



Board Meeting Agenda
March 4-5, 2009

March 4, 2009
Field Trip

12:00 - 5:00 PM

Members of the Board and staff will participate in a field trip focusing on issues and activities relevant to the Conservancy's mission in the North Central Subregion. The field trip will begin with a tour of the Sierra Nevada Brewery's sustainability practices at 1075 East 20th Street, Chico, at 11:00 AM and will conclude at approximately 5:00 PM. A detailed agenda for the field trip can be found at www.sierranevada.ca.gov. Members of the public are invited to participate in the field trip but are responsible for their own lunch and transportation. Limited space on the bus may be available, please call (530) 823-4672 to determine availability. The public is welcome to attend a reception following the field trip Sierra Nevada Brewery Mezzanine.

March 5, 2009
Board Meeting
Sierra Nevada Brewery Big Room
1075 East 20th Street
Chico, CA 95928

9:00AM

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Oath of Office for New Boardmembers**
- IV. Approval of December 5, 2008 Meeting Minutes**
- V. Public Comments**
Provide an opportunity for the public to comment on non-agenda items.
- VI. Chairman's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**
 - a. State Budget Update
- VII. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**
 - a. Budget/Staffing Update
 - b. Use of Proposition 84 Funds
 - c. SNC License Plate
 - d. National Geographic Geotourism Maps
 - e. SNC Outreach Efforts
 - f. Placer County Carbon/Biomass Project
 - g. CSU Chico, Northeast Information Center Presentation

VIII. Deputy Attorney General's Report (INFORMATIONAL)

a. Jack Laws in the Classroom Project

IX. 2009 Board Meeting Schedule (ACTION)

The Board will review the schedule of meetings for 2009 and may make changes to the meeting schedule.

X. Strategic Plan Update (ACTION)

The Board will review and may take action on proposed changes to the SNC's Strategic Plan.

XI. Status of 2008-09 Grants Program (ACTION)

The Board will be provided with a status report on the 2008-09 Grants Program and make take action to revise the 2008-09 Grants Guidelines. The Board may provide direction to staff relative to actions relating to current year grants, including possible extension of application expiration dates.

XII. 2009-10 Grants Guidelines (ACTION)

The Board will be provided with an overview of the proposed 2009-10 Grants Guidelines, including changes from current guidelines. The Board may provide staff direction in preparation of a public review draft of the guidelines. The Board may authorize a committee of the Board to provide guidance to staff and potential to approve the Guidelines following public review.

XIII. Boardmembers' Comments

XIV. Public Comments

XV. Adjournment

Meeting Materials are available on the SNC website at www.sierranevada.ca.gov. For additional information or to submit written comment on any agenda item, please contact Mrs. Burgess at (530) 823-4672 or tburgess@sierranevada.ca.gov. or 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 4, 2008**

I. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Weygandt called the meeting to order at 9:04AM.

II. Oath of Office for New Boardmembers

Deputy Attorney General Christine Sproul administered the oath of office to new Boardmembers Robert Schladale representing the Department of Finance and Todd Ferrera representing the Resources Agency.

III. Roll Call

Present: John Brissenden, Todd Ferrera (alternate for Mike Chrisman, Brian Dahle, Byng Hunt, Jon McQuiston, Bob Kirkwood, Robert Schladale (alternate for Tom Sheehy), Byron Sher, Robert Weygandt, Steve Wilensky, Ron Warner alternate for Rose Comstock, Beth Pendleton, Bill Haigh and David Graber.

Absent: BJ Kirwan

IV. Approval of October 2, 2008 Meeting Minutes

There were no changes to the Meeting Minutes.

Action: Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Wilensky seconded a motion to approve the October 2, 2008 Board Meeting Minutes. Boardmember Dahle and Boardmember Warner abstained from voting. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Public Comments

Vice Chair Weygandt asked for public comment on items not on the agenda.

Pete Devine, Education Programs Coordinator, Yosemite Association indicated that his organization is pursuing a grant for their watershed classroom project. He acknowledged SNC for the hard work in the communities and environmental sustainability efforts.

VI. Chairman's Report

a. State Budget Update

Vice Chair Weygandt asked Executive Officer Branham to update the Board on the current situation. Branham noted it is a difficult situation in Sacramento and will get into the SNC budget further in his report to the Board. Branham asked Boardmember Schladale to comment on the overall budget.

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Schladale stated that the state's spending deficit is at \$28 billion and rising and will grow because the economy continues to deteriorate. He indicated that bonds are "supported by the state's General Fund," but with the state credit rating there is a question as to whether the state can even sell bonds. He noted that some public agencies have attempted to sell bonds and have received no bidders; this is a serious situation and will need cooperation across the board.

b. Report from Future Funding Board Committee

Boardmember Wilensky gave an overview of a meeting of the Future Funding Committee on which he and Boardmember Sher serve stating there were four basic areas considered: 1) Identifying additional sources of funding and developing partnerships with other agencies; 2) Ensure support of SNC in future bond ballot measures as a more long term effort; 3) Capitalize on and use the experience of "SNC's superb staff" for fund distribution, on a fee-for-service basis; 4) Increase public and private partnerships by targeting urban areas such as the San Francisco Bay area indicating that the area greatly benefits from the nature of the projects that we embark upon.

Wilensky suggested we reflect on the results of the last election, in terms of what it means for our Region, especially regarding economic conversion. He stated that the SNC needs to be ready with clear plans and an inspired vision. He also indicated that the committee is evaluating the SNC license plate effort. He noted the goal for the March Board meeting is to share a list of short, mid-term, and long-term goals and that the committee has asked staff to look into other non-profits, for models to examine.

Boardmember Sher added that there are people considering another bond issue in 2010, which may have components for the SNC.

Branham stated he has had discussions regarding Prop 84 Sustainable Communities funding, which has not been appropriated. He noted that the SNC is looking for its fair share of those funds.

c. Subregional Representatives for 2009-10

Vice Chair Weygandt noted that four Boardmembers were rotating off the Board effective December 31st and reminded current outgoing members to please get notification to SNC staff designating new members if this has not already occurred. He stated that new representatives identified to date include Kim Yamaguchi for the North Central Subregion; Hal Stocker for the Central Subregion and Don Jardine for the East Subregion. Boardmember Dahle stated he will notify SNC once the North Subregion representative has not selected.

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VII. Election of Vice Chair

Vice Chair Weygandt indicated that it was time to elect a new Vice Chair. Boardmember Dahle nominated Boardmember Wilensky and there were no other nominations.

Action: Boardmember Dahle moved and Boardmember Kirkwood seconded a motion to nominate Boardmember Wilensky as the 2009 Vice Chair. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Executive Officer's Report

a. Budget/Staffing Update

Executive Officer Branham gave an overview to the Board on the current SNC budget, noting that the SNC was able to bring retired annuitants back, which has given staff some relief. He stated that under the Executive Order there is still no overtime allowed by employees and he is anticipating mandatory furloughs, where each employee will be required to take a day off per month, without pay, which will have some impact on the current workload. Branham stated that the Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF) has been under increasing stress with the reserve spent and projections for declining revenue. He said that therefore, the SNC was anticipating the Governor's budget will contain a reduction for the SNC's base operating budget.

Branham reported that SNC has hired Tristyn Armstrong as the new Executive Assistant, noting that the SNC is pretty much up to full staffing and does not have any vacancies left to fill. He also reported on the two contracts with RCDs in Mariposa and Placer Counties noting that these contracts help meet some specific technical needs for the SNC.

Boardmember Schladale stated that the Department of Finance does not know if work furloughs will happen, adding that in the November legislative session there was not an agreement with the Governor's proposal. Boardmember Schladale stated that in order for furloughs to take affect bargaining units/unions will need to be consulted.

Boardmember Kirkwood suggested flexibility in the furlough would help, suggesting the office close between Christmas and New Year's, like the private sector. Vice Chair Weygandt stated in Placer County they have realized additional savings by closing the facilities during this time as well.

b. Sierra Nevada License Plate Update

Branham reviewed the background and current status of the SNC License plate effort, noting there have been challenges in securing funding for the marketing campaign. He indicated that since the October Board meeting the SNC has

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worked with The Sierra Fund and Secretary Chrisman to get signed letters to potential funders and Boardmembers. He noted that the Sierra Fund has created a Web site and brochure to help facilitate the marketing effort and that the only thing needed at this point is money to kick-off marketing. Branham stated the Board should revisit this issue at the March meeting.

c. Northern Sierra Partnership Overview

Branham indicated that he and Boardmember Weygandt represented the SNC at the October 8 Northern Sierra Partnership (NSP) kick-off event, featuring Governor Schwarzenegger at Donner Lake. He introduced Alex Mas, representing the Northern Sierra Partnership (NSP), to provide an overview of the Partnership and its goals.

Mas stated he has been working for The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in the Sierra for the past eight years; he is currently on loan from TNC to lead the NSP effort. Mas described the NSP's area of interest ranges from south of Lake Tahoe to Lassen National Park, with a focus on areas with high water yield and carbon storage potential. He discussed issues including carbon sequestration and the threat of fire and indicated the complex nature of the Region and the potential threats facing it require a more collaborative approach to protecting the area's valuable resources.

Mas recognized the Morgan Family Foundation for convening a group of conservation organizations active in this geographic area – organizations that the Foundation has funded in the past. This resulted in an effort in which The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, Sierra Business Council, Feather River Land Trust and Truckee Donner Land Trust are working collaboratively to raise funds and identify and implement high-priority conservation and restoration projects in the project area. The goal is to raise funds to implement its priority projects, including \$75 -100 million in private funds to match \$225 – 300 million in public dollars.

Mas believes the NSP and the SNC have an opportunity to use this innovative public-private partnership as a vehicle for coordinating and enhancing conservation efforts in the Northern Sierra. He identified three specific areas of overlapping interest:

1. strategic planning - sharing finalized strategic planning efforts to identify opportunities for collaboration;
2. funding – facilitating dialogue between the SNC and NSP members and other partners on grant proposals for work in the area; and
3. SNC's Climate Change Initiative – working together to identify demonstration or pilot projects to model adaptation strategies and tools.

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Boardmember Hunt asked whether any agencies in the State of Nevada are part of the partnership, since the area of interest spills over into Nevada. Mas indicated that there is Nevada agencies involved, especially in the Truckee River watershed.

Boardmember Kirkwood informed the Board that he has served on the steering committee for the creation of the NSP. By way of background, he reported that the partnership's initial area of interest focused on the Truckee and Feather River watersheds but the group added areas targeted by the Trust for Public Land as part of its "checkerboard" project. Kirkwood expressed how impressed he is with the efforts of Becky and Jim Morgan and willingness of the partnership organizations to share fundraising strategies. He believes this can be used as a model in other parts of the Region. Kirkwood also pointed out that any grants made to these organizations will leverage the matching funds the group is soliciting.

Boardmember Weygandt mentioned that Placer County started an open space policy in 2000, which has now protected more than 12,000 acres. He indicated that the County did not necessarily have expertise in conducting complex land conservation projects, so they relied on some of the NSP partners for the technical aspects of these deals. He noted that for one project in Placer/Nevada counties, four of these five partners were involved and that collaboration is very important to the Region.

d. Stewardship Council Update

Branham referenced the presentation given in October by Soapy Mulholland and noted the Board's interest in continuing to work with the Stewardship Council. SNC will stay abreast of the pilot projects including Doyle Springs (in Tulare County) and Bucks Lake (in Plumas County). He said a committee including Boardmembers Haigh and McQuiston will likely meet at the beginning of the year to discuss SNC's potential role.

e. Outreach Activities

Branham noted this will be added as ongoing agenda item. He stated some of the events since the October Board meeting include: the Governor's event regarding the Northern Sierra Partnership and event celebrating the completion of the Modoc Line transaction. Boardmember Kirkwood noted for clarification that the SNC's involvement with the Modoc Line consisted of staff involvement and not a grant. Branham indicated that the SNC did make a small financial contribution towards the appraisal but not via a grant. Boardmember Dahle thanked SNC staff for their assistance and support stating they were at a stopping point until SNC got involved.

Branham notified the Board of a meeting with National Geographic regarding their Geotourism initiative. He noted the discussion was primarily related to a series of

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Sierra Nevada maps that would highlight various geotourism opportunities in the Region, and that an update will be provided at the March meeting.

f. County Board of Supervisors Presentations

Bob Kingman, Mt. Lassen Area Manager and Kim Carr, Mt. Whitney Area Manager provided an update on presentations to County Boards of Supervisors per Board direction at the December meeting. Both reported that presentations had begun and the remaining will be scheduled and completed by the end of the fiscal year.

IX. Deputy Attorney General's Report

Deputy Attorney General, Christine Sproul, provided information to the Board regarding statewide efforts to manage greenhouse gas emissions and suggested that SNC may have a role to play in efforts related to carbon sequestration in Sierra forests and watershed protection.

Specifically, she provided information on the status of three chaptered pieces of legislation:

- The Air Resources Board (ARB) has developed a scoping plan as part of its implementation of AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. The plan contains the main strategies California will use to reduce the greenhouse gases that cause climate change. The ARB is scheduled to adopt the plan next week and then will begin the development of associated regulations.
- SB 375 directs urban communities to address sustainability in their planning efforts, including limiting greenhouse gas emissions.
- SB 97 directs Resources Agency and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to include greenhouse gas emission impacts in amendments to CEQA guidelines.

X. Proposed Amendments to SNC's Conflict of Interest (ACTION)

Deputy Attorney General Sproul explained that SNC organizational changes that occurred since adoption of the SNC's original Conflict of Interest regulation created a need to update the regulation. She stated that the proposed changes are consistent with the staff changes and position titles reflected in SNC's current organizational chart. A Notice of Intent to amend has been filed with the Office of Administrative Law (AOL) and the public comment period will run through January 12, 2009. She recommended that the Board adopt a resolution authorizing the Executive Officer to approve and adopt amendments to the conflict of interest code for the SNC in substantially the form proposed, including any necessary minor technical changes, and directing the Executive Officer to take the necessary actions to complete the rulemaking process, noting this would allow the code amendments to be completed before the next cycle for filing statements of economic disclosure. If, however, substantive changes to the proposed amendments be recommended, she

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recommended that the resolution direct the Executive Officer to present the revised package to the Board for approval.

Action: Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Hunt seconded a motion to delegate authority to the Executive Officer to adopt amendments after the public comment period unless there are substantial changes to the Conflict of Interest regulation. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. 2009-10 Grant Allocation (ACTION)

Branham explained that staff is considering proposing changes to the grant allocation for the 2009-10 grant cycle. He noted that staff had hoped changes in the Guidelines for the current year would result in more applications for on-the-ground projects, but that did not occur. Therefore, he said staff is discussing a single round of grants in 2009-2010, which would focus on the types of applications currently received as Competitive and Strategic Opportunity Grants 1. He suggested the SNC could also allow for applications for pre-project due diligence work currently awarded as SOG 2s. By limiting grants to a single round, he indicated that staff would be able to focus on managing grants already awarded by the SNC and working even more with grant applicants to develop project ideas.

Boardmember Kirkwood stated that his overall reaction to the proposal is positive, because it would move the SNC even more in the direction of on-the-ground projects, which is the heart and soul of bond funds. He suggested that a reallocation of funds from SOGs to competitive might even be a good idea in the current year given his review of the project descriptions for all of the recommended projects and the strong tie he saw between the competitive applications and the appropriate use of bond funds.

Branham stated that the competitive grant recommendations would be brought to the Board in March and that we would also have received the second round of the SOG applications by then, so that we might be better able at that time to determine whether some sort of reallocation in the current year would make sense. He noted that competitive grant applications have been concentrated in particular parts of the region, so that is something the Board would need to consider in reallocating current year funding.

Boardmember Wilensky expressed his concern that some areas don't have as many resources to put together good projects and applications and suggested that need also should be a factor in allocating resources including resources to assist potential grantees in generating project ideas and applications.

Branham said that the potential changes to next year's grant program would provide staff with more time to work with potential grantees.

Boardmember McQuiston said that he is uncomfortable changing this year's allocation and that he sees a number of pros and cons to the potential changes in next year's

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grant program. He stated that the Board would be in a better position to make decisions at a future meeting when more information is available.

Boardmember Weygandt stated that staff “set a record” in helping grant applicants. He also stated his view that Boardmember Kirkwood’s comments have merit and that we need to look at what can be done between now and the end of the year to ensure we are funding the best projects.

Branham stated that the last deadline for SOG applications is at the end of February. In the meantime, staff are providing some assistance to grantees and trying to focus grantees on the best types of projects. He indicated that by March we’ll know what came in as SOG applications and so the Board will have more information to consider a different approach.

Boardmember Schladale expressed his concern that bond funds have a limited intent and use and projects may not qualify for bond funding just because they are a good project. He said it would be good to find alternative funding sources for some projects and stated that the Department of Finance’s perspective is that a focus on on-the-ground projects is appropriate and asked if staff had taken their grant recommendations to the Attorney General.

Branham noted that Deputy Attorney General Sproul had reviewed all of the recommended projects. Sproul stated that the projects being recommended had been looked at carefully and that Proposition 84 contains specific language that provides more latitude for some activities.

Boardmember Sher asked if there were a way to flag projects that meet the general obligation bond filter and others that meet the Proposition 84 filter.

Branham stated that SOG 2s would generally be the ones that fell in the latter category and that staff could talk with DAG Sproul to see how we might be able to provide that information.

