15, 2011, June 15, 2012, December 15,

	2012
Final Report (Task 1)	May 31, 2013
Final Assessment Protocol and MP (Task 2)	July 30, 2011
Final Meadow Assessment Technical Memo (Task 2)	December 31, 2011
Conceptual Models and Limiting Factors (Task 3)	January 30, 2012
Climate Change Scenarios (Task 3)	February 15, 2012
Finalized Hope Valley Meadow Conceptual Designs (Task 3)	June 30, 2012
Project Maps (Task 4)	November 15, 2011
Detailed Design Drawings (Task 4)	December 1, 2012
Project Technical Design Plan and Maps (Task 4)	March 15, 2013

### SNC PROJECT COSTS

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>TOTAL SNC FUNDING</b>
Staff/Personnel Expense/ Wages/Benefits and Occupancy	\$ 41,044.28
Travel/Meeting Expense - Project Related	\$1,850.00
Subgrants/Contracts/Consultants - Project Related	\$ 65,765.00
Materials/Supplies - Project Related	\$ 570.00
Equipment Leases/Purchases - Project Dependent	\$ 2,537.91
Outreach/Education	\$ 2,500.00
Performance Measure reporting	\$ 2,942.95
Administrative Costs	\$ 11,789.86
<b>SNC GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 129,000.00</b>

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program Safe Drinking Water,  
Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act of  
2006 (Proposition 84)**

**Applicant:** SEQUOIA RIVERLANDS TRUST

**Project Title:** PRE-ACQUISITION WORK ON FOUR STRATEGIC LAND CONSERVATION PROJECTS

**Subregion:** SOUTH

**County:** TULARE AND KERN

**SNC Funding:** \$198,500.00

**Total Project Cost:** \$317,000.00

**Application Number:** 412

**Final Score:** 90.3

**PROJECT SCOPE**

The purpose of the project is to conduct site evaluations and produce appraisals necessary to conserve three large ranches and one smaller one, lands strategically located to improve climate change resilience in the southern Sierra Nevada foothills. The three large properties are among the Southern Sierra Partnership's (SSP) top six priorities for protection, based on results of the SSP's recent climate-adapted conservation planning effort. The project will facilitate protection of roughly 40,000 acres of blue oak woodland, grassland, rare communities such as vernal pools and sycamore alluvial woodlands, habitat for and occurrences of numerous special status species and many miles of high quality riparian corridors connecting these other habitats. In addition, these projects, when completed, will assist in protecting working landscapes in Tulare and Kern counties. The protection of these lands and their resources is an important component of Proposition 84 goals. And, securing important natural resources and retaining working landscapes are essential components of the SNC's Program Areas. This project is supported by \$118,543 of funding in addition to the SNC's funding support.

## PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
<p><b>Conduct Site Assessment and Appraisals at Mebane, Hershey, Flynn and Craig Ranches:</b></p> <p><b>Mebane Ranch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete biological field evaluation of upper elevation portions of the ranch</li> <li>• Complete environmental site assessment for entire ranch</li> <li>• Complete negotiation of Phase 1 purchase and sale agreement and conservation easement terms</li> <li>• Confirm funding for Phase 1 conservation easement or fee title acquisition</li> <li>• Execute Phase 1 of option agreement and close the transaction</li> <li>• Define Phase 2 conservation easement, outline easement terms</li> <li>• Appraise value of Phase 2 conservation easement</li> <li>• Identify probable funding source for Phase 2 and beyond; apply for Phase 2 funding</li> </ul> <p><b>Hershey Ranch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm phased option agreement to acquire fee title and/or conservation easements on the entire ranch</li> <li>• Facilitate DFG approval of draft Deer Creek Conceptual Area Protection Plan</li> <li>• Complete biological field evaluation for entire ranch</li> <li>• Complete environmental site assessment for entire ranch</li> <li>• Complete negotiation of Phase 1 purchase and sale agreement and conservation easement terms</li> <li>• Confirm funding for Phase 1 conservation easement or fee title acquisition</li> <li>• Execute Phase 1 of option agreement and close the transaction</li> <li>• Define Phase 2 conservation easement and outline easement terms</li> <li>• Appraise value of Phase 2 conservation easement and/or fee title acquisition</li> <li>• Identify probable funding source for Phase 2 and beyond; apply for Phase 2 funding</li> </ul> <p><b>Flynn Ranch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop phased option agreement to acquire conservation easements on parts of the ranch not included in Phase 1</li> <li>• Draft White River Conceptual Area Protection Plan and submit to DFG for review and approval</li> <li>• Complete environmental site assessment for parts of the ranch not included in Phase 1</li> <li>• Define Phase 2 conservation easement and outline easement</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">May 2011-March 2013</p>

terms • Appraise value of Phase 2 conservation easement • Identify probable funding source for Phase 2 and beyond; apply for Phase 2 funding <b>Craig Ranch</b> • Complete biological records search and field evaluation to confirm values relevant to <b>Case Mountain ACEC</b> • Appraise value of the property per the revised parcel map • Assist BLM with securing the property • Coordinate with BLM to complete environmental due diligence and other pre-acquisition work to ready the property for BLM acquisition	
Progress Report	November 2011
Progress Report	May 2012
Progress Report	November 2012
Final Report	May 2013
<b>FINAL PAYMENT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST</b>	<b>May 2013</b>

### PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Project related staff/personnel expense	\$28,595.00
Project related travel	3,545.00
Project related consultant expense	112,386.00
Project related materials and supplies	1,150.00
Appraisals and Valuation Updates	36,000.00
Project Administration	16,824.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$198,500.00</b>

### PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS

- Audubon California
- Sierra Business Council
- The Nature Conservancy
- Pacific Ag Management, Inc.
- Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners

## **PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC staff.

- Linear Feet of Stream Bank Protected or Restored
- Number of Significant Sites Protected or Preserved
- Acres of Land Conserved

## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

### **Sequoia Riverlands Trust Category 2 Application to SNC Proposition 84 Grants Program**

**County:** Tulare

**Applicant:** Sequoia Riverlands Trust

**Project Title:** Pre-acquisition Work on Four Strategic Land Conservation Prospects in the Southern Sierra Foothills

## **PROJECT GOAL**

The purpose of the project is to take advantage of a window of opportunity to conserve three large ranches and one smaller, but strategically located property, to improve climate change resilience in the southern Sierra Nevada foothills. The three large properties are among the Southern Sierra Partnership's top six priorities for protection, based on results of the SSP's recent climate-adapted conservation planning effort. Sequoia Riverlands Trust and its partners have been working on each of these land protection opportunities for at least two years, and momentum seems to be building to bring them to fruition. Each needs a well-placed investment – an appraisal, or Conceptual Area Protection Plan, or biological evaluation, or focused attention on negotiations and partnership development – to move the project toward conserved status.

The project will facilitate protection of roughly 40,000 acres of blue oak woodland, grassland, rare communities such as vernal pools and sycamore alluvial woodlands, habitat for and occurrences of numerous special status species and many miles of high quality riparian corridors connecting these other habitats.

## **PROJECT SCOPE**

The project includes such activities as appraisals, biological evaluations, environmental site assessments, focused negotiations with landowners, and development of innovative conservation partnerships focused on protecting four significant properties in the Kaweah, Deer Creek, White River, Poso Creek and Kern River drainages.

## **LETTERS OF SUPPORT**

Letters of support are provided from SRT's fellow members of the Southern Sierra Partnership (The Nature Conservancy, The Sierra Business Council and Audubon-California), the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners, and the potential conservation buyer for the large ranch near Bakersfield.

Due to the confidential nature of most of these transaction at this stage, SRT did not seek letters of support from other conservation groups or public entities.

## **SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE**

It is difficult to predict the exact timing of the tasks proposed for this grant since they are dependent on progress of negotiations with landowners, uncertain capacity of agencies, issues that may be discovered during title searches and so forth. Tasks that are anticipated for each property during a two-year grant period are listed more or less sequentially below, followed by a schedule of SNC grant reporting milestones.

### **Mebane Ranch**

- Complete biological field evaluation of upper elevation portions of the ranch
- Complete environmental site assessment for entire ranch
- Complete negotiation of Phase 1 purchase and sale agreement and conservation easement terms
- Confirm funding for Phase 1 conservation easement or fee title acquisition (acquisition funds not in this SNC grant)
- Execute Phase 1 of option agreement and close the transaction
- Define Phase 2 conservation easement, outline easement terms
- Appraise value of Phase 2 conservation easement
- Identify probable funding source for Phase 2 and beyond; apply for Phase 2 funding

### **Hershey Ranch**

- Confirm phased option agreement to acquire fee title and/or conservation easements on the entire ranch
- Facilitate DFG approval of draft Deer Creek Conceptual Area Protection Plan
- Complete biological field evaluation for entire ranch
- Complete environmental site assessment for entire ranch
- Complete negotiation of Phase 1 purchase and sale agreement and conservation easement terms (as applicable)
- Confirm funding for Phase 1 conservation easement or fee title acquisition (acquisition funds not in this SNC grant)
- Execute Phase 1 of option agreement and close the transaction
- Define Phase 2 conservation easement and outline easement terms
- Appraise value of Phase 2 conservation easement and/or fee title acquisition
- Identify probable funding source for Phase 2 and beyond; apply for Phase 2 funding

### **Flynn Ranch (Phase 2)**

- Develop phased option agreement to acquire conservation easements on parts of the ranch not included in Phase 1
- Draft White River Conceptual Area Protection Plan and submit to DFG for review and approval
- Complete environmental site assessment for parts of the ranch not included in Phase 1
- Define Phase 2 conservation easement and outline easement terms
- Appraise value of Phase 2 conservation easement
- Identify probable funding source for Phase 2 and beyond; apply for Phase 2 funding

**Craig Ranch**

- Complete biological records search and field evaluation to confirm values relevant to Case Mountain ACEC
- Appraise value of the property per the revised parcel map
- Assist BLM with securing the property (e.g. finding a partner that would enable SRT to acquire and hold the property until BLM receives LWCF funding)
- Coordinate with BLM to complete environmental due diligence and other pre-acquisition work to ready the property for BLM acquisition

**SNC Grant Reporting Milestones**

By June 2011	Execute Prop. 84 grant agreement between SNC and SRT
By Nov. 2011	Submit six-month progress report to SNC
By May 2012	Submit annual progress report to SNC
By Nov. 2012	Submit eighteen-month progress report
By May 2013	Submit final report and payment request to SNC

**SNC PROJECT COSTS**

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>TOTAL SNC FUNDING</b>
Project-related staff/personnel expense	\$28,596
Project-related travel	\$3,545
Project-related contracts/consultants (including SRT Executive Director)	\$112,386
Project-related materials & supplies	\$1,150
Appraisals, valuation updates, title reports	\$36,000
Project administration	\$16,824
<b>SNC GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$198,500</u></b>

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program Safe Drinking Water,  
Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act of  
2006 (Proposition 84)**

**Applicant:** THE NATURE CONSERVANCY  
**Project Title:** RUDNICK RANCH ACQUISITION  
**Subregion:** SOUTH  
**County:** KERN  
**SNC Funding:** \$500,000.00  
**Total Project Cost:** \$11,276,000.00  
**Application Number:** 434  
**Final Score:** 90.3

**PROJECT SCOPE**

This project will acquire approximately 15,000 acres\* of the Rudnick Ranch in the southern Sierra Nevada range. The ranch supports chaparral, grasslands, oak woodlands, and riparian communities in the Middle Kern - Upper Tehachapi - Grapevine watershed. Protection of the ranch eliminates the threat of subdivision and associated water use safeguarding local aquifers and allowing natural ground water recharge and runoff processes to continue. Caliente Creek follows the southern property boundary for approximately 4.3 miles and conservation of the ranch will protect large areas of the creek's watershed and floodplain. Over six miles of Walker Basin Creek occur on the ranch with a majority supporting perennial flow.

The goal is to continue operations as a working ranch ensuring grazing is carried out in a sustainable manner that maintains the important resources. Living resources include a broad matrix of plant and animal species located in the several habitat types found on the ranch. Historic resources include preservation of Baker Grade Road built by Bakersfield's namesake and the ruins of the old tollhouse that remains on the property.

This project is part of a larger joint conservation effort under the umbrella of the Southern Sierra Partnership (SSP), consisting of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Audubon California, Sequoia Riverlands Trust, Sierra Business Council and others. The SSP was formed to prioritize effective conservation of the Southern Sierra and

Tehachapi Ranges by identifying key properties that ensure the region maintains its character in the face of increased human demands and climate change. The Nature Conservancy is seeking the majority of funding for completing this acquisition from a variety of sources including public and private funders.

### PROJECT SCHEDULE

<b>DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
Complete Phase I – Environmental Assessment	July 2011
Complete Funding and Closing Documents	August 2011
Finalize Acquisition	September 2011
Six-month progress report	November 2011
<b>FINAL PAYMENT / FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST</b>	<b>January 2012</b>

### PROJECT COSTS

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>TOTAL SNC FUNDING</b>
Acquisition fees	\$500,000.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$500,000.00</b>

### PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS

- Audubon California
- Ranchers for Responsible Conservation
- Sequoia Riverlands Trust
- Sierra Business Council

### PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC staff.

- Linear Feet of Stream Bank Protected or Restored
- Number of Significant Sites Protected or Preserved
- Acres of Land Conserved
- Tons of Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided

\* Assessor Parcel Numbers for the properties included in this project are:

179-150-02, 179-150-19, 179-150-08, 179-150-07,  
179-150-03, 179-150-18, 179-150-06, 179-150-05,  
179-150-04, 179-150-09, 179-150-10, 179-150-11,  
179-150-12, 397-110-09, 397-110-06, 397-110-05,  
179-140-01, 179-140-02, 179-140-03, 179-140-05,  
179-140-04, 197-140-06, 179-140-07, 179-150-16,  
179-150-20, 179-150-21, 179-150-22, 179-150-23,  
179-150-24, 179-150-25, 179-150-26, 179-150-27,  
179-150-28, 179-150-29, 179-150-30, 179-150-31,  
179-150-14, 179-140-13, 179-140-14, 179-140-15,  
179-140-16, 179-140-17, 179-140-11, 179-140-19,  
179-140-18, 179-140-08, 179-170-04, 179-170-05,  
179-160-01, 179-160-02, 179-160-03, 179-260-01,  
179-170-06, 179-160-07, 179-160-06, 179-160-04,  
266-140-02, 266-150-05, 266-150-04, 266-150-03,  
266-160-03, 266-160-01, 266-170-01, 266-170-02,  
266-160-02, 266-170-04, 266-170-03, 266-180-01,  
266-180-02, 179-180-02, 179-180-22

## PROJECT SUMMARY

**County:** Kern

**Applicant:** The Nature Conservancy

**Project Title:** Rudnick Ranch Acquisition

### PROJECT GOAL

The goal of this project is to conserve approximately 15,000 acres of the Rudnick Ranch in the southern Sierra Nevada range. The ranch supports nearly 15,000 acres of intact chaparral, grasslands, oak woodlands, and riparian communities in the Middle Kern - Upper Tehachapi - Grapevine watershed. Land speculation, intensive agriculture, and mining to the east and west threaten the integrity of the ranch and its watersheds. Protection of the ranch eliminates the threat of subdivision and associated water use safeguarding local aquifers and allowing natural ground water recharge and runoff processes to continue. It will also allow recharge of ground water basins in the San Joaquin Valley and protects water quality in the watershed. Caliente Creek follows the southern property boundary for approximately 4.3 miles and protection of the ranch will protect large areas of the creek's watershed and floodplain. Over six miles of Walker Basin Creek occur on the ranch with a majority supporting perennial flow. The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) goal is to acquire the property and continue operations as a working ranch ensuring grazing is carried out in a sustainable manner that maintains the important resources. The project supports many of the SNC goals including preservation of working landscapes (ranching in this case) and conserving the Region's cultural, historical, physical and living resources. Living resources include a broad matrix of plant and animal species located in the several habitat types found on the ranch. Historic resources include preservation of Baker Grade Road built by Bakersfield's namesake and the ruins of the old tollhouse that remains on the property. Rudnick Ranch is also known as "Tollhouse Ranch." The project will also protect Kern County's existing water quality by maintaining nearly 24 square miles of watershed in open permeable ground permanently preserving the function of the natural hydrologic cycle. Other key outcomes of this project include conservation of a key wildlife linkage, climate change adaptation, and building conservation partnerships.

### PROJECT SCOPE

This grant will result in conservation of the nearly 15,000 acre (approximately 23 sq. mile) Rudnick Ranch. It is part of a larger joint conservation effort under the umbrella of the Southern Sierra Partnership (SSP), consisting of TNC, Audubon California, Sequoia Riverlands Trust, and Sierra Business Council. The SSP was formed to accelerate effective conservation of the Southern Sierra and Tehachapi Ranges by identifying key properties that ensure the region maintains its character in the face of increased human demands and climate change. The Tehachapi and southern Sierra Nevada Mountain Ranges present a unique opportunity for conservation as a result of their location, features and intactness. The intersection of these two ranges occurs at the convergence of five ecoregions in a region of steep and diverse topography. Although largely under private ownership, large ranches dominate the landscape resulting in a tremendous opportunity to maintain working landscapes, sustain ecosystem services and conserve the regions physical, cultural, living and historical resources. The Ranges are biologically diverse and provide the only connectivity for the Central and South Coast Ranges to interior ranges. Special focus was given to the protection of riparian

corridors and their floodplains and watersheds to facilitate species movement and allow natural ground water recharge and runoff processes to continue by minimizing future channelization and flood protection infrastructure.

The SSP has established a five year goal to conserve 275,000 acres of important conservation lands in the southern Sierra Nevada and Tehachapi mountains. These lands have been selected for their contribution to protecting aquatic and riparian habitats, maintaining connectivity across elevational gradients, provision of refugia and expansion areas needed to accommodate climate change sensitive species and, to maintain the approximately 50 mile linkage from the Sierra Nevada to the South and Central Coast Ecoregions. Rudnick Ranch is a key component of this five year goal.

Performance Measures applicable to the project are the linear feet of stream bank protected; the number of special significance sites protected or preserved and acres of land conserved.

TNC has a signed letter of intent for a one-year option to purchase the Ranch in fee for \$11,250,000. The formal option agreement is currently being circulated for signature by the buyer and seller. TNC intends to eventually transfer fee title to a conservation buyer and retain a conservation easement. In the interim we may lease the property to a rancher, possibly to the seller, and sell the fee interest with a conservation easement to a conservation buyer. The remaining project costs will be provided through public and private grants.

#### LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Audubon California  
Ranchers for Responsible Conservation  
Sequoia Riverlands Trust  
Sierra Business Council

Reed Tollefson  
Emmy Cattani  
R. Scott Spear  
Steve Frisch

#### SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
INCLUDE SPECIFIC TASKS IDENTIFIED IN SCOPE AND ALL REPORTS, ETC.	ASSUME START DATE 60 DAYS AFTER SNC BOARD AUTHORIZATION
Phase 1 Environmental Assessment	July 2011
Complete funding and closing conditions	August 2011
Acquire property	September 2011
Six month progress report	March 2012
Final report	September 2012

#### SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Capital Costs	\$1,000,000
<b>SNC GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program Safe Drinking Water,  
Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act of  
2006 (Proposition 84)**

**Applicant:** USDA FOREST SERVICE-SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST

**Project Title:** LONG MEADOW RESTORATION PROJECT

**Subregion:** SOUTH

**County:** TULARE

**SNC Funding:** \$72,320.00

**Total Project Cost:** \$97,849.00

**Application Number:** 358

**Final Score:** 90.3

**PROJECT SCOPE**

This grant will provide for pre-project planning and environmental review to prepare a joint National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document for the long term restoration work at Long Meadow. The ultimate goal of this project is to repair a large and unstable headcut within Long Meadow. These conditions are impacting the stability of the meadow through accelerated loss of meadow vegetation and soil, resulting in negative consequences to water quality and downstream aquatic habitats. Long Meadow also contains unique cultural and scenic resources which could be compromised through continued meadow degradation. Proposition 84 grant funds will provide for pre-project planning and environmental review to allow implementation of the Long Meadow Restoration Project. This project is consistent with Proposition 84 requirements to protect and restore water sources and their associated lands, and the SNC program area goals that address protection of water quality. This project has in-kind support from the Forest Service in the amount of \$25,529.

## PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Initiate joint NEPA/CEQA environmental analysis in consultation with the SNC and issue relevant NEPA/CEQA notices regarding preparation of a project; submit to SNC.	May 2011
Prepare engineering site design, conduct field surveys, and obtain regulatory permits; Army Corps of Engineers, Section 404 Permit; Water Quality Waiver. Submit copies to the SNC.	May-June 2011
Begin Internal & Interagency project scoping. Distribute appropriate NEPA/CEQA noticing to Forest Service resource specialists (hydrology, soils, archaeology, wildlife biology, botany, etc.) and SNC.	June-July 2011
Based on identified purpose and need, the Forest Service in coordination with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy develops proposed action and prepares scoping letter/map; schedule public meetings; issue press release; post on Sequoia NF website; conduct public meetings and possible field trip for adequately noticing a project. Submit all copies to SNC.	July-August 2011
Analyze results of public scoping and identify issues and concerns. Develop alternatives in coordination with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.	August -September 2011
Complete specialists reports including: Biological Evaluation/ Assessment (BE/BA), Archaeological Reconnaissance Report, Vegetation & Hydrology Reports, and submit to SNC.	September-October 2011
Complete six-month progress report/submit to SNC.	October 2011
Prepare joint CEQA/NEPA preliminary environmental document in consultation with the SNC; send to public for appropriate public comment period. Submit all related materials to the SNC.	October 2011 – January 2012
Analyze public comments received in consultation with the SNC.	January – February 2012
Prepare and issue appropriate final NEPA/CEQA environmental and decision documents in consultation with the SNC.	February – September 2012
Complete twelve- month report/submit to SNC.	April 2012
<b>Final Completed Joint NEPA/CEQA Document and Final Report Due</b>	<b>October 2012</b>

## PROJECT COSTS

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>TOTAL SNC FUNDING</b>
Staff/Personnel Expense	\$53,520.00
Contracts/Consultants: Hydro-Engineer to design project site plan	5,000.00
Fees – Section 404 & 401 Permits	5,000.00
Fees – CEQA coordination	2,500.00
Indirect Costs: Performance Measure Reports	1,000.00
Indirect Costs: Public Notifications for CEQA and NEPA noticing	100.00
Administrative Oversight/Budgeting and Accounting	5,200.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$72,320.00</b>

## PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS

- WildPlaces
- Giant Sequoia National Monument Association
- Guthrie Ranches, J. Less Guthrie

## PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC staff.

- Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments
- Percent of Pre-project and Planning Efforts Resulting in Project Implementation
- Measurable Changes in Knowledge or Behavior

## PROJECT SUMMARY

**County:** Tulare

**Applicant:** USDA Forest Service, Sequoia National Forest, Western Divide Ranger District

**Project Title:** Long Meadow Restoration Project

### PROJECT GOAL

The goal of this project is to repair a large and unstable headcut within Long Meadow. These conditions are impacting the stability of the meadow through accelerated loss of meadow vegetation and soil, resulting in negative consequences to water quality and downstream aquatic habitats. Long Meadow also contains unique cultural and scenic resources which could be compromised through continued meadow degradation. Proposition 84 grant funds will provide for pre-project planning and environmental review to allow implementation of the Long Meadow Restoration Project. This project is consistent with Proposition 84 requirements to protect and restore water sources and their associated lands. This project is consistent with Sierra Nevada Conservancy goals to protect, conserve, and restore the Region's physical and cultural resources and improve water quality. This project will contribute to the protection and restoration of the Long Meadow Creek sub-watershed and larger Wild and Scenic Middle Kern River watershed.

### PROJECT SCOPE

This grant will provide for pre-project planning and environmental review to prepare a joint NEPA/CEQA document for the long term restoration work at Long Meadow. The outcome would be a fully supported decision specifying on-the-ground implementation measures to restore ecosystem conditions and protect natural and cultural resources. Resource specialists will perform necessary reports, assessments, and site surveys. Other activities will include preparing and completing plans for a site specific project design. The project will include costs to acquire a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Permit, Section 401 Permit from California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and possibly a Streambed Alteration Agreement from California Department of Fish & Game. The project will include coordination with Sierra Nevada Conservancy for preparation of a joint NEPA/CEQA document. The pre-planning and environmental review will lead to project implementation to establish a low gradient step pool system from the bottom of the meadow up to the headcut. These actions will reduce the steepened flow gradient created by the headcut that currently promotes undercutting of the meadow, bank slumping, and soil transport. Exposed areas will be resploped to match the natural contours and planting of native vegetation will further stabilize the bankments. The Forest Service will provide in-kind services and contributions of salary, vehicle mileage, survey materials, print, and distribution costs to support the accomplishment of the project. This application will compliment a proposal submitted to SNC by the Giant Sequoia National Monument Association under this grant cycle. This Category 1 application will rehabilitate portions of the Trail of 100 Giants loop trail located in Long Meadow Grove, a popular recreation destination. These improvements will further decrease sediment transport into stream environments.

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Letters of support are provided by the following individuals and organizations:

1. WildPlaces Ecological Restoration and Education (non-profit)
2. J. Less Guthrie – Rancher and Grazing Permittee
3. Giant Sequoia National Monument Association

### SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Initiate joint NEPA/CEQA environmental analysis and issue Project Initiation letter (PIL); submit to SNC.	May 2011
Prepare engineering site design, conduct field surveys, and obtain regulatory permits; Army Corps of Engineers, Section 404 Permit; Water Quality Waiver, CA State Water Quality Board; and possible Streambed and Lakebed Alteration Agreement from CA Dept. of Fish & Game.	May-June 2011
Begin Internal & Interagency project scoping. Distribute PIL to Forest Service resource specialists (hydrology, soils, archaeology, wildlife biology, botany, etc.).	June-July 2011
Based on identified purpose and need, Forest Service develops proposed action and prepares scoping letter/map; schedule public meetings; issue press release; post on Sequoia NF website; conduct public meetings and possible field trip.	July-August 2011
Analyze results of public scoping and identify issues and concerns. Develop alternatives.	August -September 2011
Complete specialists reports including: Biological Evaluation/Assessment (BE/BA), Archaeological Reconnaissance Report, Vegetation & Hydrology Reports.	September-October 2011
Prepare joint CEQA/NEPA preliminary environmental document; send to public for appropriate public comment period.	October –December 2011
Analyze public comments received.	December 2011
Prepare and issue appropriate final environmental and decision documents; i.e., Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or Record of Decision (ROD).	January-February 2012
Complete six-month progress report/submit to SNC	October 2011
Complete six report/submit to SNC	April 2012
Complete final report/submit to SNC	October 2012

### SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Staff/Personnel Expense	\$53,520.00
Contracts/Consultants: Hydro-Engineer to design project site plan	\$5,000.00
Fees – Section 404 & 401 Permits	\$5,000.00
Fees – CEQA coordination	\$2,500.00
Indirect Costs: Performance Measure Reports	\$1,000.00
Indirect Costs: Public Notifications	\$100.00
Administrative Oversight/Budgeting and Accounting	\$5,200.00
<b>SNC GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$72,320.00</b>

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program Safe Drinking Water,  
Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act of  
2006 (Proposition 84)**

**Applicant:** THE SIERRA FUND

**Project Title:** HUMBUG CREEK WATERSHED ASSESMENT AND  
MANAGEMENT PLAN

**Subregion:** CENTRAL

**County:** NEVADA

**SNC Funding:** \$197,592.00

**Total Project Cost:** \$235,092.00

**Application Number:** 407

**Final Score:** 90.2

**PROJECT SCOPE**

The purpose of the Humbug Creek Watershed Assessment and Management Plan is to develop a plan and acquire necessary permits to implement recommended activities to address the problems of turbidity, mercury, and physical hazards in the Humbug Creek/South Yuba River watershed that result from historic mining activities. The project will: compile existing knowledge on the ecosystem, habitat, human and natural environment in the Humbug Creek Watershed; characterize and assess the current water quality conditions of the abandoned Malakoff Diggins hydraulic mine and Humbug Creek and evaluate their contribution to the water quality of the South Yuba; evaluate and select actions to improve water quality in Humbug Creek, congruent with the natural habitat and resource management objectives and obligations of State Parks; and develop a management plan that specifies the recommended management techniques and actions, permitting requirements of any recommended actions, so that permitting can be completed and implementation is ready to proceed.