Sproul stated that there is specific language in Proposition 84 that allows for certain activities not typically addressed in general obligation bond law, for example, fuels reduction.

Boardmember Schladale agreed that all of the projects are worthwhile, but that it is important to ask “what is the physical asset we are getting?” His concern is that the independent bond counsel might unravel some of the commitments the SNC has made.

Sproul noted that there have been significant discussions within the Attorney General’s Office regarding the merit of preserving asset value, which is different than acquiring assets and they both qualify for funding.

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Schladale expressed an interest in learning more and Branham suggested that more guidance from the Department of Finance is also helpful and that it would make sense to get the Finance attorney, the Attorney General's Office, and the SNC together to discuss these issues.

Boardmember Kirkwood said it is important not to make ourselves vulnerable when the next bond act is up for a vote—that we not only do not want to be legally vulnerable, but that we don't want to be politically vulnerable either.

Action: Boardmember Wilensky moved and Boardmember Warner seconded a motion to direct to proceed with development of an allocation plan as described and to allow proper time be allocated at the March Board meeting for a full discussion relative to this issue, with a staff report to include reports from the Department of Finance and Attorney General's office, fully reconciled for Board deliberations. The motion passed unanimously.

XII. Strategic Plan Update (ACTION)

Joan Keegan, Assistant Executive Officer, reported this is the 2 ½-year mark of the SNC Strategic Plan, and the good news is, it's a really good Plan that has stood its ground and still is very sound. Keegan outlined the five areas of proposed changes to strengthen the plan: 1) Update the content to reflect changes in the SNC's guidelines, office locations, etc.; 2) Move completed actions to an appendix; 3) Better distinguish between specific actions and more general strategies; 4) Report on progress based on the actions/strategies identified within each year's action plan; and 5) Remove the section that contained initial project ideas contributed through public input (but keep in an appendix), since the SNC now has actual projects to report on.

Boardmember McQuiston asked what the staff is recommending for next steps. Keegan notified the Board that staff would like approval to send the document out for public comment noting any Boardmember comments could be provided to staff during the comment period. It was suggested to incorporate results from the previous grant discussion into the Strategic Plan, if appropriate. Boardmember Brissenden pointed out the need to flesh out the education piece a bit more, especially regarding the fact that a public that is educated about watershed and natural resource stewardship is indeed an "asset" to the State of California. Branham clarified that the Strategic Plan covers the entire SNC program, not just activities funded by Proposition 84.

Action: Boardmember Sher moved and Boardmember Brissenden seconded a motion to approve staff's posting of the draft revised document for public comment and returning to the March Board meeting with a final draft including public comments. The motion passed unanimously.

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XIII. Strategic Opportunity Grants (ACTION)

Kerri Timmer, SNC Program Manager, provided an overview and background of the SNC grant program and explained the types of grants that the SNC offers. To put this year's recommendations in context, Timmer briefly reviewed last year's grant awards and directed Board members to take a moment to look at the printed maps that illustrate those awards. Timmer went on to remind Board members that staff was in the process of evaluating the Competitive applications that will be to them for discussion and possible authorization at the March, 2009 Board meeting.

Boardmember Kirkwood stated that the staff review in previous rounds was solid and consistent with Board guidance and requested that future Board materials provide details about the Executive Officer Authorizations that happen between Board meetings and that project summaries identify whether the project is a SOG 1 or a SOG 2.

Boardmember Pendleton asked for confirmation that staff will follow up with the projects that were on the not recommended list and Timmer confirmed that staff is already working with those applicants whose projects fell in the Medium ranking.

Region-Wide

Bob Kingman, Mt. Lassen Area Regional Manager, informed Boardmembers that project number SNC 080082 will include a special provision in the grant agreement to work with long-standing existing clean-up efforts so as not to hamper or negatively affect those efforts. Kingman read the language to include in the motion to this effect.

Boardmember Schladale requested further discussion about the individual projects in individual Subregions.

North Subregion

Bob Kingman reported that staff was recommending 5 projects in the North Subregion for a total of \$408,580. Boardmember Kirkwood and members of the Board held detailed discussion about SNC 080213 – the South Ash Valley Project. Boardmember Kirkwood spoke in defense of the project. Boardmember Schladale asked clarifying questions about the physical, on-the-ground assets the project would provide for the taxpayers of the state. There was additional discussion about whether General Obligation Bond law or Proposition 84 requirements take precedent when determining whether or not to authorize a grant application.

Boardmember Sher brought up conservation easements in general and the Jameson Ranch project in particular. Boardmember Sher wondered if there was a real and immediate threat to the property or the working ranch on which the conservation easement was being proposed in the Jamison Ranch Conservation Easement application (SNC 080131). Boardmember Sher wondered if this type of project was likely to be a common type of application received by the SNC. Boardmember

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Kirkwood responded that he hoped that the SNC received many applications to fund the purchase of conservation easements before a property became threatened in hopes that the SNC would be able to protect properties at a lower value.

Action: Boardmember Dahle made a motion and Boardmember Wilensky seconded to approve Projects SNC 080151, SNC 080220, SNC 080222, and SNC 080223. The motion passed unanimously.

Action: Boardmember Dahle made a motion and Boardmember Wilensky seconded to approve Project SNC 080213. Boardmember Schladale opposed Project SNC 080213. The motion passed.

North Central Subregion

Bob Kingman reported that the staff recommended 5 projects in the North Central Subregion for a total of \$434,219. Boardmember Schladale identified two projects, SNC 080041 and SNC 080165 that he'd like to discuss in more detail.

Action: Boardmember Kirkwood made a motion and Boardmember Hunt seconded to approve SNC 080131, SNC 080156, and SNC 080163A. The motion passed unanimously.

Regarding SNC 080041, Boardmember Schladale asked if there is specific language in Proposition 84 that authorized fuel reduction projects. DAG Sproul indicated there was language in Section 75050.

Action: Boardmember Warner made a motion and Boardmember Hunt seconded to approve and SNC 080041. The motion passed unanimously.

Regarding SNC 080165, an education project, Boardmember Schladale indicated that he saw no on-the-ground asset resulting from this project. Branham indicated that this project was likely to be one that would benefit from the discussion about Proposition 84/General Obligation Bond priorities that will take place between the Department of Finance and the Attorney General's office.

Action: Boardmember Schladale moved to hold SNC 080165 for further discussion in March pending a report by SNC Counsel. The motion died for lack of a second.

Action: Boardmember Warner made a motion and Boardmember Wilensky seconded to approve and SNC 080165. Boardmember Schladale opposed. The motion passed.

East Subregion

Kim Carr, the Mt. Whitney Area Manager, reported that staff was recommending four projects in the East Subregion for a total of \$265,446. Boardmember Schladale requested clarification of the project summary wording for application SNC 080119.

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Boardmember Kirkwood commented that SNC 080210 didn't make a very clear watershed connection and that he didn't feel that the in-class education experience proposed in this application would make the same kind of lasting experience for students that an on-the ground education experience would. Kirkwood was troubled by the potential precedent funding a "light" education project with bond funds might set across the state. Kirkwood suggested the SNC Board needed to give more guidance to staff about the types of education projects the SNC should fund.

Public Comment:

Joan Clayburgh, Sierra Nevada Alliance: spoke in favor of the project stating "Jack Laws is an exceptional educator with an ability to relate that made him 'better than outside'."

Boardmember Schladale requested clarification that project SNC 080181 would deliver more than just a study or would lead to something on the ground. Boardmember Haigh and Kim Carr responded to the question by suggesting that the type of data gathered in this project would complement the pre-fire data that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) collected prior to the burn. According to Haigh, the new data collected through this project would have a brick and mortar effect, allowing effective decision making and building a solid foundation to help the BLM with future land use planning.

SNC 080210 was pulled for further discussion related to the finite asset or lasting effect on watershed health.

Action: Boardmember Hunt made a motion and Boardmember Wilensky seconded to approve Projects SNC 080119, SNC 080181 and SNC 080185. Boardmember Schladale abstained from voting. The motion passed unanimously.

South Subregion

Kim Carr reported that staff was recommending four projects in the South Subregion for a total of \$254,951. Boardmember Schladale questioned the on-the-ground long term benefits and delivery of physical assets that would still exist in 20 years as a result of projects SNC 080109 and SNC 080116. Carr indicated that it was staff's view that there would be long term benefits from both projects.

SNC 080109 was pulled for further discussion.

Action: Boardmember McQuiston made a motion and Boardmember Wilensky seconded to approve Projects SNC 080116, SNC 080189 and SNC 080226. Boardmember Schladale abstained from voting on SNC 080116. The motion passed unanimously.

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South Central Subregion

Kim Carr reported that staff was recommending five projects in the South Central Subregion for a total of \$345,100. Boardmember Schladale questioned the long term benefits resulting from two of the five projects: SNC 080029 and SNC 080193.

SNC 080029 was pulled for further discussion.

Action: Boardmember Wilensky made a motion and Boardmember Kirkwood seconded to approve Projects SNC 080101, SNC 080193, SNC 080199, and SNC 080205. Boardmember Schladale abstained from voting on SNC 080199. The motion passed unanimously.

Central Subregion

Bob Kingman reported that staff was recommending seven projects in the Central Subregion for a total of \$572,636 with specific CEQA specifications on SNC 080092 and SNC 080149. Timmer read the specific CEQA approval language into the record.

Action: Boardmember Brissenden made a motion and Boardmember Kirkwood seconded to: direct staff to file a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and file a Notice of Determination (NOD) for project SNC 080092, the Nevada City Environs Trail and Restoration Project; find that the Environmental Impact Report is adequate for SNC 080149, the Hazel Creek Meadow Restoration Project, and that impacts will be mitigated to less than significant levels with mitigations included in the project; to direct staff to file an NOD for SNC 080149; and direct staff to enter into all necessary agreements and file the appropriate CEQA documentation with the State Clearinghouse for all authorized projects. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board returned to the Projects that were held for further discussion.

In the Region-wide category there were two projects that were held: SNC 080082 and SNC 080207. There was conversation about the enduring asset of this project. Kingman posed that the project is an effort to establish long term annual river clean ups and that the removal of tons of garbage from the streams is a long term benefit. Kingman reported on some of the partners involved with the project.

Action: Boardmember Brissenden made a motion and Boardmember Ferrera seconded to approve Project SNC 080082. Boardmember Schladale opposed Project SNC 080082. The motion passed.

The Board discussed SNC 080207 – with the primary conversation revolving around the motivation for moving this project from the South Central Subregion specifically to the Region-wide category. Carr explained that the project is being used as a model and that the deliverables had been scaled back to achieve that goal.

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Action: Boardmember Kirkwood made a motion and Boardmember Wilensky seconded to approve Project SNC 080207. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board discussed SNC 080210 in the East Subregion. Boardmember Hunt suggested that the Board develop a clear policy for funding education projects in the future. Boardmember Wilensky asked staff to prepare a set of guidelines for how to approach education projects for the purpose of next year's funding for Board review at the March meeting. Boardmember Schladale pointed out that he felt that this project, in particular, would fail the General Obligation bond test. Branham suggested that the project be deferred.

Action: Boardmember Wilensky made a motion and Boardmember Hunt seconded to conditionally approve Project SNC 080210 pending the outcome of meetings between the Department of Finance and the Attorney General's office and the creation of a memo to provide guidance regarding funding education grants with bond funding. Boardmember Kirkwood opposed Project SNC 080210. The motion passed.

The Board discussed SNC 080109 in the South Subregion. Boardmember McQuiston gave full support for the project concurring with staff recommendation for funding the project and stating that this rare resource needs protection.

Public Comment:

Ron and Judy Hyatt, Kern River Residents: spoke in support of the project.

Action: Boardmember McQuiston made a motion and Boardmember Hunt seconded to approve Project SNC 080109. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board recalled project SNC 080029 from the South Central Subregion for discussion. Boardmember Wilensky stated that this is an extreme example of a successful education program.

Public Comment:

Valerie Kleinfelder, Chair of Central Sierra Resource Conservation and Development Council spoke in support of the project.

Action: Boardmember Sher made a motion and Boardmember Kirkwood seconded to approve Project SNC 080029. Boardmember Schladale opposed Project SNC 080029. The motion passed.

XIV. Boardmembers' Comments

Boardmember Hunt stated, "It has been a pleasure to serve on the Board and that the East Subregion has benefitted from the existence of the SNC."

Board Meeting Minutes

December 4, 2008

Boardmember Wilensky noted having County Supervisors on the Board really brings grounded viewpoints and suggested that a longer term should be considered because it takes 1 year just to get going.

Boardmember Weygandt stated it has been an incredible privilege to be a part of the group and commented positively on his history of participating in the making of the SNC.

Branham thanked the Board and its members, thanking Vice Chair Weygandt, for his service as a Vice Chair. Branham then reminded members that a group photo would be taken on the deck outside.

Boardmember Wilensky stated Boardmembers Hunt and Weygandt have been good for SNC and suggested some kind of "lifetime servitude" so that they never forget the Board.

XV. Public Comments

Addie Jacobsen, Ebbets Pass Forest Watch, thanked the SNC for coming to her home town. She was pleased the Board got to see local projects like the revitalization of downtown Murphys, the CHIPS program, and Love Creek, projects that represent the wonderful things that can happen in the region. However, she pointed out that clearcutting is still happening in this part of the region. She has approached the Board before requesting that the SNC establish a task force on clearcutting. That request was denied. But if not that, is there something else the SNC could do to address the issue? Jacobsen handed out informational packets with photos showing clearcutting activities in eight Sierra counties and a map of current Timber Harvest Plans on land adjacent to these clearcuts. She provided data showing that in just the past eight years (since 2000), SPI has gotten more than 250,000 acres approved for clearcutting or near-clearcutting. She urged the SNC to consider a role it might play in this matter.

Adjournment

Vice Chair Weygandt adjourned the meeting at 1:31PM.

Budget

California's significant fiscal crisis has had an impact on the Conservancy's budget, as it has most state departments. SNC management is working to ensure that budget reductions, staff furloughs and other fiscal challenges are met with a plan to minimize the affect on the SNC's mission; however there will undoubtedly be an impact.

Current Year (2008-09)

The SNC is funded in the current year to implement our programs across the Region (see Table I). It is anticipated that we will expend a significant portion of our 2008-09 base operating budget (\$4.0 million from the Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF), and \$500,000 from Proposition 84 for grant administration). The effects of the Governor's Executive Order and Furlough Order will result in some funds being reverted to the ELPF.

Due to the shortfall in funds contained in the Pooled Money Investment Account, the Conservancy was ordered to freeze all grant funding to recipients as of December 17, 2008. This includes invoices from grantees for work already performed on projects from prior funding years as well as, any additional work on existing grants. This matter is discussed further in Agenda item IX.

Currently, of the planned \$14 million in grant funding for this fiscal year, only \$49,000 had been "encumbered" prior to Dec. 17. None of the grants approved at the December Board meeting have been awarded at this time. If any of these funds are not awarded in the current year, the funds remain available to the Conservancy for an additional two fiscal years.

FY 2009-10

In addition to the serious problems facing the State's General Fund and bond funds, the ELPF also faces serious fiscal constraints. The Governor's FY 2009-10 proposed budget reduces the SNC's ELPF appropriation by \$500,000, approximately 12%. Combined with the furloughs discussed below, the SNC may be facing a reduction of greater than 15% of total available resources in the coming fiscal year. The Conservancy is currently planning how to best implement this cut.

Staffing

As a result of the current fiscal crisis, the Governor has ordered state workers to take two days each month off, without pay. The Conservancy will follow the plan that calls for closing down our offices on the first and third Friday on the month. The result of this action for all full-time employees is a pay reduction of 9.2 percent, with an approximate savings of \$65,000 for the current fiscal year and \$140,000 for 2009-10.

Obviously, there will be a reduction of available staff resources during this period. SNC management is working to identify priorities so that the most critical functions continue to be performed during this period.

Table 1
2008-09 SNC EXPENDITURES AND ENCUMBRANCES
 As of January 31, 2009

State Operations				
<i>Personal Services</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Expended</i>	<i>Balance</i>	<i>% Spent</i>
SALARIES AND WAGES	1,739,022	835,090	903,933	48%
SALARY SAVINGS (3%)	(45,385)			
STAFF BENEFITS	498,927	264,609	234,318	53%
<i>Personal Services, Totals</i>	2,192,565	1,099,698	1,092,866	50%

<i>Operating Expenses & Equipment</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Expended</i>	<i>Balance</i>	<i>% Spent</i>
GENERAL EXPENSE	660,737	85,213	575,524	13%
TRAVEL - IS	148,833	43,516	105,317	29%
TRAVEL - OS	15,000	0	15,000	0%
TRAINING	57,580	10,526	47,054	18%
FACILITIES	279,744	236,167	43,577	84%
UTILITIES	10,411	5,530	4,881	53%
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	57,646	1,724	55,922	3%
CONTRACTS- EXTERNAL	105,145	91,853	13,292	87%
CONTRACTS- INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT	926,652	710,278	216,374	77%
CONSOLIDATED DATA CENTER	0	0	0	0%
EQUIPMENT	0	0	0	0%
OTHER ITEMS OF EXPENSE	25,920	7,781	18,139	30%
PRO RATA (control agency costs)	55,767	27,884	27,884	50%
<i>Operating Expenses & Equipment, Totals</i>	2,343,435	1,220,472	1,122,963	52%
State Operations, Totals	4,536,000	2,320,170	2,215,829	51%
Local Assistance, Totals	17,000,000	49,900	16,950,100	0%
SNC EXPENDITURES, TOTALS	21,536,000	2,370,070	19,165,929	11%

Local Assistance Grants

PROPOSITION 84 \$17,000,000 \$ 49,900 \$16,950,100 0%

Background

Following the passage of Proposition 84, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) used a transparent public process to develop Guidelines for the awarding of funds allocated to it by the measure. The Guidelines adopted by the Board over the past two years allowed a wide range of projects aimed at meeting the diverse needs in the Region.

The Guidelines have required, among other things that projects must contribute “to the protection or restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources.” This language is taken verbatim from Proposition 84. The Guidelines also require that projects must address one or more the SNC Program areas.

During the course of awarding projects over the last two years, the SNC Board has discussed the appropriate level of support for certain projects that do not directly result in “on the ground projects”, for example certain educational and planning projects. The experience of awarding grants in 2007-08 led to Board to direct staff to include language in the 2008-09 Guidelines stating that “the SNC will award grants with the primary aim of achieving tangible ‘on the ground’ impacts...” At the same time, the Guidelines recognize the value of “activities which prepare for, or create the context for, other natural resource protection and restoration efforts.” Specifically, “educational efforts and community capacity-building” with the Region were identified.

At the December 2008 Board meeting, questions were raised about a number of these types of projects and the appropriateness of using bond funds for this purpose. The discussion centered on whether bond funded projects must in all cases involve a “capital asset” as described in the General Obligation Bond law. After discussion, the Board approved each of these projects (with one exception) with the understanding that such projects were an appropriate use of bond funds. In the case of one project, the Board conditionally approved it with the requirement that the Deputy Attorney General review it in more detail to determine whether it met statutory requirements (that matter is discussed in the Deputy Attorney General’s Report).

The Board also instructed staff to discuss the issue further with the Attorney General’s office and the Department of Finance.

Current Status

SNC staff, in consultation with the Deputy Attorney General, has developed a guidance document -- attachment A of this agenda item. The purpose of this document is to provide the legal framework guiding the types of project appropriately funded using bond funds provided by Proposition 84. The document includes a description of the requirements of the General Obligation Bond Statute, the SNC’s enabling legislation and the relevant sections of Proposition 84 and the manner in which these various authorities are harmonized. The document has been provided to the Department of

Finance, but at the time of the preparation of this staff report follow-up conversations had not occurred. The document also provides descriptions of the types of projects eligible for funding from bond funds.

The conclusion of SNC staff and the Deputy Attorney General is that projects described as eligible in the Guidelines are in fact an appropriate use of bond funds, as discussed in the attachment.

Next Steps

SNC will pursue additional conversations with the Department of Finance on this matter. This guidance will be incorporated into future Guidelines, to the extent appropriate. It should be noted, that Guidelines for 2009-10 are currently intended to provide for some, but not all projects that are allowable under Proposition 84, given the stronger focus on “on the ground” projects. This should not be construed however, as an indication that those projects funded in the past were inappropriately funded with Proposition 84 funds; but rather as a programmatic focus consistent with the SNC mission.

Recommendation

No action is needed by the Board, however comments and further direction to staff is welcome.

Guidance for the Use of Proposition 84 Funds

Background

Proposition 84, passed by voters in November 2006, allocates \$54 million to be available to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) for “the protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water and other natural resources.” [Sec. 75050 (j).] In 2007, the SNC developed guidelines to be used in the awarding of grants under Proposition 84. The SNC began awarding grants consistent with the guidelines in December 2007.

Through the course of Guideline development and awarding of grants, there have been numerous discussions by the SNC Board relating to allowable use of bond funds as it relates to the SNC grant program. Discussions at the December 2008 Board meeting raised questions regarding applicable requirements for grants using Proposition 84 funds. This document provides clarification with regard to these requirements.

Discussion

SNC’s enabling statutes (PRC 33300 et seq.) set forth the mission of the Conservancy and provide authority to the SNC to carry out its mission. Public Resources Code section 33320 generally directs the Conservancy to work in seven broad program areas. The funding provided for the SNC in Chapter 5 of Proposition 84, however, is directed to “the protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources.” (For ease of reference these resources are referred to herein as watershed resources.) Thus SNC is able to provide grants using Proposition 84 funds for the activities authorized in its enabling statute that also constitute actions for the “protection” and “restoration” of watershed resources, as those terms are defined by Proposition 84.

In addition, use of Proposition 84 funds (and other General Obligation bond funds) is guided by the State General Obligation Bond Law (“GO Bond Law,” Government Code section 16720 et seq.). Generally, that statute specifies that these bond funds may only be used for certain listed purposes, the first of which is the “costs of construction or acquisition of capital assets.” Capital assets are defined by the GO Bond Law in section 16727 to include various things. Under this definition capital assets include tangible physical properties, certain major maintenance and retrofit work, certain equipment, and costs “incidentally but directly related” to construction or acquisition “including but not limited to, planning, engineering, construction management . . . design work, environmental impact reports and assessments, required mitigation expenses, appraisals,” and more. In addition to these “capital asset” projects, the GO Bond Law notes that an individual bond act “may contain provisions applicable to the bonds issued thereunder, and, in case of conflict, the provisions in the bond act shall prevail.” (Government Code Section 16723.)

Guidance for the Use of Proposition 84 Funds

Under the SNC grant program, grants that fund acquisition of property or the construction of facilities or improvements to protect and preserve watershed resources (Competitive and SOG 1) meet the test of “capital assets.” This includes projects that encompass fee title land acquisitions, conservation easement acquisitions, buildings or structures appurtenant to these activities, and similar physical types of acquisitions and development. Additionally, projects that accomplish stream or habitat restoration, fire fuels treatment and soil erosion projects qualify for Proposition 84 grant funding under the express provisions of the definitions of “protection” and “restoration” contained in Section 75005 Proposition 84 as defined below:

- Protection means those actions necessary to prevent harm or damage to persons, property or natural resources or those actions necessary to allow the continued use and enjoyment of property or natural resources and includes acquisition, development, restoration, preservation and interpretation.
- Restoration means the improvement of physical structures or facilities and, in the case of natural systems and landscape features includes, but is not limited to, projects for the control of erosion, the control and elimination of exotic species, prescribed burning, fuel hazard reduction, fencing out threats to existing or restored natural resources, road elimination, and other plant and wildlife habitat improvement to increase the natural system value of the property. Restoration projects shall include the planning, monitoring and reporting necessary to ensure successful implementation of the project objectives.

The SNC also funds engineering, site planning, CEQA and permitting expenses, soils analyses and these types of pre-construction or restoration activities, where it is anticipated that the physical project itself will be financed in a subsequent grant round or be funded by other funding sources, but in all events will likely be completed. These are activities recognized in the GO Bond Law as “incidentally but directly related to construction or acquisition” of “capital assets”, and are equally incidentally but directly related to project activities for the protection and restoration of watershed resources expressly authorized by Proposition 84. The definition of “restoration” in Proposition 84 expressly includes, but is not limited to “projects for the control of erosion, the control and elimination of exotic species, prescribed burning, fuel hazard reduction, fencing out threats to existing or restored natural resources, road elimination, and other plant and wildlife habitat improvement to increase the natural system value of the property.”
[Section 75005 subd.(n).]

As mentioned above, the statute also allows for the use of G.O. bond funds in instances and for activities specified by the “provisions applicable to the bonds issued [under a particular bond act]” and provides that in case of conflict with the general GO Bond Law the provisions in the more specific bond act shall prevail. In this regard, Proposition 84, in pertinent part, authorizes SNC to expend bond funds contained in that proposition for the “protection or restoration of watershed resources.” Further, Proposition 84 also

Guidance for the Use of Proposition 84 Funds

provides that "...it is the intent of the people that when a project or program is funded herein, funds for such program or project may be used to the full extent authorized by the statute governing the program or conservancy receiving such funds".

Therefore, under its enabling legislation, the General Obligation Bond Law and Proposition 84, projects that result in the protection or restoration of watershed resources are eligible for Proposition 84 bond funding. This includes projects such as those described below:

Project Planning and Preparation

The SNC may fund project planning and preparation activities required to ready a specific acquisition or site improvement project for implementation, such as:

- preparing and completing plans, acquiring permits, completing the environmental review process (CEQA), performing appraisals, performing necessary studies and assessments and developing necessary project designs specific to a particular site or physical project;
- preparing plans and supplementing existing plans that establish a set of specific projects needed to protect or restore watershed resources or that involve collaboration among key stakeholders to target a specific impact or impacts on a specified watershed, that will result in the protection or restoration of watershed resources.

Education/Interpretation

The SNC may fund interpretation projects that meet one or more of the following tests:

- The project will result in a visitor-serving amenity that educates and communicates information about watershed health and/or the significance and value of natural, historical, and cultural resources in a way that increases the understanding and enjoyment of these resources and that may utilize the expertise of a naturalist or other specialist skilled at educational interpretation. (This is the definition of "interpretation" in Proposition 84, and interpretation is part of "protection" as defined in Proposition 84).
- The project will result in the protection or restoration of watershed resources by working to prevent harm or damage to those resources through specific educational activities aimed at actions to modify or eliminate the behavior of relevant target population(s), contributing to those harmful impacts.

Guidance for the Use of Proposition 84 Funds

- The education/interpretation activities comprise a small (less than 5%) component of a larger acquisition or site improvement project that will complement or enhance the on-the-ground benefits to watershed resources by the project, and can be viewed as incidentally but directly related to the necessary activities involved in providing watershed protection benefits under Proposition 84 criteria.

Conclusion

Grants that demonstrate clear protection or restoration of watershed resources are an appropriate use of Proposition 84 bond funds. Determining whether a particular activity meets the applicable criteria of Proposition 84 involves discretionary judgment by the Conservancy. The SNC Guidelines provide a process, including evaluation criteria, to guide the making of such determinations.

Background

In October 2006, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) began taking steps towards applying to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for a specialized license plate. The plate would generate additional revenue for the SNC and would help create awareness of the need for additional investment in the Region.

To date, a design has been approved and the SNC has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with The Sierra Fund who was responsible for conducting the marketing campaign necessary to secure 7,500 prepaid applications. Following the collection of the first application, the SNC has one year to submit the 7,500 applications.

At the March 2008 Board meeting, the Board was presented with a copy of a marketing plan under the direction of The Sierra Fund and SNC staff. The Board also approved the final plate design at that time.

At the June 2008 Board meeting, Boardmembers indicated the need to increase fundraising efforts and offered assistance in the process. At this point, a number of Boardmembers were contacted for support of the fundraising efforts.

At the December 2008 Board meeting, it was reported that fundraising efforts had been unsuccessful, largely attributed to the current economic situation resulting in a drastic cooling of philanthropic donations.

Current Status

In January 2009, the SNC addressed a meeting of several regional stakeholders to re-evaluate the existing plan to secure 7,500 prepaid applications for license plates needed to initiate production by DMV. At this meeting an update was given outlining the growing need for the SNC to develop additional funding sources given fiscal difficulties faced by state government. The group also discussed the challenges of raising the necessary funds to conduct the campaign and the fact that three additional license plate campaigns that have or are about to commence, which would dramatically impact the market share of potential SNC plate applicants.

Based on the current situation, the group agreed to explore an alternative marketing approach focused on a local grass-roots level. Strong support was expressed by a number of the groups and a subsequent planning meeting was organized by The Sierra Fund in February to begin developing a new strategy.

Next Steps

The SNC will continue to work with The Sierra Fund and a broad network of partners has been identified to assist in the effort and a steering committee is forming. Staff will continue to update the Board on development and implementation of the revised strategy.

Background

In September 2008 SNC staff was contacted about exploring options to partner with the National Geographic Foundation and other partners to initiate a Geotourism MapGuide project for the Sierra Nevada Region. The National Geographic Foundation has completed several of these guides in different regions of the world. The purpose of the guides is to identify and highlight unique locations within a region that appeal to visitors wishing to experience authentic local history and culture.

At the SNC December 2008 meeting, staff distributed information about Geotourism and informed the Board about the opportunity to participate in a Sierra Nevada project. Since that time a core team of partners has convened to further the effort.

SNC support for this project helps to achieve SNC program goals to increase tourism and recreation opportunities and supports enhancement of economic opportunities for the Region. It also supports goals in the SNC Education and Communication plan to strengthen a regional identity for the Sierra Nevada.

Current Status

Staff has participated in several meetings to convene a core team of proponents for the Geotourism MapGuide effort. As of this meeting, core partners include the SNC, the National Geographic Foundation, the Sierra Business Council (SBC), The Sierra Arts, Culture and Heritage Community, and California State Parks. Strong support has also been indicated from the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service (USFS). One of the initial tasks of the core team will be to identify additional stakeholders, representative of the entire Region, to identify site nominations and other resources to sustain the project.

The scope of the effort is being developed and is subject to change based on financial support. As of now, the SNC has committed an initial amount of \$35,000 to leverage an equal amount granted to the SBC from the Morgan Family Foundation. The USFS is preparing a grant application to support the effort for up to \$250,000 from the National Scenic Byways Program. These funding levels will support the outreach needed to collect site nominations, development of the map, creation of a regional website hosted by National Geographic, and printing of up to 50,000 maps for free distribution throughout the region and key points throughout the State. A good example of a Geotourism MapGuide Web site can be viewed at www.crownofthecontinent.net.

Next Steps

Development and publication of the MapGuide is expected to be completed within one-year. Staff will continue to keep the Board updated on progress of the project.

Background

SNC staff continues to interact with a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties about issues and opportunities related to all program areas. These activities include ongoing interactions with grantees, efforts to assist potential grantees and information-sharing opportunities with local governments and other organizations. For purposes of reporting on this activity staff has organized efforts in a general category and efforts focused within one of the seven program areas.

General Outreach Efforts

- Area Managers and staff are making presentation to County Boards of Supervisors at regularly scheduled meetings throughout the Region. To date, staff has presented to the Shasta, Alpine, Plumas, Butte, Yuba, Lassen, El Dorado County, and Madera Counties' Boards. Other presentations are being scheduled.
- Presentation to the California Forestry Association Board of Directors regarding climate change, fire and related issues at annual meeting.
- Attendance at the Regional Council of Rural Counties Annual Officers Dinner. Participated in the TUCARE tour, Tuolumne County.
- Participated in the Modoc Line Dedication Event, Modoc/Lassen Counties
- Staff attended tour of Concow area (Butte County) to view fire damage and fuels reduction projects with Assemblyman LaMalfa, Assemblyman Nielsen and Butte County Supervisor Yamaguchi.
- Presentation to the Commonwealth Club on Climate Change in the Sierra, San Francisco.
- Legislative Staff Tour – Staff planned and hosted a tour of projects and potential projects for legislative fiscal staff. Visits included the City of Placerville, Wakamatsu Ranch (American River Conservancy) and the Calaveras Healthy Impacts Products Solution (CHIPS).
- Participated in Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) funding opportunities meeting at which NRCS staff presented useful information about available funding sources through the 2008 Farm Bill.
- Staff has been attending meetings and workshops regarding other funding sources that are available for potential grantees. (Department of Water Resources Revolving Fund; Department of Health Services Water Quality, NRCS).
- On-going communications with current grantees regarding impacts from bond freeze and completion of project work.

Recreation and Tourism

- Held meeting with Placer County Parks Department to discuss potential applications for Immigrant Trail Project and Acquisition Project adjacent to Hidden Falls Regional Park.

- Staff attended regular meeting of the El Dorado Youth Commission Meeting and shared information with youth council on how to participate in public processes to improve bicycle paths in El Dorado County.
- Attended Yosemite Gateway Partners Meeting.
- Staff has been interacting with the Sierra Business Council, State Parks, the US Forestry Services (USFS), the Bureau of Land Management, Art organizations and others to further develop plans and funding to support a regional National Geographic Geotourism MapGuide Project.

Physical, Cultural, Archaeological, Historical, and Living Resources

- Attended presentation from USFS and Institute for Bird Populations to evaluate possible grant applications for research and other types of projects in the Sierra.
- Held project Development meeting with Foothill Conservancy regarding potential efforts to implement a dam removal project on E Panther Creek in the Mokelumne River Watershed.
- Met with Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council to discuss future SOG applications and opportunities for work with California Indian Basketweavers Association and possible development of film commission programs for SCLTC.
- Discussed California Tribal Water Summit Planning Conference, a Tribal Water Summit to include California tribes in the State Water Plan process.
- Attended monthly meeting of the SARSAS (Save Auburn Ravine Salmon and Steelhead) and discussed potential SNC grant applications.

Working Landscapes

- Attended UC Extension presentation on the Irrigated Agricultural Lands Program and presented Grant Program opportunities to mostly ranch owner/operators.
- Attended the California Farm Bureau Federation's Annual Legislative Reception.
- Staff attended the annual California Rangeland Conservation Coalition Summit and met with several partners and potential partners to discuss future rangeland conservation projects

Natural Disaster Risks

- Attended Mariposa Firesafe Council Board meeting.
- Staff met with and City of Rocklin officials and discussed Open Space Fire Prevention, Vegetation Management and Watershed Protection Prescribed Grazing Project in the City of Rocklin.
- Met with Mariposa Firesafe Council to discuss various issues relating to grants.
- Staff held a project development meeting with Highway 108 Firesafe Council to discuss grant process and potential application.