**PROJECT SCHEDULE**

<b>DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
Draft Watershed Assessment for review by advisors	June 2011
Draft Management Plan for review by advisors	April 2012
Draft Watershed Assessment for review by advisors	April 2012

Final Watershed Assessment and Management Plan August 2012	August 2012
Contracts for CEQA and Permitting Activities	August 2012
Final Watershed Assessment and Management Plan	August 2012
<b>FINAL REPORT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST</b>	<b>March 2013</b>

### PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
<b>SECTION ONE: Direct Costs</b>	
Staff/Personnel	\$52,760.00
Travel/Meeting	1,300.00
Contracts/Consultants	57,400.00
Materials/Supplies	900.00
Purchases/equipment leases/lab costs	3,300.00
CEQA costs / consultant	50,000.00
<b>SECTION TWO: Indirect Costs</b>	
Outreach/Education	8,000.00
Performance Measure Reporting	1,200.00
SECTION THREE: Administrative Costs	22,732.00
<b>GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$197,592.00</b>

### PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS

- California Department of Parks & Recreation, Natural Resources Division
- South Yuba River Citizens League, River Scenic Program Director
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control
- Huldrege & Kull Consulting Engineers – Geologists
- Delta Tributaries Mercury Council (Mercury Pollution in Northern California) & Larry Walker & Associates

### PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC staff.

- Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments
- Percent of Pre-Project Planning Efforts Resulting in Project Implementation

## PROJECT SUMMARY

**County:** Nevada County  
**Applicant:** The Sierra Fund  
**Project Title:** Humbug Creek Watershed Assessment and Management Plan

## PROJECT GOAL

**The purpose of the Humbug Creek Watershed Assessment and Management Plan is to develop a plan and acquire necessary permits to implement recommended activities to address the problems of turbidity, mercury, and physical hazards in the Humbug Creek watershed that result from historic mining activities.** This is an area of the popular Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park that was home to the largest hydraulic mine in the world. The goal of the Humbug Creek Watershed Assessment and Management Plan is to develop a comprehensive plan to address the water quality and safety impairments in the watershed, while maintaining the cultural significance and integrity of the site.

This project directly addresses several goals of the SNC and Prop 84, most prominently:

- Protect, and restore the region's diverse resources by increasing knowledge about the watershed's rich historical and cultural resources, and how to manage and protect them.
- Improve water quality by addressing existing threats of turbidity, mercury and acid mine drainage, which will improve the water quality of Humbug Creek and the South Yuba River, and lead to protection and restoration of downstream waterways, the Yuba and Feather River watershed, and associated natural resources.

## PROJECT SCOPE

The project will:

- ❖ Compile existing knowledge on the ecosystem, habitat, human and natural environment in the Humbug Creek watershed in a pro-active, voluntary and collaborative way.
- ❖ Characterize and assess the current water quality conditions of the Diggins and Humbug Creek and evaluate their contribution to the water quality of the South Yuba.
- ❖ Evaluate and select the most effective and feasible actions to improve water quality in Humbug Creek, congruent with the natural habitat and resource management objectives and obligations of State Parks.
- ❖ Develop a comprehensive plan that specifies the recommended management techniques and actions, permitting requirements of any recommended actions, so that permitting can be completed and implementation is ready to proceed.

State Parks will be the key project partner for compiling information on the watershed, and producing a feasible assessment and management plan. The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) will contribute 10 years of water monitoring data in the watershed, and be the main partner to promote community involvement through watershed educational tours and activities.

The Mining Toxins Working Group, a team of experts with representatives from USGS, BLM, State Water Resources Control Board, Department of Toxic Substances Control, and local environmental contractors will provide a forum for information gathering, project planning, and review of draft

management plans to ensure a final result that can be used as an example for similar sites throughout the Sierra Nevada. The Sierra Fund will anchor these activities, manage grant administration, facilitate inter-agency coordination, acquire any needed permits, and draft and finalize assessment and management plan documents.

This project draws on strong in-kind support from its partners. Agency participation in the Working Group is entirely in-kind, totaling at least \$28,000 of staff time. SYRCL is contributing use of their water quality monitoring sites and their watershed coordinator, totaling \$7,500. Finally, The Sierra Fund will use outreach funds already received from The California Wellness Foundation to assist with public outreach for the project. SNC funds will be used to complete all other work described above.

### LETTERS OF SUPPORT

- CA State Parks
- South Yuba River Citizens League
- CA Dept. of Toxic Substances Control
- Larry Walker Associates
- Holdrege and Kull

### SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Draft Watershed Assessment for review by advisors	June 2011
Draft Management Plan for review by advisors	April 2012
Final Watershed Assessment and Management Plan	August 2012
Contracts for Permitting Activities	August 2012

### SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
<b>SECTION ONE: Direct Costs</b>	
Staff/Personnel	\$52,760
Travel/Meeting	\$1,300
Contracts/Consultants	\$57,400
Materials/Supplies	\$900
Purchases	\$3,300
Permits	\$50,000
<b>SECTION TWO: Indirect Costs</b>	
Staff/Personnel	\$0
Outreach/Education	\$8,000
Performance Measure Reporting	\$1,200
<b>SECTION THREE: Administrative Costs</b>	
13% Overhead	\$22,732
<b>SNC TOTAL GRANT REQUEST</b>	<b>\$197,592</b>
<b>SECTION FOUR: Other Project Contributions</b>	<b>\$37,500</b>

Agenda Item X Exhibit D

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ALL NOT RECOMMENDED APPLICATIONS

March 3, 2011

Score	Subregion	Project #	Project Title	Applicant Organization	Application Type
89.8	South Central	357	<a href="#">Roen Ranch Conservation Easement</a>	Sierra Foothill Conservancy	Category One
89.7	Central	337	<a href="#">Combie Reservoir Sediment and Mercury Removal</a>	Nevada Irrigation District	Category One
89.7	Central	355	<a href="#">Garden Bar Preserve Acquisition</a>	Nevada County Land Trust	Category One
89.6	North Central	422	<a href="#">Perazzo Meadows Restoration</a>	Truckee River Watershed Council	Category One
89.5	Central	400	<a href="#">Bear Creek Ranch Conservation Easement Acquisition</a>	American River Conservancy	Category One
89.3	South Central	438	<a href="#">Campstool Ranch &amp; Working Forest Conservation Easement</a>	The Pacific Forest Trust	Category One
89.0	South	428	<a href="#">Assessment and Prioritization of Conservation Lands Based on Vegetation Resources</a>	California Native Plant Society	Category Two
89.0	Central	344	<a href="#">The Excelsior Canal Inventory &amp; Management Plan Project</a>	The Excelsior Foundation	Category Two
89.0	Central	367	<a href="#">Deer Creek Watershed 303 (d) Mercury Remediation and Total Maximum Daily Load</a>	Friends of Deer Creek	Category Two
88.7	Central	429	<a href="#">Yuba Meadows Partnership: Restoration Planning Phase</a>	South Yuba River Citizens League	Category Two
88.2	Central	403	<a href="#">Deer Creek Watershed Bacterial Contamination Assessment and Planning</a>	Friends of Deer Creek	Category Two
87.5	North Central	329	<a href="#">Pauley Creek Meadow Restoration Project</a>	USDA Forest Service Tahoe National Forest	Category Two
87.5	North Central	436	<a href="#">Jamison Ranch Conservation Easement</a>	The Pacific Forest Trust	Category One
87.3	South	417	<a href="#">Conservation Easement in the White River Watershed</a>	Sequoia Riverlands Trust	Category One
87.3	Central	326	<a href="#">Overland Emigrant Trail Studies</a>	Placer County Department of Facility Services	Category Two
87.3	South	318	<a href="#">Butterbrecht Canyon and Spring Conservation Easement</a>	Audubon California	Category One
87.2	North	439	<a href="#">JS Ranch Easement Acquisition</a>	American Land Conservancy	Category One
86.5	North Central	336	<a href="#">Kerstiens Conservation Easements - Lassen Foothills Project</a>	The Nature Conservancy	Category One
85.7	South Central	351	<a href="#">Meadow Boardwalk Replacement</a>	California Department of Parks and Recreation	Category One
84.9	East	397	<a href="#">An Assessment of Recreational Impacts on Osprey</a>	California Department of Parks and Recreation	Category Two
84.0	East	324	<a href="#">Mattly Ranch Aquaculture Project</a>	County of Mono	Category Two
84.0	East	333	<a href="#">Eastern Sierra Water Watchers</a>	Friends of the Inyo	Category Two
84.0	East	383	<a href="#">Mono Basin Outdoor Education Center Planning</a>	Mono Lake Committee	Category Two
84.0	East	396	<a href="#">Reclaimed Water Pipeline Energy Generation</a>	South Lake Tahoe Public Utility District	Category Two
83.8	Central	349	<a href="#">Due Diligence for Working Lands Acquisition</a>	Nevada County Land Trust	Category Two
83.1	North	409	<a href="#">Great Shasta Rail Trail Due Diligence</a>	Shasta Land Trust	Category Two
82.8	Central	444	<a href="#">Deer Creek Salmon and Steelhead Habitat Restoration Project</a>	Friends of Deer Creek	Category One
81.5	North	413	<a href="#">Category 2 Pre-Plan for Upper Fall River Restoration Project</a>	Fall River Resource Conservation District	Category Two
81.0	South Central	406	<a href="#">American River Watershed Trails and Abandoned Mines Sediment Reduction Pre-Projects Planning and Due Diligence</a>	Upper American River Foundation	Category Two
80.6	Central	328	<a href="#">Lower Squaw Creek Restoration</a>	Truckee River Watershed Council	Category Two
80.5	North	437	<a href="#">Rehabilitation of the Lassen Peak Trail</a>	National Park Service - Lassen Volcanic National Park	Category One
78.4	Central	321	<a href="#">American River Canyon Shaded Fuel Break</a>	City of Auburn Fire Department	Category One
78.4	North Central	320	<a href="#">Lakes Basin Trail and Watershed Restoration</a>	Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship	Category Two
78.4	North Central	366	<a href="#">Schroeder Property Acquisition</a>	Northern California Regional Land Trust	Category One
78.4	North Central	388	<a href="#">Mathews Property Acquisition</a>	Northern California Regional Land Trust	Category One
78.4	North Central	435	<a href="#">Abandoned Mine Lands Watershed Assessment Model: North Yuba Rivers</a>	Department of Toxic Substances Control	Category Two

Agenda Item X Exhibit D

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ALL NOT RECOMMENDED APPLICATIONS

March 3, 2011

Score	Subregion	Project #	Project Title	Applicant Organization	Application Type
77.9	East	441	<a href="#">Mammoth Lakes Trail System: Enhanced Signage and Wayfinding Systems</a>	Town of Mammoth Lakes	Category One
77.9	North Central	405	<a href="#">Quincy Learning Landscape Acquisition</a>	Feather River Land Trust	Category One
77.7	North	360	<a href="#">Pine Creek Watershed Restoration - Phase I: Watershed Characterization</a>	USDA Forest Service Lassen National Forest	Category Two
77.0	North	432	<a href="#">Bear Creek Working Forest Conservation Easement</a>	The Pacific Forest Trust	Category One
76.8	North	352	<a href="#">Parkville Ranch Conservation Easement Acquisition</a>	Shasta Land Trust	Category One
76.4	North Central	398	<a href="#">Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway: Farad</a>	Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway, Incorporated	Category Two
76.4	North Central	414	<a href="#">Invasive Weed Management and Goat Grazing Demonstration Project</a>	Feather River College	Category One
75.6	East	392	<a href="#">Defensible Space Curbside Chipping Program</a>	Alpine Fire Safe Council	Category One
75.4	Central	323	<a href="#">McKinney Rubicon Trail Enhancement</a>	Placer County, Department of Public Works	Category One
75.3	North Central	382	<a href="#">CEQA Permitting for Western Sierra County Fuels Reduction Project</a>	Sierra County Fire Safe and Watershed Council	Category Two
75.2	South	376	<a href="#">Bufford Ranch Conservation Easement Project</a>	California Rangeland Trust	Category One
74.4	North	370	<a href="#">Hoffman Farm Conservation Easement</a>	Lassen Land and Trails Trust	Category One
74.3	North Central	354	<a href="#">Firewise Chipper Program</a>	Butte County Fire Safe Council	Category One
73.7	North Central	369	<a href="#">Key Brand Angus Ranch Conservation Easement Project</a>	California Rangeland Trust	Category One
73.7	East	449	<a href="#">Western Indian Wells Valley Monitoring Well Rehabilitation and Surface Water Monitoring Project 2010/2011</a>	Eastern Kern County Resource Conservation District	Category One
73.2	East	380	<a href="#">Emergency Wastewater Treatment Project</a>	Markleeville Public Utility District	Category One
72.5	Central	332	<a href="#">Bear Creek Slope Stabilization Project</a>	Alpine Springs County Water District	Category Two
72.2	South	339	<a href="#">Tule River Access Improvement Project</a>	USDA Forest Service-Sequoia National Forest	Category One
72.2	North Central	347	<a href="#">Clover Valley Ranch Conservation and Restoration Project</a>	Feather River Land Trust	Category One
71.8	North	375	<a href="#">Honey-Eagle Lakes Watershed Assessment and Permitting</a>	Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District	Category Two
71.8	North Central	385	<a href="#">Rose Ranch Acquisition Project</a>	Northern California Regional Land Trust	Category One
68.0	Central	353	<a href="#">Burton Homestead Wetland Restoration</a>	Nevada County Land Trust	Category One
67.0	Central	389	<a href="#">Watershed Improvement Zone - American River</a>	Placer County Planning Department	Category One
66.9	South Central	418	<a href="#">Sutter Creek Stream Restoration Project</a>	Central Sierra Resource Conservation and Development Council	Category One
66.8	Central	374	<a href="#">Penobscot Ranch Conservation Easement Project</a>	California Rangeland Trust	Category One
65.3	East	334	<a href="#">Conway Ranch Aquaculture Project</a>	County of Mono	Category Two
65.1	South Central	391	<a href="#">Ratto Ranch Conservation Easement - Appraisal and Planning</a>	Tuolumne County Land Trust	Category Two
64.8	Central	319	<a href="#">Nevada County Airpark AST Containment</a>	Nevada County	Category One
63.6	North	384	<a href="#">Black Butte Road Strategic Fuel Reduction Project</a>	Western Shasta Resource Conservation District	Category One
60.1	North Central	359	<a href="#">Lake Madrone Shaded Fuel Break</a>	Butte County Fire Safe Council	Category One
59.9	South Central	345	<a href="#">East Panther Creek Dam Removal and Restoration Project, Phase IV</a>	Foothill Conservancy	Category One
58.2	Central	442	<a href="#">ACRE (Ag Conservation Resource Enhancement) Incentives Project</a>	Placer County Resource Conservation District	Category One
57.5	North	338	<a href="#">Battle Creek Watershed Stewardship, Phase IV</a>	Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy	Category Two
55.5	South Central	356	<a href="#">South Central Sierra Watershed Improvement Project</a>	Central Sierra Resource Conservation and Development Council	Category One
55.2	South	372	<a href="#">Trail of 100 Giants Repair and Rehabilitation</a>	Giant Sequoia National Monument Association, Inc.	Category One
55.0	South Central	373	<a href="#">San Andreas Creek Riparian Restoration</a>	San Andreas Recreation and Park District	Category Two

Agenda Item X Exhibit D

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ALL NOT RECOMMENDED APPLICATIONS

March 3, 2011

Score	Subregion	Project #	Project Title	Applicant Organization	Application Type
51.2	South	424	<a href="#">Sequoia Crest Environmental Review</a>	Alder Creek Fire Safe Council	Category Two
51.2	South	440	<a href="#">Bob Powers Gateway Preserve Wetland Enhancement</a>	Kern River Valley Heritage Foundation	Category One
50.9	North Central	343	<a href="#">Sierra Nevada Field Campus (SNFC) Research Facility</a>	San Francisco State University	Category Two
45.8	North Central	342	<a href="#">La Porte Road II Hazardous Fuel Reduction</a>	Plumas County Fire Safe Council	Category One
38.1	South	431	<a href="#">CEQA Compliance for Fuel Modification Projects</a>	Tulare County Resource Conservation District and Sequoia Fire Safe Council	Category Two
31.6	Central	363	<a href="#">Yuba River: Excelsior Conservation Easement</a>	The Trust for Public Land	Category One
29.6	Central	415	<a href="#">Native Conservation Corps Project Development</a>	Native Alliance of the Sierra Nevada Foothills	Category Two
23.3	East	341	<a href="#">Kirkwood Water Supply Feasibility Project</a>	Kirkwood Meadows Public Utility District	Category Two
16.2	South Central	395	<a href="#">Mokelumne Watershet Inter-Jurisdictional CEQA/NEPA Team</a>	Calaveras Healthy Impact Products Solutions, Incorporated	Category Two
DQ	South	350	<a href="#">Sierra National Forest Meadow Restoration Project</a>	USDA Forest Service, Sierra National Forest, Headquarters	Category Two
DQ	South	390	<a href="#">Kern River Watershed Restoration Project</a>	Desert Mountain Resource Conservation and Development Council	Category One
DQ	South	393	<a href="#">Forest Restoration Effects on Stream Water Quality and Quantity: Kings River Experimental Watershed</a>	USDA Pacific Southwest Research Station Headquarters	Category One

If you click on the Project Title, the link will open the full application. Note - the full application files are large PDF files that may take a while to open.

Category One projects are Acquisition or Site Improvement/Restoration projects.

Category Two projects are Pre-Project Planning projects.

**SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY  
PROPOSITION 84 GRANT APPLICATIONS  
NOT SUBJECT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

## **Introduction**

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), a Conservancy within the Natural Resources Agency of the State of California, initiates, encourages, and supports efforts that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region, its communities, and the citizens of California. SNC jurisdiction encompasses all or portions of 22 counties in the mountains and foothills of the Sierra Nevada; certain neighboring areas, including the Mono Basin, Owens Valley, and the Modoc Plateau; and a part of the southern Cascade region, including the Pit River Watershed.

The SNC Strategic Plan states that it will:

- ▶ Support efforts that advance environmental preservation and the economic and social well-being of Sierra residents in a complementary manner;
- ▶ Work in collaboration and cooperation with local governments and interested parties in carrying out the SNC mission;
- ▶ Make every effort to ensure that, over time, SNC funding and other efforts are spread equitably across each of the various Subregions and among the program areas, with adequate allowance for the variability of costs associated with individual regions and types of projects; and
- ▶ Inform and educate all Californians as to the substantial benefits they enjoy from the Region and the importance of the environmental and economic well-being of the Region.

The statute creating the SNC (Public Resources Code 33300 et seq.) provides for seven specific program objectives:

- ▶ Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation;
- ▶ Protect, conserve, and restore the Region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources;
- ▶ Aid in the preservation of working landscapes;
- ▶ Reduce the risk of natural disasters, such as wildfires;
- ▶ Protect and improve water and air quality;
- ▶ Assist the regional economy through the operation of the Conservancy's program; and
- ▶ Undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public.

## **2010 Grant Applications**

One of the tools used by SNC to accomplish the seven program objectives is the issuance of grants. As part of SNC review of FY 2010 Grant applications received by September 13, 2010, SNC considered whether or not the action to be funded by the grant is considered a "project" subject to the California

Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); whether or not the action would be exempt from CEQA; and if the action is not exempt from CEQA, what the appropriate CEQA documentation would be.

The grant applications listed in Table 1 below were determined to involve activities that are not considered a “project” subject to CEQA.

<b>Table 1 Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 84 Strategic Opportunity Grant Applications Not Subject to CEQA</b>					
<b>Application Number</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Determination</b>
SNC 327	Camp Sacramento Erosion Control and Habitat Improvement Project	El Dorado County Resource Conservation District	El Dorado	Pre-Project Due Diligence: Biological/wildlife/ other survey(s)	Preparation of studies, engineering design, and environmental review is not a project subject to CEQA. (The environmental documents will assess the potential effects of project implementation.)
SNC 358	Long Meadow Restoration Project	USDA Forest Service-Sequoia National Forest	Tulare	Pre-Project Due Diligence: CEQA/NEPA Compliance	Project planning and environmental review are not projects subject to CEQA. (The environmental documents will assess the potential effects of project implementation.)
SNC 362	Barry Property Pre-Planning	Lassen Land and Trails Trust	Lassen	Pre-Project Due Diligence: CEQA/NEPA Compliance	Project planning, appraisal, and environmental review and permitting are not projects subject to CEQA. (The environmental documents will assess the potential effects of project implementation.)
SNC 365	Markleeville Creek Restoration Project	Alpine Watershed Group	Alpine	Pre-Project Due Diligence: CEQA/NEPA Compliance	Project planning, appraisal, and environmental review and permitting are not projects subject to CEQA. (The environmental documents will assess the potential effects of project implementation.)
SNC 379	Upper Tuolumne and Stanislaus Watersheds Meadows Restoration	Tuolumne River Preservation Trust	Tuolumne	Pre-Project Due Diligence: CEQA/NEPA Compliance	Project planning, permitting, and environmental review are not projects subject to CEQA. (The environmental documents will assess the potential effects of project implementation.)
SNC 394	Deer Creek-Mill Creek Acquisition: Pre-Project Planning	Western Rivers Conservancy	Tehama	Pre-Project Due Diligence: Appraisal	Site appraisal, environmental site assessment and due diligence, and purchase negotiations are not projects subject to CEQA.
SNC 412	Pre-Acquisition Work on Four Strategic Land Conservation Projects	Sequoia River lands Trust	Kern, Tulare	Pre-Project Due Diligence: Appraisal, Biological/wildlife/other survey(s), Environmental	Site appraisal, environmental site assessment and due diligence, and purchase negotiations are not projects subject to CEQA.

**Table 1  
Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 84 Strategic Opportunity Grant Applications  
Not Subject to CEQA**

Application Number	Project Name	Applicant	County	Activity	Determination
				site assessment (Phase I/II), Preliminary title report	
SNC 420	Hope Valley Meadow Restoration	American Rivers	Alpine	Pre-Project Due Diligence: Design/permit	Site assessment and restoration design are not projects subject to CEQA. (Project implementation would be subject to CEQA, and the required review will be carried out by the lead agency.)
SNC 425	Mono County Land Donation and Exchange	Eastern Sierra Land Trust	Mono	Pre-Project Due Diligence: Appraisal	Property appraisal services, environmental assessments, and other pre-purchase due diligence activities are not projects subject to CEQA.
SNC 427	Ackerson Meadows: Keystone Habitat for Great Gray Owls	American Rivers	Tuolumne	Pre-Project Due Diligence: Appraisal	Property appraisal services, environmental assessments, and other pre-purchase due diligence activities are not projects subject to CEQA.
SNC 446	Little Chico Creek Appraisal Project	Northern California Regional Land Trust	Butte	Pre-Project Due Diligence: Appraisal	Property appraisal is not a project subject to CEQA.
SNC 448	Lone Pine Water Reclamation Feasibility Study	Mojave Desert-Mountain Resource Conservation and Development Council	Inyo	Pre-Project Due Diligence: Environmental site assessment (Phase I/II)	Project planning, permitting, and environmental review are not projects subject to CEQA. (The environmental documents will assess the potential effects of project implementation.)

**Grant Application Activities Listed in Table 1 are not “Projects” Subject to CEQA**

CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(a) defines “project” as “the whole of an action, which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, and that is any of the following:

- (1) An activity directly undertaken by any public agency including but not limited to public works construction and related activities, clearing or grading of land, improvements to existing public structures, enactment and amendment of zoning ordinances, and the adoption and amendment of local General Plans or elements thereof pursuant to Government Code Sections 65100-65700.
- (2) An activity undertaken by a person which is supported in whole or in part through public agency contracts, grants, subsidies, loans, or other forms of assistance from one or more public agencies.

(3) An activity involving the issuance to a person of a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use by one or more public agencies.”

The activities proposed in the grant applications listed in Table 1 involve preparing and completing plans for a specific project design; environmental review/acquiring permits; performing appraisals and other pre-acquisition tasks; performing necessary studies, surveys, and assessments related to a specific project; or preparing plans or supplementing existing plans that will result in a specific project or set of projects. Although SNC will provide public assistance in the form of a grant for the activities listed in Table 1, the proposed activities have no potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect change in the environment. Therefore, the activities proposed in the grant applications listed in Table 1 are not “projects” subject to CEQA.

### **CEQA Does Not Apply to Table 1 Grant Application Activities**

Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), a project is exempt from CEQA if “the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA.” As described above, the activities proposed in the grant applications listed in Table 1 have no potential for causing a significant effect on the environment and are not subject to CEQA.

### **Potential Future Actions**

By funding the grants listed in Table 1, SNC does not authorize, or commit to authorizing, any action that has potential to result in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. As defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(a), described above, any other action that would potentially result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment and that would either (1) be directly undertaken by a public agency; (2) be undertaken by a person and supported in whole or in part through a public agency; or (3) that would involve the issuance of an entitlement from a public agency shall be considered a “project” and shall be subject to CEQA. In such cases, the public agency that has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving the project (the “lead agency” per CEQA Guidelines Section 15367) shall determine the appropriate CEQA documentation and shall ensure that such documentation is prepared.

# Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research  
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project (SNC 317)

**Project Location – Specific:**

The project is located within the Willow Creek Watershed in the north-central part of the Sierra National Forest, just south of Yosemite National Park, in Madera County, California.

**Project Location – City:** Near the community of North Fork

**Project Location – County:** Madera

**Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:**

The project involves developing a project design for meadow restoration and the appropriate environmental documents needed to analyze the potential environmental effects of the restoration of approximately 290 acres of meadows (42 of which are high-priority meadows that are home to endangered and Forest Service sensitive species and some rare mosses) and ten miles of stream in the Willow Creek Watershed. Coarsegold Resource Conservation District is requesting \$60,764 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program for this preliminary project work. The goal of the restoration plan will be to promote watershed health by improving water quality, quantity, and aquatic habitat in the Willow Creek Watershed.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Coarsegold Resource Conservation District

**Exempt Status:** *(check one)*

- Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15306, "Information Collection"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

The proposed Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, Class 6, which consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. The project will focus on developing a meadow and stream restoration plan and completing environmental documentation necessary to evaluate the potential environmental effects of repairing several high-priority meadows in the watershed. No changes in land use and no significant adverse impacts to natural resources will occur as a result of the project.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

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**From:** (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** Webber Lake and Lacey Meadow Acquisition (SNC 325)

### Project Location – Specific:

The project is located in the Little Truckee River Watershed in the Jackson Meadows region of Sierra and Nevada Counties. The project site is approximately eight miles west of the FS07 intersection with State Route 89, and 15 miles northwest of the Town of Truckee, California. Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 14-090-08; 14-110-03, -11, -12, -13; 14-150-02, -04; and 15-130-05.

**Project Location – City:** Northwest of the Town of Truckee

**Project Location – County:** Sierra and Nevada

### Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project is the acquisition of Webber Lake and Lacey Meadows properties in the Little Truckee River Watershed; Truckee Donner Land Trust is requesting \$1,000,000 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program to apply to the acquisition. The goal of this acquisition is to protect significant wildlife and wet meadow hydrological conservation values, protect source water in the Little Truckee basin, and allow for continued conservation-based management of approximately 2,994 acres. The Truckee Donner Land Trust will acquire this property as a keystone piece of a larger conservation effort with The Nature Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land that would protect over 17,000 acres in the watershed, including Webber Falls, Perazzo Meadow, Independence Lake, Cold Stream Meadow, and Henness Pass Working Forest Conservation Easement.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Truckee Donner Land Trust

### Exempt Status: *(check one)*

- Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15313, "Acquisition of Lands for Wildlife Conservation Purposes", Section 15317, "Open Space Contracts or Easements", and Section 15325, "Transfers of Ownership of Interest in Land to Preserve Existing Natural Conditions and Historical Resources"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed Webber Lake and Lacey Meadow Acquisition project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, which consists of acquisition of lands for wildlife conservation purposes. The land acquisition will allow The Truckee Donner Land Trust to preserve approximately 2,994 acres of land for wildlife and wet-meadow protection. In addition, the proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15317, Class 17, which consists of the establishment of agricultural preserves, the making and renewing of open space contracts under the Williamson Act, or the acceptance of easements or fee interests in order to maintain the open space character of the area. The proposed project would maintain the open space character of approximately 2,994 acres. The proposed project is also categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15325, Class 25, which consists of the transfers of ownership of interests in land in order to preserve open space, habitat, or

historical resources. The land acquisition will allow the Truckee Donner Land Trust to preserve existing natural conditions of the site consistent with Categorical Exemption 15325 (a), which exempts transfers of ownerships from environmental review when the acquisition, sale, or other transfer of areas is intended to preserve natural conditions, including plant and animal habitats. No changes in land use and no significant adverse impacts to natural resources will occur as a result of the project.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz  
Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

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From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** Bruin Ranch Property Acquisition (SNC 331)

### Project Location – Specific:

The project is adjacent to the Auburn Valley Golf and Country Club at the western terminus of Auburn Valley Road, just west of the junction of Bell Road and Lone Star Road, northwest of the city of Auburn, in western Placer County, California. Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs): 026-020-009, 026-020-011, 026-020-012, 026-020-013, 026-061-001, 026-061-003, 026-061-007, 026-061-051, 026-061-068, and all but the eastern portions of the following APNs: 026-061-004, -005, -006 and -009; and 026-370-039.

**Project Location – City:** Northwest of the City of Auburn

**Project Location – County:** Placer

### Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project is the fee title acquisition of the 2,300-acre Bruin Ranch property on the Bear River; Placer Land Trust is requesting \$1,000,000 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program to apply to the acquisition. The purpose of this acquisition is to protect wildlife habitat along the Bear River as part of a larger landscape of protected lands, and to implement conservation-based management of the property. Bruin Ranch is one of the largest remaining privately-owned ranches with intact oak woodlands in the Bear-Yuba foothills. In addition, acquisition of Bruin Ranch would conserve significant water quality and supply benefits, including three miles of Bear River frontage, 16 miles of tributary streams, and a half dozen ponds and wetland areas (a total of 29 acres of wetlands). This project will protect 20 acres (19.6 linear miles) of stream/river and an additional eight acres of wetlands and ponds on an historical parcel in the Sierra foothills, relatively untouched by mining and hydroengineering impacts.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Placer Land Trust

### Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15313, "Acquisition of Lands for Wildlife Conservation Purposes", Section 15317, "Open Space Contracts or Easements", and Section 15325, "Transfers of Ownership of Interest in Land to Preserve Existing Natural Conditions and Historical Resources"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed Bruin Ranch Property Acquisition project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, which consists of acquisition of lands for wildlife conservation purposes. The land acquisition will allow the Placer Land Trust to preserve approximately 2,300 acres of land for wildlife and wetland protection, and resource conservation management. In addition, the proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15317, Class 17, which consists of the establishment of agricultural preserves, the making and renewing of open space contracts under the Williamson Act, or the acceptance of easements or fee interests in order to maintain the open space character of the area. The proposed project would maintain

the open space character of approximately 2,300 acres. The proposed project is also categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15325, Class 25, which consists of the transfers of ownership of interests in land in order to preserve open space, habitat, or historical resources. The land acquisition will allow the Placer Land Trust to preserve existing natural conditions of the site, meeting the intent of Categorical Exemption 15325 (a), which exempts transfers of ownerships from environmental review when the acquisition, sale, or other transfer of areas is intended to preserve natural conditions, including plant and animal habitats. No significant adverse impacts to natural resources will occur as a result of the project. Possible future actions on the property related to the planning and development of public access may be subject to further CEQA evaluation, but are not currently proposed and are not a part of this project.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz  
Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

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**From:** (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** Topping Ranch Conservation Easement (SNC 346)

### Project Location – Specific:

The project is located approximately three miles northeast of Millerton Lake, and seven miles east of the intersection of Highway 41 and Road 200 in eastern Madera County, California. Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 051-130-023, 051-130-003, 051-130-008, 051-130-006, and 050-232-007.

**Project Location – City:** Near O'Neals

**Project Location – County:** Madera

### Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project is the purchase of a conservation easement on 1,362 acres of the historic Topping Ranch; the Sierra Foothill Conservancy is requesting \$875,890 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program for the purchase. The major objectives for this project are to: 1) protect the physical, cultural, and natural resources of Topping Ranch; 2) expand land conservation and connectivity within the Fine Gold Creek Drainage and the San Joaquin River Corridor; and 3) preserve the viability of a working ranch and the local ranching infrastructure and economy. The Topping Ranch includes 1,962 total acres. Acreage that will be subject to the conservation easement will have its development rights removed, thus protecting the existing open space/agricultural uses. The protection of this portion of the Ranch would provide a protected buffer for vernal pool lands while ensuring the viability of the Ranch as a large intact property.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Sierra Foothill Conservancy

### Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 15313, "Acquisition of Lands for Wildlife Conservation Purposes", Section 15317, "Open Space Contracts or Easements", and Section 15325, "Transfers of Ownership of Interest in Land to Preserve Existing Natural Conditions and Historical Resources"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed Topping Ranch Conservation Easement project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, which consists of acquisition of lands for wildlife conservation purposes. The land acquisition will allow the Sierra Foothill Conservancy to preserve approximately 1,362 acres of physical, cultural, and living resources of the Ranch. In addition, the proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15317, Class 17, which consists of the establishment of agricultural preserves, the making and renewing of open space contracts under the Williamson Act, or the acceptance of easements or fee interests in order to maintain the open space character of the area. The proposed project will place 1,362 acres under a conservation easement. The proposed project is also categorically exempt from the provisions

of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15325, Class 25, which consists of the transfers of ownership of interests in land in order to preserve open space, habitat, or historical resources. The land acquisition will allow the Sierra Foothill Conservancy to preserve existing natural conditions of the site, meeting the intent of Categorical Exemption 15325 (a), which exempts transfers of ownership from environmental review when acquisition, sale, or other transfer of areas is intended to preserve natural conditions, including plant and animal habitats. The proposed project has a goal of perpetuating grazing habitat and open space. No substantial changes in land use or significant adverse impacts to natural resources will occur as a result of the project

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz  
Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

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From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** Grand Bluffs Forest 2011-2012 (SNC 348)

### Project Location – Specific:

The project is located approximately six miles east of Shaver Lake, on Dinky Creek Road, off Forest Service Road #FS10S87, in Fresno County, California.

**Project Location – City:** Near Shaver Lake

**Project Location – County:** Fresno

### Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

This is a forest improvement project involving minor alterations to land and vegetation. Sierra Resource Conservation District is requesting \$92,472 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program for site improvement/restoration activities on approximately 74 acres of forestland. The land is part of a 240-acre working forest conservation easement site. The purpose of this project is to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire on a 240-acre in-holding of private Sierra Nevada forest land known as the Grand Bluffs Forest. The project would include the following site improvement/restoration activities: 20 acres of precommercial thinning, mastication, and piling and burning; 23 acres of piling and burning; 12 acres of tree planting; 13 acres of seedling release; and six acres of noxious weed (bull thistle) removal by hand. Restoration activities will utilize hand crews and a low-ground-pressure Bobcat 341 C Series Excavator. Mastication shall produce a low profile of wood chip debris over the soil to prevent soil erosion. Burning of excess fuels will only be performed on approved air quality burn days. The goals for the project include fire risk reduction, resource management, and natural resources protection.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Sierra Resource Conservation District

### Exempt Status: (check one)

Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);

Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));

Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));

Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15304, "Minor Alterations to Land"

Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed Grand Bluffs Forest 2011-2012 project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, which consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of the land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. Trees will be removed and thinned to improve forest health and reduce fire risk using methods that will protect water quality and improve habitat values. The project consists of minor land alterations involving the removal of surface vegetation and the planting of conifer trees. Biological surveys were performed on the proposed project site in 2002, 2003, and 2006; and a search of the Natural Diversity Database was completed in September 2010 without finding sensitive or listed species present or dependent upon the project area. A State Certified Archaeological Surveyor surveyed the proposed project area for cultural resources, and no cultural or historic resources were found. No significant impacts to the environment will result from the project.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

*Revised 2005*

**NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**  
**CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15304**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy**  
**Proposition 84 Grant Application Number 348**  
**Grand Bluffs Forest 2011-2012**

**Description of Activities**

The Sierra Resource Conservation District is requesting \$92,472 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program for site improvement/restoration activities on approximately 74 acres of forestland (part of a 240 acre in-holding of private Sierra Nevada forest land known as the Grand Bluffs Forest). The project will include heavy fuel load treatments, including: brush and small tree thicket mastication or pre-commercial thinning on 20 acres; hand and machine piling of excess downed woody material on 43 acres; pile covering and burning on 43 acres; pruning of retained conifers on 20 acres, removing ladder fuels; release work in 13 acres of previously planted plantation; tree growing and planting of an additional 12 acres; and exotic weed removal on six acres.

Specific site improvement/restoration work will include:

- 1) *Mastication of brush and small trees to 5"dbh, pre-commercial thinning:* Work to be done on 20 acres. Mastication (grinding, chipping) is to be done with a Bobcat 341C Excavator (rubber track) fitted with a mastication head on the end of the boom. Work to start after July 15th to avoid bird nesting and Pacific Fisher denning season. In this terrain, estimate 36 days or 278 hours of work.
- 2) *Lifting roots and piling excess downed woody debris:* Work to be done after mastication with Bobcat 341C Excavator fitted with a two-prong grapple rake with opposing 'thumb'. 20 acres previously masticated is included in this grant, estimate 14 days of work; for 23 acres previously treated summer '09, estimate ten days of work. Total acres 43, Total days 25, total hours 200.
- 3) *Pruning 'leave' trees:* On 20 acres of masticated and piled acres, work to commence after mastication as long as mastication equipment is safe distance away from pruners. Two-person pruning crew, one with Husquavarna chainsaw head pole saw, 8' length, and one Silky manual pole saw with extension to 20'.
- 4) *Pile covering and burning:* Piles to be covered on 43 acres with Kleen Burn kraft paper, to be done before the snow falls. Burning of piles will be in fall – winter, 2011 – 2012 & spring 2013 when conditions are safe, usually after 1-3" of snow has fallen, and when air pollution control board deems conditions are right for burn days.
- 5) *Release work in plantations:* Mastication & some root lifting in 13 acres of previously planted plantation. Estimate five days and 40 hours of work.
- 6) *Planting conifers:* Six acres will be planted with 1950 Ponderosa Pine & Sugar Pine seedlings grown in leach tubes, planted manually with dibble in fall 2011 or spring 2012 as conditions permit, such as adequate moisture in the ground in the fall and after snowmelt in the spring. Rate of planting will be 325 trees per acre. Another six acres will be planted as above in fall 2012 and spring 2013. Each year will take a two-person crew two days, or 32 hours per year, for a total of eight person-days, or 64 hours and 3,900 trees.

- 7) *Exotic weed removal*: Weeds will be removed on a total of six acres. In 2011, work will be done on four acres and in 2012 follow up work will be done on two acres within the previously worked four acres for a total of six acres treated. Cheat Grass (*Bromus tectorum*) will be hand hoed during spring 2011 before seed heads form and again in the same time frame in 2012. Bull Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) will be hand hoed before purple flower heads appear in spring – summer 2011 and 2012. Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) will be hand pulled and hoed before seed formation in spring and early summer 2011 and 2012. Salsify (*Tragopogon dubius*) will be hand pulled before seed formation in summer 2011 and 2012.

This is an on-the-ground project to mechanically and hand treat accumulated forest fuels build-ups to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire. This project also includes reforestation, growing and planting trees, in areas previously treated. The project goal is to return the forest landscape to more historical conditions.

### **Reasons Why the Project is Exempt**

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a categorical exemption provides for an exemption from CEQA environmental documentation requirements for a class of projects determined not to have a significant effect on the environment. Categorical Exemptions are addressed in Article 19 of the CEQA Guidelines, where a list of 32 classes of projects has been identified. Projects falling within one of these classes of projects are generally exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

### **CEQA Guidelines Section 15304: Minor Alterations to Land**

The Grand Bluffs Forest 2011-2012 project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4, which is defined as follows:

Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. Examples include but are not limited to:

- (A) Grading on land with a slope of less than ten (10) percent, except that grading shall not be exempt in a waterway, in any wetland, in an officially designated (by federal, state, or local government action) scenic area, or in officially mapped areas of severe geologic hazard, such as an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within an official Seismic Hazard Zone, as delineated by the State Geologist;
- (B) Issuance of a grading permit in conjunction with a project for which a design review approval has been granted and/or following any discretionary action which was subject to environmental review;
- (C) New gardening or landscaping, including the replacement of existing conventional landscaping with water efficient or fire resistant landscaping;
- (D) Filling of earth into previously excavated land with material compatible with the natural features of the site;
- (E) Minor alterations in land, water, and vegetation on existing officially designated wildlife management areas or fish production facilities which result in improvement of habitat for fish and wildlife resources or greater fish production;
- (F) Minor temporary use of land having negligible or no permanent effects on the environment, including carnivals, outdoor festivals/concerts, sales of Christmas trees, arts and crafts fairs, etc.;

- (G) Minor trenching and backfilling where the surface is restored;
- (H) Maintenance dredging where the spoil is deposited in a spoil area authorized by all applicable state and federal regulatory agencies;
- (I) The creation of bicycle lanes on existing rights-of-way.
- (J) Fuel management activities within 30 feet of structures to reduce the volume of flammable vegetation, provided that the activities will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species or significant erosion and sedimentation of surface waters. This exemption shall apply to fuel management activities within 100 feet of a structure if the public agency having fire protection responsibility for the area has determined in writing, or by written policy or ordinance, that 100 feet of fuel clearance is required due to extra hazardous fire conditions. (Ord. 5119-B (part), 2001)

The Grand Bluffs Forest 2011-2012 project consists of minor land alterations involving the thinning and removal of surface vegetation for forestry purposes (improved forest health and fire risk reduction) and the planting of conifer trees on approximately 74 acres; there are no hazardous materials on or around the project site; and the site improvement/restoration work will not result in significant adverse impacts. This project is similar in nature to the examples listed in Guidelines Section 15304.

#### **No Exceptions to a Categorical Exemption**

Categorical exemptions represent activities that generally do not result in significant environmental impacts. However, there are six exceptions to categorical exemptions, defined in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. Generally, a categorical exemption does not apply if a project would occur in certain specified sensitive environments, would affect scenic resources within an official state scenic highway, or would be located on a designated hazardous waste site. In addition, a categorical exemption would not apply if the project causes substantial adverse changes in the significance of a historical resource or would be considered significant within the cumulative context. Table 1 identifies the exceptions from CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 and a brief discussion of why each exception does not apply to the Grand Bluffs Forest 2011-2012 project.

**Table 1  
Categorical Exemption Exceptions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2)**

Exception	Applicability
<p>(a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.</p>	<p>The main goal of this approximately 74-acre site improvement/restoration project within Grand Bluffs Forest is to restore the forest landscape to a healthy, more resilient condition where natural processes can occur. The project will directly benefit the land by planting trees, thinning brush, and eradicating invasive weeds. This project work consists of minor land alterations involving the removal of surface vegetation and the planting of conifer trees. The anticipated timeline for the project is from July 2011 through June 2012. The project would include the following site improvement/restoration activities: 20 acres of precommercial thinning, mastication, and piling and burning; 23 acres of piling and burning; 12 acres of tree planting; 13 acres of seedling release; and six acres of noxious weed (bull thistle) removal by hand. Restoration activities will utilize hand crews and a low-ground-pressure Bobcat 341 C Series Excavator. Mastication shall produce a low profile of wood chip debris over the soil to prevent soil erosion. Specifically, the project will:</p> <p><i>Improve watershed health:</i> Improving a working forest landscape improves watershed health by planting trees, pruning ladder fuels, masticating brush species, removing exotic weed species and releasing plantation trees. Removing decadent brush and overstocked tree thickets by mastication greatly reduces wildfire risk, which protects watershed health.</p> <p><i>Protect and enhance wildlife habitat:</i> Masticating decadent Ceanothus brush species that will re-sprout provides succulent browse for deer and opens up to wildlife these areas that were otherwise impenetrable. Mastication covers the open ground with wood chips that protects water quality for trout species living in Summit Creek.</p>

	<p><i>Improve forest health:</i> Mastication of brush and suppressed stands of trees and pruning of retained trees will improve forest health by reducing mixed conifer stand densities, increasing resilience to pine bark beetle infestation.</p>
<p>(b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.</p>	<p>The site improvement/restoration activities will not adversely affect environmental resources and will therefore not contribute to any cumulative environmental impact in relation to other restoration projects in the region. The site improvement/restoration will result in beneficial effects to the region's forests, creeks, watersheds, and associated lands by providing wildfire risk reduction, and natural resource management and protection.</p>
<p>(c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.</p>	<p>The site improvement/restoration project will not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.</p> <p><b>Aesthetics.</b> The site improvement/restoration will result in a minor change in the appearance of the Grand Bluffs Forest and/or streams due to precommercial thinning; the removal of surface vegetation, and the planting of conifer trees. The main goal of this approximately 74-acre site improvement/restoration project within Grand Bluffs Forest is to restore the forest landscape to a healthy condition where natural processes can occur. All intended management practices such as site preparation, trees and planting, thinning, pruning, and burning can be conducted with limited visibility or detection from surrounding properties. The project will directly benefit the land by planting trees, thinning brush, and eradicating invasive weeds.</p> <p><b>Agriculture.</b> Open-range cattle grazing occurs on parts of the property; however, the project will have no impact on agricultural resources. The project will reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire on approximately 74 acres (of a 240-acre site) by removing dense brush stands and thickets in the Grand Bluffs Forest. Approximately 200 acres of the total 240-acre site is forestland, and approximately</p>

40 acres is occupied with granite rock outcrop and rock land.

**Air Quality/GHGs.** The project activities will result in nominal fugitive dust and mobile source emissions. Mobile source emissions will be limited to those associated with vehicle trips to/from the site improvement/restoration areas, and mechanized equipment. Although mechanized equipment will be used for restoration activities (i.e. low-ground-pressure Bobcat 341 C Series Excavator), given the lack of sensitive receptors in close proximity, sensitive receptors will not be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. The restoration will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the region's applicable air quality plan and will not violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation. Burning of excess fuels will only be performed on approved air quality burn days. Smoke dispersal is anticipated to be excellent due to normal wind patterns and the absence of nearby residential populations.

**Biological Resources.** See (a). Biological surveys were performed on the project area in 2002, 2003, 2006, and a search of the Natural Diversity Database was completed in September 2010 without finding sensitive or listed species present or dependent upon the project area. The integrity of native plant communities will be protected by exotic weed removal, allowing more area for native species to thrive. In addition, wildlife habitat will be improved by removing decadent brush stands, the mastication of which triggers succulent browse growth. Wildlife habitat is protected by removal of exotic weed species.

**Cultural Resources.** See (f).

**Geology/Soils.** Site improvement/restoration activities will not expose people or structures to loss, injury, or death due to seismic activity or unstable soils. The work planned at Grand Bluffs Forest will protect the water quality of the Summit Creek watershed by covering the soil with wood chips that protects the land

	<p>from erosion and the resultant sediment loading in the water courses. Wood chips covering the soil increase water infiltration, helping to recharge the Summit Creek water table. Valuable soils are retained on-site to grow trees and support wildlife.</p> <p><b>Hazards/Hazardous Materials.</b> See (e).</p> <p><b>Hydrology/Water Quality.</b> See (a) and Geology/Soils.</p> <p><b>Noise.</b> Site improvement/restoration activities will generate temporary noise. However, given that restoration activities will be limited to daytime business hours (the least sensitive hours of the day), and the limited extent to which these activities could expose sensitive receptors to increased noise levels, the project will not cause significant noise effects.</p> <p><b>Transportation.</b> There will be limited additional trips on local roadways during project implementation. No vehicular transportation over sensitive habitat will occur. The vehicles will not block traffic and no traffic delays will occur due to restoration activities.</p> <p><b>Other CEQA Issues.</b> The project will have no effect on land use, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, or utilities and service systems.</p>
<p>(d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.</p>	<p>Approximately 40 acres of the entire 240-acre site is occupied with granite rock outcrop and rock land; however, the proposed project (consisting of activities on approximately 74 acres) will not result in the removal of, or damage to, any trees, rock outcroppings, historic buildings or other resources within the viewshed of a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.</p>
<p>(e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>	<p>The site is not located on toxic sites listed pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>
<p>(f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.</p>	<p>A State Certified Archaeological Surveyor has surveyed the project area for cultural resources. Archaeological resources have been located in an isolated location and remote from timber stands requiring</p>

	<p>management practices on the 240-acre site. However, they have not been found within the approximately 74-acre site improvement/restoration area. The project will not result in an adverse change in the significance of any archaeological or historical resource and will not disturb or destroy any human remains or paleontological resources.</p>
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# Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research  
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** Rodden Ranch Conservation Easement (SNC 361)

### Project Location – Specific:

The project is located near the Stanislaus-Calaveras County border, between State Highway 4 and the Stanislaus River, in the western portion of unincorporated Calaveras County, California. Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 50-038-012; 50-039-004; 53-017-001, -002, -004, -005 and -006; and 53-019-001, -002, -003, -004, -005, -006 and -009.

**Project Location – City:** West of Copperopolis

**Project Location – County:** Calaveras

### Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project is the purchase of a conservation easement over the approximately 5,868-acre Rodden Ranch property; The Trust For Public Land is requesting \$1,000,000 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program to apply towards the purchase. The purpose of the conservation easement is to ensure the Ranch remains in agricultural/grazing uses and to protect the oak woodland values associated with the property. The Ranch is believed to harbor threatened and endangered species such as California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog, and several seasonal creeks run through the property. These natural water systems support productive habitat for aquatic as well as terrestrial species by serving as migration corridors and a water source. The proposed project will result in secured habitat connectivity and permanent protection of the multiple natural and scenic resources contained on the property.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** The Trust for Public Land

### Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15313, "Acquisition of Lands for Wildlife Conservation Purposes", Section 15317, "Open Space Contracts or Easements", and Section 15325, "Transfers of Ownership of Interest in Land to Preserve Existing Natural Conditions and Historical Resources"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed Rodden Ranch Conservation Easement project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, which consists of acquisition of lands for wildlife conservation purposes. The land acquisition will allow The Trust for Public Land to preserve approximately 5,868 acres of land for wildlife such as California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog. In addition, the proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15317, Class 17, which consists of the establishment of agricultural preserves, the making and renewing of open space contracts under the Williamson Act, or the acceptance of easements or fee interests in order to maintain the open space character of the area. With the purchase of a conservation easement, The Trust for Public Land will ensure that the open space character of the approximately 5,868-acre Ranch is preserved. The proposed project is also categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15325, Class 25,

which consists of the transfers of ownership of interests in land in order to preserve open space, habitat, or historical resources. The land acquisition will allow The Trust for Public Land to preserve existing natural conditions of the site consistent with Categorical Exemption 15325 (a), which exempts transfers of ownerships from environmental review when the acquisition, sale, or other transfer of areas is intended to preserve natural conditions, including plant and animal habitats. The project proposes the acquisition of a conservation easement in order to preserve the existing land use and natural conditions (cattle grazing and oak woodland values, respectively) of the subject property. No change in land use will result from the project, but once the easement is in place development rights will be limited and grazing and other agricultural activity will be managed to protect natural resources.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz  
Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

# Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

**To:** Office of Planning and Research  
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

**From:** (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** Sierra Crest Working Forest Conservation Easement Phase III (SNC 368)

### Project Location – Specific:

The project is located north of FS07/Jackson Meadows Road in the vicinity of Webber Lake, in the headwaters of the Middle Yuba, Middle Fork Feather, and Little Truckee River watersheds in the Tahoe National Forest, Sierra County, California. Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 018-110-001 and -007; 018-100-003, -004, -006, and -010; and 018-120-008.

**Project Location – City:** Northwest of the Town of Truckee

**Project Location – County:** Sierra

### Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project is the purchase of conservation easements over 2,720 acres of Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) alpine forestlands; The Trust for Public Land is requesting \$540,000 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program towards the purchase. Once acquired, the conservation easements will be held for permanent stewardship and monitoring by the Truckee Donner Land Trust, thereby permanently protecting watersheds important to California's water supply (including the Middle Yuba, Little Truckee, and Middle Fork Feather Rivers) because the conservation easements will prevent conversion of forest land to residential and other development. SPI will, however, continue to own the land in fee and manage the properties sustainably as productive timberland, subject to the terms of the easements held by the Truckee Donner Land Trust. This is the third and final phase of the Sierra Crest Conservation Easement Project that has already placed conservation easements over 4,365 acres of Sierra checkerboard lands.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** The Trust for Public Land

### Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15313, "Acquisition of Lands for Wildlife Conservation Purposes", Section 15317, "Open Space Contracts or Easements", and Section 15325, "Transfers of Ownership of Interest in Land to Preserve Existing Natural Conditions and Historical Resources"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed Sierra Crest Working Forest Conservation Easement Phase III project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, which consists of acquisition of lands for wildlife conservation purposes. The land acquisition will allow The Trust for Public Land to preserve approximately 2,720 acres of land for watershed and alpine forestlands protection. In addition, the proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15317, Class 17, which consists of the establishment of agricultural preserves, the making and renewing of open space contracts under the Williamson Act, or the acceptance of easements or fee interests in order to maintain the open space character of the area. With the purchase of a conservation easement, The Trust for Public Land will ensure that the open space character of the approximately 2,720-acre site is preserved. The proposed project is also categorically exempt

from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15325, Class 25, which consists of the transfers of ownership of interests in land in order to preserve open space, habitat, or historical resources. The land acquisition will allow The Trust for Public Land to preserve existing natural conditions of the site consistent with Categorical Exemption 15325 (a), which exempts transfers of ownerships from environmental review when the acquisition, sale, or other transfer of areas is intended to preserve natural conditions, including plant and animal habitats. The project proposes the acquisition of a conservation easement in order to preserve the existing land use and natural conditions of the subject property. Future timber operations would be allowed and would be subject to environmental review as required under the Forest Practices Act.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz  
Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
                    Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

# Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research  
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** White Sulphur Springs Ranch Hydrologic and Spring Protection Plan (SNC 371)

### Project Location – Specific:

The project is located in the Sulphur Creek Watershed on the eastern edge of the Sierra-Nevada crest (Mohawk Ridge), abutting the headwaters of the North Yuba River to the west and the Carmen Creek watershed to the east, in Plumas County, California.

**Project Location – City:** Near the City of Portola

**Project Location – County:** Plumas

### Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project is the development of a spring protection plan that will identify and map all springs and water features within the approximately 39-acre White Sulphur Springs Ranch (WSSR), assess the quality and quantity of water of each feature, determine ecosystem functions, and develop best management practices to protect springs so that recreational use can occur while protecting water features at WSSR. The Mohawk Valley Stewardship Council is requesting \$75,000 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program to develop the plan. Specifically, grant money will go towards the following: 1) documenting locations of springs and water features at the WSSR and providing a map of all features; 2) reviewing documents that describe water rights at WSSR and incorporating information into final report; 3) measuring water quality and quantity at each spring and water feature; 4) determining hydrologic role, springshed condition and connectivity of each spring and water feature; 5) determining existing use relative to fire suppression system, warm springs pool, potable water sources, and landscape irrigation; 6) mapping proposed recreation features (trails, amphitheater, pool, ethnobotanical gardens) relative to springs and other water features; 7) determining potential impacts of water use and recreation features; 8) formulating best management practices and avoidance measures that will maintain or restore springs and water features; 9) recommending restoration actions needed to restore springs and water features (e.g. that there are manmade ditches on the property that currently divert flows from springs out of natural drainage features); and 10) preparing a final report documenting all information collected, including mapped features.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Mohawk Valley Stewardship Council

### Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15306, "Information Collection"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed WSSR Hydrologic and Spring Protection Plan project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, Class 6, which consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. The proposed project is requesting funding to identify springs and all other water features on the property, and to develop a spring protection and restoration plan that will protect water sources while allowing and managing for their responsible use for the public benefit. No changes in land

use and no significant adverse impacts to natural resources would occur as a result of the project.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz  
Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
                    Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

# Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

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PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** Cinnamon Ranch Agriculture and Resource Protection Project (SNC 387)

### Project Location – Specific:

The project is located in Hammil Valley in the eastern Sierra, southern Mono County, California. Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 25-200-05, 25-200-16, and 25-240-06.

**Project Location – City:** Near Bishop

**Project Location – County:** Mono

### Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project is the purchase of an agricultural conservation easement that will permanently protect a historic and organic certified working farm on approximately 602 acres of important farm and rangeland. The Eastern Sierra Land Trust is requesting \$735,000 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program to apply to the purchase. This project will aid in the preservation of the region's threatened working landscapes while also protecting the significant natural and historical resources that exist at this site. The easement will prohibit future subdivision, limit development, and eliminate the potential for future water export, as the ranch holds surface water rights for three creeks. Overall, the project will protect scenic, historical, and important habitat resources, while protecting continued agricultural use.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Eastern Sierra Land Trust

### Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15313, "Acquisition of Lands for Wildlife Conservation Purposes", Section 15317, "Open Space Contracts or Easements", and Section 15325, "Transfers of Ownership of Interest in Land to Preserve Existing Natural Conditions and Historical Resources"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed Cinnamon Ranch Agriculture and Resource Protection Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, which consists of acquisition of lands for wildlife conservation purposes. The land acquisition will allow the Eastern Sierra Land Trust to preserve approximately 602 acres of land for wildlife and creek protection. Important special status species that occur within the project site include the Swainson's hawk, Casa Diablo deer herd, and desert bighorn sheep. In addition, the proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15317, Class 17, which consists of the establishment of agricultural preserves, the making and renewing of open space contracts under the Williamson Act, or the acceptance of easements or fee interests in order to maintain the open space character of the area. The Cinnamon Ranch Agriculture and Resource Protection project is also categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15325, Class 25, which consists of the transfers of ownership of interests in land in order to preserve open space, habitat, or historical resources. The land acquisition will allow the Eastern Sierra Land Trust to preserve existing natural conditions of the site, meeting the intent of Categorical Exemption 15325 (b), which exempts transfers of ownerships from environmental review when the acquisition, sale, or other transfer of areas is intended to allow continued agricultural use of the

areas, in addition to Categorical Exemption 15325 (e), which exempts transfers of ownerships from environmental review when the acquisition, sale, or other transfer of areas is intended to preserve historical resources. A conservation easement will protect the region's privately owned working lands from development and will encourage continued agricultural use. The project will also protect the natural and historical resources that exist on-site. This will be accomplished by limiting future development on the property to within a predesignated area away from the most productive soils, prohibiting subdivision, and ensuring that the water resources tied to the land remain on the property where they contribute to agricultural productivity, as well as the local flora and fauna, and replenish the aquifer below.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz  
Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

# Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research  
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** South Ash Valley Watershed Restoration Project (SNC 399)

### Project Location – Specific:

The project is located in the South Ash Valley Watershed, Spooner Trough Canyon, approximately 20 miles southwest of Adin, in Lassen County, California.