Water and Air Quality

- Held meeting with Kern River Heritage Foundation.
- Held a White Sulphur Springs site Visit with the Mohawk Valley Stewardship Council to discuss potential application.
- Attended meeting of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board informing water agencies about the projection of stimulus dollars flowing into both the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds.
- Staff participated in tour of Wolf Creek from the headwaters in Grass Valley to the Bear River confluence to familiarize for potential future grant applications.
- Participated in the Mariposa IRWMP Planning meeting to discuss development of a region acceptance process proposal for DWR in order to qualify for future funding.
- Staff coordinated and attended a meeting with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) regarding Sierra Meadow Restoration Funding Strategy for the Sierra Nevada.

Regional Economy

- Staff met with Sierra Business Council to discuss capacity building and tools for local organizations and governments.
- Staff helped to coordinate and facilitate three meetings of the Calaveras Consensus Group a large-scale gathering of numerous agencies and local interests to discuss the development of a sustainable forestry economy in the West Point area of Calaveras County.

Public Lands

- Participated in a meeting with BLM to discuss coordinating increasing attention to Abandoned Mines Remediation and safety related projects.

Next Steps

SNC staff will continue to take advantage of opportunities for attendance at meetings, site visits and other events to inform and assist stakeholders.

Recommendation

No action is needed by the Board; however, suggestions for outreach activities or comments on existing efforts are welcome.

Background

Brett Storey, Senior Management Analyst in the Placer County Executive Office, will be giving the SNC staff and Board an update on a project funded in part by the Conservancy: the Biomass Removal on National Forest Lands project.

The first phase of implementation has been completed, with a productive on-the-ground project within the Tahoe National Forest. Several tons of woody biomass material that would have otherwise been burned in the open has been diverted to make multiple megawatts of green energy. This project has eliminated a significant amount of air pollution and has enabled the USFS to move forward with plans to treat many hundred valuable acres in the American River watershed. The project report will document these attributes, as well as the entire economic portfolio, and provide a sense of where the value-added pieces need to be refined to ensure that this kind of stewardship can be accomplished to support other land managers in the Sierra.

Current Status/Next Steps

The presentation will provide the SNC Board an overview of the project. Documented amounts of biomass removed, air pollution and carbon avoided and watershed improvements will be detailed. The relationship of project economics of biomass via land stewardship will also be discussed. Additionally a short 6-minute video documenting the project will be shown to the Board and public.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no Board action is needed at this time, although we encourage Boardmembers to share their thoughts and comments after the presentation.

Background

At the December meeting the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Board directed the proposed Jack Laws in Eastern Sierra Classrooms (SNC 080210) grant application to its legal counsel for review to determine whether the proposed project would satisfy applicable criteria in order to be eligible for funding with Proposition 84 bond funds.

Discussion

The proposed Jack Laws project would provide educational presentations (two per day for ten days) by an outstanding naturalist/artist/lecturer to students in class in public elementary, middle and high schools in Mono and Inyo Counties. In addition, under the proposal each school would receive a copy of an acclaimed field guide by Mr. Laws. Participating schools would be encouraged to develop activities to be coordinated with the presentations by Mr. Laws.

The proposal involves providing classroom lectures to instill a general appreciation of Sierra Nevada natural resources in students, to explain watershed ecology and explore the biodiversity of natural resources in the Sierra Nevada, and to inspire students to get to know and actively care for natural resources in their Sierra "backyard." Thus the focus of the project is on indoor activity and general education regarding Sierra Nevada natural resources. While the general focus is on Sierra natural resources, the project would not serve to develop or to provide actions to protect specific, identified watershed resources, or activities resulting in protection or restoration of watershed resources.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the outstanding reputation of Mr. Laws and the obvious value to the schools and the students of the proposed lecture series, this project does not demonstrate a sufficient tangible contribution to protection or restoration of watershed resources within the meaning of the definitions contained in Proposition 84 to be eligible for funding using bond funds. Therefore, the project will not be funded.

Background

In October of 2008, the SNC Board approved a Board meeting schedule for 2009 (attached). The schedule includes meetings in June, September and December for the remainder of the current calendar year. The next Board meeting is planned for Lake Isabella in the South Subregion for June 3 and 4. The September Board meeting is being held in coordination with the Regional Council of Rural Counties in the Truckee area on September 23-24.

Current Status

As described in an earlier item, the SNC is currently not able to authorize new grants using Proposition 84 funds and it appears unlikely that this situation will change prior to the June Board meeting. Without the issue of grants awards on the agenda, the only necessary action item for June is the approval of Grants Guidelines for 2009-10. Approval of these guidelines is necessary for the SNC to be able to proceed with the grant program once the grant freeze is lifted.

Should the freeze be lifted prior to the June meeting, the Board could act on Competitive Grants originally planned for action at this meeting. In order for adequate meeting planning and public notice requirements, a decision on holding the June Board meeting should be made now or in the very near future.

Recommendation

Given that it is unlikely that the Board will be able to act on grants at the June meeting, staff recommends that the Board consider cancelling the June Board meeting and direct that the December Board meeting be held in the South Subregion. If this action is taken, delegation of authority to a committee of the Board for the purpose of approving Guidelines is also recommended and addressed in a subsequent agenda item.

June 3 & 4

South Subregion

September 23 & 24

Central Subregion

December 2 & 3

North Subregion

Background

In July 2006, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Board approved a Strategic Plan (Plan) for the organization. The process to develop the Plan included substantial public interaction and input.

In accordance with direction given by the Board in October 2008, staff presented a draft revised plan to the Board in December 2008. This initial Board review was followed by an invitation for public comment on the draft revised Plan.

The final draft revised Plan (Attachment A) is substantially similar to the version presented to the Board in December. Minor additional changes have been made to reflect input received from the Board and the need for minor additional clean-up.

A more comprehensive review of the Plan will occur in 2011, given the Plan was developed to address a five year timeframe.

Overview of Proposed Revisions

As discussed with the Board in December 2008, the Plan has held up well over the two-and-a-half years since its adoption and continues to provide relevant strategic direction to the organization. Therefore, proposed changes are relatively minor, including the following:

- Bringing the content up-to-date.
- Updating information in the Plan regarding the issue of climate change.
- Moving actions that have already been completed or are included in the 2008-09 Action Plan to an appendix.
- Making a distinction between specific actions and more general strategies.
- Using the Annual Report to report progress.
- No longer identifying some of the initial project ideas in the Plan.

The most significant change in format addresses the mix of specific actions and more general strategies that were included as “actions” in the original plan. Because all of the specific actions have been completed or underway, they have been removed from the main body of the Plan to an appendix. The general strategies remain in the Plan and will continue to provide valuable direction to the SNC as it determines the specific actions it should undertake each year.

The Plan was circulated for public review, however no comments were received.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board review and approve the final draft of the revised Strategic Plan and direct staff to continue to undertake the specific actions necessary to implement the Plan.

SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY



Sierra Nevada Conservancy Strategic Plan

Revised March 5, 2009

Draft

*“Planning without action is futile;
action without planning is fatal.”*

Unknown

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

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December 4, 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC or Conservancy) is a State agency within the Resources Agency created by bi-partisan legislation, co-authored by Assembly members John Laird and Tim Leslie, and signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in September 2004. It was created with the understanding that the environmental, economic and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada and its communities are closely linked and that the region would benefit from an organization providing a strategic direction. The SNC is charged with a broad mission to be accomplished through a variety of activities in collaboration and cooperation with various partners.

The 2006 SNC Strategic Plan will guide operations through 2010. The plan describes the vision, mission and guiding principles of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and provides a foundation for program development and activities to achieve the Conservancy's vision and mission. The plan meets the requirements of the statute creating the SNC (Public Resources Code Section 33345).

This Strategic Plan contains important information that defines the SNC and how it operates. Key information includes:

- An agency **Vision** describing the hopes and dreams of the SNC for its jurisdictional area;
- A **Mission Statement** that reflects the charge given to the SNC by the State Legislature and the Governor;
- A set of guiding **Principles** that guide the operations and interactions of the organization;
- An **assessment of the External and Internal conditions** under which the SNC will carry out its programs;
- A series of **Organizational Strategies and Goals** that describe the steps necessary to create a successful organization;
- A set of **Programmatic Goals and Actions** that create a sound foundation for the implementation of various programs the SNC is empowered to carry out; and

- A **Glossary** that defines key terms used by the SNC in this document.

This is part one of a two-phase plan. Specific timeframes for program goals, performance measures and actions and project concepts will be developed in the next phase of planning. The program areas are defined by law, as are specific duties and limitations.

This plan was created through an open and transparent process that included six public workshops (one in each subregion). Following the workshops, the Board reviewed the plan at its June 1, 2006, meeting. Following that meeting the plan was revised and public comment was once again solicited. A final plan was approved at the July 20, 2006, board meeting. (Appendix C provides a full list of activities meeting attendees suggested could be considered for the SNC's projects and Appendix D includes a summary of the public meetings)

The SNC will continue to modify the plan as needed to adapt to new information, changed circumstances and unanticipated events. Any plan modifications will continue to be made through an open, public process. The plan will be reviewed annually to determine progress, with a comprehensive review occurring at least every five years.

A copy of this plan and other information about the strategic planning process and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy may be found at www.sierranevada.ca.gov. You can also request a copy on CD or hard copy by contacting the SNC at (530) 823-4670, max@sierranevada.ca.gov or pick one up in our offices located at:

11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205 Auburn, CA 95603.

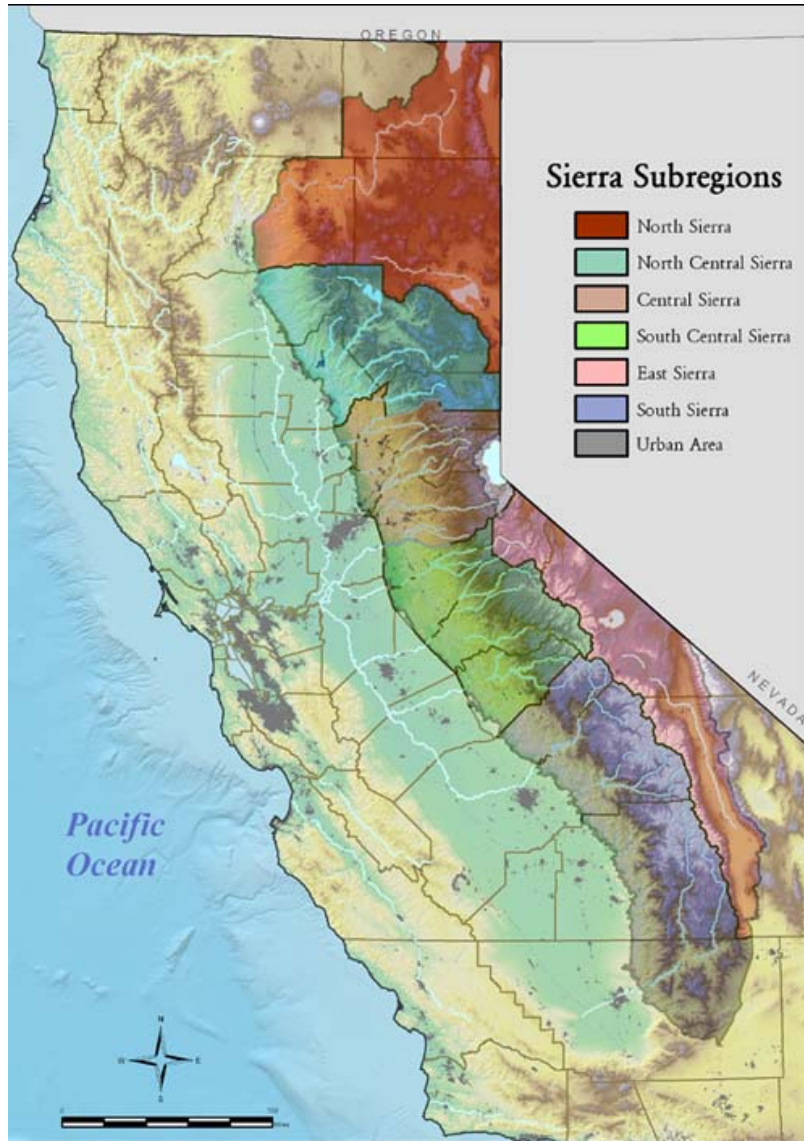


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ABOUT THE SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

Thoughts about the Conservancy

The 25 million acres of the conservancy reach from Kern County to the Oregon border.

The Conservancy will not only support environmental preservation but assist the regional economy, preserve working landscapes and provide increased opportunities for tourism. It will serve as an example of economy and environment in harmony.

The 25 million acres within the new conservancy are a gift to the people of California, a gift that we have now guaranteed will keep on giving. Our children and grandchildren, visitors from far and wide, will see and enjoy the same Sierra Nevada that we value so much today.

*Governor
Arnold
Schwarzenegger
September 27, 2004*

Vision

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy's vision for the future is:

The magnificent Sierra Nevada Region enjoys outstanding environmental, economic and social health with vibrant communities and landscapes sustained for future generations.

Features:

- Rich and diverse natural, physical and living resources are protected and conserved.
- Healthy, diverse and economically sustainable local communities thrive, prepared for and protected from natural disasters.
- Californians value and invest in healthy watersheds that

provide high quality water, spectacular scenery and important wildlife habitat.

- Sustainable working landscapes provide environmental, economic and social benefits to the region.
- The region's cultural, archeological and historical resources are preserved, visited and treasured.
- Healthy and sustainable tourism, recreation and commercial activities are valued and encouraged.



Mission Statement

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy 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.

Description

The SNC is a State agency within the Resources Agency. The Conservancy's service area covers approximately 25 million acres, nearly 25% of California's land area, making it the largest conservancy in the state. The SNC jurisdiction includes the mountains and foothills of the Sierra Nevada range, and certain neighboring areas including the Mono Basin, Owens Valley, the Modoc Plateau and a part of the southern Cascade region including the Pit River watershed.

For purposes of this plan, the terms "Sierra Nevada Region" and "region" includes all of these areas.

The service area covers all or portions of 22 counties, from Modoc County in the north to Kern County in the south. It is one of the most significant natural and biologically diverse regions (with related socio-economic benefits) in the world.

Governance

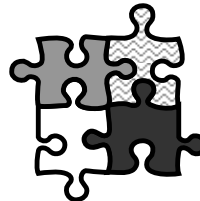
The Conservancy is governed by a 16-member board, including 13 voting members and 3 nonvoting liaison advisers, appointed under Public Resources Code section 33321. Members include:

- State Secretary for [Natural Resources](#) (or his/her designee)
- State Director of Finance (or his/her designee)
- Three members of the public appointed by the Governor
- Two members of the public, one each appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly and the Senate Rules Committee
- Six county supervisors whose districts are within the region, each representing one of the six Sierra Nevada subregions
- Three non-voting Federal liaison advisers, one each from the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management

Things the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Can Do:

- Award grants and loans;
- Develop projects and programs designed to further its purpose;
- Facilitate collaborative planning efforts;
- Enter into agreements and contracts with willing participants;
- Encourage and initiate coordination, collaboration and cooperation among interested parties; and
- Provide technical information, expertise, program and project development and other non-financial assistance.

(For more detail on Conservancy authority see Appendix B)



Program Description

The law creating the SNC outlines its mission. All the SNC activities are based on the principles of balance, cooperation and equity. The SNC 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's mission;
- Make every effort to ensure that, over time, Conservancy 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.

Program Areas

The statute creating the SNC provides for seven specific program objectives (using the precise language from the statute and not in priority order):

- 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;
- Undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public.

This Strategic Plan guides programs, activities and projects necessary to achieve these goals.

Decision-Making and Monitoring

The Conservancy uses the best available information and science in decision making and will continue to frequently assess the effectiveness of its programs. The SNC builds upon existing information and identifies where key gaps or weaknesses may exist. Information useful in decision making will continue to be collected and made available for use by others.

The SNC provides for research and monitoring activities in support of its mission. Monitoring allows the Conservancy to refine or modify programs and promote adaptive management based on the results.

Agency Funding Sources

The SNC's base budget¹ currently consists of funding from the California Environmental License Plate Fund. Additional funding for the implementation of the Conservancy's programs comes from Proposition 84 bonds. Proposition 84 allocated \$54 million in bond funds to the SNC, of which \$51 million will be used to fund local assistance grants, with the remainder used to pay administrative costs. The SNC may also receive funds and interests in real or personal property by gifts, bequests or grants.

Deleted: future bond funding and/or other special funding sources

¹ The state authorized budget for basic operational needs.

AGENCY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The SNC has a number of principles that serve to guide the organization's operation into the future:

How We Operate

- The SNC conducts operations openly. Decision making will be transparent, and we always strive to improve communications throughout the region.
- The SNC strives to maintain neutrality so all interested parties are provided an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the SNC's activities.

Our Key Objectives

- The SNC seeks to "add value" and build upon existing community and regional efforts.
- The SNC brings a regional focus to the issues of the Sierra Nevada, collecting and sharing information across the region and communicating the benefits and contributions of the region.
- The SNC encourages community-based solutions and will assist communities with technical expertise, information and resources necessary to achieve local solutions.
- The SNC uses the best available information and science in making decisions, identifying opportunities to fill information and technical gaps and building on and expanding community information.
- The SNC informs and educates the public throughout the Region and the State about the important contributions the Sierra Nevada provides to all Californians, including providing clean water for many uses outside the Sierra, access to world-class recreation and tourism and the production of a variety of important commodities.
- The SNC strives to identify and implement activities that result in integrated environmental, economic and social benefits rather than "either or" outcomes.