**Project Location – City:** Adin

**Project Location – County:** Lassen

### Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

This is a forest and watershed improvement project. The Lassen County Fire Safe Council is requesting \$142,082 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program for site improvement/restoration activities on approximately 625 acres (a portion of two parcels totaling approximately 1,178 acres) of private land consisting of wet meadow and sagebrush steppe habitat. The purpose of this project is to restore watershed functions (capture, storage of water in soil, and beneficial release) within the South Ash Valley Watershed at the headwaters of Ash Creek, a tributary of the Pit River. Primary site improvement/restoration activities will include the removal of invasive western juniper (*Juniperus occidentalis*) through biomass utilization and the implementation of adaptive range management techniques. Fuel loads will be reduced by shear and chainsaw. After removal, most of the material will be chipped and hauled to an electrical power producing facility to be used as fuel. After the mechanical treatments are completed, hand crews will remove smaller junipers or other junipers that could not be cut mechanically. Watershed restoration through the removal of juniper and the implementation of adaptive range management techniques will restore water function and re-establish the native plant community. In addition, the reduction of hazardous fuel loads will reduce the threat of a catastrophic fire that could have a devastating impact on the South Ash Valley Watershed.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Lassen County Fire Safe Council

### Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15304, "Minor Alterations to Land"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed South Ash Valley Watershed Restoration Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, which exempts from CEQA projects involving minor public or private alterations in the condition of the land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. The project consists of minor land alterations involving the removal of invasive western juniper to allow for the restoration and maintenance of existing natural vegetation in order to improve wildlife resources including wildlife habitat, rangeland health, and watershed conditions. No significant impacts to the environment will result from the project.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

*Revised 2005*

**NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**  
**CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15304**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy**  
**Proposition 84 Grant Application Number 399**  
**South Ash Valley Watershed Restoration Project**

**Description of Activities**

The Lassen County Fire Safe Council is requesting \$142,082 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program for site improvement/restoration activities on approximately 625 acres (a portion of two parcels totaling approximately 1,178 acres) of private land consisting of wet meadow and sagebrush steppe habitat. Primary site improvement/restoration activities will include the removal of invasive western juniper (*Juniperus occidentalis*) through biomass utilization and the implementation of adaptive range management techniques. Fuel loads will be reduced by shear and chainsaw. After removal, most of the material will be chipped and hauled to an electrical power producing facility to be used as fuel. After the mechanical treatments are completed, hand crews will remove smaller junipers or other junipers that could not be cut mechanically. Watershed restoration through the removal of juniper and the implementation of adaptive range management techniques will restore water function and re-establish the native plant community. In addition, the reduction of hazardous fuel loads will reduce the threat of a catastrophic fire that could have a devastating impact on the South Ash Valley Watershed. The goal of the project is to restore watershed functions (capture, storage of water in soil, and beneficial release) within the South Ash Valley Watershed.

**Reasons Why the Project is Exempt**

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a categorical exemption provides for an exemption from CEQA environmental documentation requirements for a class of projects determined not to have a significant effect on the environment. Categorical Exemptions are addressed in Article 19 of the CEQA Guidelines, where a list of 32 classes of projects has been identified. Projects falling within one of these classes of projects are generally exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

**CEQA Guidelines Section 15304: Minor Alterations to Land**

The South Ash Valley Watershed Restoration Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4, which is defined as follows:

Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. Examples include but are not limited to:

- (A) Grading on land with a slope of less than ten (10) percent, except that grading shall not be exempt in a waterway, in any wetland, in an officially designated (by federal, state, or local government action) scenic area, or in officially mapped areas of severe geologic hazard, such as an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within an official Seismic Hazard Zone, as delineated by the State Geologist;
- (B) Issuance of a grading permit in conjunction with a project for which a design review approval has been granted and/or following any discretionary action which was subject to environmental review;
- (C) New gardening or landscaping; including the replacement of existing conventional landscaping with water efficient or fire resistant landscaping;

- (D) Filling of earth into previously excavated land with material compatible with the natural features of the site;
- (E) Minor alterations in land, water, and vegetation on existing officially designated wildlife management areas or fish production facilities which result in improvement of habitat for fish and wildlife resources or greater fish production;
- (F) Minor temporary use of land having negligible or no permanent effects on the environment, including carnivals, outdoor festivals/concerts, sales of Christmas trees, arts and crafts fairs, etc.;
- (G) Minor trenching and backfilling where the surface is restored;
- (H) Maintenance dredging where the spoil is deposited in a spoil area authorized by all applicable state and federal regulatory agencies;
- (I) The creation of bicycle lanes on existing rights-of-way.
- (J) Fuel management activities within 30 feet of structures to reduce the volume of flammable vegetation, provided that the activities will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species or significant erosion and sedimentation of surface waters. This exemption shall apply to fuel management activities within 100 feet of a structure if the public agency having fire protection responsibility for the area has determined in writing, or by written policy or ordinance, that 100 feet of fuel clearance is required due to extra hazardous fire conditions. (Ord. 5119-B (part), 2001)

The South Ash Valley Watershed Restoration Project consists of minor land/vegetation alterations involving the removal of invasive western juniper on approximately 625 acres for forestry purposes, which is similar in nature to the examples listed in Guidelines section 15304. There are no hazardous materials or sites on or around the project site; and the site improvement/restoration work will not result in significant adverse impacts.

#### **No Exceptions to a Categorical Exemption**

Categorical exemptions represent activities that generally do not result in significant environmental impacts. However, there are six exceptions to categorical exemptions, defined in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. Generally, a categorical exemption does not apply if a project would occur in certain specified sensitive environments, would affect scenic resources within an official state scenic highway, or would be located on a designated hazardous waste site. In addition, a categorical exemption would not apply if the project causes substantial adverse changes in the significance of a historical resource or would be considered significant within the cumulative context. Table 1 identifies the exceptions from CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 and a brief discussion of why each exception does not apply to the South Ash Valley Watershed Restoration Project.

**Table 1  
Categorical Exemption Exceptions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2)**

Exception	Applicability
<p>(a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.</p>	<p>The primary action of the project will be reducing fuel loads by mechanical methods on approximately 625 acres. All of the work is adjacent to Bureau of Land Management administered public lands. The project area is primarily sagebrush steppe uplands with wet meadows that have been severely encroached by western juniper. The restoration of these ecosystems through the removal of juniper and the implementation of adaptive range management techniques will restore watershed function and re-establish the native plant community.</p> <p>The project is anticipated to begin during the field season of 2011, with all work completed before December 2011. Targeted fuel is approximately 98% juniper, 2% deformed, dying, or overstocked Jeffrey pine in need of thinning, and a small amount of decrepit mountain mahogany. All old-growth juniper will be retained (defined by the character of the juniper, not its size). Fuel will be removed by shear and chainsaw. Part of the treatment involves minimizing the development of skid trails by attempting to skid across the entire landscape. This results in a treatment where there is maximum shrub and perennial grass retention and less soil compaction overall. Maximum retention of shrubs and grasses also results in less soil erosion potential and faster reestablishment of native grasses and shrubs. After removal, most of the material will be chipped and hauled to an electrical power-producing facility to be used as fuel. All of the aforementioned work will be accomplished through a contract with a private Licensed Timber Operator who is regulated under the California Forest Practice Act.</p> <p>After the mechanical treatments are completed, hand crews will remove smaller junipers or other junipers that could not be cut mechanically. CalFire conservation</p>

	<p>crews will perform hand treatments within zones where mechanical equipment cannot operate. The entire project has been planned over a two-year period, and all environmental and permitting clearances have been obtained.</p> <p>The project area supports critical wildlife habitat. Project activities will not take place where sensitive resources have been identified. Restoration of the habitat will provide enhanced opportunities for hunting and non-take wildlife activities such as bird and wildlife watching. The project will restore the soil, plant communities, and watershed function, including improved water quality and quantity. The reduction of the hazardous fuel loads provided by the juniper removal will reduce the threat of catastrophic fire within the project area.</p>
<p>(b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.</p>	<p>The site improvement/restoration activities will not adversely affect environmental resources and will therefore not contribute to any cumulative environmental impact in relation to other restoration projects in the region. The site improvement/restoration will result in beneficial effects to the region's watersheds and associated lands by restoring the region's physical and living resources; aiding in the preservation of working landscapes; reducing the risk of natural disaster such as wildfires; and improving water quality.</p>
<p>(c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.</p>	<p>The project will not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.</p> <p><b>Aesthetics.</b> The project will result in a minor change in the appearance of the watershed due to the removal of invasive western juniper on approximately 625 acres. However, the intent of the project is to restore watershed functions by removing an invasive species.</p> <p><b>Agriculture.</b> Although land within the project area and surrounding area is currently used for livestock grazing, the project will have no impact on agricultural resources. The cooperating landowner is a cattle rancher who will implement an adaptive management grazing system. The system will allow the rancher to</p>

control timing and grazing use of the project area to optimize restoration and sustainability. The Cooperative Sagebrush Steppe Restoration Initiative (CSSRI), with assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the University of California, Cooperative Extension, Lassen County Field Office, has developed a guide for livestock operators implementing juniper removal projects that includes adaptive management strategies.

**Air Quality/GHGs.** The project activities will result in nominal fugitive dust and mobile source emissions. Mobile source emissions will be limited to those associated with vehicle trips to/from the site improvement/restoration areas, and mechanized equipment. Although mechanized equipment will be used for restoration activities (i.e. shear and chainsaw), given the lack of sensitive receptors in close proximity, sensitive receptors will not be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. The restoration will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the region's applicable air quality plan and will not violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation.

**Biological Resources.** See (a).

**Cultural Resources.** See (f).

**Geology/Soils.** Project activities will not expose people or structures to loss, injury, or death due to seismic activity or unstable soils.

**Hazards/Hazardous Materials.** See (e).

**Hydrology/Water Quality.** See (a).

**Noise.** Site improvement/restoration activities will generate temporary noise (primarily from mechanical equipment such as shear and chainsaw). However, given that restoration activities will be limited to daytime business hours (the least sensitive hours of the day), and the limited extent to which these activities could expose sensitive receptors to increased noise

	<p>levels, the project will not cause significant noise effects.</p> <p><b>Transportation.</b> There will be limited additional trips on local roadways during project implementation. No vehicular transportation over sensitive habitat will occur. The vehicles will not block traffic and no traffic delays will occur due to restoration activities.</p> <p><b>Other CEQA Issues.</b> The project will have no effect on land use, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, or utilities and service systems.</p>
<p>(d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.</p>	<p>The site improvement/restoration activities will not result in the removal of, or damage to, any trees, rock outcroppings, historic buildings or other resources within the viewshed of a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.</p>
<p>(e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>	<p>The site is not located on any toxic sites listed pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>
<p>(f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.</p>	<p>The project will not result in an adverse change in the significance of any archaeological or historical resource and will not disturb or destroy any human remains or paleontological resources. Additionally, project activities will not take place where sensitive resources have been identified.</p>

# Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research  
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** Humbug Creek Watershed Assessment and Management Plan (SNC 407)

### Project Location – Specific:

The project is located in the Humbug Creek Watershed (an area of the Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park), 21625 and 22270 N. Bloomfield-Graniteville Road, in Nevada County, California.

**Project Location – City:** Nevada City

**Project Location – County:** Nevada

### Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project is the development of a plan and the preparation of permit applications to implement recommended activities to address the problems of turbidity, mercury, and physical hazards in the Humbug Creek watershed that have resulted from historic mining activities. The Sierra Fund is requesting \$197,592 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program for this work. The goal of the Humbug Creek Watershed Assessment and Management Plan is to develop a comprehensive plan to address the water quality and safety impairments in the watershed, while maintaining the cultural significance and integrity of the site. The watershed is located in an area of the Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park, which was home to the largest hydraulic mine in the world. Methods used to accomplish the project would include facilitated meetings, promotion of a collaborative working environment, historical research with State Parks and other local agencies, document draft and review process with expert advisors, and hiring of contractors for any necessary permitting activities. Land uses would not change as a result of this project.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** The Sierra Fund

### Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption.** State type and section number: Section 15306, "Information Collection"
- Statutory Exemptions.** State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed Humbug Creek Watershed Assessment and Management Plan project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, Class 6, which consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. The project consists of the development of a plan and the acquisition of necessary permits to implement recommended activities to address the problems of turbidity, mercury, and physical hazards in the Humbug Creek watershed that have resulted from historic mining activities. No changes in land use and no significant adverse impacts to natural resources would occur as a result of the project.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz  
Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
                    Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

# Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research  
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor (SNC 410)

### Project Location – Specific:

The project is located along Incline Road, downstream from Foresta Bridge, along Briceburg Road, from Briceburg to the North Fork of the Merced River, in Mariposa County, California.

**Project Location – City:** Midpines

**Project Location – County:** Mariposa

### Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

This is a weed removal and disposal project that will result in minor changes to land and vegetation. The Upper Merced River Watershed Council is requesting \$192,270 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program to remove yellow starthistle (YST) and Italian thistle from riparian habitat along the Upper Merced River. The project includes approximately 80 acres of sensitive riparian habitat. The work will be accomplished by the manual removal (hand pulling and mowing by crews) and disposal of invasive weeds. No herbicides will be used. The goals of this project are to: remove YST and Italian thistle infestations along targeted areas of the Merced River corridor by crews using manual techniques; continue to manage areas of regrowth in previously treated sections of the river corridor; expand treatment to include a two-acre infestation along the North Fork, and another one-acre area a mile downstream from the confluence of the North Fork and the Merced; expand weed work to a hard-to-reach area between the river and the road along Incline Road in El Portal where herbicide cannot be used; continue to survey and map any new or existing YST and Italian thistle infestations in the river corridor that have not been documented; and provide opportunities for people to learn about invasive weed management.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Upper Merced River Watershed Council

### Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15304, "Minor Alterations to Land"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed Invasive Weed Management project in the Merced River Corridor is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, which consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of the land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. The project consists of minor land alterations involving the removal of non-native plants by hand. No significant impacts to the environment will result from project.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

*Revised 2005*

**NOTICE OF EXEMPTION  
CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15304**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
Proposition 84 Grant Application Number 410  
Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor**

**Description of Activities**

The Upper Merced River Watershed Council is requesting \$192,270 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program to remove yellow starthistle (YST) and Italian thistle from riparian habitat along the Upper Merced River. The project includes approximately 80 acres of sensitive riparian habitat. The work will be accomplished by manual removal (hand pulling and mowing by crews) and disposal of invasive weeds. No herbicides will be used. The goals of this project are to: remove YST and Italian thistle infestations along targeted areas of the Merced River corridor by crews using manual techniques; continue to manage areas of regrowth in previously treated sections of the river corridor; expand treatment to include a two-acre infestation along the North Fork, and another one-acre area a mile downstream from the confluence of the North Fork and the Merced; expand weed work to a hard-to-reach area between the river and the road along Incline Road in El Portal where herbicide cannot be used; continue to survey and map any new or existing YST and Italian thistle infestations in the river corridor that have not been documented; and provide opportunities for people to learn about invasive weed management.

**Reasons Why the Project is Exempt**

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a categorical exemption provides for an exemption from CEQA environmental documentation requirements for a class of projects determined not to have a significant effect on the environment. Categorical Exemptions are addressed in Article 19 of the CEQA Guidelines, where a list of 32 classes of projects has been identified. Projects falling within one of these classes of projects are generally exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

***CEQA Guidelines Section 15304: Minor Alterations to Land***

The Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4, which is defined as follows:

Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. Examples include but are not limited to:

- (A) Grading on land with a slope of less than ten (10) percent, except that grading shall not be exempt in a waterway, in any wetland, in an officially designated (by federal, state, or local government action) scenic area, or in officially mapped areas of severe geologic hazard, such as an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within an official Seismic Hazard Zone, as delineated by the State Geologist;
- (B) Issuance of a grading permit in conjunction with a project for which a design review approval has been granted and/or following any discretionary action which was subject to environmental review;

- (C) New gardening or landscaping; including the replacement of existing conventional landscaping with water efficient or fire resistant landscaping;
- (D) Filling of earth into previously excavated land with material compatible with the natural features of the site;
- (E) Minor alterations in land, water, and vegetation on existing officially-designated wildlife management areas or fish production facilities which result in improvement of habitat for fish and wildlife resources or greater fish production;
- (F) Minor temporary use of land having negligible or no permanent effects on the environment, including carnivals, outdoor festivals/concerts, sales of Christmas trees, arts and crafts fairs, etc.;
- (G) Minor trenching and backfilling where the surface is restored;
- (H) Maintenance dredging where the spoil is deposited in a spoil area authorized by all applicable state and federal regulatory agencies;
- (I) The creation of bicycle lanes on existing rights-of-way.
- (J) Fuel management activities within 30 feet of structures to reduce the volume of flammable vegetation, provided that the activities will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species or significant erosion and sedimentation of surface waters. This exemption shall apply to fuel management activities within 100 feet of a structure if the public agency having fire protection responsibility for the area has determined in writing, or by written policy or ordinance, that 100 feet of fuel clearance is required due to extra hazardous fire conditions. (Ord. 5119-B (part), 2001)

The Invasive Weed Management project in the Merced River Corridor includes utilizing hand labor to manage invasive weeds. The work area will be on approximately 80 acres; there are no hazardous materials on or around the project site; and the restoration work will not result in significant adverse impacts.

### **No Exceptions to a Categorical Exemption**

Categorical exemptions represent activities that generally do not result in significant environmental impacts. However, there are six exceptions to categorical exemptions, defined in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. Generally, a categorical exemption does not apply if a project would occur in certain specified sensitive environments, would affect scenic resources within an official state scenic highway, or would be located on a designated hazardous waste site. In addition, a categorical exemption would not apply if the project causes substantial adverse changes in the significance of a historical resource or would be considered significant within the cumulative context. Table 1 identifies the exceptions from CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 and a brief discussion of why each exception does not apply to the Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor project.

<b>Table 1</b>	
<b>Categorical Exemption Exceptions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2)</b>	
<b>Exception</b>	<b>Applicability</b>
<p>(a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.</p>	<p>This project improves the Merced River watershed and land surrounding the project area by manual removal of yellow starthistle (YST) and Italian thistle seed sources. This project occurs on the extreme eastern edge of YST infestation in California. Stopping the spread of these noxious invasives at this point is critical for wildlife habitat and the survival of native landscapes. The project will remove YST and Italian thistle along approximately 80 acres of sensitive riparian habitat adjacent to the Merced River. The anticipated timeline for the project is 32 months (from March 2011 through 2013). The invasive work will be accomplished by manual removal (hand pulling and mowing by crews), which is especially suitable for the gulches and hillsides next to the Merced River.</p> <p>Invasive plants have impacted waterways, trails, and scenic landscapes along the Merced Wild &amp; Scenic corridor. These invasive noxious thistles crowd out natives and destroy habitat for wildlife, including endangered species. Because of its high water needs during spring and summer when human water use is at its highest, YST threatens human economic interests, as well as native plant ecosystems.</p> <p>Specifically, there are two badly infested areas of YST in the project area: one on the hillsides around and downstream from the National Park Service administrative area of El Portal, and the second from Briceburg downstream. In the cooperative effort to keep the invasives from spreading to the pristine area, the US Forest Service (USFS) and the National Park Service (NPS) have spent several seasons attacking YST on the hillsides of El Portal. The funding for the USFS work has been cut, and while the NPS has picked up some of the responsibility in El Portal, progress has been slow. The invasives' growth and regrowth have outstripped management. At the other end of the river corridor, the Upper Merced River</p>

	<p>Watershed Council (UMRWC) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have targeted the five-mile Briceburg Road and subsequent two miles downriver on the Wild &amp; Scenic Trail.</p> <p>This project is part of a large, on-going invasives project that started in 2003. No chemicals will be used for weed removal. Crews will be hired, trained and supervised by the staff from Upper Merced River Watershed Council (UMRWC) and participating agencies and will manually remove YST and Italian thistle from designated areas. New or undocumented infestations will be mapped using GPS and GIS. The project will follow removal and disposal protocols established by the Sierra National Forest (SNF) which include, when necessary, double-bagging [3-4mm thick plastic] and removing the weeds. As part of their in-kind support, the Bureau of Land Management transports the bagged weeds to the landfill when necessary.</p>
<p>(b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.</p>	<p>The restoration activities will not adversely affect environmental resources and will therefore not contribute to any cumulative environmental impact in relation to other riparian restoration in the region. The restoration will result in beneficial effects to the region's rivers, their watersheds, and associated lands by controlling invasives, preventing their spread, and encouraging the native biodiversity to prevail.</p>
<p>(c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.</p>	<p>The restoration project will not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.</p> <p><b>Aesthetics.</b> The restoration will result in a minor change in the appearance of the Merced River and/or streams due to weed removal; however, the goal of the project is to improve the Merced River watershed and land surrounding the project area by removal of invasive yellow starthistle (YST) and Italian thistle seed sources.</p> <p><b>Agriculture.</b> The project will have no impact on agricultural resources. The project will help maintain river and watershed function, thereby protecting the streams and riparian habitat.</p>

	<p><b>Air Quality/GHGs.</b> The project activities will result in nominal fugitive dust and mobile source emissions. Mobile source emissions will be limited to those associated with vehicle trips to/from the restoration areas. No mechanized equipment will be used for restoration activities. Given the limited ground disturbance for restoration activities and lack of sensitive receptors in close proximity, sensitive receptors will not be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. The restoration will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the region's applicable air quality plan and will not violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation.</p> <p><b>Biological Resources.</b> See (a).</p> <p><b>Cultural Resources.</b> See (f).</p> <p><b>Geology/Soils.</b> Restoration will not expose people or structures to loss, injury, or death due to seismic activity or unstable soils.</p> <p><b>Hazards/Hazardous Materials.</b> See (e).</p> <p><b>Hydrology/Water Quality.</b> See (a).</p> <p><b>Noise.</b> Restoration activities are not anticipated to generate temporary noise, as weeds are proposed to be removed by hand. The project will not cause significant noise effects.</p> <p><b>Transportation.</b> There will be limited additional trips on local roadways during restoration implementation. No vehicular transportation over sensitive habitat will occur. The vehicles will not block traffic and no traffic delays will occur due to restoration activities.</p> <p><b>Other CEQA Issues.</b> The project will have no effect on land use, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, or utilities and service systems.</p>
<p>(d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources within a</p>	<p>Although State Route 140 (in Mariposa County) is an officially designated state scenic highway, the restoration will not result in the removal of, or damage to, any trees, rock outcroppings, historic buildings</p>

<p>highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.</p>	<p>or other resources within the viewshed of a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.</p>
<p>(e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.</p>	<p>The site is not located on any toxic sites listed pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. The project will not involve the storage, transport, or use of hazardous materials.</p>
<p>(f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.</p>	<p>With only limited ground disturbance from weed removal activities, the project will not result in an adverse change in the significance of any archaeological or historical resource and will not disturb or destroy any human remains or paleontological resources.</p>

# Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research  
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** Complying with CEQA for Forest Management: Natural & Cultural Resource Surveys in Coldstream Canyon – Donner Memorial State Park (SNC 421)

### Project Location – Specific:

The project is located entirely within California State Parks property, in Coldstream Canyon within Donner Memorial State Park, southwest of the Town of Truckee, in Placer County, California.

**Project Location – City:** Southwest of the Town of Truckee

**Project Location – County:** Placer

### Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

This project involves conducting wildlife, vegetation, and archeological surveys needed for CEQA compliance for future projects in Coldstream Canyon at Donner Memorial State Park. California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is requesting \$59,816 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program to conduct the studies. DPR intends to eventually implement both forest management and floodplain restoration in Coldstream Canyon at Donner Memorial State Park. In order to commence work on these projects, DPR must comply with CEQA regulations and conduct wildlife, vegetation, and archeological resource studies in Donner Memorial State Park in compliance with applicable state and federal protocol requirements. The surveys will support all CEQA documentation needed for forest management on 125 acres in the Canyon, and for an already designed floodplain restoration project at the lower reaches of the Canyon on State Parks property. The surveys needed for CEQA compliance meet the end project goals for benefiting environmental resources in the region, including watershed-wide restoration and habitat and water quality improvements in the Park.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** California Department of Parks and Recreation

### Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15306, "Information Collection"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed project (Complying with CEQA for Forest Management: Natural & Cultural Resource Surveys in Coldstream Canyon – Donner Memorial State Park) is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, Class 6, which consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. The proposed project is requesting funding to conduct wildlife, rare and special species/vegetation, and cultural/archeological surveys on project areas planned for forest management, as well as for wildlife surveys on the planned floodplain restoration site within Coldstream Canyon at Donner Memorial State Park. The surveys will bring both projects near full CEQA compliance. No significant adverse impacts to natural resources would occur as a result of the project.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz  
Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

# Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research  
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** Rudnick Ranch Acquisition (SNC 434)

### Project Location – Specific:

The project is located at the intersection of the Sierra Nevada and Tehachapi Mountains, near Caliente in Kern County, California. The Assessor's Parcel Numbers are listed in the table below.

179-150-02	179-150-19	179-150-08	179-150-07
179-150-03	179-150-18	179-150-06	179-150-05
179-150-04	179-150-09	179-150-10	179-150-11
179-150-12	397-110-09	397-110-06	397-110-05
179-140-01	179-140-02	179-140-03	179-140-05
179-140-04	197-140-06	179-140-07	179-150-16
179-150-20	179-150-21	179-150-22	179-150-23
179-150-24	179-150-25	179-150-26	179-150-27
179-150-28	179-150-29	179-150-30	179-150-31
179-150-14	179-140-13	179-140-14	179-140-15
179-140-16	179-140-17	179-140-11	179-140-19
179-140-18	179-140-08	179-170-04	179-170-05
179-160-01	179-160-02	179-160-03	179-260-01
179-170-06	179-160-07	179-160-06	179-160-04
266-140-02	266-150-05	266-150-04	266-150-03
266-160-03	266-160-01	266-170-01	266-170-02
266-160-02	266-170-04	266-170-03	266-180-01
266-180-02	179-180-02	179-180-22	

**Project Location – City:** East of Bakersfield

**Project Location – County:** Kern

### Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project is the acquisition of approximately 15,000 acres in the Tehachapi Mountains. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is requesting \$500,000 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program to apply to the purchase. Rudnick Ranch supports nearly 15,000 acres of intact chaparral, grasslands, oak woodlands, and riparian communities in the Middle Kern – Upper Tehachapi - Grapevine watershed. Land speculation, intensive agriculture, and mining to the east and west threaten the integrity of the Ranch and its watersheds. Protection of the Ranch eliminates the threat of subdivision, development, and associated water use, safeguarding local aquifers and allowing natural ground water recharge and runoff processes to continue. TNC's goal is to acquire the property and continue operations as a working ranch, ensuring grazing is carried out in a sustainable manner that maintains the important resources.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** The Nature Conservancy

**Exempt Status:** *(check one)*

- Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15313, "Acquisition of Lands for Wildlife Conservation Purposes", Section 15317, "Open Space Contracts or Easements", and Section 15325, "Transfers of Ownership of Interest in Land to Preserve Existing Natural Conditions and Historical Resources"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

The proposed Rudnick Ranch Acquisition project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15313, Class 13, which consists of acquisition of lands for wildlife conservation purposes. The land acquisition will allow The Nature Conservancy to preserve approximately 15,000 acres for fish and wildlife conservation purposes, as a broad matrix of plant and animal species is located in several habitat types found on the Ranch. In addition, the proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15317, Class 17, which consists of the establishment of agricultural preserves, the making and renewing of open space contracts under the Williamson Act, or the acceptance of easements or fee interests in order to maintain the open space character of the area. The proposed project is also categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15325, Class 25, which consists of the transfers of ownership of interests in land in order to preserve open space, habitat, or historical resources. The land acquisition will allow The Nature Conservancy to preserve existing natural conditions of the site, meeting the intent of Categorical Exemption 15325 (a), which exempts transfers of ownerships from environmental review when the acquisition, sale, or other transfer of areas is intended to preserve natural conditions, including plant and animal habitats. The proposed project involves land acquisition to preserve natural conditions and protect natural resources, while allowing responsible grazing. No significant adverse effects on natural resources will result from the project.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

*Revised 2005*

## Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research  
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Project Title:** Stockton Creek Preserve and Trail (SNC 443)

### Project Location – Specific:

The project is located in the Stockton Creek Watershed near Slaughter House Road and Highway 140, in Mariposa County, California. Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 012-011-001, 012-150-031, a portion of 012-150-052, and a portion of 012-150-056.