Implementing Our Programs

- The SNC develops program priorities considering the input received through community outreach efforts and seeks to meet community needs, recognizing local and regional differences, through program and organizational flexibility.
- The SNC gives priority to multi-benefit projects and integrated activities (those that address more than one of the SNC's program objectives).
- The SNC encourages projects and activities that leverage other organizations' (government, private and non-profit) competencies and funding.

- The SNC evaluates projects considering what is occurring on surrounding lands, cognizant of potential impacts to those landscapes.
- The SNC purchases and/or creates incentives for the purchase, where practical, of resources for goods and services within the Sierra Nevada Region. We diligently seek opportunities to improve the economic well-being of communities in the region.

Working with Others

- The SNC emphasizes cooperation with local governments and other governmental, tribal and non-governmental partners in providing information, technical assistance and financial support to assist in meeting mutual goals.
- The SNC coordinates and collaborates with all partners to achieve research, project funding and program goals.
- The SNC convenes and facilitates interested parties to seek solutions for difficult problems to achieve environmental, economic and social benefits.
- The SNC respects the mission, responsibilities and obligations of other agencies and organizations.

AGENCY ASSESSMENT

As a new organization, the SNC needs to create strategies and actions that recognize the many factors supporting or creating barriers to effectiveness. The assessment below, based on a review of existing information from numerous sources and public input, summarizes key factors.

External Assessment

One of the most significant natural and biologically diverse regions in the world, the Sierra Nevada Region constitutes about 25% of California's land area. It serves as home to over 600,000 Californians, and provides recreational opportunities for millions (nearly 4 million Californians live within 30 minutes of the Region). The region also:

1. Provides more than 60% of California's most valuable commodity - water, the vast majority of which is used for residential, agricultural and environmental uses outside of the region;
2. Supports 212 communities dependent upon natural resources for jobs, recreation, and community character;
3. Sustains a growing tourism industry involving more than 50 million recreation visit days a year;
4. Supports half of all plant species found in California;
5. Provides habitats for 66% of the bird and mammal species and about 50% of the reptile and amphibian species in California;
6. Is home to more than 400 species of terrestrial vertebrates and in excess of 320 species of aquatic invertebrates (the region contains more endemic aquatic invertebrates than any other ecological region in the world);
7. Produces from 33% to 50% of the State's annual timber supply;
8. Provides solace and vacation opportunities for all.

Key Sierra Nevada Facts

- The Sierra Nevada is the third fastest growing region in California. Some estimates predict the population will triple by 2040. The area is experiencing rapid retiree and commuter resident growth, and large intermittent recreational populations that increase resource pressures.
- For some time, the Sierra Nevada's economy has been diversifying from primarily a resource-based economy to one increasingly dependent on tourism and related services specialized goods and services tied to the state economy, and health, financial, and other services needed by the growing population.
- Many parts of the region face significant threats from natural disaster, in particular the risk of catastrophic fire.
- There is increasing conflict over various land use decisions in certain portions of the region and over regional resource conservation strategies.
- In some Sierra communities there is a lack of affordable housing, declining personal income, low literacy rates, and outdated communications infrastructure.
- In some subregions there are a growing number of children living in poverty.

Environmental, Economic, and Social Challenges

Institutional Challenges	Resource Challenges
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relative lack of public funding committed to the Sierra Nevada Region; the area received only about 1% of all State bond funds designated for conservation purposes from 1996-2001(excluding Lake Tahoe); 2. Lack of institutional and funding capacity to deal with the region's issues. Many local and State agencies have difficulty meeting basic needs because of budgetary shortfalls. Many local governments and organizations in the region need technical assistance and funding to develop and implement projects; 3. Lack of cohesive and comprehensive State policy on investment objectives for acquisition, restoration, economic development, recreation and tourism, and resource management activities within the region; and 4. Lack of knowledge about the importance of the Sierra Nevada Region by a majority of Californians living outside the area. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rapid population growth in some areas breaks up the ecosystem and working landscapes and increases the risk of wildfire along the wildland-urban interface; 2. Job losses in industries such as timber, agricultural and ranching, along with the reduction in mining activity, place additional economic burdens on many communities that are distant from the metropolitan economies on either side of the region; 3. Impaired water quality in many of the Sierra Nevada's rivers; 4. Adverse effects on land and water species and their habitat, many of which already face declining health and numbers; 5. Approximately 70% of the forest and rangelands and 75% of the homes in the Region are at significant risk of fire (FRAP Assessment for Sierra and Modoc bioregions). 6. Lack of affordable housing in many communities, particularly workforce housing; 7. Reduced access to quality health care; 8. Loss of historical and cultural character of communities; and 9. Lack of needed community infrastructure and public services such as roads, quality health care transportation systems, wastewater treatment, and storm water management. 10. Adverse impacts of climate change on natural resources, watersheds and local economies in the Sierra.

In recent years, a great deal of attention has been focused on the significant environmental, economic and social challenges facing the region. In fact, the creation of the SNC was largely a product of this recognition.

The scale, scope and complexity of resources, funding and institutional needs exceed the current capacity of the existing public programs and private nonprofit sector. The current situation presents many challenges to Sierra communities in addressing natural resource and community needs and has resulted, or could result, in the following:

Positive Signs

Even with these significant challenges, progress is being made within the region. The past decade has seen a substantial increase in collaborative planning efforts by government agencies and the non-governmental community. There are a substantial number of public and private groups, (representing business, the environment, tourism, healthcare, cultural efforts such as music, arts and crafts, ranching, and agriculture), governments, and other sectors, working collaboratively to come up with sustainable solutions. There are a number of local government efforts taking this approach to address complex resource and infrastructure issues.

Many groups have focused on watershed management, community planning, reducing the risk of catastrophic fire, preserving working landscapes and protection of critical habitat. In addition, many traditional land management practices have been modified to reduce the impact on the environment.

A 2002 survey recorded the following groups within the Sierra Nevada Region:

- **18 active resource conservation districts**
- **Approximately 75 community Fire Safe Councils**
- **More than 22 operating land trusts and support organizations**
- **More than 20 Coordinated Resource Management Planning groups**

These efforts provide the SNC opportunities to partner, facilitate and collaborate, as well as leverage funds and resources to achieve common goals.

Internal Assessment

The SNC serves a broad range of purposes. In order to develop effective programs and set priorities, it must continue to actively engage the public, government agencies, non-governmental partners and other interested parties with a particular focus on subregional outreach. This approach allows input on the strategic program planning, program guidelines and development, and provides important information as to changes occurring in the region.

In order to be successful, the SNC must constantly determine where it can add value, building upon and enhancing community efforts while respecting the responsibilities of other government agencies.

Large Area

The Conservancy's service area includes approximately 25 million acres and all or part of 22 counties. This area creates significant transportation, communication and operational challenges. An effective organizational response requires strategic deployment of the SNC's resources and effective communication with the public and all partners.

Complex Institutional Setting

The SNC operates in a complex institutional setting. The Board includes representatives of the Executive Branch (Resources Agency, Department of Finance

and 3 gubernatorial appointees), the Legislature (Speaker of the Assembly and Senate Rules Committee appointees), representatives from 22 counties, and 3 federal agencies (the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management). There are over 200 communities (more than 20 incorporated cities), 30-40 special districts and dozens of local non-governmental organizations within the region.

Program Diversity

Rather than patching together separate agency programs, the SNC will continue to use a comprehensive and integrated approach to address regional and subregional needs. This approach necessarily results in program diversity and complexity. As noted earlier, the SNC is charged with seven distinct program areas that must be integrated in order to achieve the mission of the organization. There are a wide variety of tools available to address each area, recognizing the diversity that exists throughout the region. The SNC's program complexity is magnified by rapid regional change, which is driven, in part, by population growth within and immediately adjacent to the region. Some estimates predict the population is

expected to triple in the next 30-40 years. As the economic structure of the region diversifies from one primarily dependent on commodity-based industries to one driven by new services, the SNC's charge will require new approaches. For example, the potential conversion of working landscapes to residential and commercial uses would lead to increased demand for stewardship on remaining lands in order to receive the environmental, economic and social benefits these lands provide. The Conservancy must continue to be responsive and take advantage of opportunities resulting from various planning efforts.

An Emphasis on Consultation and Collaboration

The SNC is committed to working collaboratively and cooperatively with all levels of government, and a wide variety of partners, including non-governmental organizations and private landowners, in developing and implementing its programs. It cooperates and consults with the city or county wherever a real property interest is being acquired, and with public water systems where a project may affect the system.

Additionally, is it necessary to closely monitor a host of Federal, State and local planning processes, as well as to coordinate activities with other State agencies.

Complexity of Program Development and Implementation

The SNC is managed in accordance with Program Guidelines adopted by the Board in July 2007. These guidelines create a “level playing field,” (fair and even access to the SNC processes) for all interests. The guidelines identify program objectives and the procedures and processes used to carry out the programs. They reflect analysis of program (resource) requirements at the regional and subregional levels; institutional capacities; funding needs for each program; and an

assessment of Federal, State and local plans for each program objective.

In order to carry out its activities consistent with the guidelines, Conservancy personnel:

- Develop and analyze regional, subregional and community information;
- Engage in required consultative and subregional liaison processes to determine needs and priorities;
- Review existing and potential funding programs affecting the region;
- Review and analyze project proposals;
- Provide technical assistance to local governments and non-governmental organizations; and
- Convene and facilitate willing parties with diverse interests and perspectives.

The Conservancy relies on communication and data systems to achieve program objectives, improve community capacity and provide for maximum public

participation in Conservancy meetings and workshops and is continuously trying to improve its ability to communicate and manage information effectively.

Critical to the Conservancy’s success is the implementation of an Education and Communication Plan adopted by the Board in December 2007. The purpose of the plan is to support increased understanding of the region and subregions by all parties. By educating California citizens about the many benefits of the Sierra Nevada Region, the resource challenges and opportunities that exist and the need for their involvement, the public can assist in supporting efforts to improve the environmental, economic and social well-being of the region.

Deleted: with sufficient expertise and adequate resources to

Deleted: a successful program will be an education and communications

Deleted: by clear and understandable

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Deleted: This Strategic Plan is the first step in developing these guidelines.

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AGENCY FIVE YEAR ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC GOALS

During the next two-and-a-half years the SNC will continue to build an effective infrastructure to implement its charter, develop strategies, and set priorities for decision making on projects and site-specific activities. In order to carry out its mission, the SNC will continue to focus on five key organizational areas:

- **Create an Effective Organization**
- **Use and Share Best available Information**
- **Increase Knowledge and Capacity**
- **Ensure a Balanced Portfolio**
- **Identify Funding Needs**

I. Create an Effective Organization

In its initial years the SNC defined key purposes, functions and project goals and created an organizational structure to support them. It hired staff; adopted rules, regulations and guidelines for the SNC’s operations; designed organizational

management structures; completed required reports and plans; and established the organization’s facilities.

The SNC organizational structure emphasizes flexibility and recognize the Sierra Nevada’s differences and similarities. It addresses challenges of serving an area as large and diverse as the Sierra Nevada Region by focusing on its core mission and

forming partnerships with other governmental agencies and a wide variety of partners and interested parties.

The SNC does not supersede local efforts. Instead its efforts emphasize community interaction and build on and enhance the existing infrastructure.

Strategies to support Organizational Goal 1

- Strategy 1.1: Ensure an open and transparent decision-making process by adopting understandable rules, guidelines, and procedures for the SNC’s business.
- Strategy 1.2: Conduct a robust public outreach and feedback program within the region and in the state’s metropolitan areas important to the success of the program.

Deleted: Goal 1.1:
Deleted: Establish the SNC interim headquarters in Auburn. (April 2006)
 Determine location of a permanent headquarters location that will meet the SNC’s needs and add economic value to the community. (July 2007)

Deleted: Goal 1.2:
Deleted: Establish satellite office locations based on available staff and resources and operational needs. (July 2007)

II. Use and Share Best Available Information

The SNC will **continue to** base decisions on best available information by engaging in data collection, analysis and sharing.

Numerous governmental agencies, non-governmental entities, educational institutions, and individuals maintain information to make daily decisions affecting the region. However, for a variety of reasons, the information is not always easily available to others. The SNC will collaborate with local decision makers to determine information needs and define ways to make the best available information readily available.

A number of entities have developed a significant amount of high quality regional research and information. The SNC will **continue to** identify and incorporate as much existing data as possible into its information collection and dissemination efforts.

In addition to acquiring best available and necessary information, the SNC proposes to engage community leaders and others in defining information priorities, data gaps and dissemination methods.

The SNC will **continue to** make information widely available for use by others using multiple strategies and tools with an emphasis on internet and other emerging technologies.

Beyond acquiring information and making it available, the SNC will focus on means to improve the overall capacity of communication systems in the region. For example, some areas in the Sierra Nevada Region do not have access to high-speed internet, or even basic internet service, at reasonable rates.

Strategies to support Organizational Goal 2

Strategy
2.1: Work with governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, tribes, private landowners, educational institutions, and other interested parties, to determine existing relevant information relating to the SNC's mission, significant information gaps and potential sources of new information. In doing so, build upon and enhance existing information infrastructure.

Strategy
2.2: Assess preferred dissemination methods, technological needs and data limitations of the SNC's partners. Develop overall data acquisition and, dissemination requirements and a strategy to address the SNC statutory and organizational needs, with an emphasis on improving communities' ability to access and use information.

III. Increase Knowledge and Capacity

The Sierra communities have a rich history of self-sufficiency and resourcefulness. Currently, many local activities, consistent with the SNC’s mission, are underway. The SNC will continue to build upon these efforts and assist communities with building and creating capacity by providing information, technical assistance, financial, and other resources.

The SNC recognizes goals and activities must be flexible enough to address the wide variety of regional issues and concerns and to adapt to new information or situations. Neither “one size fits all,” nor will static programs be effective.

Education efforts, demonstration projects, and research and monitoring activities designed to increase knowledge will continue to be encouraged and supported.

Strategies to support Organizational Goal 3

Strategy 3.1: Determine existing and potential regional and community education, shared learning and research projects that the SNC can support and enhance.

Strategy 3.2: Work with communities to meet their technological, communication, and technical assistance needs.

Strategy 3.3: Support integrated regional, subregional and local planning efforts, consistent with the SNC’s mission.

Deleted: Based on the Goal 3.1 assessment and the information technology assessment

Deleted: Develop an education and communications plan to support increased understanding of the importance of the Sierra Nevada within the region and throughout the state. (October 2007)¶

Deleted: Goal 3.4:

IV. Implement a Balanced Program

The SNC places a priority on projects and activities that provide multiple benefits consistent with program goals. The integration of environmental, economic and social aspects is encouraged and supported.

The SNC will make every effort to, over time, allocate resources and activities equitably across the subregions and program areas. Even so, in the initial years of operations, the diversity, complexity and uniqueness of the region and the subregions may create challenges in achieving this objective. Funding limitations and restrictions may also present challenges in achieving this objective. Compounding that challenge will be a desire to invest in projects that also provide statewide benefits.

The SNC will continue to identify efforts and activities with region-wide application and benefit. This may include communication efforts, enhancement of information technology infrastructure and information collection and dissemination

Strategies to support Organizational Goal 4

Strategy 4.1: Recognize the need to act based on opportunity, available funding and regional differences and statewide interest.

Strategy 4.2: Continuously refine Subregional and region wide priority setting processes, consistent with the statute, to guide staff and the Board in decision making.

Deleted: Goal 4.1:

Deleted: Develop, in collaboration with other organizations, environmental, economic and social well-being indices to monitor the progress in the various program and geographic areas. The indices will identify the key indicators to be monitored and measured and clearly identify performance standards. (July 2007)

Deleted: Goal 4.2

Deleted: Develop a program activity tracking system to ensure equitable distribution, over time, of resources across the region, subregions and programs.

Deleted: Goal 4.3:

V. Identify Funding Needs

Adequate funds are essential to fully implement this Strategic Plan. The SNC recognizes that funding may be limited, inconsistent and targeted to certain program areas, depending on funding sources and appropriation by the Legislature. The SNC will continue to fund essential activities and implement this plan consistent with available funding and statutory requirements.

The California Environmental License Plate Fund and Proposition 84 bond funds are the current sources of the SNC budget. The SNC will continue to engage in a number of important activities using base funding including gathering and disseminating important information and providing technical assistance. Funds for grants comes from Proposition 84 bonds. The SNC may also receive resources from gifts, bequests or donation

Deleted: Additional funding (primarily for grants and loans) is expected to come from future bonds and other special funding sources

Strategies to support Organizational Goal 5

Strategy
5.1: Develop and communicate funding needs of the region to the public, the SNC partners, and decision makers at all levels.

Strategy
5.2: Leverage and improve funding options and opportunities by identifying and communicating potential funding sources to those engaged in project activities consistent with the SNC's mission.

Strategy
5.3: Identify and secure additional opportunities for stable funding sources for the SNC.

AGENCY FIVE YEAR PROGRAMMATIC GOALS

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Program Goals

(These goals are listed as they appear in the statute and do not necessarily reflect a priority order.)

- 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
- Undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public

The statute creating the SNC charged the organization with seven program goals (see box on this page). This Strategic Plan identifies a set of strategies in support of each goal. The Conservancy develops an Action Plan each year, which identifies the specific actions the Conservancy will undertake in that fiscal year to carry out these strategies and further the program goals. Conservancy staff report to the Board regarding the contents and status of the Action Plan and includes information regarding program accomplishments in its Annual Report.