**Project Location – City:** Near the town of Mariposa

**Project Location – County:** Mariposa

### Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project is the fee title acquisition of approximately 425 acres of land adjacent to the existing Mariposa Public Utility District- (MPUD) owned Stockton Creek dam and reservoir. The MPUD is requesting \$1,000,000 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Grant Program for the acquisition. The primary purpose of the acquisition is to accomplish as much watershed protection as possible. The water from the Stockton Creek Watershed flows directly into the Stockton Creek Reservoir, which is Mariposa's primary public water source. The proposal also includes the acquisition of a public access easement overlying an existing water line easement.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Mariposa Public Utility District

### Exempt Status: *(check one)*

- Ministerial (Sec. 2180(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15317, "Open Space Contracts or Easements", and Section 15325, "Transfers of Ownership of Interest in Land to Preserve Existing Natural Conditions and Historical Resources"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed Stockton Creek Preserve and Trail project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15317, Class 17, which consists of the establishment of agricultural preserves, the making and renewing of open space contracts under the Williamson Act, or the acceptance of easements or fee interests in order to maintain the open space character of the area. The proposed project would maintain the open space character of approximately 425 acres. The proposed project is also categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15325, Class 25, which consists of the transfers of ownership of interests in land in order to preserve open space, habitat, or historical resources. The land acquisition will allow the MPUD to preserve existing natural conditions of the site, meeting the intent of Categorical Exemption 15325 (a), which exempts transfers of ownerships from environmental review when the acquisition, sale, or other transfer of areas are intended to preserve natural conditions, including plant and animal habitats, and Categorical Exemption 15325 (e), which exempts transfers of ownerships from environmental review when the acquisition, sale, or other transfer is intended to preserve historical resources. There are three recorded archaeological sites within the area proposed for acquisition. The

project proposes the acquisition of property in the Stockton Creek watershed to protect public water supplies and protect existing historical archaeological sites in the area. No significant adverse impacts to natural resources would occur as a result of this project. Any future actions on the property related to the planning and development of public access may be subject to further CEQA evaluation, but are not a part of this particular action.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Marji Feliz  
Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4679

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: Executive Officer  
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

## NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

To: Office of Planning and Research  
State Clearinghouse  
P.O. Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
1521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

Subject: **FILING OF NOTICE OF DETERMINATION IN COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 21108 OR 21152 OF THE PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE**

Project Title: Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration (SNC 322)

State Clearinghouse No.: SCH# 2004102011

Project Location: Sly Park Recreation Area, 4771 Sly Park Road in Pollock Pines. Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground are located in the northeast portion of the park along Lake Drive Road.

County: El Dorado County

Project Description: The El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) has requested \$153,466 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Proposition 84 Grants Program to fund restoration design and apply for permits for Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground. The restoration will include stabilizing Hazel Creek banks, removing non-native vegetation, recreating a riparian buffer zone along the creek, protecting the re-vegetated areas and creek with a 50-foot setback buffer zone and natural barriers, and constructing an all-weather safety access bridge over the creek. To accomplish the restoration of Hazel Creek, seven campsites and the associated access road will be removed, along with reconfiguring the remaining campsites according to Sly Park Recreation Area (SPRA) Master Plan standards. Two campsites will be replaced with ADA-accessible cabins. Native vegetation in the campground will be re-established by installing barriers, providing access controls, and installing interpretive signage to protect native habitats and provide education opportunities and safety information. A new bridge over Hazel Creek will be added to provide emergency access to the back of Sly Park and to provide a dedicated access for bicycles and horses to cross the creek without causing impacts to Hazel Creek and the water quality of Jenkinson Lake. The combined restoration of Hazel Creek and the Hazel Creek Campground areas consists of approximately 3.5 acres and will implement a part of the SPRA Master Plan, which has been adopted by the EID Board of Directors and permitted by the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.

As  Lead Agency  a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has approved the above described project on March 3, 2011, and has made the following determinations regarding the above described project:

1. The project  will  will not have a significant effect on the environment.
2. A  Negative Declaration  Mitigated Negative Declaration  Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) followed by an Initial Study (CEQA Guidelines Section 15177) was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation measures  were  were not made a condition of project approval.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan  was  was not adopted for this project.
5. A Statement of Overriding Considerations  was  was not adopted for this project.
6. Findings  were  were not made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

This is to certify that the project is consistent with the Sly Park Master Plan and the Sly Park MEIR. The MEIR, the Subsequent Initial Study, and record of project approval are available to the General Public at the following location:

Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

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Jim Branham

Executive Officer

(530) 823-4670  
Phone #

TO BE COMPLETED BY OPR ONLY

Date Received For Filing and Posting at OPR:

**RESPONSIBLE AGENCY  
ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Project Title:  
Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration (SNC 322)
2. Responsible Agency Name and Address:  
Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603
3. Contact Person and Phone Number:  
Marji Feliz, Program Coordinator (530) 823-4679
4. Project Location:  
Sly Park Recreation Area, 4771 Sly Park Road in Pollock Pines. Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground are located in the northeast portion of the park along Lake Drive Road, in El Dorado County, California.
5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address:  
El Dorado Irrigation District  
2890 Mosquito Road  
Placerville, CA 95667
6. General Plan Designation:  
Natural Resource
7. Zoning:  
Recreational Facilities
8. Description of Project:  
The El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) has requested \$153,466 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Proposition 84 Grants Program to fund restoration design and file permits for Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground. The restoration will include stabilizing Hazel Creek banks, removing non-native vegetation, recreating a riparian buffer zone along the creek, protecting re-vegetated areas and the creek with a 50-foot setback buffer zone and natural barriers, and constructing an all-weather safety access bridge over the creek. To accomplish the restoration of Hazel Creek, seven campsites and the associated access road will be removed, along with reconfiguring the remaining campsites according to Sly Park Recreation Area (SPRA) Master Plan standards. Two campsites will be replaced with ADA-accessible cabins. Native vegetation in the campground will be re-established by installing barriers, providing access controls, and installing interpretive signage to protect native habitats and provide education opportunities and safety information. A new bridge over Hazel Creek will be added to provide emergency access to the back of Sly Park and to provide a dedicated access for bicycles and horses to cross the creek without causing impacts to Hazel Creek and the water quality of Jenkinson Lake. The combined restoration of Hazel Creek and the Hazel Creek Campground areas consist of approximately 3.5 acres and will implement a part of the SPRA Master Plan, which

has been adopted by the EID Board of Directors and permitted by the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.

9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

Land uses at and surrounding Sly Park Recreation Area include public utility, business park, and residential development.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required:

California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
California Department of Fish and Game  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
El Dorado County Development Services Department

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Sly Park Recreation Area (SPRA), owned and operated by the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID), is a significant regional recreation resource serving El Dorado County, the greater Sacramento region and beyond. As the SPRA centerpiece, Jenkinson Lake is one of the closest and most accessible mountain lakes in this large service area. The SPRA provides a diverse range of recreational opportunities, including camping, hiking, biking, swimming, fishing, horseback riding, boating and related water sports, and access to historical sites.

The popularity and heavy use of the park over time has resulted in degradation of the very resources that attract recreationists, including trampling of vegetation, soil compaction, and erosion. These adverse impacts are problematic not only because they reduce the scenic quality of the park and ecosystem conductivity, but they have the potential to threaten the high quality of water in Jenkinson Lake if left unmanaged. Jenkinson Lake is an important source of drinking water for many El Dorado County residents, and its recreational use must be consistent with the preservation of the lake's excellent water quality and natural resources. Because of past degradation and the importance of Jenkinson Lake as a public water supply, several components of the SPRA Master Plan involve campground renovation, restoration of vegetation, and reduction of erosion in addition to the enhancement of the recreational experience. One such project component is the Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project (proposed project).

Hazel Creek Campground is currently a 19-unit family campground adjacent to Hazel Creek just upstream of its mouth at Jenkinson Lake. The campground has been severely impacted by over 50 years of use. The campsites are undefined and campers and their equipment have had unrestricted access outside the formal campsites, leaving essentially no vegetation between the campsites. This has resulted in compacted soils, a high erosion potential, and lack of any wildlife habitat. Further, the camping experience itself has been impacted by preventing any sense of personal space or privacy within the campsites.

In 2007, the EID Board of Directors approved the Sly Park Recreation Area Master Plan (SPRA Master Plan) to guide improvements, management, and operation of SPRA over the next 20 years. On April 9, 2007, the EID Board of Directors certified a Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR), which, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code 211000 et seq.), analyzed the potential effects of implementing the SPRA Master Plan, including the Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project. A

Subsequent Initial Study was prepared on November 14, 2008, in accordance with the requirements of CEQA to provide subsequent evaluation for the Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration project identified and discussed in the MEIR. The Subsequent Initial Study confirmed that the proposed project would have no new significant environmental impacts that were not already addressed in the MEIR.

## **PREVIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION**

### Sly Park Recreation Area Master Plan Environmental Impact Report

Foothill Associates, *Draft Master Environmental Impact Report for the Sly Park Recreation Area*. SCH No. 2004102011. January 2007.

Foothill Associates, *Final Master Environmental Impact Report for the Sly Park Recreation Area*. SCH No. 2004102011. March 2007.

### Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project Subsequent Initial Study

El Dorado Irrigation District, *Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project Subsequent Initial Study*. SCH No. 2004102011. November 14, 2008.

### Basic Features of the Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project

The goal of the proposed project is to protect the water quality of Hazel Creek (thereby protecting Jenkinson Lake), restore the native wildlife habitat of Hazel Creek and the Hazel Creek Campground, and enhance public recreation. This is necessary due to the over 50 years of overuse and lack of access control within the campground and along Hazel Creek. What native habitat of Hazel Creek remains adjacent to the Hazel Creek Campground has been impacted by the presence of campsites in its corridor and by the activities of campers and day visitors. Hazel Creek is also being impacted by horse and mountain bike crossings over the banks and into the stream bed. The lack of an appropriate stream crossing for emergency vehicles inhibits controlled burning on the south side of the lake and could prevent emergency access in case of wildfire. Specifically, the proposed project includes the following:

#### **Reconfigured Traditional Campsites**

As determined in the SPRA Master Plan, a 50-foot setback buffer is being established for Hazel Creek. Seven campsites and a spur road that serves five of them will be removed because they are located in the buffer zone. With continued degradation, these campsites and activities associated with them can adversely impact the water quality and terrestrial and/or aquatic habitat of Hazel Creek and Jenkinson Lake. The remaining 12 campsites will be reconfigured to conform to campsite standards and proper circulation as identified in the Master Plan. Native vegetation will be re-established between the campsites, reducing erosion, providing habitat, and adding privacy. To help increase the diversity of recreational opportunities and clientele at the campsite and further minimize water quality impacts near the creek, two units are proposed be handicapped accessible cabins.

#### **Widen Campground Loop Road**

The existing Hazel Creek Campground road is too narrow in many places, restricting proper circulation. The road will be regraded, surfaced as needed, and widened to a uniform 12-foot width where feasible to improve circulation in the campground.

## **Hazel Creek Campground Restoration and Reconfiguration**

Ecological restoration is a deliberate activity that initiates and/or accelerates the recovery of an ecosystem with respect to its health, integrity, and sustainability. Restoration represents a perpetual commitment to protecting the land and resources. With reconfiguration of the campground, the campground and the former spur road will be revegetated with a combination of native herbaceous species, shrubs and trees, and hydroseeding. All areas outside formal campsites, roads, and trails will be revegetated according to the specific native habitat type (e.g., forest or riparian). These improvements will provide defined access and use areas that will be protected with barriers, as described below.

### **Hazel Creek Restoration**

Campsites will be removed from close proximity to Hazel Creek (see following paragraph), and creek banks will be stabilized. Non-native plants in the area surrounding the creek will be removed and the area supplemented with native riparian vegetation as described above. A new bridge will be constructed for the trail crossing over Hazel Creek between the campground and Hazel Meadow to allow horses and vehicles to cross Hazel Creek without impact.

### **50-foot Creek Setback Buffer**

A 50-foot setback buffer will be established for Hazel Creek through the project area. Any structures, including eight campsites, within the 50-foot setback will be removed and the setback then becomes a buffer between the campground and the creek.

### **Access Barriers to Protect New Vegetation**

A barrier consistent with the Master Plan design guidelines (e.g. split-rail fence, boulder) will be installed at the perimeter of all rehabilitated areas within the campground to prevent unauthorized access.

### **Hazel Creek Access Control**

Signage informing the public of the 50-foot setback and restricting access thereto, along with an access barrier consistent with the Master Plan design guidelines, will protect the rehabilitated creek from new impacts. Signage would provide information about safety and explain technical environmental restoration aspects of the site. Interpretive themes may include water quality and natural resource topics such as erosion control, soil compaction, vegetative filtration, stormwater management, biological diversity, and native flora and fauna.

## **Impacts Identified Relevant to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Request**

The action before the Sierra Nevada Conservancy is providing \$153,466 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Proposition 84 Grants Program to the El Dorado Irrigation District to fund design and permits for activities to restore and enhance approximately 3.5 acres of Hazel Creek and the Hazel Creek Campground areas. The proposed project's Subsequent Initial Study identifies potential resource impacts related to aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, hazards/hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, and noise. Specifically, the proposed project may result in visual impacts; temporary increases in dust and exhaust odor due to equipment use during construction activities; the disturbance of special-status plant species or amphibian species; the potential to inadvertently disturb human remains during ground-disturbing activities; soil erosion or the loss of topsoil; the release of hazardous materials into the environment; water quality/drainage impacts; and/or construction noise impacts. Based on the proposed project's Subsequent Initial Study, the project would not cause any additional significant effects on the environment not previously examined in the SPRA Master Plan MEIR. The project proponent will implement measures identified in the

MEIR and proposed project's Subsequent Initial Study to lessen potential impacts to aesthetics, air quality, biological and cultural resources, geology/soils, hazardous/hazardous materials, and hydrology and water quality, and noise.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact."

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture Resources                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology / Soils |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards / Hazardous Materials | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation / Traffic   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems              | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance   |   |

**DETERMINATION (To be completed by the Responsible Agency)**

On the basis of this evaluation:

The SNC Board determined that the proposed project is a subsequent project within the scope of the Sly Park Master Plan Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) and that the proposed project would not cause any additional significant effects on the environment not previously examined in the MEIR. The **SUBSEQUENT INITIAL STUDY**, prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15177, adequately analyzed the action for which the Sierra Nevada Conservancy will provide grant funding, and notes which mitigation measures from the MEIR will be implemented to avoid significant impacts. The SNC Board adopted findings pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15096(h) and 15091. The El Dorado Irrigation District as the lead agency also adopted a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program that identifies the timing of mitigation measures and which parties will be responsible for implementing them; the SNC is not responsible for implementing any of these measures and is not proposing any additional mitigation measures.

Signature

Date

Jim Branham

Executive Officer

Printed Name

Title

Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Responsible Agency

**CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT  
RESPONSIBLE AGENCY  
STATEMENT OF FINDINGS**

**Project Title:** Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration (SNC 322)

**State Clearinghouse Number:** SCH# 2004102011

**Project Location:** Sly Park Recreation Area, 4771 Sly Park Road in Pollock Pines. Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground are located in the northeast portion of the park along Lake Drive Road, in El Dorado County, California.

**Description of Project:** The El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) has requested \$153,466 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Proposition 84 Grants Program to fund restoration design and file permits for Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground. The restoration will include stabilizing Hazel Creek banks, removing non-native vegetation, recreating a riparian buffer zone along the creek, protecting the re-vegetated areas and creek with a 50-foot setback buffer zone and natural barriers, and constructing an all-weather safety access bridge over the creek. To accomplish the restoration of Hazel Creek, seven campsites and the associated access road will be removed, along with reconfiguring the remaining campsites according to Sly Park Recreation Area (SPRA) Master Plan standards. Two campsites will be replaced with ADA accessible cabins. Native vegetation in the campground will be re-established by installing barriers, providing access controls, and installing interpretive signage to protect native habitats and provide education opportunities and safety information. A new bridge over Hazel Creek will be added to provide emergency access to the back of Sly Park and to provide a dedicated access for bicycles and horses to cross the creek without causing impacts to Hazel Creek and the water quality of Jenkinson Lake. The combined restoration of Hazel Creek and the Hazel Creek Campground areas consists of approximately 3.5 acres and will implement a part of the SPRA Master Plan, which has been adopted by the EID Board of Directors and permitted by the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.

**Findings:** Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21002.1(d) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15096(g) and (h), the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), as a Responsible Agency, has reviewed and considered the following documents prepared by the Lead Agency (CEQA):

El Dorado Irrigation District, *Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project Subsequent Initial Study*. November 14, 2008.

Using its independent judgment, the SNC makes the following finding:

The above listed document: a) adequately address the potential impacts of the project, and b) is adequate for use by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) for assessing the potential impacts of funding the grant request now before the SNC for approval.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy hereby makes the following findings regarding the significant effects of the proposed project, pursuant to Public Resources Code 21081 and Section 15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

## 1. AESTHETICS

The proposed project may impact the visual qualities of the surrounding area; impacts are considered potentially significant. The Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) for the SPRA Master Plan covers aesthetic impacts for the proposed project and provides mitigation measures. Those mitigation measures that apply specifically to the proposed project are listed below.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measures will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

**AES-2** Avoid removal of existing trees. Adjust locations of facilities as practicable to minimize impacts to existing vegetation. Use retaining walls where feasible to protect existing trees from cut/fill within the drip-line. Where removal of trees is necessary, replant with fast growing, native species suitable to site conditions. Develop a Mitigation Monitoring Plan to ensure survival of plantings.

**AES-4** Site facilities to minimize the need for extensive site grading. Avoid steep cut and fill banks that will have difficulty revegetating. Plant cut-and-fill banks to aid in revegetation. Use retaining walls where necessary to retain soil and minimize cut/fill banks. Consider the use of planting pockets or stepped walls with vegetation planted between tiers for retaining walls that cannot easily be screened by planting at the base of the wall.

**AES-5** Where feasible, conduct construction at times when it will not have significant impacts on SPRA visitors: off-season is preferable to peak-season, and weekdays are preferable to weekends.

**AES-7** Maintain plantings around parking areas to reduce glare and light impacts.

**AES-8** Minimize soil and vegetation disturbance during construction. Replant disturbed areas as soon after construction is completed as feasible.

## 2. AIR QUALITY

The proposed project may have short-term construction-related air quality impacts, including the potential for short-term odors from construction equipment. Impacts are considered potentially significant. The MEIR for the SPRA Master Plan covers air quality impacts for the proposed project and provides mitigation measures. Those mitigation measures that apply specifically to the proposed project are listed below.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measures will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

- AQ-1** Construction activities will limit the amount of actively disturbed ground areas to no more than 6 acres on any single day.
- AQ-2** The construction contractor(s) shall maintain equipment in tune per manufacturer specifications. The construction contractor(s) shall use catalytic converters on gasoline-powered equipment. The construction contractor(s) shall not leave inactive construction equipment idling for prolonged periods (i.e., more than 5 minutes).

### 3. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The proposed project may cause indirect impacts to Hazel Creek, in addition to impacts on special-status amphibian species (California red-legged frog and foothill yellow-legged frog). Bridge construction within suitable mixed conifer habitat also has the potential to affect special-status plant species. Impacts are considered potentially significant. The MEIR for the SPRA Master Plan covers biological impacts for the proposed project and provides mitigation measures. Those mitigation measures that apply specifically to the proposed project are listed below.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measures will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

- BIO-1** This mitigation measure was deleted during in the Final Master EIR for the SPRA Master Plan.
- BIO-2** The Hazel Creek restoration project will require a Corps permit as the restoration activities will be occurring within below the ordinary high water mark. This work would be covered under Nationwide Permit (NWP) 27, Stream and Wetland Restoration Activities. A pre-construction notification is required for the restoration of Hazel Creek and must be submitted to the Corps before work occurring within the creek corridor. Any permit conditions required by the Corps will be followed for the duration of the restoration work.

The stabilization of the bank along Lake Drive will require a Corps permit as it is occurring below the ordinary high water mark. This work would be covered under Nationwide Permit 13, Bank Stabilization; therefore NWP 13 shall be acquired before bank stabilization work occurring along Lake Drive. If the bank stabilization activity is less than 500 feet in length and the activity will not disturb more than one cubic yard per running foot, a post-notification to the Corps will be required to ensure compliance with this nationwide permit. If the length of bank stabilization is greater than 500 feet, a pre-construction notification package must be submitted to the Corps to ensure compliance with the permit. If a pre-construction package is required for the bank stabilization along Lake Drive, any permit conditions required by the Corps will be followed for the duration of the work.

- BIO-5** Construction of SPRA Master Plan elements may indirectly affect unnamed tributaries, creeks, or Jenkinson Lake from runoff during construction. If indirect

impacts have the potential to occur during construction activities, additional measures may be required to maintain water quality standards of the waterways. If a 404 permit is required for the SPRA Master Plan, water quality concerns during construction shall be addressed in a required Section 401 water quality certification by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be required for the entire SPRA Master Plan project. SWPPPs are required in issuance of a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) construction discharge permit by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) during construction is standard in most SWPPPs and water quality certifications. Examples of BMPs include stockpiling of debris away from regulated wetlands and waterways; immediate removal of debris piles from the site during the rainy season; use of silt fencing and construction fencing around regulated waterways; and use of drip pans under work vehicles and containment of fuel waste throughout the site during construction.

**BIO-6** A Streambed Alteration Agreement shall be obtained from CDFG, pursuant to Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code, for each stream crossing and any other activities affecting the bed, bank or associated riparian vegetation of any stream within SPRA, specifically work that is occurring near Carpenter and Hazel creeks. Appropriate mitigation measures shall be developed in coordination with CDFG in the issued 1602 agreement.

**BIO-7** A pre-construction survey for California red-legged frog and foothill yellow-legged frog should be performed within any areas proposed for a bridge crossing or where work will be occurring within a riparian corridor. Generally, this includes work being performed in proximity to Hazel and Carpenter creeks. Aquatic and upland habitat will be surveyed by a qualified biologist for the presence of California red-legged frog or foothill yellow-legged frog.

Because foothill yellow-legged frogs have been identified within Sly Park Creek within the SPRA, a clearance survey should be performed prior to construction to ensure no impacts will occur to this species that is known to occur within the SPRA. If this species is identified during the pre-construction clearance survey, any individuals should be safely re-located by a qualified professional out of the construction zone to an equivalent habitat located within the SPRA.

The qualified biologist performing the survey should possess a valid California Department of Fish and Game Scientific Collecting Permit. Although California red-legged frogs have not been identified within the SPRA before, if this species is identified during a pre-construction survey, the USFWS should be contacted immediately for subsequent measures. No California redlegged frogs shall be moved or re-located as part of the pre-construction survey.

**BIO-8** As discussed in Table 4.7.3 of the Master EIR, several Master Plan components shall require a Corps permit and/or Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement. If either the Corps or California Department of Fish and Game require specific California red-legged frog or foothill yellow-legged frog impact avoidance measures, the applicant shall adhere to the conditions of the permit. These conditions are expected to include construction impact avoidance measures such as the presence of a biological monitor during creek restoration activities, a

seasonal time restriction on work occurring within the creek bed, or a pre-construction survey.

- BIO-9** Avoidance measures for reducing impacts to potential habitat for western pond turtle have been incorporated into the SPRA Master Plan as a design guideline to the maximum extent feasible. Also, the 50- and 100-foot setbacks as required under the El Dorado County General Plan will aid in the protection of western pond turtle and potential marsh habitat during construction activities. However, impacts may still occur during removal of existing campsites within the 50-foot buffer, construction of span bridges, and other project elements that are expected to occur within the 50-and 100-foot creek buffer.

A pre-construction clearance survey for western pond turtle is recommended before construction activities occurring within potential pond turtle habitat. Potential habitat for western pond turtle occurs along Sly Park and Hazel creeks and potentially other perennial, slow-moving drainages. The clearance survey shall be performed during April or May when western pond turtle are most active and identifiable. It is assumed construction is not going to take place during the rainy season, a period when western pond turtle would be less identifiable. Open water areas with emergent vegetation with open rocks for basking shall be adequately surveyed to determine the presence or absence of western pond turtle within the creek corridors. The areas to be subject to clearance surveys shall be based upon final grading plans for each project element, specifically the two span bridges and campground reconfigurations. If western pond turtle are not observed, construction activities shall proceed as scheduled. If western pond turtle are observed, shall be consulted on subsequent impact avoidance measures.

- BIO-10** Signs shall be posted to discourage collecting and handling of aquatic wildlife by recreational users. Interpretive trail signage and kiosks proposed for specific campgrounds shall serve to inform the public of the sensitivity and the ecological importance for preserving of riparian habitat and creek corridors. Interpretive signs and kiosks shall also define Park rules and prohibit collecting aquatic wildlife (other than fishing). Also, design measures such as creek access controls (boulders and cable fencing) at Pine Cone, Rainbow, and Kamloop camps have been incorporated into the SPRA Master Plan project where applicable. The re-configuration of campsites away from Hazel Creek at Hazel Creek, Kamloop, and Rainbow campgrounds would widen the buffer to Hazel Creek to enhance riparian habitat value; the increased distance of campsites to Hazel Creek shall further discourage foot traffic along Hazel Creek and reduce the likelihood of aquatic wildlife collection.

- BIO-14** Construction activities are not expected to occur during the rainy season; however, nesting territories of other raptor species could be established during winter months that could be disturbed by construction activities during that time. Specifically, resident owl species are known to initiate nest building and breeding during early winter months. For this reason, pre-construction nesting raptor surveys shall be performed within SPRA. Based on the final grading plans for specific SPRA Master Plan components, any trees that are planned for removal shall be surveyed for the presence of active raptor nests. A pre-construction raptor survey is recommended to determine the activity status of any identified raptor nests within SPRA including a 500-foot buffer from construction activities, if construction

of any new facilities is expected to occur during the typical nesting season (February-September). The survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than 30 days before the start of construction activities. If more than 30 days lapse between the survey and the start of construction, an additional survey shall be performed. If the nests are found and considered to be active, construction activities shall not occur within 500 feet of the nests until the young have fledged and the appropriate resource agencies (USFS, USFWS, or CDFG) shall be consulted. If construction activities are proposed to occur during the non-breeding season (October-January), a survey is not required and no further studies are necessary. As discussed in BIO-11 through BIO-13, in order to avoid impacts to northern goshawk, bald eagle, California spotted owl, and other nesting raptors during their typical breeding seasons, construction activities should not occur from February through September.

Avoidance measures for reducing impacts to nesting raptor species and potential nest trees have been incorporated into the SPRA Master Plan as a design guideline to the maximum extent feasible. For example, during campground re-configuration construction activities, no trees with a DBH of 6 inches or greater shall be removed; raptors are not likely to nest within trees less than 6 inches DBH. Ongoing recreational activities are not expected to have a significant affect on nesting raptors, as any raptors nesting in areas of recreational use will have become habituated to human activity.

- BIO-15** Avoidance measures for reducing impacts to federally sensitive invertebrate species have been incorporated into the SPRA Master Plan as a design guideline to the maximum extent feasible. Additionally, the 50- and 100-foot setbacks as required under the El Dorado County General Plan policies would aid in protecting federally sensitive invertebrate species. Also, the re-configuration of campgrounds shall not allow construction within 50 feet from the ordinary high-water mark of any creeks.

Before construction occurring within the creek corridors for the two proposed span bridges, these potential habitat areas shall be surveyed to determine the presence or absence of Button's Sierra sideband, Gold rush hanging scorpionfly, South Forks ground beetle, and spiny rhyacophilan caddisfly. A qualified entomologist or invertebrate zoologist shall be retained that is familiar with the biology, habitat requirements, and identification of these species. An adequate number of surveys shall be performed over a period when the invertebrate species are identifiable. These species are assumed to be active and identifiable year-round. If any of these federally sensitive invertebrate species are identified within the SPRA area, any individuals should be safely re-located by a qualified entomologist out of the construction zone to an equivalent habitat located within the SPRA. If these species are not identified, bridge construction shall proceed as scheduled and no further mitigation should be necessary.

- BIO-16** Before the removal of any trees or structures within SPRA, a clearance survey shall be performed to determine the presence of bat roosts. The final grading plans for each individual project shall determine the trees and structures to be removed which shall be subject to the pre-construction survey. The pre-construction survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist familiar with the identification of bat species and roosting sign. If special-status roosting bats are found during the pre-

construction survey, CDFG or the USFWS should be consulted regarding measures to minimize impacts to roosting bats during construction. No trees or Park facility structures shall be removed that is used as by roosting bats. If special-status bats are not found during the pre-construction survey, no mitigation measures should be necessary for special-status bats.

**BIO-18** The following measures are designed to protect existing trees and minimize impacts during construction activities.

To protect the root zone, drift fencing (or similar protective barrier approved by El Dorado County) a minimum of 4 feet tall, shall be installed at least two feet outside the drip line of each protected tree. A circle with a radius measurement from the trunk of the tree to the tip of its longest limb shall constitute the drip line protection area for preserved trees and shall establish the Critical Root Zone (CRZ) of the tree. The drift fencing shall not be moved once installed.

Removal of tree branches and/or roots shall be minimized to the extent practical and shall be in compliance with the 2001 “American National Standard for Tree Care Operations – Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance-Standard Practices (Pruning)” (A300, Part 1) and with the 1995 International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) companion publication of “Tree Pruning Guidelines.” The removal or severing of any roots on trees to be retained shall only be done at the discretion of an onsite arborist and shall not cause permanent damage to the tree. Roots shall be cut cleanly as close to the excavation as possible. Roots with cut faces of more than 1.5 inches shall be coated with emulsified asphalt or other approved coating formulated for use on damaged plant tissues. Any tree impacted by activity within its CRZ, including cuts to branches and/or roots shall be considered impacted and subject to the same mitigation as a removed tree.

In the event that a stand of trees will be preserved, the entire stand may be fenced, as a group, per the above stated guidelines. Fencing shall be shown on construction plans and shall be installed before the onset of grading activities. Signs shall be attached to the fencing describing the trees as protected.

No grading, vehicular traffic, dumping of excavated debris, materials storage, or disposal of chemicals or contaminated water shall be allowed within the CRZ of the trees to be retained as shown on final site plans. This includes but is not limited to washing concrete from tools or trucks; paint materials; sheetrock, mud, or stucco materials; or other chemicals such as solvents and herbicides. Nails, ties, screws, or other fasteners shall not be use to attach signs, braces, etc. to any tree trunks or branches.

Drainage patterns on the site shall not be modified so that water accumulates in, or is diverted across, the CRZ of any preserved tree.

Construction crews shall be informed of the above measures and shall be required to comply with the guidelines of this mitigation plan. They will also be provided a copy of the map illustrating areas to be fenced and avoided. Before construction, all construction personnel shall be required to sign a document acknowledging receipt and understanding of all tree protection and preservation requirements.

A certified arborist shall monitor the protected trees periodically during construction to ensure the above-mentioned measures are carried out and to monitor the health and structure of the trees.

If construction activities intercept major roots outside of the CRZ, a certified arborist shall be consulted to advise construction crews on how best to minimize damage to roots.

Whenever feasible, utility trenches shall be established outside of the CRZ. If utilities must be located within this area, they should be placed in a conduit that is bored through the soil. Immediately backfill and water to the point of saturation all areas where soil cuts and trenches enter the CRZ of any existing tree.

**BIO-19** To mitigate for the loss of trees, the following tree replacement measures shall be implemented for individual trees removed as part of the SPRA Master Plan:

Based on final grading plans, each SPRA Master Plan project that would require tree removal shall be subject to an arborist survey and report. All trees that occur within the construction footprint will be inventoried by an ISA Certified Arborist. The survey will include numbering each qualifying tree (per El Dorado County guidelines) and recording required data such as species, size, health, and structural condition. Following the inventory of all trees proposed for removal, an arborist report will be completed and submitted to the Manager of Environmental Review Division.

Replacement shall be required for all healthy native trees equal to or greater than 6 inch diameter at breast height (DBH) that will be removed. A healthy tree is defined as a tree with an average to be below-average amount of deadwood with respect to the tree's size and growing environment and little evidence of stress. A healthy tree shall also exhibit a low risk for failure as a public hazard in that it has minimal evidence of wounds, cavities, decay, or indication of hollowness within the root crown, trunk, or primary limbs, as well as lack of co-dominant stems or included bark in major trunk or branch attachments.

For all trees, at least one (1) one-gallon seedling shall be replanted for every two inches of impact for a mitigation ratio of 1:2, thus a 12 inch DBH tree would require six (6) one-gallon replacement seedlings. Replacement seedlings shall be of the same genus and species removed.

For oak (*Quercus* spp.) trees removed, replacement trees may be up to but in no case larger than 15-gallon size or to be consistent with General Plan Policy 7.4.5.2, the replacement requirement shall be calculated on an inch for inch basis, whichever measure is more stringent on tree replacement. The ratio of a 5-gallon oak replacement seedling to inches removed shall be at a minimum 1:3; the ratio of a 15-gallon oak replacement seedling to inches removed shall be at a minimum of 1:6.

Tree re-planting may take place anywhere in SPRA in a location that provides conditions suitable to the growth requirements of the species including areas identified for reforestation in the Forest Management Plan.

Replacement stock seedlings shall be purchased from a source in the SPRA region where feasible.

A complete tree monitoring plan shall be required for the replacement trees.

Monitoring shall be designed to ensure compliance with the established performance standard and to discover and remediate conditions that are detrimental or potentially detrimental to the plantings to ensure the continued success of the plantings. A minimum of eighty percent (80%) of the total plantings will survive annually (exhibiting fair health characteristics or higher) for a period of 3 years from the date of planting. If the plantings fail to meet the performance standard, they shall be replaced annually on an inch-for-inch basis, under the guidelines of this management plan to meet the 80% survival goal.

Monitoring of the plantings will occur annually for three years, from the date of installation, conducted by a certified arborist or qualified biologist. Monitoring will consist of a site assessment to evaluate the health of each planting. Annual monitoring reports shall be submitted to the Manager of Environmental Review Division.

The project proponent, or its successor, is the responsible party for monitoring plantings within SPRA. Any maintenance or remediation required to achieve the performance standard is the responsibility of the project proponent.

#### 4. CULTURAL RESOURCES

A total of 24 cultural resources have been identified in SPRA. Twelve of these are considered eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources, and the remaining twelve are not eligible. Although cultural resources identified in the park are not found within the proposed project site, ground disturbance has the potential to disturb previously unknown cultural resources or human remains. Impacts are considered potentially significant. The MEIR for the SPRA Master Plan covers cultural resources impacts for the proposed project and provides mitigation measures. Those mitigation measures that apply specifically to the proposed project are listed below.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measure will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

**CR-12** Train Staff to Recognize Cultural Deposits and Stop Work in the event of an Unanticipated Discovery.

**CR-13** Stop Work if Human Remains are Unearthed and Contact the El Dorado County Coroner.

#### 5. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The proposed project may result in substantial soil erosion; therefore, impacts are considered potentially significant. The MEIR for the SPRA Master Plan covers geology and soils impacts for the proposed project and provides mitigation measures. Those mitigation measures that apply specifically to the proposed project are listed below.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measures will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

**GEO-1** The applicant shall hire a California-registered geotechnical engineer experienced and knowledgeable in the practice of soils engineering to perform site-specific geotechnical studies. The study shall identify any areas of unstable geology or soils, as well as map and characterize the extent of slope instability or potential for landsliding. The report shall provide recommendations for project design alterations, considerations or other features which could reduce the potential hazards to an acceptable level. All feasible recommendations from the study(s) shall be required as part of the project approval and may include the designation of building envelopes, where appropriate. Areas of landsliding identified within the studies shall be repaired or avoided by development to the extent that they would pose no risk to life or property.

**GEO-2** Final grading plans shall be submitted to a licensed professional geotechnical engineer for review and recommendation. All recommendations shall be incorporated into project design.

## 6. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Although not anticipated, previously unidentified hazardous materials may be encountered during site preparation and construction activities; therefore, impacts are considered potentially significant. The MEIR for the SPRA Master Plan covers hazards and hazardous material impacts for the proposed project and provides mitigation measures. Those mitigation measures that apply specifically to the proposed project are listed below.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measures will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

**HAZ-2** During site preparation and construction activities, if evidence of previously unidentified hazardous materials contamination is observed or suspected (i.e., stained or odorous soil, or oily or discolored water) construction activities shall cease and a Registered Environmental Professional II shall assess the situation. If necessary, the environmental professional shall prepare a sampling plan to collect soil and/or groundwater samples to determine whether or not the suspected location has been adversely affected by past activities. The samples shall be analyzed for the contaminants determined to be a potential health concern by the

environmental professional. Depending on the nature of the contamination (if any), the Hazardous Materials Division of the El Dorado County Department of Environmental Management shall be contacted for further direction, which could include further investigation or remediation to all applicable federal, State, and local standards.

## 7. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

During construction, there would be short-term soil disturbances within the project site; therefore, impacts are considered potentially significant. The MEIR for the SPRA Master Plan covers hydrology and water quality impacts for the proposed project and provides mitigation measures. Those mitigation measures that apply specifically to the proposed project are listed below.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measures will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

**HWQ-1** Proper timing of construction and maintenance activities throughout the year such that potential impacts to water quality are minimized or avoided.

**HWQ-2** Storm water runoff from developed impervious areas shall be pre-treated using applicable measures identified in the Storm Water General Permit, especially first flush, from roads and parking lots before discharging into existing waterways.

## 8. NOISE

The proposed project may expose persons to or generation of noise levels during construction; therefore, impacts are considered potentially significant. The MEIR for the SPRA Master Plan covers noise impacts for the proposed project and provides mitigation measures. Those mitigation measures that apply specifically to the proposed project are listed below.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measures will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

**Noise-1** Construction of potentially significant Master Plan components shall occur only during the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekends, and between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on federally recognized holidays.

The SNC Board has considered the environmental documentation prepared for the project, adopts the findings listed in this document, and approves the project. A Notice of Determination (NOD) indicating the results of these findings will be filed with the State Clearinghouse of the

Governor's Office of Planning and Research pursuant to Section 15096(i) of the State CEQA Guidelines. The Executive Officer of the SNC is authorized to file the NOD.

Certification:

I hereby certify that the statements furnished above present the data and information used to support the findings made herein pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15091 or 15096(h), and the facts, statements, and information presented herein, are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name Jim Branham

Title Executive Officer

# MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM

## 1.1 MITIGATION AND MONITORING PROGRAM CONTENTS

This document is the Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP) for the proposed Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project (SNC 322) (State Clearinghouse No. 2004102011), located in the Sly Park Recreation Area at 4771 Sly Park Road in Pollock Pines, El Dorado County, California. Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground are located in the northeast portion of the park along Lake Drive Road. The MMP includes a brief discussion of the legal basis for and the purpose of the program, discussion, and direction regarding complaints about noncompliance, a key to understanding the monitoring matrix, and the monitoring matrix itself.

## 1.2 LEGAL BASIS OF AND PURPOSE FOR THE MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM

California Public Resources Code §21081.6 requires public agencies to adopt mitigation monitoring or reporting programs whenever certifying an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). This requirement facilitates implementation of all mitigation measures adopted through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process.

The MMP contained herein is intended to satisfy the requirements of CEQA as they relate to the Subsequent Initial Study prepared for the Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project. It is intended to be used by El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) staff, participating agencies, the developer, project contractors, and mitigation monitoring personnel during implementation of the proposed project. The SNC is not responsible for implementing any of these measures and is not proposing any additional mitigation measures for this project.

Mitigation is defined by *CEQA Guidelines* §15370 as a measure that does any of the following:

- Avoids impacts altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
- Minimizes impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.
- Rectifies impacts by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment.
- Reduces or eliminates impacts over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the project.
- Compensates for impacts by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

## 1.3 BRIEF PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2007, the EID Board of Directors approved the Sly Park Recreation Area (SPRA) Master Plan to guide improvements, management, and operation of SPRA over the next 20 years. Prior to approving the SPRA Master Plan, the EID Board of Directors certified the Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR), which, as required by

CEQA (Public Resources Code 211000 et seq.), analyzed the potential effects of implementing the SPRA Master Plan. The proposed Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project is identified and discussed in the SPRA MEIR.

In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, a Subsequent Initial Study was prepared in November 2008 to provide further evaluation for the Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project. The purpose of the Subsequent Initial Study was to confirm whether there would be any new significant environmental impacts not addressed in the SPRA MEIR. The Subsequent Initial Study identified no new significant environmental impacts, and the specific mitigation measures previously identified in the SPRA MEIR that would apply to the proposed Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project are identified in the Mitigation Monitoring Table on the following pages.

#### 1.4 MITIGATION MONITORING TABLE

The Mitigation Monitoring Table identifies the mitigation measures proposed for the Hazel Creek and Hazel Creek Campground Restoration Project. These mitigation measures are reproduced from the Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) for the Sly Park Recreation Area (SPRA) Master Plan, and conditions of approval for the project. The table has the following columns:

**Mitigation Measure/Summary:** Lists the mitigation measures identified within the MEIR for a specific impact, along with the number for each measure enumerated in the MEIR.

**Implementation Phase:** Identifies at what point in time, review process, or phase the mitigation measures will be completed.

**Monitoring Phase:** Identifies at what point in time, review process, or phase the mitigation measures will be monitored.

**Enforcing Agency / Responsible Party:** References the EID department or any other public agency with which coordination is required to satisfy the identified mitigation measure.

**Verification of Compliance:** Spaces to be initialed and dated by the individual designated to verify adherence to a specific mitigation measure.

#### 1.5 NONCOMPLIANCE COMPLAINTS

Any person or agency may file a complaint asserting noncompliance with the mitigation measures associated with the proposed project. The complaint shall be directed to the EID in written form, providing specific information on the asserted violation. The EID shall conduct an investigation and determine the validity of the complaint. If noncompliance with a mitigation measure has occurred, the EID shall take appropriate action to remedy any violation. The complainant shall receive written confirmation indicating the results of the investigation or the final action corresponding to the particular noncompliance issue.

**TABLE 1-1: HAZEL CREEK AND HAZEL CREEK CAMPGROUND RESTORATION PROJECT**

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

Mitigation Measure		Implementation Phase	Monitoring Phase	Enforcing Agency / Responsible Party	Verification of Compliance		
					Initials	Date	Remarks
<b>AESTHETICS</b>							
AES-2	Avoid removal of existing trees. Adjust locations of facilities as practicable to minimize impacts to existing vegetation. Use retaining walls where feasible to protect existing trees from cut/fill within the drip-line. Where removal of trees is necessary, replant with fast growing, native species suitable to site conditions. Develop a Mitigation Monitoring Plan to ensure survival of plantings.	Prior to approval of final plans and specifications.	Pre-construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			
AES-4	Site facilities to minimize the need for extensive site grading. Avoid steep cut and fill banks that will have difficulty revegetating. Plant cut-and-fill banks to aid in revegetation. Use retaining walls where necessary to retain soil and minimize cut/fill banks. Consider the use of planting pockets or stepped walls with vegetation planted between tiers for retaining walls that cannot easily be screened by planting at the base of the wall.	During project planning and prior to the approval of final plans and specifications.	Pre-construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			
AES-5	Where feasible, conduct construction at times when it will not have significant impacts on SPRA visitors: off-season is preferable to peak-season, and weekdays are preferable to weekends.	During the construction phase.	During construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			
AES-7	Maintain plantings around parking areas to reduce glare and light impacts.	Following construction during normal park operations.	During construction.	Park Maintenance and Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			
AES-8	Minimize soil and vegetation disturbance during construction. Replant disturbed areas as soon after construction is completed as feasible.	Throughout construction.	Throughout construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			
<b>AIR QUALITY</b>							
AQ-1	Construction activities will limit the amount of actively disturbed ground areas to no more than 6 acres on any single day.	During construction.	During construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			
AQ-2	The construction contractor(s) shall maintain equipment in tune per manufacturer specifications. The construction contractor(s) shall use catalytic converters on gasoline-powered equipment. The construction contractor(s) shall not leave inactive construction equipment idling for prolonged periods (i.e., more than 5 minutes).	During construction.	During construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			

**TABLE 1-1: HAZEL CREEK AND HAZEL CREEK CAMPGROUND RESTORATION PROJECT**

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

Mitigation Measure		Implementation Phase	Monitoring Phase	Enforcing Agency / Responsible Party	Verification of Compliance		
					Initials	Date	Remarks
<b>BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES</b>							
BIO-1	This mitigation measure was deleted in the Final Master EIR for the SPRA Master Plan.	--	--	--	--	--	--
BIO-2	<p>The Hazel Creek restoration project will require a Corps permit as the restoration activities will be occurring within below the ordinary high water mark. This work would be covered under Nationwide Permit (NWP) 27, Stream and Wetland Restoration Activities. A pre-construction notification is required for the restoration of Hazel Creek and must be submitted to the Corps before work occurring within the creek corridor. Any permit conditions required by the Corps in the issuance of the permit will be followed for the duration of the restoration work.</p> <p>The stabilization of the bank along Lake Drive will require a Corps permit as it is occurring below the ordinary high water mark. This work would be covered under Nationwide Permit 13, Bank Stabilization; therefore NWP 13 shall be acquired before bank stabilization work occurring along Lake Drive. If the bank stabilization activity is less than 500 feet in length and the activity will not disturb more than one cubic yard per running foot, a post-notification to the Corps will be required to ensure compliance with this nationwide permit. If the length of bank stabilization is greater than 500 feet, a pre-construction notification package must be submitted to the Corps to ensure compliance with the permit. If a pre-construction package is required for the bank stabilization along Lake Drive, any permit conditions required by the Corps will be followed for the duration of the work.</p>	Prior to the implementation of creek restoration and bank stabilization efforts.	Pre-construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			
BIO-5	Construction of SPRA Master Plan elements may indirectly affect unnamed tributaries, creeks, or Jenkinson Lake from runoff during construction. If indirect impacts have the potential to occur during construction activities, additional measures may be required to maintain water quality standards of the waterways. If a 404 permit is required for the SPRA Master Plan, water quality concerns during construction shall be addressed in a required Section 401 water quality certification by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be required for	Prior to the approval of final plans and specifications and during construction.	Pre-construction / During construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			

**TABLE 1-1: HAZEL CREEK AND HAZEL CREEK CAMPGROUND RESTORATION PROJECT**

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

Mitigation Measure		Implementation Phase	Monitoring Phase	Enforcing Agency / Responsible Party	Verification of Compliance		
					Initials	Date	Remarks
	the entire SPRA Master Plan project. SWPPPs are required in issuance of a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) construction discharge permit by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) during construction is standard in most SWPPPs and water quality certifications. Examples of BMPs include stockpiling of debris away from regulated wetlands and waterways; immediate removal of debris piles from the site during the rainy season; use of silt fencing and construction fencing around regulated waterways; and use of drip pans under work vehicles and containment of fuel waste throughout the site during construction.						
BIO-6	Streambed Alteration Agreement shall be obtained from CDFG, pursuant to Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code, for each stream crossing and any other activities affecting the bed, bank or associated riparian vegetation of any stream within SPRA, specifically work that is occurring near Carpenter and Hazel Creeks. Appropriate mitigation measures shall be developed in coordination with CDFG in the issued 1602 agreement.	Prior to approval of final plans and specifications and during construction.	Pre-construction / During construction.	EID Project Manager, EID Environmental Review Division, and Construction Contractor.			
BIO-7	A pre-construction survey for California red-legged frog and foothill yellow-legged frog should be performed within any areas proposed for a bridge crossing or where work will be occurring within a riparian corridor. Generally, this includes work being performed in proximity to Hazel and Carpenter Creeks. Aquatic and upland habitat will be surveyed by a qualified biologist for the presence of California red-legged frog or foothill yellow-legged frog.  Because foothill yellow-legged frogs have been identified within Sly Park Creek within the SPRA, a clearance survey should be performed prior to construction to ensure no impacts will occur to this species that is known to occur within the SPRA. If this species is identified during the pre-construction clearance survey, any individuals should be safely re-located by a qualified professional out of the construction zone to an equivalent habitat located within the SPRA.	Prior to construction.	Pre-construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			

**TABLE 1-1: HAZEL CREEK AND HAZEL CREEK CAMPGROUND RESTORATION PROJECT**

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

Mitigation Measure		Implementation Phase	Monitoring Phase	Enforcing Agency / Responsible Party	Verification of Compliance		
					Initials	Date	Remarks
	The qualified biologist performing the survey should possess a valid California Department of Fish and Game Scientific Collecting Permit. Although California red-legged frogs have not been identified within the SPRA before, if this species is identified during a pre-construction survey, the USFWS should be contacted immediately for subsequent measures. No California red-legged frogs shall be moved or re-located as part of the pre-construction survey.						
BIO-8	As discussed in Table 4.7.3 of the Master EIR, several Master Plan components shall require a Corps permit and/or Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement. If either the Corps or California Department of Fish and Game require specific California red-legged frog or foothill yellow-legged frog impact avoidance measures, the applicant shall adhere to the conditions of the permit. These conditions are expected to include construction impact avoidance measures such as the presence of a biological monitor during creek restoration activities, a seasonal time restriction on work occurring within the creek bed, or a pre-construction survey.	Prior to and during construction.	Pre-construction / During construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			
BIO-9	Avoidance measures for reducing impacts to potential habitat for western pond turtle have been incorporated into the SPRA Master Plan as a design guideline to the maximum extent feasible. Also, the 50- and 100-foot setbacks as required under the El Dorado County General Plan will aid in the protection of western pond turtle and potential marsh habitat during construction activities. However, impacts may still occur during removal of existing campsites within the 50-foot buffer, construction of span bridges, and other project elements that are expected to occur within the 50-and 100-foot creek buffer.  A pre-construction clearance survey for western pond turtle is recommended before construction activities occurring within potential pond turtle habitat. Potential habitat for western pond turtle occurs along Sly Park and Hazel Creeks and potentially other perennial, slow-moving drainages. The clearance survey shall be performed during April or May when western pond turtle are most active and identifiable. It is assumed	Prior to and during construction.	Pre-construction / During construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			

**TABLE 1-1: HAZEL CREEK AND HAZEL CREEK CAMPGROUND RESTORATION PROJECT**

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

Mitigation Measure		Implementation Phase	Monitoring Phase	Enforcing Agency / Responsible Party	Verification of Compliance		
					Initials	Date	Remarks
	construction is not going to take place during the rainy season, a period when western pond turtle would be less identifiable. Open water areas with emergent vegetation with open rocks for basking shall be adequately surveyed to determine the presence or absence of western pond turtle within the creek corridors. The areas to be subject to clearance surveys shall be based upon final grading plans for each project element, specifically the two span bridges and campground reconfigurations. If western pond turtle are not observed, construction activities shall proceed as scheduled. If western pond turtle are observed, shall be consulted on subsequent impact avoidance measures.						
BIO-10	Signs shall be posted to discourage collecting and handling of aquatic wildlife by recreational users. Interpretive trail signage and kiosks proposed for specific campgrounds shall serve to inform the public of the sensitivity and the ecological importance for preserving of riparian habitat and creek corridors. Interpretive signs and kiosks shall also define Park rules and prohibit collecting aquatic wildlife (other than fishing). Also, design measures such as creek access controls (boulders and cable fencing) at Pine Cone, Rainbow, and Kamloop camps have been incorporated into the SPRA Master Plan project where applicable. The re-configuration of campsites away from Hazel Creek at Hazel Creek, Kamloop, and Rainbow campgrounds would widen the buffer to Hazel Creek to enhance riparian habitat value; the increased distance of campsites to Hazel Creek shall further discourage foot traffic along Hazel Creek and reduce the likelihood of aquatic wildlife collection.	During project planning and prior to approval of final plans and specifications.	Pre-construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division, and Park Management.			
BIO-14	Construction activities are not expected to occur during the rainy season; however, nesting territories of other raptor species could be established during winter months that could be disturbed by construction activities during that time. Specifically, resident owl species are known to initiate nest building and breeding during early winter months. For this reason, pre-construction nesting raptor surveys shall be performed within SPRA. Based on the final grading plans for specific SPRA Master Plan components, any trees that are planned for removal shall be surveyed for the presence of active raptor nests. A	During project planning and prior to and during construction.	Pre-construction / During construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division, and Park Management.			

**TABLE 1-1: HAZEL CREEK AND HAZEL CREEK CAMPGROUND RESTORATION PROJECT**

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

Mitigation Measure		Implementation Phase	Monitoring Phase	Enforcing Agency / Responsible Party	Verification of Compliance			
					Initials	Date	Remarks	
	<p>pre-construction raptor survey is recommended to determine the activity status of any identified raptor nests within SPRA including a 500-foot buffer from construction activities, if construction of any new facilities is expected to occur during the typical nesting season (February-September). The survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than 30 days before the start of construction activities. If more than 30 days lapse between the survey and the start of construction, an additional survey shall be performed. If the nests are found and considered to be active, construction activities shall not occur within 500 feet of the nests until the young have fledged and the appropriate resource agencies (USFS, USFWS, or CDFG) shall be consulted. If construction activities are proposed to occur during the non-breeding season (October-January), a survey is not required and no further studies are necessary. As discussed in BIO-11 through BIO-13, in order to avoid impacts to northern goshawk, bald eagle, California spotted owl, and other nesting raptors during their typical breeding seasons, construction activities should not occur from February through September.</p> <p>Avoidance measures for reducing impacts to nesting raptor species and potential nest trees have been incorporated into the SPRA Master Plan as a design guideline to the maximum extent feasible. For example, during campground re-configuration construction activities, no trees with a DBH of 6 inches or greater shall be removed; raptors are not likely to nest within trees less than 6 inches DBH. Ongoing recreational activities are not expected to have a significant affect on nesting raptors, as any raptors nesting in areas of recreational use will have become habituated to human activity.</p>							
BIO-15	<p>Avoidance measures for reducing impacts to federally sensitive invertebrate species have been incorporated into the SPRA Master Plan as a design guideline to the maximum extent feasible. Additionally, the 50- and 100-foot setbacks as required under the El Dorado County General Plan policies would aid in protecting federally sensitive invertebrate species. Also, the -configuration of</p>	Prior to construction.	Pre-construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.				

**TABLE 1-1: HAZEL CREEK AND HAZEL CREEK CAMPGROUND RESTORATION PROJECT**

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

Mitigation Measure		Implementation Phase	Monitoring Phase	Enforcing Agency / Responsible Party	Verification of Compliance		
					Initials	Date	Remarks
	<p>campgrounds shall not allow construction within 50 feet from the ordinary high-water mark of any creeks.</p> <p>Before construction occurring within the creek corridors for the two proposed span bridges, these potential habitat areas shall be surveyed to determine the presence or absence of Button's Sierra sideband, Gold rush hanging scorpionfly, South Forks ground beetle, and spiny rhyacophilan caddisfly. A qualified entomologist or invertebrate zoologist shall be retained that is familiar with the biology, habitat requirements, and identification of these species. An adequate number of surveys shall be performed over a period when the invertebrate species are identifiable. These species are assumed to be active and identifiable year-round. If any of these federally sensitive invertebrate species are identified within the SPRA area, any individuals should be safely re-located by a qualified entomologist out of the construction zone to an equivalent habitat located within the SPRA. If these species are not identified, bridge construction shall proceed as scheduled and no further mitigation should be necessary.</p>						
BIO-16	<p>Before the removal of any trees or structures within SPRA, a clearance survey shall be performed to determine the presence of bat roosts. The final grading plans for each individual project shall determine the trees and structures to be removed which shall be subject to the pre-construction survey. The pre-construction survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist familiar with the identification of bat species and roosting sign. If special-status roosting bats are found during the pre-construction survey, CDFG or the USFWS should be consulted regarding measures to minimize impacts to roosting bats during construction. No trees or Park facility structures shall be removed that is used as by roosting bats. If special-status bats are not found during the pre-construction survey, no mitigation measures should be necessary for special-status bats.</p>	Prior to construction.	Pre-construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			
BIO-18	<p>The following measures are designed to protect existing trees and minimize impacts during construction activities.</p>	Prior to approval of final plans and specifications and	Pre-construction / During construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			

**TABLE 1-1: HAZEL CREEK AND HAZEL CREEK CAMPGROUND RESTORATION PROJECT**

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

Mitigation Measure	Implementation Phase	Monitoring Phase	Enforcing Agency / Responsible Party	Verification of Compliance		
				Initials	Date	Remarks
<p>To protect the root zone, drift fencing (or similar protective barrier approved by El Dorado County) a minimum of 4 feet tall, shall be installed at least two feet outside the drip line of each protected tree. A circle with a radius measurement from the trunk of the tree to the tip of its longest limb shall constitute the drip line protection area for preserved trees and shall establish the Critical Root Zone (CRZ) of the tree. The drift fencing shall not be moved once installed.</p> <p>Removal of tree branches and/or roots shall be minimized to the extent practical and shall be in compliance with the 2001 "American National Standard for Tree Care Operations – Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance-Standard Practices (Pruning)" (A300, Part 1) and with the 1995 International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) companion publication of "Tree Pruning Guidelines." The removal or severing of any roots on trees to be retained shall only be done at the discretion of an onsite arborist and shall not cause permanent damage to the tree. Roots shall be cut cleanly as close to the excavation as possible. Roots with cut faces of more than 1.5 inches shall be coated with emulsified asphalt or other approved coating formulated for use on damaged plant tissues. Any tree impacted by activity within its CRZ, including cuts to branches and/or roots shall be considered impacted and subject to the same mitigation as a removed tree.</p> <p>In the event that a stand of trees will be preserved, the entire stand may be fenced, as a group, per the above stated guidelines. Fencing shall be shown on construction plans and shall be installed before the onset of grading activities. Signs shall be attached to the fencing describing the trees as protected.</p> <p>No grading, vehicular traffic, dumping of excavated debris, materials storage, or disposal of chemicals or contaminated water shall be allowed within the CRZ of the trees to be retained as shown on final site plans. This includes but is not limited to washing concrete from tools or trucks; paint materials; sheetrock, mud, or stucco materials; or other chemicals such as solvents and</p>	during construction.					