The SNC ensures that strategies and actions are integrated across program areas.

Ongoing development of the Conservancy's plans is done using an open process, utilizing information gained from public input and other information gathering, development and analysis. All of the Conservancy's efforts recognize and address subregional differences and priorities.

Following are the program goals as identified in statute, with key strategies identified.

Deleted: actions which will serve as the foundation for development of specific strategies, approaches and projects designed to achieve these goals

Deleted: As the next phase in the process, the SNC will develop program-specific strategies for carrying out these actions with measurable outcomes and specific timelines. This blueprint for action will be

Program Goal 1: Tourism and Recreation

Provide Increased Opportunities for Tourism and Recreation

Californians enjoy numerous recreational opportunities in the Sierra and the statute creating the SNC positions it as an advocate for increasing and improving those opportunities.

The Conservancy's mandate to provide increasing opportunities for tourism and recreation is a clear recognition of the major economic contribution of these activities to the region and its communities.

Tourism and recreational opportunities are essential to the Sierra Nevada's changing economy and major contributors to economic growth. In 1999, overnight campers spent over \$560 million for use of private and public campgrounds, more than a sixth of such expenditures statewide.² These sectors continue to grow and provide more jobs and wages than many other sectors combined.

Between 1992 and 1998 the jobs generated by travel spending alone grew from about 6,500 to over 9,000.³

The growth is driven by the creation of new businesses and the expansion of existing ones, based on providing value-added services on both public and private lands.

Recreational opportunities in the Sierra Nevada offer nearly every type of outdoor activity for visitors and residents (both full and part-time) from camping to snowshoeing, hunting to bird watching, and rock climbing to motorized sports. In fact, some estimates indicate that as many as 50 million visitor days are spent on public lands a year.

At the same time, it is important to note that some forms of recreation can create impacts on natural resources, especially use that is inconsistent with prescribed rules and restrictions. Likewise, increased tourism could create stress to existing infrastructure in many Sierra communities.

Many communities have developed or are exploring "non traditional"

opportunities, such as eco-tourism, agri-tourism and heritage related tourism. Also the opportunity for additional recreational activities in the non-peak or "shoulder" seasons present viable options in many areas.

The SNC will [continue to](#) work with communities on identifying opportunities that increase tourism and recreation consistent with sustainable practices and in recognition of community infrastructure needs. The SNC will [also continue to](#) encourage and support efforts that teach visitors how to be good stewards of local resources.

² Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP), Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Assessment, Socio-Economic Assessment, Wildland Outdoor Recreation Assessment. p. 31

³ FRAP, Assessment, Socio-Economic Assessment, Wildland Outdoor Recreation Assessment, p. 29

Strategies to Support Program Goal 1

- Strategy 1.1: Identify top priority tourism and recreational opportunities for all, including those in non-traditional activities such as eco-tourism, agri-tourism and heritage related tourism. Promote opportunities consistent with the integration of environmental, economic and social benefits.
- Strategy 1.2: Identify funding sources relative to tourism and recreation that may be utilized to complement the SNC activities in order to achieve objectives.
- Strategy 1.3 Identify and promote opportunities to enhance recreational and tourism activities in the non-peak and “shoulder” seasons.
- Strategy 1.4: Provide opportunities on public lands through increased management, improved access and new trails.
- Strategy 1.5: Promote opportunities on private land by supporting resource and amenity conservation and restoration projects associated with private creation of recreational use.

Program Goal 2: Physical, Cultural, Archaeological, Historical, and Living Resources

Protect, Conserve, and Restore the Region's Physical, Cultural, Archaeological, Historical, and Living Resources

The Sierra Nevada is a special place with many areas of interest. The extraordinary landscape draws residents and visitors. Few places on the planet have such beauty, ecological diversity, archaeological, cultural and historical assets.

Humans have lived in the Sierra for about 10,000 years, and have been a factor in the regional ecology for 3,000 to 5,000 years. Early people used fire to improve the land for food, hunting and gathering and to generate plants to make baskets and serve other needs. Today, the Sierra Region continues to be home to numerous tribes.

Later, the Sierra hosted California's famous gold rush, which marked a turning point in the Sierra's cultural, economic and natural history. During that period, a large number of people came to the Sierra to pursue their fortunes and built many of today's communities.

During this time, the practices employed by the miners severely degraded the Sierra's waterways and landscape. The results of these practices are still problems in many areas.

Increasing pressures including growth, economic decline, the risk of catastrophic fire, climate change and decreasing water and air quality put these important features at risk.

By 2040, almost 20 percent of the Sierra's current private forests and rangelands could be affected by projected development.⁴ Such conversion would put at risk, among other things, the Sierra Nevada's wildlife and ecosystem health and its rich cultural and historic treasures.

In addition, nearly 70 percent of the Region's forests and rangelands are ecologically at risk from wildfire.⁵

Catastrophic fire would have profound environmental, economic and social impacts.

Climatic changes also present significant potential impacts to the Sierra's physical and living resources. Currently, even conservative projections of warming temperatures suggest a significant decrease in the Sierra snowpack and changes in precipitation patterns, which must be considered in planning processes.

In order to protect, conserve and restore the region's living resources, it is essential to promote ecosystem and watershed health. This requires an integrated approach recognizing the importance of terrestrial and aquatic habitats and the activities and conditions that may threaten their health.

Collaborative, integrated watershed planning efforts that address a wide range of issues are encouraged and supported.

⁴ FRAP Assessment Summary, p. 89

⁵ FRAP Assessment Chapter 3, Health - Wildfire Risks to Assets, p. 12

Strategies to Support Program Goal 2

Strategy 2.1: Identify priority projects, partners and mechanisms, that protect, conserve and restore physical and natural resources, watersheds, wildlife habitat and other living resources.

Strategy 2.2: Identify priority projects, partners and mechanisms that protect, conserve and restore cultural, archaeological and historical resources.

Strategy 2.4: Identify specific funding sources that may complement the SNC activities in order to achieve program objectives.

Strategy 2.5: Work in partnership with other governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other interested parties to identify information, assistance and resources needed to support community projects consistent with SNC's mission.

Strategy 2.6: Partner with local governments to identify information, technical assistance and resources that would be of value in local land-use decision-making.

Strategy 2.7: Facilitate and foster good planning and education efforts (including those aimed particularly at students) to protect and enhance ecosystem and watershed health, sustainable working landscapes and economically viable communities.

Deleted: Identify critical information needs at the regional and community levels to assist in assessing resource protection needs.

Deleted: that protect, conserve and restore these important assets

Program Goal 3: Working Landscapes

Aid in the Preservation of Working Landscapes

Working landscapes are lands managed to produce goods and commodities from the natural environment (including farms, ranches, forests, mines and watersheds).

Some of these lands provide important contributions to habitat, biodiversity, water quality, air quality and open space that benefit everyone. Based on landowner skills, resources, and voluntary conservation and restoration actions, the benefits can be substantial.

Although management responsibilities and costs rest with the landowner, in many communities these lands are an important part of the local economy, culture and

social fabric. Working landscapes represent a scenic and historic asset for the region, covering approximately 36 percent of California's forests and rangelands.⁶

Many of these working landscapes are at risk because landowners have difficulty keeping their businesses economically viable. In many places, development pressure is strong and the potential economic gain for converting the lands to other uses is substantial. The resulting conversion of use is often detrimental to natural resource values that remain.

In some instances the management of public

lands in the area affect private landowners. Many are dependent on availability of government lands to create a scale of operation to make their own endeavors profitable. For example, in the Eastern Sierra 95 percent of land ownership is held by federal and other governments, 2.5 percent in ranches, and 2.5 percent in other private ownership.⁷ In this area many private enterprises rely on these public lands for ranching, recreation, etc. In addition, government policies designed to respond to other resource issues can have unintended consequences and destabilize private working landscapes dependent on a mix of resources.

⁶ FRAP Assessment Summary, p. 75

⁷ FRAP Report to the California Biodiversity Council, September 18, 1997

Strategies to Support Program Goal 3

- Strategy 3.1:** Collaborate with governmental and non-governmental partners in identifying willing landowners interested in preserving their working landscapes through conservation easements and similar mechanisms.
- Strategy 3.2:** Identify voluntary incentive-based programs (including those complementing and enhancing regulatory efforts) to assist in preserving working landscapes consistent with achieving sustainable environmental protection, natural resource conservation and watershed management objectives.
- Strategy 3.3:** Identify opportunities for more cohesive public and private land management, including “checkerboard” ownership patterns, by identifying and facilitating potential voluntary land exchanges.
- Strategy 3.4:** Identify voluntary incentives to private and public landowners to manage the upper watershed to increase natural water storage and groundwater recharge.
- Strategy 3.5:** Facilitate local, regional and State planning to encourage upper watershed conservation efforts that result in increased natural water storage, groundwater recharge and habitat improvement.
- Strategy 3.6:** Provide regional perspective and coordination expertise to help local planning efforts consistent with working landscape goals; assist communities in minimizing adverse impacts of public land management on private working landscapes.

Program Goal 4: Natural Disaster Risks

Reduce the Risk of Natural Disasters, such as Wildfires

The Sierra Nevada geography, geology, climate and vegetation make it particularly susceptible to natural disasters, particularly wildfires, floods, landslides, avalanches, and volcanic events. Effective fire suppression efforts in recent decades have increased fuel build-up in many areas. At the same time active public land forest management (timber harvesting and fuels management) has also been reduced.

As this occurred, substantial residential and commercial growth occurred in historic wildlands. Increased length of the wildland-urban interfaces increase natural disaster risks. The existence of thousands of presently undeveloped parcels of land extending randomly into wildlands has the potential of exacerbating that latent risk.

For example, 79 percent of housing units in the Sierra wildland-urban interface are at significant risk from wildfire (Very High or Extreme fire threat).⁸ Collaboration among local jurisdictions and local landowners may help affect future land-use decisions that could exacerbate the problem.

In addition, significant management challenges have increased fire risk on many publicly held lands. The proximity of these lands to developed areas creates additional threats.

In recent years, there has been an increase in efforts to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire on public and private lands. Substantial federal funding has been allocated to many of the Sierra Nevada's National Forests. Local Fire Safe Councils have been formed in many communities and there is a

growing awareness of the fire problem among local decision-makers.

Similar investments are made for landslides and floods, but often after a fire event. Due to changing land-use patterns, official floodplain and other geographic hazard mapping are not always up to date and new construction sometimes occurs in those areas.

Some areas in the region face the risk of avalanche during the winter. In addition, volcanic hazards are of particular concern to some parts of the region.

Sierra communities must also determine the potential effects of climate change and develop strategies to deal with those changes.

⁸ FRAP Assessment Summary, p. 102)

Strategies to Support Program Goal 4

- Strategy 4.1:** Collaborate with State and federal land managers to identify projects and activities that will reduce risks of, and prepare for, natural disasters on public lands.
- Strategy 4.2:** Assist communities in the development and implementation of firesafe community plans, flood prevention and other natural disaster prevention and response community-based plans. Collaborate with local governments and community-based organizations to create incentives for hazard mitigation and disaster planning.
- Strategy 4.3:** Collaborate with federal, State and local fire agencies to identify opportunities for the SNC to assist in risk reduction efforts on private lands.
- Strategy 4.4:** In cooperation with local governments, identify strategies to reduce the wildland-urban interface fire risk created by building structures that are within or encroach into wildlands.⁹
- Strategy 4.5:** Provide assistance to the Region in the development and implementation of alternative, multi-benefit natural disaster risk reduction programs such as bio-fuel creation.

⁹ Where houses and other human development meet or intermingle with wildland vegetation and wildfire poses a significant risk to human lives and structures.

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**Program Goal 5:
Water and Air Quality**
Protect and improve water and air quality.

Water

The Sierra Nevada Region has numerous major rivers, hundreds of lakes, and thousands of miles of streams that form 31 watersheds.

These watersheds are the lifeblood of California as they contribute over 60% of California's water needs, (primarily to areas outside of the Sierra Nevada) and substantial hydro-electric power.

Many watersheds retain negative impacts from historic land uses, ongoing land-use changes, and episodic, intense wildfires that have degraded water and air quality and aquatic habitat conditions. Historic mining activities also have significant water quality impacts, from both sediment and heavy metals. In addition some forms of recreation can create impacts on water resources, especially if not conducted consistent with prescribed rules, regulations and restrictions.

Today, new construction, mining, timber and range management, residential and commercial land use, and road construction are all activities that are regulated to address impacts on water quality. Planning and regulation takes place at the State, regional and local levels. In addition, communities are facing issues such as wastewater treatment

and storm water runoff that can affect water quality. At the same time, many Sierra dams are in the process (or will be in the near future) of being relicensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The outcomes of these efforts will have important consequences in many communities.

The SNC will continue to work with these regulatory agencies and the communities to determine efforts that will contribute to improving water quality and will continue to fund efforts to improve watershed health through its Proposition 84 grant program.

Air

While California faces some of the nation's most difficult air quality challenges, some Sierra communities enjoy some of the state's cleanest air.

However, in the more urbanized areas of the Sierra Nevada, as in other parts of California, motor vehicles are significant contributors to air pollution. Some areas, most particularly in the foothill region, receive substantial additional negative impacts from urban pollution carried by wind.

Air quality issues in the Sierra are further complicated by the role of fire. Catastrophic fires can create substantial amounts of pollution and can be particularly intense during active burning. At the same

time, land managers use fire as a tool to reduce the risk of wildfire through prescribed burns. Reconciling land management activities and air quality standards continues to be a challenge.

Climate Change

Issues involving climate change are especially relevant to the Sierra Nevada's water and air quality. Governor's Executive Order (S-3-05) notes increased temperatures threaten to greatly reduce the Sierra snowpack, one of the State's primary sources of water; and increased temperatures also threaten to further exacerbate California's air quality problems with adverse effects on human health. New approaches such as carbon sequestration hold great promise for the region and carbon emission offsets created by Sierra land management and other practices could enhance overall statewide goals.

Even under lower emissions scenarios, the Sierra snowpack is projected to face significant decline in the coming years. A regional approach on how to adapt to climate change is necessary to protect our natural resources and local economies. That is why the Administration has developed a Sierra Nevada Climate Change Initiative, to be led by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy in partnership with the California Tahoe Conservancy and other state and federal entities.

Strategies to support Program Goal 5

Deleted:

Strategy 5.1: Identify and support voluntary incentive-based programs that complement and enhance regulatory efforts to achieve environmental protection and sustainability goals.

Strategy 5.2: Identify and support priority projects aimed at assessing, protecting, and improving watershed health, particularly those that provide multiple benefits.

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Strategy 5.4: Provide incentives for watershed restoration projects resulting in upper watershed health, water quality improvement and water source conservation efforts.

Deleted: Develop and make available a list of funding sources, resources, consultants, and organizations with skills, expertise and knowledge to assist communities with projects consistent with this goal.

Strategy 5.5: Engage in cooperative efforts with agencies and other partners aimed at educating the public about, planning for, and monitoring the effects of climate change on the Sierra Nevada Region, as well as the impact that actions taken within the Sierra Nevada have on mitigation of climate change throughout the State. For example, investigate technology and program options for carbon sequestration.

Strategy 5.6: Work with local governments, air quality organizations, and other stakeholders to encourage efforts to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire through increased biomass energy production, thereby reducing open burning and associated negative impacts on air quality and greenhouse gas emissions.

Program Goal 6: Regional Economy

Assist the regional economy through the operation of the Conservancy's program.

The Sierra Nevada economy is rooted in its natural environment by tourism, recreation, sustainable resource management, the production of agricultural products and the extraction of valuable minerals and building materials.

Many Sierra Nevada communities face ongoing economic challenges. At the same time, the changing local economies described earlier in this document present opportunities for greater diversification. Many communities are in need of assistance in developing efforts to attract diverse, sustainable economic activity. California as a whole will benefit from

greater economic vitality within the Sierra.

In carrying out its programs, the SNC will support developing the needed information technology and other communications infrastructure that will help attract economic activity, particularly activity that reinvests in the region.

Population and economic growth constitute a dilemma for various parts of the region. Some seek and benefit from expansion while others prefer less development. SNC will continue to take these differences into consideration in project planning.

The SNC will continue to carry out its operations with an emphasis on providing economic benefits for Sierra communities. This includes being a consumer in the local economy by purchasing goods and services locally, conducting meetings and events in the region and assisting local businesses in gaining more State business opportunities. SNC will also continue to invest in program areas in ways that enhance the economy of the Sierra.

The Conservancy will also play a role in fostering collaboration and cooperation among producers of regional goods and services to improve markets.

Strategies to support Program Goal 6

- Strategy 6.1: To the maximum extent feasible, focus the SNC's expenditures and conduct activities within the region, utilizing community businesses.
- Strategy 6.2: When investing in the SNC's information technology system and other infrastructure, factor in approaches to increase value to the region.
- Strategy 6.3: Identify resources and assistance that will benefit communities in efforts to improve their economic well-being.
- Strategy 6.4: Assist in growing and diversifying local economies that are compatible with the area's natural resources, through innovative investments and economic development that are regionally distinctive.

Program Goal 7: Public Lands

Undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public.

Over 60 percent of the Sierra Nevada Region is owned by the public, with the federal government being the single largest land manager. These lands provide substantial recreational opportunities for Sierra residents and visitors and simultaneously provide for the protection of significant natural resources. The use of public lands for recreation and tourism provides substantial economic benefits for many communities. Just as significantly, those spending time on them, receive hours of enjoyment and fond memories.