**TABLE 1-1: HAZEL CREEK AND HAZEL CREEK CAMPGROUND RESTORATION PROJECT**

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

Mitigation Measure		Implementation Phase	Monitoring Phase	Enforcing Agency / Responsible Party	Verification of Compliance		
					Initials	Date	Remarks
	<p>herbicides. Nails, ties, screws, or other fasteners shall not be use to attach signs, braces, etc. to any tree trunks or branches.</p> <p>Drainage patterns on the site shall not be modified so that water accumulates in, or is diverted across, the CRZ of any preserved tree.</p> <p>Construction crews shall be informed of the above measures and shall be required to comply with the guidelines of this mitigation plan. They will also be provided a copy of the map illustrating areas to be fenced and avoided. Before construction, all construction personnel shall be required to sign a document acknowledging receipt and understanding of all tree protection and preservation requirements.</p> <p>A certified arborist shall monitor the protected trees periodically during construction to ensure the above-mentioned measures are carried out and to monitor the health and structure of the trees.</p> <p>If construction activities intercept major roots outside of the CRZ, a certified arborist shall be consulted to advise construction crews on how best to minimize damage to roots.</p> <p>Whenever feasible, utility trenches shall be established outside of the CRZ. If utilities must be located within this area, they should be placed in a conduit that is bored through the soil. Immediately backfill and water to the point of saturation all areas where soil cuts and trenches enter the CRZ of any existing tree.</p>						
BIO-19	<p>To mitigate for the loss of trees, the following tree replacement measures shall be implemented for individual trees removed as part of the SPRA Master Plan:</p> <p>Based on final grading plans, each SPRA Master Plan project that would require tree removal shall be subject to an arborist survey and report. All trees that occur within the construction footprint will be inventoried by an ISA</p>	Prior to approval of final plans and specifications, and prior to and during construction.	Pre-construction / During construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			

**TABLE 1-1: HAZEL CREEK AND HAZEL CREEK CAMPGROUND RESTORATION PROJECT**

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

Mitigation Measure	Implementation Phase	Monitoring Phase	Enforcing Agency / Responsible Party	Verification of Compliance		
				Initials	Date	Remarks
<p>Certified Arborist. The survey will include numbering each qualifying tree (per El Dorado County guidelines) and recording required data such as species, size, health, and structural condition. Following the inventory of all trees proposed for removal, an arborist report will be completed and submitted to the Manager of Environmental Review Division.</p> <p>Replacement shall be required for all healthy native trees equal to or greater than 6 inch diameter at breast height (DBH) that will be removed. A healthy tree is defined as a tree with an average to be below-average amount of deadwood with respect to the tree's size and growing environment and little evidence of stress. A healthy tree shall also exhibit a low risk for failure as a public hazard in that it has minimal evidence of wounds, cavities, decay, or indication of hollowness within the root crown, trunk, or primary limbs, as well as lack of co-dominant stems or included bark in major trunk or branch attachments.</p> <p>For all trees, at least one (1) one-gallon seedling shall be replanted for every two inches of impact for a mitigation ratio of 1:2, thus a 12 inch DBH tree would require six (6) one-gallon replacement seedlings. Replacement seedlings shall be of the same genus and species removed.</p> <p>For oak (<i>Quercus</i> spp.) trees removed, replacement trees may be up to but in no case larger than 15-gallon size or to be consistent with General Plan Policy 7.4.5.2, the replacement requirement shall be calculated on an inch for inch basis, whichever measure is more stringent on tree replacement. The ratio of a 5-gallon oak replacement seedling to inches removed shall be at a minimum 1:3; the ratio of a 15-gallon oak replacement seedling to inches removed shall be at a minimum of 1:6.</p> <p>Tree re-planting may take place anywhere in SPRA in a location that provides conditions suitable to the growth requirements of the species including areas identified for reforestation in the Forest Management Plan.</p> <p>Replacement stock seedlings shall be purchased from a</p>						

**TABLE 1-1: HAZEL CREEK AND HAZEL CREEK CAMPGROUND RESTORATION PROJECT**

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

Mitigation Measure		Implementation Phase	Monitoring Phase	Enforcing Agency / Responsible Party	Verification of Compliance		
					Initials	Date	Remarks
	<p>source in the SPRA region where feasible. A complete tree monitoring plan shall be required for the replacement trees.</p> <p>Monitoring shall be designed to ensure compliance with the established performance standard and to discover and remediate conditions that are detrimental or potentially detrimental to the plantings to ensure the continued success of the plantings. A minimum of eighty percent (80%) of the total plantings will survive annually (exhibiting fair health characteristics or higher) for a period of 3 years from the date of planting. If the plantings fail to meet the performance standard, they shall be replaced annually on an inch-for-inch basis, under the guidelines of this management plan to meet the 80% survival goal.</p> <p>Monitoring of the plantings will occur annually for three years, from the date of installation, conducted by a certified arborist or qualified biologist. Monitoring will consist of a site assessment to evaluate the health of each planting. Annual monitoring reports shall be submitted to the Manager of Environmental Review Division.</p> <p>The project proponent, or its successor, is the responsible party for monitoring plantings within SPRA. Any maintenance or remediation required to achieve the performance standard is the responsibility of the project proponent.</p>						
<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>							
CR-12	Train staff to recognize cultural deposits and stop work in the event of an unanticipated discovery.	Prior to and during construction.	Pre-construction / During construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division and Park Management.			
CR-13	Stop work if human remains are unearthed and contact the El Dorado County Coroner.	During construction.	During construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division, and Park Management.			

**TABLE 1-1: HAZEL CREEK AND HAZEL CREEK CAMPGROUND RESTORATION PROJECT**

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

Mitigation Measure	Implementation Phase	Monitoring Phase	Enforcing Agency / Responsible Party	Verification of Compliance		
				Initials	Date	Remarks

**GEOLOGY/SOILS**

GEO-1	The applicant shall hire a California-registered geotechnical engineer experienced and knowledgeable in the practice of soils engineering to perform site-specific geotechnical studies. The study shall identify any areas of unstable geology or soils, as well as map and characterize the extent of slope instability or potential for landsliding. The report shall provide recommendations for project design alterations, considerations or other features which could reduce the potential hazards to an acceptable level. All feasible recommendations from the study(s) shall be required as part of the project approval and may include the designation of building envelopes, where appropriate. Areas of landsliding identified within the studies shall be repaired or avoided by development to the extent that they would pose no risk to life or property.	During project planning and prior to approval of final plans and specifications.	Pre-construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			
GEO-2	Final grading plans shall be submitted to a licensed professional geotechnical engineer for review and recommendation. All recommendations shall be incorporated into project design.	During project planning and prior to approval of final plans and specifications.	Pre-construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			

**HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

HAZ-2	During site preparation and construction activities, if evidence of previously unidentified hazardous materials contamination is observed or suspected (i.e., stained or odorous soil, or oily or discolored water) construction activities shall cease and a Registered Environmental Professional II shall assess the situation. If necessary, the environmental professional shall prepare a sampling plan to collect soil and/or groundwater samples to determine whether or not the suspected location has been adversely affected by past activities. The samples shall be analyzed for the contaminants determined to be a potential health concern by the environmental professional. Depending on the nature of the contamination (if any), the Hazardous Materials Division of the El Dorado County Department of	During construction.	During construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division, and Park Management.			
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**TABLE 1-1: HAZEL CREEK AND HAZEL CREEK CAMPGROUND RESTORATION PROJECT**

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

Mitigation Measure		Implementation Phase	Monitoring Phase	Enforcing Agency / Responsible Party	Verification of Compliance		
					Initials	Date	Remarks
	Environmental Management shall be contacted for further direction, which could include further investigation or remediation to all applicable federal, State, and local standards.						
<b>HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY</b>							
HWQ-1	Proper timing of construction and maintenance activities throughout the year such that potential impacts to water quality are minimized or avoided.	During project planning and prior to and during project construction and maintenance activities.	Pre-construction / During construction.	EID Project Manager, Manager, EID Environmental Review Division, and Park Management.			
HWQ-2	Storm water runoff from developed impervious areas shall be pre-treated using applicable measures identified in the Storm Water General Permit, especially first flush, from roads and parking lots before discharging into existing waterways.	During construction.	During construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division, and Park Management.			
<b>NOISE</b>							
NOISE-1	Construction of potentially significant Master Plan components shall occur only during the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekends, and between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on federally recognized holidays.	During construction.	During construction.	Manager, EID Environmental Review Division.			

## **LEAD AGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION**

If you would like to view the supporting environmental documentation prepared for this project by the lead agency, click on the following links:

[\*\*Sly Park Master Plan Draft Master Environmental Impact Report\*\*](#)

[\*\*Sly Park Master Plan Final Master Environmental Impact Report\*\*](#)

[\*\*Sly Park Master Plan Record of Approval\*\*](#)

Note: these are large PDF files that may take a while to load. For best performance, right-click and choose "Save Target as"; the PDF file will download to your computer, and then you can open the local copy of the PDF document.

## NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

To: Office of Planning and Research  
State Clearinghouse  
P.O. Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
1521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

Subject: **FILING OF NOTICE OF DETERMINATION IN COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 21108 OR 21152 OF THE PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE**

Project Title: Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project (SNC 419)

State Clearinghouse No.: SCH# 2010062071

Project Location: Lower Ash Creek, one mile north of State Highway 299 between the towns of Bieber and Adin

County: Lassen and Modoc Counties

Project Description: Pit Resource Conservation District (RCD) has requested \$1,000,000 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Proposition 84 Grants Program to fund the restoration of approximately 2,415 acres of degraded meadow, riparian, and aquatic conditions along the lower portion of Ash Creek. The purpose of this project is to restore the historic wet meadow and associated stream channel that have been degraded by a variety of past management practices. A proven restoration method known as "pond-and-plug" will be used to block an eroding channel that has down-cut through a meadow, and redirect the stream to historic remnant channels. This will be accomplished by partially filling the incised channel. Portions of the channel will be excavated and enlarged to create ponds, and newly excavated material will be used to fill areas in between the ponds that are referred to as "plugs." The redirected flow in the remnant channels will raise the water table and rehydrate the site, gradually reestablishing the wet meadow conditions. Topsoil and vegetation from the excavated areas, including sod and willows, will be salvaged and used to revegetate the "plugs."

As  Lead Agency  a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has approved the above described project on March 3, 2011, and has made the following determinations regarding the above described project:

1. The project  will  will not have a significant effect on the environment.
2. A  Negative Declaration  Mitigated Negative Declaration  Environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation measures  were  were not made a condition of project approval.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan  was  was not adopted for this project.
5. A Statement of Overriding Considerations  was  was not adopted for this project.
6. Findings  were  were not made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

This is to certify that the Mitigated Negative Declaration is available to the General Public at the following location:

Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

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Jim Branham

Executive Officer

(530) 823-4670  
Phone #

TO BE COMPLETED BY OPR ONLY

Date Received For Filing and Posting at OPR:

**RESPONSIBLE AGENCY  
ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Project Title:  
Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Restoration Project (SNC 419)
2. Responsible Agency Name and Address:  
Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603
3. Contact Person and Phone Number:  
Marji Feliz, Program Coordinator (530) 823-4679
4. Project Location:  
Lower Ash Creek; one mile north of State Highway 299 between the towns of Bieber and Adin in Lassen and Modoc Counties
5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address:  
Pit Resource Conservation District  
P.O. Box 301  
Bieber, CA 96009
6. General Plan Designation:  
Agriculture General
7. Zoning:  
Agricultural Preserve / Agriculture Exclusive
8. Description of Project:  
Pit Resource Conservation District (RCD) has requested \$1,000,000 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Proposition 84 Grants Program to fund the restoration of approximately 2,415 acres of degraded meadow, riparian, and aquatic conditions along the lower portion of Ash Creek. The purpose of this project is to restore the historic wet meadow and associated stream channel that have been degraded by a variety of past management practices. A proven restoration method known as "pond-and-plug" will be used to block an eroding channel that has down-cut through a meadow, and redirect the stream to historic remnant channels. This will be accomplished by partially filling the incised channel. Portions of the channel will be excavated and enlarged to create ponds, and newly excavated material will be used to fill areas in between the ponds that are referred to as "plugs." The redirected flow in the remnant channels will raise the water table and rehydrate the site, gradually reestablishing the wet meadow conditions. Topsoil and vegetation from the excavated areas, including sod and willows, will be salvaged and used to revegetate the "plugs."
9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:  
The surrounding lands are primarily used for agriculture and rangeland. Most of the surrounding landscape is farmland, grassland, or sagebrush scrub.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required:  
California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Pit Resource Conservation District (RCD) proposes an implementation project to address degraded meadow, riparian, and aquatic conditions along the lower portion of Ash Creek. The total project restoration area is approximately 2,415 acres and consists of roughly 137,000 linear feet of stream channels. The project will also protect an additional 1,085 acres of meadow that is at risk from the degraded 2,415 acre area. This restoration project is consistent with the Upper Pit River Watershed Management Strategy, a recently completed, large-scale collaborative planning effort. Once concluded, the Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project will be the largest meadow restoration project in the Sierra Region.

The dominant feature of the project site is a degraded stream and meadow along Ash Creek. Although the landform evolved for thousands of years without significant degradation, nonsustainable management practices including channelization, improper bridge and culvert placement and design, and historic over-grazing have caused severe degradation in the past century. The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) purchased the area in 1988, but despite efforts to improve habitat conditions for wildlife, the historic disconnect between the stream channels and their floodplain has allowed meadow degradation to continue. This project proposes to restore the physical connection of Ash Creek's many stream channels to their floodplain by implementing the "pond and plug" restoration technique. The technique is also consistent with CDFG's goal to improve waterfowl conditions, as ponds would be used by thousands of migratory and resident waterfowl that concentrate in the Wildlife Area.

Overall, the project will attenuate flood flows, increase shallow ground water storage, improve water quality conditions, improve aquatic resources, improve water management infrastructure, and improve meadow and riparian productivity and health. Threatened species that thrive in broad meadow systems, including the greater sandhill crane, will also benefit from the restoration. Nesting success of this species in particular has declined in degraded meadow systems due to the meadows' dry nature and resulting lack of predatory protection. In addition to improved aquatic and riparian habitat for fish and terrestrial species, the meadow productivity will also benefit livestock. The State currently leases portions of the Wildlife Area for haying livestock grazing during the summer, and revenue from these leases is used by the State and Pit RCD to fund other projects. The final component of the restoration project is the re-design of an existing water delivery system maintained and operated by the Wildlife Area. The current system delivers water downstream for seasonal wetland management, but does so inefficiently. The re-design of this system has been integrated into the restoration design, which not only sustains the stream and meadow, but also increases efficiency of water management and use. The overall result is a project that stimulates the economy while restoring, protecting, and sustaining a working landscape.

## PREVIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration

California Department of Fish and Game, *Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project*, SCH No. 2010062071. May 2010.

### Proposed Project Goals

The proposed project has six goals which are described below:

*Goal 1 – Restore the natural form and function of the stream and floodplain:* Redesign or restoration of the channel will immediately reconnect the stream channel to its historic floodplain. This will allow for frequent, low-intensity floods: a feature that is characteristic of functioning meadows. Reconnecting the stream channel to its floodplain will directly affect the length (approximately 120,000 - 137,000 linear feet) of streambank restored, the amount of ground water held within the meadow system, the amount of land (approximately 2,000 - 2,415 acres) restored within the stream channel and floodplain, and the stream flow during the rainy and dry seasons. The restoration and subsequent flooding of the meadow surface will provide a mechanism for trapping sediment, as discussed in Goal 2.

*Goal 2 – Stop soil erosion at the site:* Elimination of existing gullies and entrenched channels will reduce the delivery of sediment to lower reaches of the Ash Creek watershed, bringing the amount of downstream sediment delivery near, if not equal, to pre-settlement levels. Instead of serving as a sediment contributor and conduit to downstream reaches, the meadow will once again serve as a sediment trap.

*Goal 3 – Raise the local water table:* Restoration of stream channel and floodplain functions will soon raise the shallow ground water table. The primary benefits of this effect include:

- a. Flood attenuation: the meadows will once again store water for slow release instead of rapidly releasing runoff in concentrated flows. Released water will be cleaner, cooler and more consistent in flow throughout the year.
- b. Riparian health: the higher water table will allow wetland/wet meadow vegetation to become re-established, and will improve conditions for riparian corridors along the primary stream and secondary stream channels.

By accomplishing Goals 1-3, the restored channel and meadow will replicate the historic stream and floodplain processes, and natural channel migration across the floodplain will occur on a geologic time scale. These historic processes include the natural release of flow energies, which reduces erosive effects of high flow events, and the slow, manageable movement of sediment through the watershed. Finally, restoration of the stream and floodplain will enable the system to “evolve” with global climatic changes, thereby reducing the necessity of management actions in maintaining the functionality of the stream meadow system.

*Goal 4 – Improve habitat values for the site:* The restored channel will be designed with habitat features to accommodate a wide range of aquatic and riparian organisms. These features are largely absent in the existing gullied channel. The project will also incrementally improve conditions for native fish within Ash Creek. Of particular interest will be improved habitats for the greater sandhill crane, waterfowl, shorebird, and neo-tropical songbird. Various game species will also benefit, including mule deer and valley quail, as will an innumerable amount of non-game species. Livestock forage values will also increase, and will provide for continued agricultural outputs of this once productive rangeland.

*Goal 5 – Improve agricultural productivity:* Experience with similar projects in the region indicates that forage outputs can actually increase while meeting other project watershed and habitat goals. Modern grazing management is drastically different from historic practices, and the State will conduct their grazing program to meet multiple management objectives while sustaining the resource. As conditions exist today, even complete elimination of grazing would not result in significant improvements to watershed function during any human time scale. Improved grazing management will ensure that, after an initial rest period, livestock utilization will not adversely affect meadow productivity for ecological or forage outputs.

*Goal 6 – Document the Performance Measures (No. 1-4, 6, 12, and 13) identified in the Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s Category 1 Grant Program.* The four mandatory Performance Measures identified within the Category 1 Grant Program will be documented throughout the life of the project. Documentation will include estimating the number of people who read newspaper and newsletter articles, recording the number of people who attend meetings where the project is discussed or presented, recording the dollar value of resources leveraged, documenting the number and types of jobs created, and quantifying the number of new, improved, or preserved economic activities. The number of acres of land and stream channel restored will also be quantified, as well as the changes in shallow ground water and stream flow. The benefits resulting from project completion are expected to last indefinitely with minimal active maintenance. Ensuring vegetative health by utilizing proper grazing management techniques will be the key to long-term success.

Finally, the proposed project will improve connectivity between past projects conducted in the Wildlife Area (e.g. Big Swamp Enhancement Project, Pilot Butte 3/Elkins 1C Wetland Enhancement Project) and key District projects identified in the *Pit RCD Watershed Management Strategy* (Rose Canyon Creek Restoration Project, Lower Rose Creek Restoration Project, Shaw Ranch Streambank Protection and Enhancement Project, and Mason/Monchamp/Balcom Streambank Stabilization and Floodplain Enhancement Project). The proposed project is also consistent with treatment of conditions identified in the *Pit River Watershed Assessment* as contributing to stressors of water quality in the Upper Pit River, and will address seven of the nine goals created by the *Upper Pit River Watershed Management Strategy*.

#### Impacts Identified Relevant to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Request

The action before the Sierra Nevada Conservancy is providing \$1,000,000 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s Proposition 84 Grants Program to the Pit RCD to restore approximately 2,415 acres of degraded meadow, riparian, and aquatic conditions along the lower portion of Ash Creek. The Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration identifies potential resource impacts related to biological resources, cultural resources, and hazards/hazardous materials. Specifically, potential biological resources impacts may include the disturbance of nesting greater sandhill cranes and/or Swainson’s hawk, the disturbance of special-status plant species, short-term disturbance of Waters of the United States and Other Wetlands, and temporary disturbance of common wildlife and fish species. Cultural resources impacts may include potential adverse changes in the significance of historical and/or archeological resources, the potential to inadvertently disturb human remains during ground-disturbing activities, and the potential for damage to buried archaeological sites. Potential impacts on terrestrial and aquatic resources from hazards/hazardous materials also exist. Based on the proposed project’s Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, the above-mentioned potential impacts are considered significant, but mitigable. The project proponent will implement measures identified in the proposed project’s Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration to lessen potential impacts to biological resources, cultural resources, and hazardous/hazardous materials.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact."

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture Resources              | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources      | <input type="checkbox"/> Geology / Soils          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards / Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality          | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation / Traffic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems              | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |   |

**DETERMINATION (To be completed by the Responsible Agency)**

On the basis of this evaluation:

The SNC Board determined that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by, or agreed to by, the project proponent. An **INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** was prepared that adequately analyzed the action for which the Sierra Nevada Conservancy will provide grant funding, mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project, and the SNC Board has adopted findings pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15096(h) and 15091. The Department of Fish and Game as the lead agency also adopted a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program that identifies the timing of mitigation measures and which parties will be responsible for implementing them; the SNC is not responsible for implementing any of these measures and is not proposing any additional mitigation measures.

Signature

Date

Jim Branham

Executive Officer

Printed Name

Title

Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Responsible Agency

**CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT  
RESPONSIBLE AGENCY  
STATEMENT OF FINDINGS**

**Project Title:** Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project (SNC 419)

**State Clearinghouse Number:** SCH# 2010062071

**Project Location:** Lower Ash Creek, one mile north of State Highway 299 between the towns of Bieber and Adin

**Description of Project:** Pit Resource Conservation District (RCD) has requested \$1,000,000 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Proposition 84 Grants Program to fund the restoration of approximately 2,415 acres of degraded meadow, riparian, and aquatic conditions along the lower portion of Ash Creek. The purpose of this project is to restore the historic wet meadow and associated stream channel that have been degraded by a variety of past management practices. A proven restoration method known as the "pond-and-plug" will be used to block an eroding channel that has down-cut through a meadow, and redirect the stream to historic remnant channels. This will be accomplished by partially filling the incised channel. Portions of the channel will be excavated and enlarged to create ponds, and newly excavated material will be used to fill areas in between the ponds that are referred to as "plugs." The redirected flow in the remnant channels will raise the water table and rehydrate the site, gradually reestablishing the wet meadow conditions. Topsoil and vegetation from the excavated areas, including sod and willows, will be salvaged and used to revegetate the "plugs".

**Findings:** Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21002.1(d) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15096(g) and (h), the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), as a Responsible Agency, has reviewed and considered the following documents prepared by the Lead Agency (CEQA):

California Department of Fish and Game, *Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project*, SCH No. 2010062071. May 2010.

Using its independent judgment, the SNC makes the following finding:

The above listed document: a) adequately addresses the potential impacts of the project, and b) is adequate for use by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) for assessing the potential impacts of funding the grant request now before the SNC for approval.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy hereby makes the following findings regarding the significant effects of the proposed project, pursuant to Public Resources Code 21081 and Section 15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

## **1. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

The Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration identifies potential impacts related to biological resources. Specifically, potential biological resource impacts may include the disturbance of nesting greater sandhill cranes and/or Swainson's hawk, the disturbance of special-status plant species, short-term disturbance of Waters of the United States and Other Wetlands, and temporary disturbance of common wildlife and fish species.

**Potential Impact on Nesting Greater Sandhill Cranes and Swainson's Hawk.** The project could potentially cause the loss of greater sandhill crane and Swainson's hawk nest(s) if the species are found nesting near or within the project area. These impacts could occur from disturbance by construction activities between April 1 through August 15 which could cause the destruction of eggs/young or abandonment of active nest(s). DFG Code 3503.5 prohibits the destruction of raptor nests, and any loss of eggs or individuals would be considered a significant impact. Additionally, impacts on these two species would be considered "take" under the California Endangered Species Act. Impacts are considered potentially significant.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measures will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

**Mitigation Measure W-1. Conduct pre-construction surveys for greater sandhill crane if construction activities will occur before August 1.** Greater sandhill cranes typically begin nesting on ACWA in early April, and most young fledge by July 15. However, some individual nests have been found after July 15, likely representing pairs that lost a nest during their first attempt, and the second attempt therefore extends longer into the nesting season. Because of the short construction window (estimated at 90 days), activities will need to start in the summer as soon as cranes have completed nesting (i.e. late July). A qualified wildlife biologist will monitor the proposed construction areas during the later part of the nesting season (July) to determine if any cranes are still nesting. Once the biologist determines that cranes are no longer nesting within the project area, construction activities may begin, and no further mitigation measures would be required.

**Mitigation Measure W-2. Conduct pre-construction surveys for Swainson's Hawk if construction activities will occur before August 1.** Swainson's hawk typically begins nesting in the Big Valley area in early May, and most young fledge by mid-August. However, some individual nests may be active after August 15, likely representing pairs that lost a nest during the first nest attempt; consequently the second attempt extends longer into the nesting season. Successful pairs that have successfully fledged young but are still in the post-fledging dependency period could also still be "attached" to the nest site. Because of the short construction window (estimated at 90 days), activities will need to start in the summer as soon as possible (i.e. late July). A qualified wildlife biologist will monitor the proposed construction areas during the latter part of the nesting season (July) to determine if Swainson's hawks are nesting. If the biologist determines that no Swainson's hawks are nesting within .5 miles of the construction areas, no further mitigation is required.

**Potential Impacts on Special-Status Plants (including Lemmon's milk-vetch, Castlegar hawthorne, Boggs Lake hedge-hyssop, and Howell's thelypodium).** The project could potentially cause the loss of individuals and/or colonies of the above special-status plant species. These impacts could occur from direct disturbance during construction activities or from changes in the groundwater hydrology and resulting vegetative responses as a result of restoration of the project site. The loss of individuals and/or colonies of these species could be considered a significant impact if a substantial portion of the local population is affected. Impacts are considered potentially significant.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measure will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

**Mitigation Measure W-3. Conduct pre-construction surveys for special-status plant species in ground disturbance areas prior to construction.** Prior to construction in ground disturbing areas, wet meadow edge habitat, and large vernal pools/seasonally managed wetlands, a qualified botanist familiar with the identification of special-status plant species will conduct presence/absence surveys for Lemmon's milk-vetch, Castlegar hawthorne, Boggs Lake hedgehyssop, and Howell's thelypodium. If any of these species are found in ground-disturbance areas, construction will avoid or minimize impacts if feasible. If construction activities cannot avoid Lemmon's milk-vetch colonies or minimize impacts on them, the upper 1 to 4 inches of soil will be stockpiled and replaced as the top soil layer after construction to replace fragmented plant parts and seeds potentially present in the soil profile. Populations of Sheldon's sedge that cannot be avoided will be excavated for propagation and/or direct planting in "new" moist sites, such as banks of the design channels or margins of newly created wetland areas. Individual Castlegar hawthorne shrubs will be avoided if possible. If avoidance is not feasible, individual shrubs will be relocated, or fruits/seeds and/or cuttings will be used for planting in suitable habitat within the project area. If Boggs Lake hedge-hyssop is found, construction activities will avoid direct impacts on this species. If it is found and cannot be avoided, DFG will be consulted for appropriate actions. If none of the above special-status plant species are found during surveys, no further mitigation is required.

**Short-Term Disturbance of Waters of the United States from Construction Activities.** The project will have a short-term effect on federally protected wetlands (including other waters of the United States). Ash Creek, a perennial drainage, is located within the construction area and would be considered "other waters" of the United States subject to jurisdiction under section 404 of the CWA. In addition, DFG regulates activities that would interfere with the natural flow of, or substantially alter the channel, bed, or bank of, a lake, river, or stream. These activities are regulated under CDFG Code Section 1601 for public agencies and Section 1603 for private individuals. Requirements to protect the integrity of biological resources and water quality are often conditions of streambed alteration agreements. Conditions that may be required by DFG include avoidance or minimization of vegetation removal, use of standard erosion-control measures, limitations on the use of heavy equipment, limitations on work periods to avoid impacts on fisheries and wildlife resources, and requirements to restore degraded sites or compensate for permanent habitat losses. Impacts are considered potentially significant.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measures will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

**Mitigation Measure V-1: Comply with state and federal permit conditions.** The Pit RCD will coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to confirm that the work is authorized under a Nationwide Permit (NWP). The Pit RCD will also coordinate with DFG to

consult with the Corps; the project will qualify for a NWP 27. Under the NWP 27, the Corps authorizes the restoration of pool and riffle patterns and restoration of riparian areas. The Pit RCD will incorporate all state and federal permit conditions into the final project design and site restoration plans.

**Mitigation Measure V-2: Restore drainage topography to naturally functioning conditions.** The Pit RCD will require contractors to follow the supervision of the restoration design consultant responsible for implementing the restoration design plan in order to ensure that naturally functioning drainage topography occurs following construction. Most of the “new” channels that will transport flow within the project area are remnant stream channels within the meadow that are well vegetated and occurred prior to gully incisement. These channels will function to restore the stream and floodplain to natural conditions. A small portion of design channel will be constructed in order to redirect the stream to these natural channels. Detailed analysis of the design channel was calculated and presented in the restoration design plan.

**Temporary Disturbance of Common Wildlife and Fish Species and Interference with Migratory Corridors.** The proposed project will disturb the movements of native resident wildlife and fish species on the project site. This disturbance will result from construction activities. In addition, the proposed project will temporarily affect the natural flow of water in Ash Creek when the flow is redirected to the remnant channels at the start of the construction period. However, water will continue to flow downstream to provide habitat for downstream resident fish and wildlife species in the remnant channel(s). The remnant channels will allow the stream to function properly to transport bedload and suspended sediment, provide natural gravel for fish, and eliminate downstream scour from heavy flood flows. The gully channel will no longer be receiving flow and will slowly dry as water seeps into the ground. Because of this, some resident fish may become stranded as pools dry and become isolated. These fish may then be potentially impacted from desiccation, predation, or direct impacts from construction activities. Significant impacts could occur if construction activities affected a substantial portion of the local populations.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measure will reduce the project’s environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

**Mitigation Measure W-4. Conduct rescue surveys for fish and western pond turtle stranded in aquatic habitat within the incised gully channel and relocate them to undisturbed areas.** Rescue surveys will be conducted for fish and northwestern pond turtle that become stranded within the incised gully channel once flow has been redirected to the remnant channels on the meadow floodplain. It is assumed that most fish and turtles will move to other areas when aquatic conditions become dry. However, in case they do not or cannot move, a qualified wildlife biologist familiar with the biology of these species will conduct surveys at appropriate times to detect and capture them. The biologist will also obtain and/or hold the necessary permits to capture and move the fish and turtles to suitable habitat. If no fish or turtles are found within the aquatic habitat, no further mitigation would be required. No further mitigation measures are required once surveys have been conducted and fish and turtles have been relocated.

## 2. CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration identifies potential impacts related to cultural resources. Specifically, cultural resource impacts may include potential adverse changes in the significance of historical and/or archeological resources, the potential to inadvertently disturb human remains during ground-disturbing activities, and/or the potential for damage to buried archaeological sites.

**Potential Adverse Change in the Significance of a Historical and/or Archeological Resource.** Restoration and construction activities could potentially cause an adverse change in the significance of a historical and/or archeological resource. These adverse changes could result from ground-disturbing activities or changes in vegetation communities. Impacts are considered potentially significant.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measure will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

**Mitigation Measure CR-1: Review archeological records, conduct preconstruction archeological surveys, and prepare an archeological resource management report.**

Prior to construction activities, a qualified archeologist will review the archeological records compiled by the Northeast Information Center, Chico, and the DFG, and conduct a complete heritage-resource inventory of the area of potential effects (APE). The APE includes the active work zone and access routes as well as meadow areas to be affected by restored groundwater elevations. The APE will be flagged prior to initiation of survey work in order to facilitate the survey. A complete inventory entails a systematic pedestrian examination of the surface of all identified portions of the project area. It may also require resurveying previously inventoried properties or "spot-checking" to ensure the adequacy of previous coverage. Beyond the exposure of the ground surface for assistance in ground visibility, no subsurface excavation is authorized. The archeologist will also record sites utilizing "Historic Property Recording Specification" format. All newly discovered prehistoric, ethnographic, and historical heritage resources encountered within and directly adjacent to the project areas(s) will be recorded. Boundaries of all heritage resources will be identified using red- and black-striped flagging and/or other appropriate means as agreed to with the F/D HPM, e.g. Area Controlled Signs. Heritage resource sites will be recorded using State Historic Preservation Office (DPR – 523) site forms. Site boundaries will be recorded using a resource-grade Global Positioning System (GPS). The archeologist will also obtain California State Trinomial numbers for sites in the project area for inclusion in the final report. In-Situ Artifact Recording procedures will be followed during both inventory and site-recording activities. No collection of artifacts is authorized.

A draft report will be submitted to and reviewed by DFG and the Pit RCD prior to construction. The inventory report will conform to guidelines in the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation "Archaeological Resource Management Reports: Recommended Contents and Format" or Secretary of Interior's "Standards & Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation: Reporting Identification Results." This includes preparing a Heritage Resources Inventory Report (HRIR) with site records attached for each separate undertaking. The report shall describe the results of the prefield literature search

and sensitivity assessment, methodology, and results of inventory efforts. At minimum, the report will include vicinity, project location, inventory coverage, previous coverage, site location, and isolated data figures.

**Potential to Inadvertently Disturb Human Remains During Ground-Disturbing Activities.**

Although not expected, ground-disturbing activities have the potential to disturb human remains. Although this potential is considered low because most construction is located in a habitat type (wet meadow) that was not regularly used for burying humans due to its wet nature and difficulty of digging, the impact is considered potentially significant.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measure will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

**Mitigation Measure CR-2: State compliance.** Whenever human remains of Native American origin are discovered, close compliance with state requirements will be followed. This includes immediate cessation of work and notification of the appropriate authorities.

**Potential for Damage to Buried Archaeological Sites.** Although not expected, ground-disturbing activities have the potential to damage buried archaeological sites. Although this potential is considered low because the habitat type (wet meadow) was not regularly used to bury human remains due to its wet nature and difficulty of digging, the impact is considered potentially significant.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measure will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

**Mitigation Measure CR-3: Work stoppage.** Immediately upon discovery of any cultural resources, work will be stopped in the immediate area. Work will only be started again upon notification of the appropriate authorities and approval for restart.

### **3. HAZARDS/HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

The Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration identifies potential resource impacts related to hazards/hazardous materials. Potential impacts on terrestrial and aquatic resources from hazards/hazardous materials may occur.

**Potential Impacts on Terrestrial and Aquatic Resources from Hazardous Materials.**

Impacts on aquatic and terrestrial resources could potentially result from the accidental release of hazardous materials into creeks or ground surfaces. Impacts are considered potentially significant.

**Finding:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.

**Facts in Support of the Finding:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy concurs with the lead agency that the following mitigation measure will reduce the project's environmental effects to a less-than-significant level.

**Mitigation Measure HM-1: Fueling and Maintenance outside of riparian and aquatic areas.** Refueling and equipment maintenance will be conducted in designated areas outside of the riparian and aquatic zones. The designated area will be located in an upland area on "flat" ground.

The SNC Board has considered the environmental documentation prepared for the project, adopts the findings listed in this document, and approves the project. A Notice of Determination (NOD) indicating the results of these findings will be filed with the State Clearinghouse of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research pursuant to Section 15096(i) of the State CEQA Guidelines. The Executive Officer of the SNC is authorized to file the NOD.

Certification:

I hereby certify that the statements furnished above present the data and information used to support the findings made herein pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15091 or 15096(h), and the facts, statements, and information presented herein, are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name Jim Branham

Title Executive Officer

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**  
**FOR THE**  
**ASH CREEK WILDLIFE AREA RESTORATION PROJECT**

State of California – Dept. of Fish and Game  
Northern Region  
601 Locust Street  
Redding, California 96001  
Contact: Steve Burton  
(530) 459-1129

**JULY 2010**

## **SECTION 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires public agencies to adopt a mitigation reporting or monitoring program for all projects for which an environmental impact report has been prepared (Public Resources Code, Section 21081.6; State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091). This is intended to ensure the implementation of all mitigation measures adopted through the CEQA process. Specifically, Section 21081.6(a) (1) of the Public Resources Code requires a lead or responsible agency to "... adopt a reporting or monitoring program for changes made to the project or conditions of project approval, adopted to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment."

The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) proposes the construction of the Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project.

DFG is the lead agency for this project under CEQA. A notice of determination for the project was filed on August 17, 2010 by the Northern Region Habitat Conservation Program Manager.

This mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP) includes all mitigation measures adopted in the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

## **SECTION 2**

### **PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

The MMRP for the Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project will be in place through all phases of the project including design, construction, and operation. As lead agency under CEQA, DFG is responsible for the overall implementation and management of the MMRP, including the project design and construction phases of work, and the long-term operation and maintenance of the project.

DFG is responsible for ensuring that the following procedures and measures are implemented. Where noted, DFG shall include appropriate mitigation measures or conditions in third-party contracts entered into by the agency.

1. An implementation plan has been prepared for each mitigation measure that identifies the responsible party for implementation; the timing of compliance, including the applicable project phase(s) and monitoring frequency; and specific details about compliance verification. The Mitigation Measure Implementation Plan is attached as Appendix A of the MMRP.
2. A qualified specialist(s) will perform or monitor mitigation activities requiring particular expertise or professional licenses and certifications.
3. Mitigation measures will be included as appropriate in applicable design-build bid packages.
4. The Mitigation Measure Implementation Plan and MMRP Reporting Forms will be distributed to appropriate parties so that specific actions can be developed to carry out

the necessary mitigation.

5. Appropriate individuals at the job site, based on the nature of the mitigation measure, shall initial and date the Mitigation Measure Implementation Plan to note the implementation and completion of mitigation measures.
6. The DFG Director or an assignee will approve by signature and date the completion of each item identified on the MMRP Reporting Form.
7. All MMRP Reporting Forms for an impact issue requiring no further monitoring will be signed off as completed by the DFG Director or an assignee, at the bottom of the MMRP Reporting Form.
8. Unanticipated circumstances requiring the modification or addition of mitigation measures may arise. The DFG Director will be responsible for approving any such modifications or additions. A MMRP Reporting Form will be completed for any such modifications. The completed form will be provided to the appropriate design, construction, or operations personnel for implementation. Any approved modifications or additions shall also be reflected in the Mitigation Measure Implementation Plan.
9. The DFG Director has the authority to stop the work of contractors if compliance with any aspects of the MMRP is not occurring after appropriate notifications have been issued.

The Mitigation Measure Implementation Plan and all active and completed MMRP Reporting Forms will be kept on file at the DFG headquarters. Forms will be available upon request at the following address:

Department of Fish and Game  
Northern Region  
601 Locust Street  
Redding, California 96001  
Contact: Steve Burton

## **SECTION 3**

### **PROGRAM PHASES**

The MMRP described herein is intended to provide focused yet flexible guidelines for monitoring the implementation of the mitigation measures discussed in the Mitigated Negative Declaration and adopted by DFG. The Mitigation Measure Implementation Plan provided in Appendix A lists, by number, each mitigation measure adopted for the project. Table 1, provided below, correlates each measure by its assigned number to the specific phase of the project (i.e., design, construction, and/or operation) to which the measure applies. A MMRP Reporting Form (Appendix B) will be filled out by the DFGS Director or an assignee for each mitigation measure identified in Appendix A.

#### **3.1 DESIGN PHASE**

The design phase includes preparation of construction designs (e.g. drawings by project design

consultants). Bid packages are also compiled for release to prospective construction contractors. Prior to initiation of design phase activities, the measure(s) applicable to each design phase activity are identified by the DFG Director or assignee and reviewed with the design consultant and/or other responsible parties. If the DFG Director or assignee determines that there is noncompliance with any of the mitigation measures to be implemented during the design phase, corrective actions are required and a follow-up review is conducted after the design documents are modified in response to the DFG Director's comments. Reporting Forms are completed after each activity is performed.

During the design phase, any subsequent environmental permits and clearances (such as those related to water quality) will be identified by the DFG Director or assignee. The DFG Director or assignee will serve as the liaison with regulatory agencies and coordinate the preparation of permit applications and technical information for providing conditions permit requirement information . Depending on the permit, the permit applicant may be the DFG Director or assignee (i.e. Pit Resource Conservation District) or the construction contractor through the DFG Director.

### **3.2 CONSTRUCTION PHASE**

A pre-construction meeting will be held with each contractor prior to the initiation of any construction activity for which a mitigation measure is required. The DFG Director or assignee will attend the meeting to explain the MMR-P, roles and responsibilities, and implementation requirements. Construction activities will be monitored as conditions dictate to ensure that required mitigation measures are implemented. Applicable measures will be discussed with construction contractors periodically as needed to facilitate their implementation.

### **3.3 OPERATIONAL PHASE**

After project construction, the operational aspects of the MMRP will be the sole responsibility of the DFG Director. The DFG Director or assignee will review the MMRP annually to ensure compliance of the project operation with mitigation measures.

**Table 1  
Applicable Project Phases for Implementation of Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation Measure	Applicable Phase			
	Design	Construction		Operation
		Before	During	
1. Biological Resources – Preconstruction Surveys				
1.1 Preconstruction Survey: Greater sandhill crane		X		
1.2 Preconstruction Survey: Swainson's hawk		X		
1.3 Preconstruction Survey: Special-status plants		X		
1.4 Comply with State and Federal Permits (e.g. 401, 404)			X	
1.5 Restore drainage topography to naturally functioning conditions		X	X	
1.6 Conduct rescue surveys for fish and northwestern pond turtles		X		
2. Cultural Resources				
2.1 Review records, conduct pre-construction surveys, prepare report		X		
2.2 Work stoppage (e.g. discovery of human remains)			X	
3. Hazards and Hazardous Materials				
3.1 Fuel and Maintain Equipment outside of Riparian areas			X	



**LOWER ASH CREEK WILDLIFE AREA RESTORATION PROJECT  
MITIGATION MEASURE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Mitigation Measure No.	Mitigation Measure	Responsible Party for Implementation	Verification of Implementation (Responsible Party)		Timing of Compliance				Verification of Compliance				Comments
			Initials	Date	Design <sup>1</sup>	During Construction	Operation	Frequency	Name and Affiliation	Method of Compliance Verification	Signature	Date	
1	<p><b>Biological Resources:</b> The following mitigation measures will be incorporated into the proposed project:</p> <p><b>1.1</b> Greater sandhill cranes typically begin nesting on ACWA in early April, and most young fledge by July 15. However, some individual nests have been found after July 15, likely representing pairs that lost a nest during their first attempt, and their second attempt therefore extends longer into the nesting season. Because of the short construction window (estimated at 90 days), activities will need to start in the summer as soon as cranes have completed nesting (i.e. late July). A qualified wildlife biologist will monitor the proposed construction areas during the later part of the nesting season (July) to determine if any cranes are still nesting. Once the biologist determines that cranes are no longer nesting within the project area, construction activities may begin, and no further mitigation measures would be required.</p>	CDFG				X Before construction							
	<p><b>1.2</b> Swainson's hawk typically begins nesting in the Big Valley area in early May, and most young fledge by mid-August. However, some individual nests may be active after August 15, likely representing pairs that lost a nest during the first nest attempt, consequently the second attempt extends longer into the nesting season; or successful pairs that have successfully fledged young but are still in the post-fledging dependency period and</p>	CDFG				X Before construction							

Mitigation Measure No.	Mitigation Measure	Responsible Party for Implementation	Verification of Implementation (Responsible Party)		Timing of Compliance				Verification of Compliance				Comments
			Initials	Date	Design <sup>1</sup>	During Construction	Operation	Frequency	Name and Affiliation	Method of Compliance Verification	Signature	Date	
	<p>"attached" to the nest site. Because of the short construction window (estimated at 90 days), activities will need to start in the summer as soon as possible (i.e. late July). A qualified wildlife biologist will monitor the proposed construction areas during the latter part of the nesting season (July) to determine if Swainson's hawks are nesting. If the biologist determines that no Swainson's hawks are nesting within .5 miles of the construction areas, no further mitigation is required.</p>												
	<p><b>1.3</b> Prior to construction in ground-disturbing areas, wet meadow edge habitat, and large vernal pools/seasonally managed wetlands, a qualified botanist familiar with the identification of special-status plant species will conduct presence/absence surveys for Lemmon's milk-vetch, Castlegar hawthorne, Boggs lake hedge-hyssop, and Howell's thelypodium. If any of these species are found in ground-disturbance areas, construction will avoid or minimize impacts if feasible. If construction activities cannot avoid Lemmon's milk-vetch colonies or minimize impacts on them, the upper 1 to 4 inches of soil will be stockpiled and replaced as the top soil layer after construction to replace fragmented plant parts and seeds potentially present in the soil profile. Populations of Sheldon's sedge that cannot be avoided will be excavated for propagation and/or direct planting in "new" moist sites, such as banks of the design channels or margins of newly created wetland areas. Individual Castlegar hawthorne shrubs will be avoided if possible. If avoidance is not feasible, individual shrubs will be</p>	CDFG				X Before construction							

Mitigation Measure No.	Mitigation Measure	Responsible Party for Implementation	Verification of Implementation (Responsible Party)		Timing of Compliance				Verification of Compliance				Comments
			Initials	Date	Design <sup>1</sup>	During Construction	Operation	Frequency	Name and Affiliation	Method of Compliance Verification	Signature	Date	
	relocated, or fruits/seeds and/or cuttings will be used for planting in suitable habitat within the project area. If Boggs Lake hedge-hyssop is found, construction activities will avoid direct impacts on this species. If it is found and cannot be avoided, DFG will be consulted for appropriate actions. If none of the above special-status plant species are found during surveys, no further mitigation is required.												
	<p><b>1.4</b> The Pit RCD will coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to confirm that the work is authorized under a Nationwide Permit (NWP). The Pit RCD will also coordinate with DFG to obtain the required streambed alteration agreements if needed. Based on past similar projects and consultation with the Corps, the project will qualify for a NWP 27.</p> <p>Under the NWP 27, the Corps authorizes the restoration of pool and riffle patterns and restoration of riparian areas. The Pit RCD will incorporate all state and federal permit conditions into the final project design and site restoration plans.</p>	Pit RCD				X Before construction							
	<p><b>1.5</b> The Pit RCD will require contractors to follow the supervision of the restoration design consultant responsible for implementing the restoration design plan in order to ensure that naturally functioning drainage topography occurs following construction. Most of the "new" channels that will transport flow within the project area are remnant stream channels within the meadow that are well vegetated and occurred prior to gully incisement. These channels</p>	Design/Build Contractor					X During and at the end of construction						

Mitigation Measure No.	Mitigation Measure	Responsible Party for Implementation	Verification of Implementation (Responsible Party)		Timing of Compliance				Verification of Compliance				Comments
			Initials	Date	Design <sup>1</sup>	During Construction	Operation	Frequency	Name and Affiliation	Method of Compliance Verification	Signature	Date	
	will function to restore the stream and floodplain to natural conditions. A small portion of design channel will be constructed in order to redirect the stream to these natural channels. Detailed analysis of the design channel was calculated and presented in the restoration design plan.												
	<b>1.6</b> Rescue surveys will be conducted for fish and northwestern pond turtle that become stranded within the incised gully channel once flow has been redirected to the remnant channels on the meadow floodplain. It is assumed that most fish and turtles will move to other areas when aquatic conditions become dry. However, in case they do not or cannot move, a qualified wildlife biologist familiar with the biology of these species will conduct surveys at appropriate times to detect and capture them. The biologist will also obtain and/or hold the necessary permits to capture and move the fish and turtles to suitable habitat. If no fish or turtles are found within the aquatic habitat, no further mitigation would be required. No further mitigation measures are required once surveys have been conducted and fish and turtles have been relocated.	CDFG					X During and at the end of construction						
<b>2</b>	<b>Cultural Resources:</b> The following measures will be incorporated into the proposed project:  <b>2.1</b> Prior to construction activities, a qualified archeologist will review the archeological records compiled by the Northeast Information Center, Chico, and the DFG and conduct	CDFG/ Contractor				X Before construction							

Mitigation Measure No.	Mitigation Measure	Responsible Party for Implementation	Verification of Implementation (Responsible Party)		Timing of Compliance				Verification of Compliance				Comments
			Initials	Date	Design <sup>1</sup>	During Construction	Operation	Frequency	Name and Affiliation	Method of Compliance Verification	Signature	Date	
	<p>a complete heritage-resource inventory of the area of potential effects (APE). The APE includes the active work zone and access routes as well as meadow areas to be affected by restored groundwater elevations. The APE will be flagged prior to initiation of survey work with flagging to facilitate survey. A complete inventory entails a systematic pedestrian examination of the surface of all identified portions of the project area. It may also require resurveying previously inventoried properties or "spot-checking" to ensure the adequacy of previous coverage. Beyond the exposure of the ground surface for assistance in ground visibility, no subsurface excavation is authorized.</p> <p>The archeologist will also record sites utilizing "Historic Property Recording Specification" format. All newly discovered prehistoric, ethnographic, and historical heritage resources encountered within and directly adjacent to the project areas(s) will be recorded. Boundaries of all heritage resources will be identified using red- and black-striped flagging and/or other appropriate means as agreed to with the F/D HPM, e.g. Area Controlled Signs. Heritage resource sites will be recorded using State Historic Preservation Office (DPR – 523) site forms. Site boundaries will be recorded using a resource-grade Global Positioning System (GPS). The archeologist will also obtain California State Trinomial numbers for sites in the project area for inclusion in the final report. In-Situ Artifact Recording procedures will be followed during</p>												

Mitigation Measure No.	Mitigation Measure	Responsible Party for Implementation	Verification of Implementation (Responsible Party)		Timing of Compliance				Verification of Compliance				Comments
			Initials	Date	Design <sup>1</sup>	During Construction	Operation	Frequency	Name and Affiliation	Method of Compliance Verification	Signature	Date	
	<p>both inventory and site-recording activities. No collection of artifacts is authorized.</p> <p>A draft report will be submitted to and reviewed by DFG and the Pit RCD prior to construction. The inventory report will conform to guidelines in the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation "Archaeological Resource Management Reports: Recommended Contents and Format" or Secretary of Interior's "Standards &amp; Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation: Reporting Identification Results." This includes preparing a Heritage Resources Inventory Report (HRIR) with site records attached for each separate undertaking. The report shall describe the results of the prefield literature search and sensitivity assessment, methodology, and results of inventory efforts. At minimum, the report will include vicinity, project location, inventory coverage, previous coverage, site location, and isolated data figures.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Whenever human remains of Native American origin are discovered, close compliance with state requirements will be followed. This includes immediate cessation of work and notification of the appropriate authorities.</p>												
3	<p><b>Hazardous and Hazardous Materials:</b> The following measures will be incorporated into the proposed project:</p> <p><b>3.1</b> Refueling and equipment maintenance will be conducted in designated areas outside of the</p>	Design/Build Contractor				X							

Mitigation Measure No.	Mitigation Measure	Responsible Party for Implementation	Verification of Implementation (Responsible Party)		Timing of Compliance				Verification of Compliance				Comments
			Initials	Date	Design <sup>1</sup>	During Construction	Operation	Frequency	Name and Affiliation	Method of Compliance Verification	Signature	Date	
	riparian and aquatic zones. The designated area will be located in an upland area on "flat" ground.												

## **LEAD AGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION**

If you would like to view the supporting environmental documentation prepared for this project by the lead agency, click on the following link:

[Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Restoration Project](#)

Note: this is a large PDF file that may take a while to load. For best performance, right-click and choose "Save Target as"; the PDF file will download to your computer, and then you can open the local copy of the PDF document.

### **Background**

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) launched its first Grant Program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2007-08, using funds allocated to it through Proposition 84, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coast Protection Bond Act of 2006. In that first and subsequent grant rounds, we used a competitive application process for the identification and selection of projects to receive grant funding. The competitive process consisted of distributing and conducting outreach around a broad set of guidelines outlining how much money was available each year, how it would be allocated and the general criteria that would be used to evaluate applications, along with specific application forms and materials. Each round had a set deadline for receipt of applications, followed by an extensive evaluation and technical review process leading to staff recommendations and Board authorizations.

Funding was allocated equally per Subregion, with a portion being awarded without regard to geographic location. This allowed the funding of high benefit projects as widely and evenly as possible across the Region to help remedy the historic lack of State investment in the Sierra, resulting in building relationships and providing value to local communities. At the same time, the process did not provide for a targeted or strategic approach to project solicitation.

Assuming that the Board acts on the recommendations for FY 2010-11 Grant Program at today's meeting, we will only have +/- \$10 million left in Proposition 84 funds to distribute. At the last meeting the Board discussed input from applicants, grantees and staff regarding the degree of time and effort that goes into these applications, coupled with the desire to be as strategic as possible in how the final \$10 million in grant funds gets distributed. As a result, staff has been tasked with developing ideas for how we might address these and other concerns.

### **Current Status**

Based on Board direction and additional conversations with stakeholders in the Region, staff has fleshed out some ideas for allocation of the remaining Proposition 84 funds.

### **Overarching Issues**

All projects would be required to meet statutory requirements of the SNC's enabling legislation and Proposition 84. As a reminder, this includes the following:

#### ***SNC Statutory Program Areas***

Projects must address one or more of the following program areas, as outlined in the legislation creating the SNC, with projects addressing multiple areas being preferred:

- Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation;
- Protect, conserve, and restore the Region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources;
- Aid in the preservation of working landscapes;

- Reduce the risk of natural disasters, such as wildfires;
- Protect and improve water and air quality;
- Assist the Regional economy through the operation of the SNC's program; and,
- Undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public.

***Proposition 84 and General Obligation Bond Act Requirements***

Eligible projects must contribute to the protection or restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources. In addition, General Obligation Bond Law (Government Code §16720 et seq.) specifies that bond funds may only be used for certain listed purposes, primarily related to construction, acquisition or maintenance of so-called capital assets, which are defined as tangible physical properties and/or infrastructure, as well as certain equipment and other costs related to construction or acquisition, including planning, engineering, construction management, design work, environmental impact reports and assessments, required mitigation expenses, appraisals, etc.

2011-12 & 2012-13 Grants Program

SNC Staff is recommending the following policy direction for development of a 2011-12 and 2012-13 grant program.

- ***Develop the grant program as a two-year program.*** This helps stakeholders to know whether their project will meet eligibility criteria and when funding will be available, allowing them to plan accordingly, as well as providing more time for SNC Staff to work with prospective applicants on project development and more consistent evaluation by being able to assess like projects within each round. This approach assumes a distribution of approximately \$5 million of remaining Proposition 84 funds over each of the next two fiscal years. SNC Staff will develop a single set of guidelines covering the two-year period for Board review, with a target of approval at the September 2011 Board meeting.
- ***Maintain guidance of approximately 75% of funds going to “on the ground” projects*** (Category One). This goal allows the SNC to achieve significant tangible impacts on the ground with the 75 percent Category One projects, while still allowing the opportunity to assist in preparation of beneficial projects for future funding with the remaining 25 percent (Category Two).
- ***Target the remaining funding to one or more of the proposed strategic plan program area foci*** (discussed in more detail below): Tourism and Recreation, Healthy Forests/Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative, Agricultural Land/Working Landscapes and/or Watershed Protection and Restoration, as a means of supporting SNC's strategic direction over the next two years.

- ***Fund Allocation Alternative 1*** – maintain Subregional allocations by dividing the \$5 million equally among the six Subregions each year, and assure the spread of funds by lowering individual project caps:
  - allocate +/- \$833,000 per year in each of the six Subregions for projects meeting guideline criteria;
  - Category One projects to be capped at \$250,000 each; and,
  - Category Two projects to be capped at \$50,000 each.
  
- ***Fund Allocation Alternative 2*** – focus fund allocation strategically and programmatically based on project benefits (and not primarily on geographic location) by distributing the remaining funds across the entire Region without guaranteed Subregional allocations; assure the spread of funds by lowering individual project caps:
  - allocate approximately \$5 million across the Region in each of the next two fiscal years, with consideration given to geographic distribution and project diversity as key factors in the evaluation process;
  - within each \$5 million, allocate at least \$4 million for Category One projects and up to \$1 million for Category Two projects;
  - Category One projects capped at \$250,000 each; and,
  - Category Two projects capped at \$50,000 each.
  
- ***Areas of Grant Program Focus (based on Strategic Plan)***

The four external areas of focus adopted by the Board at the December 2010 meeting are listed below, including the types of projects that might be eligible for funding under the Proposition 84 requirements and SNC's statutory program areas:

Tourism and Recreation

Projects would need to support the social and economic needs for increased levels and diversity of sustainable tourism and recreation throughout the Sierra Nevada, including use of public lands, while protecting the natural resource values associated with recreation and tourism. This could include actions that preserve current sustainable activities, reduce or eliminate negative impacts of current or increased recreational use – particularly to watershed resources, or create infrastructure directly related to achieving the first two objectives.

Healthy Forests/Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI)

Projects would need to foster collaboration locally and Regionally in support of a cohesive, economically viable, and sustainable approach to reducing the risk of large, damaging fires, and restoration of forest ecological health or creation of infrastructure with a direct relationship to achieving first two objectives. This could include projects that result in, or lead to, reduction of fuels in areas of fire

risk, restoration of forest stands, meadows and riparian areas, post-fire rehabilitation and creation of wood processing infrastructure necessary for these activities to occur.

#### Working Landscapes/Agricultural Lands

Projects would need to lead to, or result in, the preservation of working ranches, farms or forests. This would include actions that preserve activities occurring on ranches and farms that result in sustainable economic, ecological, and social benefits to communities, people, and their environments. Projects could include conservation easements and actions necessary for such easements (i.e. appraisals, surveys, etc.), as well as other eligible projects that allow current agricultural activities to continue.

#### Watershed Protection and Restoration

Projects other than those that would meet criteria above would need to increase the long-term health and sustainability of watersheds in the Sierra Nevada, resulting in improved water quality, increased natural storage of water and improved habitat conditions. This could include projects that protect or restore watershed function, reduce or eliminate watershed impacts or otherwise result in or lead to improved watershed condition.

Since the funding source, Proposition 84, is watershed-focused at its base, staff recommends using *Working Landscapes/Agricultural Lands and Healthy Forests/SNFCI* as the two focus areas for the remaining two years of grant funding. Regarding the other two focus areas, Watershed Protection and Restoration will, by definition, be a primary outcome of any funded project due to the intent of Proposition 84, and Tourism and Recreation-focused projects generally have a harder time making a clear nexus to Proposition 84 goals. If we use these two areas of focus, we recommend having the first round concentrate on working landscapes and using the second round for healthy forest-related projects, since most healthy forest projects are restoration or site-improvement-based and, therefore, need more time to complete CEQA, permitting and other requirements.

#### Next Steps

Based on Board direction, staff intends to conduct additional outreach around these ideas and bring back a formal recommendation for Board consideration at the June 2011 meeting. Once the Board has approved a formal proposal, staff will develop a timeline and revise the Proposition 84 Grant Guidelines and application materials, as necessary, conduct outreach to stakeholders on the program, and launch the public application solicitation for FY 2011-12 & 2012-13. It should be noted that at this time, there are numerous questions around future sales of the bonds necessary to fund future projects. SNC staff will continue to monitor this situation, as it could lead to changes in the schedule of future grant rounds.

**Recommendation**

**Staff recommends that the Board direct staff to solicit public input on pursuing a two-year grant program based on the policy direction outlined above, using Alternative 2 to guide allocation of funds within the Region, with a focus on working landscapes in the first year and healthy forests in the second year. A more detailed recommendation will be made to the Board at the June meeting, based on public comment and further review by staff.**