However, with public use come management challenges relating to law enforcement, resource protection and development and maintenance of facilities. The SNC will continue to work collaboratively with land management agencies and others to address these challenges and to increase the quality and diversity of use and enjoyment of public lands.

Strategies to Support Program Goal 7

- Strategy 7.1:** Support community efforts to identify specific opportunities for sustainable public use and enjoyment of public lands. This includes conservation and restoration projects that result in public use.
- Strategy 7.2:** Develop and support, in consultation with State and federal land managers, sustainable projects that meet this objective, consistent with the land management agencies' objectives and responsibilities.

NEXT STEPS

This Strategic Plan will be comprehensively reviewed within five years by the Board, although adjustments to the plan **will continue to** occur prior to that if warranted because of new information or changing conditions. The Board will also review progress on implementing the plan to determine appropriate program adjustments. All changes to the plan will be made through an open, public process.

Deleted: Program guidelines, priorities and performance measures, consistent with the goals and actions identified in this plan will be developed in the next phase of the process (July 2006 – July 2007). ¶

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The SNC is greatly appreciative of the many individuals, organizations, and governmental agencies that played a role in the development of this plan. The input, support, and public involvement was invaluable.

Board members John Brissenden and B.J. Kirwan who served as members of the Boards sub committee, spent numerous hours attending workshops and providing guidance and support in development of this plan.

The services of Lisa Buetler and her team at the Center for Collaborative Policy at California State University Sacramento, Sherry Bartolucci of Synergistica Consulting (compliments of the Resources Legacy Foundation Fund) and a team of volunteer facilitators were likewise essential to the creation of a strong plan through a no bust public process. Finally, the work of the SNC staff and the Board have created a Strategic Plan that will ably guide the organization for the next five years.

GLOSSARY

For the purposes of this plan, the following terms have the following meanings:

Adaptive management: design and implement programs in a highly flexible manner, and revise management strategies depending on information gained from continuous monitoring to achieve desired outcomes.

Biofuel: gas or liquid fuel made from plant material (biomass). Includes wood, wood waste, wood liquors, peat, railroad ties, wood sludge, spent sulfite liquors, agricultural waste, straw, tires, fish oils, tall oil, sludge waste, waste alcohol, municipal solid waste, landfill gases, other waste, and ethanol blended into motor gasoline.

Board: governing Board of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

Capacity Building: increasing the ability of a community, local government, or organization, to design, develop and carry out programs or projects.

Carbon sequestration: refers to the provision of long-term storage of carbon in the terrestrial biosphere, underground, or the oceans so that the buildup of carbon dioxide (the principal greenhouse gas) concentration in the atmosphere will reduce or slow. In some cases, this is accomplished by maintaining or enhancing natural processes; in other cases, novel techniques are developed to dispose of carbon.

Conservancy: Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

Ecosystem: abbreviation of the term, ecological system; a collection of plants, animals and other living organisms, living together with their environment (including land, water and air) function as a loose unit, a dynamic and complex whole, interacting as an ecological unit.

Fee interest, fee title, fee estate, or fee simple: outright title to, and dominion over, a parcel of land.

Fund: the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Fund, a special fund within the State Treasury for the exclusive use of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

Interested Parties: all parties engaged in, interested in, affected by, and/or potential parties to activities of the Conservancy and region including, tribal people, governments, people of all regions, states and nations, private land owners, businesses, watershed councils, non-profits, non-governmental organizations, social and cultural organizations, advocacy groups, fire safe councils, land holding bodies, private associations, educational institutions and others.

Less-than-fee interest in land: an interest in land -- such as an easement, right-of-way, or leasehold -- which is less than the fee title, transferred by the owner of the fee title (or a predecessor) to another party (e.g., an individual, corporation, public entity, etc.).

Living Resources: biological resources, including plants, aquatic life, micro-organisms, birds, reptiles, animals and humans.

Local government: a city, county, district (including fire, water, recreation, park, sanitation, waste disposal and resource conservation districts), or joint powers authority.

Nonprofit organization (Non Governmental Organization): a private, nonprofit organization that qualifies for exempt status, and that has among its principal charitable purposes preservation of land for scientific, educational, recreational, scenic, or open-space opportunities; or, protection of the natural environment, preservation or enhancement of wildlife; or, preservation of cultural and historical resources; or, efforts to provide for the enjoyment of public lands.

Region or Sierra Nevada Region: the area lying within the Counties of Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Inyo, Kern, Lassen, Madera, Mariposa, Modoc, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Tehama, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yuba, which is more specifically described in Public Resources Code section 33302(f), and excluding both of the following: (1) The Lake Tahoe Region, as described in Section 66905.5 of the Government Code (2) The San Joaquin River Parkway, as described in Public Resources Code section 32510. The region includes the mountains and foothills of the Sierra Nevada range, and certain neighboring areas including the Mono Basin, Owens Valley, the Modoc Plateau and a part of the southern Cascade region including the Pit River watershed.

Riparian: areas adjacent to rivers and streams. Usually referred to when discussing animals and plants that require this type of environment to survive.

Shoulder Season: refers to seasons on either side of high visitation seasons in communities with a strong tourism economy.

Social Health/Well-being: The level of functionality of man-made systems within a community or region. Attributes of highly functional systems include adequate capacity and long-term sustainability.

Subregions: the six subregions of the Sierra Nevada Region, described as follows:

- (1) The north Sierra subregion, comprising the Counties of Lassen, Modoc, and Shasta.
- (2) The north central Sierra subregion, comprising the Counties of Butte, Plumas, Sierra, and Tehama.

- (3) The central Sierra subregion, comprising the Counties of El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, and Yuba.
- (4) The south central Sierra subregion, comprising the Counties of Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, and Tuolumne.
- (5) The east Sierra subregion, comprising the Counties of Alpine, Inyo, and Mono.
- (6) The south Sierra subregion, comprising the Counties of Fresno, Kern, Madera, and Tulare.

Sustainable: an activity that can be repeated over a long period of time without causing damage to the environment or the community.

Sustainable Development: development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Tribal organization: an Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, or a tribal agency authorized by a tribe, which is recognized as eligible for special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians and is identified on pages 52829 to 52835, inclusive, of Number 250 of Volume 53 (December 29, 1988) of the Federal Register, as that list may be updated or amended from time to time.

Watershed: an area of land that is drained by a single stream or river. Smaller stream-based watersheds nest within larger river-based watersheds.

Wildland-Urban Interface: where houses and other human development meet or intermingle with wildland vegetation and wildfire poses a significant risk to human lives and structures.

Working landscapes: lands producing goods and commodities from the natural environment (most commonly farms, ranches and forests). For many communities, these lands are an important part of the local economy, culture and social fabric.

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Methodology Statement – Internal Planning Process

Appendix B: Summary of Agency Duties and Authorities

Appendix C: Project Suggestions from 2005 Community Meetings

Appendix D: Summary of 2006 Community Meetings

Appendix E: Actions That Have Been Completed or Incorporated into 2008-09 Action Plan

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Appendix A: Methodology Statement – Internal Planning Process

As a new organization the Conservancy was fortunate to receive information from a variety of government agencies, nonprofit organizations and businesses. Many of the materials provided were incorporated in part or in whole in the Organizational Assessment and to prepare the program and goal statements. Where direct quotes were used we attempted to provide the source document and also wish to acknowledge the many approaches and concepts graciously provided for this review by others.

The general public provided ideas for use in developing a plan during testimony at Conservancy Board meetings, with written submissions, and during public workshops conducted in the region in 2005. This document incorporates information gathered from those meetings and submissions and additional input generated at public meetings held in the region during April and May 2006, written submissions on the April and June 2006 drafts, and direction from the Board provided at the June 1, 2006, meeting. It also includes additional input provided by the Board and the public during the revision process which occurred between December 2008 and March 2009.

Deleted: This draft Strategic Plan was prepared in accordance with the California State Department of Finance Strategic Planning Guidelines. The planning format calls for high-level goals and objectives instead of detailed program area goals. The plan is also being prepared in phases to accommodate a need for more program information to develop program guidelines and performance measures. More about the guidelines may be found at <http://www.dof.ca.gov/FISA/OSAE/SPguide.pdf>.

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Appendix B: Summary of Agency Duties and Authorities

Overview

The Laird-Leslie Sierra Nevada Conservancy Act authorizes the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to “carry out projects and activities to further the purposes of this [Act] throughout the [Sierra Nevada] Region.” The Act directs the Conservancy to “make every effort to ensure that, over time, Conservancy funding and other efforts are spread equitably among each of the various subregions and among the stated goal areas.” (Section 33341).¹⁰

The Act envisions the Conservancy will conduct its program “in cooperation with local governments, private business, nonprofit organizations, and the public” (Section 33301(d)).

Under the Act, the Conservancy has been given various powers and authority in order that it may carry out programs. Some key ones are:

- (1) Grants or loans to eligible entities (people, incorporated business and organizations, etc.);
- (2) Conservancy acquisition of an interest in land from a willing seller;
- (3) Restoration, enhancement, or improvement of land;
- (4) Transfer of an interest in land, e.g., for long-term management; and
- (5) Funding and facilitating collaborative planning efforts which involve interested entities and groups within the region.

In addition, the Conservancy is authorized:

- to provide technical assistance to eligible entities to support program and project development and implementation; and
- to conduct research and monitoring in connection with the development and implementation of the Conservancy’s program.

The Act also contains specific powers and authority relating to Conservancy income and revenue.

The Conservancy’s powers and authority are set forth in Division 23.3 of the California Public Resources Code, and are discussed in more detail below.

Summary by topic

Grants and Loans (Sections 33343-33344)

¹⁰ All section references are to the California Public Resources Code.

The Conservancy may make grants or loans to public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and tribal organizations, in order to carry out the purposes of the Act. Conservancy grants or loans may be awarded for such purposes as:

- Developing projects and programs which are designed to further the purposes of the Act;
- Acquiring interests in real property, including both fee interests (absolute title) and less-than-fee-interests (e.g., conservation easements);
- Planning and designing the restoration, enhancement, or improvement of land;
- Carrying out the restoration, enhancement, or improvement of land;
- Conducting collaborative planning efforts.

Funds may be distributed only after the intended recipient enters into an agreement with the Conservancy. The Conservancy may require repayment of grant or loan funds and outlined conditions as appropriate. After approving a grant, the Conservancy may assist the grantee in carrying out the purposes of the grant.

Grants for acquisition of real property, and applications for such grants, are subject to various conditions. An entity that receives a grant or loan for acquisition of real property must provide for management of the acquired property.

Acquisition and Management of Interests in Land (Sections 33347 and 33349(a))

The Conservancy is authorized to acquire – but only from willing sellers or transferors – an interest in land, in order to carry out the purposes of the Act. However, the Conservancy may not purchase a fee interest (absolute title) in land, and it may not exercise the power of eminent domain (condemnation). If the Conservancy plans to buy an interest in a lot or parcel of land and it is appraised at more than a set amount (currently \$250,000), the acquisition must be reviewed by the State Public Works Board.

The Conservancy must “take whatever actions are reasonably necessary and incidental to the management of lands or interests in lands under its ownership or control.” For that reason the Conservancy is allowed to make management agreements for the lands with public agencies as well as private parties.

Restoration, Enhancement, or Improvement of Land (Section 33349(b))

The Conservancy may “improve, restore, or enhance lands for the purpose of protecting the natural environment, improving public enjoyment of or public access to public lands, or to otherwise meet the objectives of this [Act],” and to “carry out the planning and design of those improvements or other measures.”

Transfer of Interests in Land (Section 33348)

The Conservancy may “lease, rent, sell, exchange, or otherwise transfer” interests in real property including vested rights which are severable from the property (sometimes known as “transferable development rights”).

Funding / Facilitating Collaborative Planning Efforts (Section 33346(a))

The Conservancy may provide funds to facilitate collaborative planning efforts within the region.

Other Activities (Sections 33346(b) and 33351)

The Conservancy “may provide and make available technical information, expertise, and other non-financial assistance to public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and tribal organizations as it relates to its mission.

The Conservancy may also expend funds to conduct research and monitoring, in connection with the development and implementation of its program.

Consultation and Coordination (Section 33342)

The Conservancy shall cooperate and consult with the city or county, as the case may be, where a grant is proposed or an interest in real property is proposed to be acquired, and, as necessary and appropriate with a public water system. The Conservancy must also coordinate its efforts, as necessary or appropriate, with those of other State agencies,

Income and Revenue (Sections 33346.5 and 33352-33355)

The Conservancy may receive gifts, donations, bequests, subventions, grants, rents, royalties, and other assistance and funds from public and private sources. Assistance received in this manner may include interests in real and personal property. SNC may also fix and collect fees for direct services which it renders, provided that the service is rendered at the request of the individual or entity receiving the service. The Conservancy may not charge more than the reasonable cost of providing the service.

All income from any source (including the proceeds from the transfer of any interest in land) is to be deposited in the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Fund, a separate fund within the State Treasury. The Legislature must authorize all expenditures from the Fund. The Fund can only be used for the purposes of the Act.

Specifically Prohibited Activities (Sections 33347(c) and 33356)

The Conservancy may not exercise any of the following powers:

- Powers of a city or county to regulate land use.

- Any other powers to regulate activities on land (except when acting as the owner of an interest in the land, or under an agreement or other grant of authority from the owner of an interest in the land).
- Any powers over water rights held by others.
- Power of eminent domain (condemnation).

Appendix C: Project Suggestions from 2005 Community Meetings.

Community Well-being

- Funding for easements
- Housing affordability/availability
- Need for community centers
- Access to Information
Technology/Communications (high-speed internet, teleconferencing, etc.)
- Access to health care, improve health care
- Public transportation
- Preservation of cultural resources
- Preservation of historical buildings and settings
- Resource related activities/jobs creation (e.g.: biomass)
- Retaining community/historic character
- Encouraging of the arts in the region
- Assist local governments in land use planning efforts
- Assist communities with infrastructure needs (e.g.: water and wastewater systems)
- SNC to “buy local”
- Tribal rights and tourism
- Economic development for youth
- Promote small businesses
- Planning for new airport
- Preserve small communities

Tourism/Recreation

- Agricultural tourism
- Assist businesses and community in promotion of tourism
- Working landscapes tourism
- Historical tourism
- Ecotourism
- ADA compliant facilities
- Hunting and fishing opportunities
- Interpretative scenic byways
- Internet access to tourism/recreation opportunities in region
- Conversion of older infrastructure for recreational opportunities
- Assist State and federal agencies in increasing public access
- Develop visitor centers
- Balance recreational opportunities and resource development
- Assist with railroad trails, bike and walking trails

Resource Protection

- Assist in land use planning efforts of local governments
- Promote forest health
- Sustainable forestry
- Fuels reduction/fire safe activities
- Technical assistance and scientific data
- Land swap opportunities
- Environmental education
- Critical acquisitions
- Use of conservation easements for habitat protection and open space preservation
- Funding for public lands maintenance and improvements
- Water quality projects - build and clean community water systems
- Watershed management and river restoration
- Air quality projects

Education, Communication, Data Acquisition and Dissemination

- ID Native American archeological and cultural resources
- Compile project examples from other conservancies
- Provide technical assistance for grant writing, etc.
- Provide a neutral forum for policy discussions
- Facilitate necessary research and monitoring

Appendix D: Summaries from 2006 Strategic Plan Community Meetings

Introduction

In early 2006, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy initiated a strategic planning process. The preliminary draft of the Strategic Plan incorporated elements required by statute, as well as input received through numerous letters, reports and Community Forums conducted in 2005. Following the release of the preliminary draft plan, region-wide workshops were conducted to collect input and comments on refining specific elements of the Strategic Plan. These were held in each of the Conservancy six sub-regions during April and May of 2006. Participants were asked to comment on:

- Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles
- Organizational Goals
- Program Areas

An overview of the meeting highlights from each session follows. The summaries provide an overview of issues discussed at the session. The section captioned “new insights” within each section summarizes concepts and issues expanded or articulated differently than in other subregional meetings.

Jackson Workshop – April 25, 2006
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Vision, Mission, Principles

- **Vision**
 - a. Add “natural resources” (“living resources” is not clear)
 - b. Make more active, less passive; more motivating, less abstract
 - c. Add “economic vitality” to last sentence
- **Mission**
 - a. Create/maintain balance between multiple (potentially competing) objectives
 - b. Identify who “other interested parties” are – State and federal agencies, non-government organizations, and the public (throughout entire Strategic Plan)
 - c. Make more active, the mission should include “protect”
- **Principles**
 - a. Be clear about SNC’s role and how it relates to local organizations and communities (regulatory v. advisory; does it own or manage land?)
 - b. Working with Others – add NGOs, private interests, and the public
 - c. Grassroots/local approach emphasized

II. Organizational Goals

- **Effective Organization**
 - a. Coordination across regions, agencies, and organizations is important
 - b. Local liaison/presence/contact is needed
 - c. Empower and work with local efforts
- **Use and Share Reliable Information**
 - a. SNC as clearinghouse
 - b. Set standards for data reliability; standardize data collection
- **Increase Knowledge and Capacity**
 - a. Use and develop models based on actual data to make projections
- **Balanced Portfolio**

- a. Change this title to something about Measuring and Monitoring
 - b. Emphasize public and private organizations
 - c. Make sure that indicators are “measurable and appropriate”
- **Funding**
- a. Grant programs and applications should be user-friendly, easy to understand

III. Program Goals

■ **Priorities**

- a. Some advocated economic goals (new business and new dam construction), others advocated environmental goals (resource protection, rural quality of life)
- b. Working landscapes, tourism and recreation, and the regional economy are all connected to protection of natural resources.

■ **Program Actions and Approach**

- a. Focus on community priorities and specific opportunities
- b. Provide greater detail about programs – make goals stronger
- c. Include public education and awareness as a goal (out of classroom educational opportunities for children, more interpretive spots for adults, convey local history to visitors)
- d. Tourism and recreation goals need to address more than increasing visitor use (assess recreation assets, needs, and current level of use; increase the quality and variety of experiences; better manage current recreational use and public lands)
- e. Link regional economy and tourism opportunities (agri-tourism and environmental tourism; commercially-based recreation access projects)

New Insights

I. Vision, Mission, Principles

- a. Vision: energize vision with a kick-off demonstration project
- b. Mission: local government includes school districts

II. Organizational Goals

- a. Organization: Some goals are long-term, some already completed – create a timeline
- b. Data: Use and develop models based on actual data to make projections
- c. Data: Indicators of well-being index should track jobs, housing balance, oak woodlands conversion
- d. Data: Need more information about groundwater in foothills

III. Program Goals

- a. Discuss quality of life in local communities – health and fitness (including addressing childhood obesity), safe places for recreation, and work/home settings
- b. Link land use planning to working landscapes and natural hazard areas

Exeter Workshop – April 26, 2006

I. Vision, Mission, Principles

■ Vision

- a. Add “natural resources”, emphasize wildlife and wildlife habitat
- b. Add “working waterscape”
- c. Stronger language on protection and importance of resources for the State

■ Mission

- a. “Other interested parties” seems to ignore the importance of NGOs, community organizations, and private interests in resource conservation – call out
- b. Facilitate collaboration and improved relations among Sierra Nevada stakeholders for seamless management and regional approaches

■ Principles

- d. Create effective network to collect and share information
- e. Emphasize involvement of local groups acting in concert with government. agencies
- f. Specify how public participates in process, seek out input and information
- g. Education is important – interpretive signs and outreach to public and youth

II. Organizational Goals

■ Effective Organization

- a. Need to have a local presence, be innovative – use existing organizations to augment SNC resources; need reliable 2-way communication
- b. Significant community involvement in setting priorities, create a very transparent culture built on equity and collaboration; continually seek public input
- c. Provide definition of terms used in the Strategic Plan

■ Use and Share Reliable Information

- a. Improve uniformity of data collection, create effective network to collect and share information (consolidate data within a single clearinghouse)
- b. Define terms and what is included in various assessments; define “better” decision-making – what decisions?

■ Increase Knowledge and Capacity

- a. Create/maintain a database to catalogue all trails, improvements, unique locations to track progress/useful application of program

■ Balanced Portfolio

- a. Clarify purpose and content of index, include a full spectrum of indicators

■ Funding

- a. Grant guidelines should be simple, transparent, and equitable

III. Program Goals

■ Priorities

- a. Air and water are most important

■ Program Actions and Approach

- a. Work with local groups, help organize and facilitate better relations of agencies and community groups; local input into federal plans
- b. Education on the value and conservation of resources and public land; discuss threats – loss of working lands, habitat; use interactive websites; educate visitors
- c. Goals 2.4, 2.5 – Include communities and non-profit organizations (NGOs, local conservation groups, community economic development councils, etc.)
- d. Goal 4 – Funds should go more to on-the-ground efforts (treat landscape and vegetation to reduce fire hazards) and less to research

- e. Protect working landscapes and unique business community that exists in region; natural resources are basis for regional economy

New Insights

I. Vision, Mission, Principles

- a. Make vision and mission shorter, more personal; should be easy to memorize and quote
- b. Include soil, along with air and water in the vision
- c. Collaboration across management boundaries to create “green infrastructure”
- d. Look at other conservancies (e.g. Appalachian Conservancy) for models
- e. Consider aesthetic quality along with economic and environmental goals
- f. Remove “sound” from sound science

II. Organizational Goals

- a. Include education and preservation regarding cultural resources
- b. Goal 1.1 – Would be good to use “green” building accessible by public transportation, biking, foot

III. Program Goals

- a. Program Priorities – Recognize unique differences and values of valley, foothills, and mountains for all sub-regions
- b. Anticipate and respond to climate change and changing conditions
- c. Add goal directed at maintaining a healthy ecosystem and wildlife habitat; prevent introduction of invasive, non-native species
- d. Add program goal to preserve “Working Waterscapes”
- e. Include land use planning for Goals 3 and 4.2
- f. Assist communities with visioning; promote clean transportation, reduction of sprawl, and other methods for cleaner air and healthier, more walkable development
- g. Goal 1 – Reach out to non-traditional groups; emphasize diversity of users

Nevada City Workshop – May 10, 2006
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I. Vision, Mission, Principles

■ Vision

- a. Add “natural resources” (“living resources” is not clear)
- b. Make more active, less passive; more motivating, less abstract
- c. Add “economic vitality” to last sentence

■ Mission

- a. Create/maintain balance between multiple (potentially competing) objectives
- b. Identify who “other interested parties” are – State and federal agencies, non-government organizations, and the public (throughout entire Strategic Plan)
- c. Make more active, the mission should include “protect”

■ Principles

- a. Be clear about SNC’s role and how it relates to local organizations and communities (regulatory v. advisory; does it own or manage land?)
- b. Working with Others – add NGOs, private interests, and the public
- c. Grassroots/local approach emphasized

II. Organizational Goals

■ Effective Organization

- a. Coordination across regions, agencies, and organizations is important

- b. Local liaison/presence/contact is needed
- c. Empower and work with local efforts
- **Use and Share Reliable Information**
 - a. SNC as clearinghouse
 - b. Set standards for data reliability; standardize data collection
- **Increase Knowledge and Capacity**
 - a. Use and develop models based on actual data to make projections
- **Balanced Portfolio**
 - a. Change this title to something about Measuring and Monitoring
 - b. Emphasize public and private organizations
 - c. Make sure that indicators are “measurable and appropriate”
- **Funding**
 - a. Grant programs and applications should be user-friendly, easy to understand

III. Program Goals

- **Priorities**
 - a. Some advocated economic goals (new business and new dam construction), others advocated environmental goals (resource protection, rural quality of life)
 - b. Working landscapes, tourism and recreation, and the regional economy are all connected to protection of natural resources.
- **Program Actions and Approach**
 - a. Focus on community priorities and specific opportunities
 - b. Provide greater detail about programs – make goals stronger
 - c. Include public education and awareness as a goal (out of classroom educational opportunities for children, more interpretive spots for adults, convey local history to visitors)
 - d. Tourism and recreation goals need to address more than increasing visitor use (assess recreation assets, needs, and current level of use; increase the quality and variety of experiences; better manage current recreational use and public lands)
 - e. Link regional economy and tourism opportunities (agri-tourism and environmental tourism; commercially-based recreation access projects)

New Insights

I. Vision, Mission, Principles

- a. Vision: energize vision with a kick-off demonstration project
- b. Mission: local government includes school districts

II. Organizational Goals

- a. Organization: Some goals are long-term, some already completed – create a timeline
- b. Data: Use and develop models based on actual data to make projections
- c. Data: Indicators of well-being index should track jobs, housing balance, oak woodlands conversion
- d. Data: Need more information about groundwater in foothills

III. Program Goals

- a. Discuss quality of life in local communities – health and fitness (including addressing childhood obesity), safe places for recreation, and work/home settings
- b. Link land use planning to working landscapes and natural hazard areas

Paradise Workshop – May 11, 2006

I. Vision, Mission, Principles

- **Vision**
 - a. Add “natural resources” (“living resources” is not clear)
 - b. “thriving places” should say “thriving environment”
 - c. include employment opportunities
- **Principles**
 - a. Working with Others – add NGOs, private interests, and the public
 - b. Change “sound science” to “peer reviewed science,” science should be credible

II. Organizational Goals

- **Effective Organization**
 - a. Actively interact and participate with local agencies and programs (county councils, fire safe programs, NEPA/CEQA processes)
 - b. Hire exceptionally competent staff
- **Use and Share Reliable Information**
 - a. Proactive outreach and communication; don’t rely on web and mail
- **Increase Knowledge and Capacity**
 - a. Reach out to existing organizations for information gathering and assistance
- **Balanced Portfolio**
 - a. Develop benchmarks; third-party monitoring
- **Funding**
 - a. Continuously expand reliable funding sources
 - b. Clearing house for grants; streamline the funding and application process

III. Program Goals

- a. Work with existing organizations and local landowners
- b. Goal 1: Tourism should be sustainable, low impact (non-degrading)
- c. Goal 2 and 5: Include watershed education; develop a management policy for water
- d. Goal 6: include private sector encouragement (marketing, tax incentives, startup); need economic reason for project success; need infrastructure to buy local

New Insights

I. Vision, Mission, Principles

- a. Vision: energize vision with a kick-off demonstration project
- b. Vision: “sustainable natural processes” instead of “well managed public lands”
- c. Mission: local government includes school districts
- d. Principles: Some regions have little political clout; often impacted by the choices of others; have been short-changed on past bonds – help balance

II. Organizational Goals

- a. Organization: need balance of input from private industry and business – reach out to overlooked organizations (e.g., Christmas tree association)
- b. Data: assessments will be defined by resources and problems of interest – define boundaries for regional assessments
- c. Data: effective and cost-efficient technical review of proposals and information is critical – include citizens and staff on technical review board

III. Program Goals

- a. Develop short-term and long-term strategy for program goals
- b. Assist agencies in implementation of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act
- c. Coordinate public and private fire plans with county fire plans

Mammoth Workshop – May 23, 2006
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I. Vision, Mission, Principles**■ Vision**

- a. Replace generic language by describing what makes the Sierra different, unique
- b. Use stronger verbs throughout, refer to sustainable ecosystems throughout
- c. Add “economic vitality” to last sentence

■ Mission

- a. Include references to cultural resources
- b. Identify “other interested parties,” add NGOs throughout
- c. Focus on measurable and tangible results

■ Principles

- a. Funding system should create collaboration and not a competitive system
- b. Keep it simple

II. Organizational Goals**■ Effective Organization**

- a. Need project goals within first 2 years, not just staff and office
- b. Determine staffing and volunteer needs

■ Use and Share Reliable Information

- a. Terms need definition throughout, be more specific

■ Increase Knowledge and Capacity

- a. Education component should include outreach to all ages
- b. Education and advocacy to areas outside of the Sierra, where votes and money are
- c. Add economic, cultural, historical to list in index

■ Balanced Portfolio

- a. Define “fair” distribution
- b. Provide a strong element of accountability back to communities

■ Funding

- a. Get information out to public
- b. Collaborate to advocate for funding for the Sierras

III. Program Goals**■ Priorities**

- a. Tourism, protection of resources, and public lands are interrelated

■ Program Actions and Approach

- a. Integrating all program areas is what is going to work – generate creative synergy
- b. Tourism infrastructure needs to meet existing (then future) demand
- c. Focus tourism on place-based activities that are true to environment, history and culture; promote education and visitor stewardship
- d. Preserve wetlands and water resources
- e. Enhance access, as well as use, to public lands
- f. Streamline permitting for project and enhance planning
- g. Shift from extraction-based to sustainable economy; nurture local entrepreneurs

New Insights**I. Vision, Mission, Principles**

- a. Healthy communities tie to the concepts of sustainability and diversity
- b. Communities “prepared for” natural disasters, instead of “protected from”
- c. Include workforce housing
- d. Collaboration and cooperation with “and among”

- e. Residents take leadership, accountability and participate

II. Organizational Goals

- a. Outreach: Need outreach to different cultures and communities
- b. Build creative tension to break down “silo” (separate interest) thinking
- c. Decisions and information in a timely manner; short deadlines are difficult in rural areas

III. Program Goals

- a. Do No Harm – no implementation of one program to detriment of others
- b. Global warming should be woven throughout program goals
- c. Restoration projects should have stand alone priorities (e.g.. invasive weeds)

Alturas Workshop – May 25, 2006
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I. Vision, Mission, Principles

■ Vision

- a. Integrate environment and economy – create balance between protection, enhancement and use of resources
- b. Add: healthy and diverse landscapes that are sustained over time; protected wildlife habitat and ecosystems; recreational diversity
- c. Need better words than “thriving place” and “living resources”

■ Mission

- a. After local government, add “Tribes” and “other resource agencies”
- b. Say “support AND COMMUNICATE efforts...”

■ Principles

- a. Clarify that “local governments” includes governments besides counties
- b. Include NGOs
- c. Stress the statewide value of the Conservancy

II. Organizational Goals

■ Effective Organization

- a. Finalize staffing and hiring to implement other organizational goals
- b. Maintain strong local presence in communities
- c. Need effective organization; improve public outreach through multiple media

■ Use and Share Reliable Information

- a. Utilize existing information already developed, so that funds go to projects
- b. Improve existing information on state of Sierra water

■ Increase Knowledge and Capacity

- a. Instead of new assessment, look at SNEP and how it may assist SNC

■ Balanced Portfolio

- a. Need guidelines for equitable distribution of funds
- b. Be inclusive in developing index – include a broad range of associations, groups, and others

■ Funding

- a. Accountability – maintain open financial records
- b. Create database of grant sources to match with projects
- c. Establish a permanent funding source (legislative guarantee)

III. Program Goals

■ Priorities

- a. Priorities for this area emphasize working landscapes, preparedness for natural disasters, and regional economies
 - b. Priorities for the overall region are smart growth, air quality and water supply
- **Program Actions and Approach**
- a. More than protection from natural disasters – preparedness; include county government and local landowners; use local wildfire protection plans
 - b. An economic foundation is needed to support tourism; work to attract clean, outside industries
 - c. Regional economy needs to address community infrastructure (education, health care); transportation access for all, including elderly and handicapped
 - d. Include public education and awareness as a goal (for public, kids, visitors) convey local history to visitors)
 - e. Look at programs that would enhance storage and supply of water (e.g. dams) – water supply is a crucial issue
 - f. Explore non-traditional economic opportunities from working landscapes, find an economic use for juniper (ethanol, furniture, etc.)
 - g. Add “provide services in collaboration, dispute resolution, etc. so that work can get done on the ground to meet vision”

New Insights

I. Vision, Mission, Principles

- a. Include social aspects of communities (education, healthcare, transportation)
- b. For implementation, weigh the value of single-benefit projects so that they can be a program priority

II. Organizational Goals

- a. Need project and program monitoring:
 - Was environment enhanced?
 - Did tourism spending increase?
- b. Look at historical funding statewide over the last 10 years and distribute new funding to under-funded areas.

III. Program Goals

- a. Need different approach to wildfire management on east side of region (different ecosystem); wildfire results in ecosystem being replaced by different plant species
- b. Electronic bulletin board with notification of Sierra activities (festivals, Creek Days, etc.)

*Meeting Highlights prepared by Judith Talbot,
Sacramento State University, Center for Collaborative Policy*

Appendix E: Actions That Have Been Completed or Incorporated into 2008-09 Action Plan

Introduction

Each year the SNC develops an Action Plan that describes the key actions the organization plans to take in that year to further its mission and goals. A number of the actions identified in the Strategic Plan adopted by the Board in 2006 were included in the 2006-07 and 2007-08 Action Plans and have been completed. Remaining specific actions included in the original plan are included in the 2008-09 Action Plan. The listing below includes all of these specific actions, which have been removed from the main body of the Strategic Plan, along with information regarding when the action was completed or will be completed.

Note that the original plan identified some actions that were specific and some actions that set forth more general strategies for how to move forward in meeting the SNC's goals. While the specific actions are being addressed as described above, the general strategies are ongoing and remain in the main body of the plan. These strategies will continue to provide valuable direction to the SNC as it determines the specific actions it should undertake each year.

Organizational Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal 1: Create an Effective Organization

- Establish the SNC interim headquarters in Auburn. (April 2006)
- Determine location of a permanent headquarters location that will meet the SNC's needs and add economic value to the community. (June 2008)
- Establish satellite office locations based on available staff and resources and operational needs. (December 2007)

Strategic Goal 2: Use and Share Best Available Information

- Identify and make available access to key federal, State and local plans and other documents affecting the regions to be considered in the development of the program guidelines and priorities (PRC 33345)(June 2006/Ongoing)

Strategic Goal 3: Increase Knowledge and Capacity

- Develop an education and communications plan to support increased understanding of the importance of the Sierra Nevada within the region and throughout the state. (December 2007)

Strategic Goal 4: Implement a Balanced Program

- Develop, in collaboration with other organizations, environmental, economic and social well-being indices to monitor the progress in the various program and geographic areas. The indices will identify the key indicators to be monitored and measured and clearly identify performance standards. (Part of 2008-09 Action Plan)

-
- Develop a program activity tracking system to ensure equitable distribution, over time, of resources across the region, subregions and programs. (Part of 2008-09 Action Plan)
-
- Create a subregional and region wide priority setting process, consistent with the statute, to guide staff and the Board in decision making. (July 2007)
-

Programmatic Goals

Program Goal 1: Provide Increased Opportunities for Tourism and Recreation

- Develop and make available a comprehensive guide to recreational and tourism opportunities in the Sierra, in cooperation with other organizations within the region. (Part of 2008-09 Action Plan)
 - Develop and make available a list of resources, consultants, organizations, etc. with skills, expertise and knowledge to assist communities with projects consistent with this goal. (December 2008)
-

Program Goal 5: Protect and improve water and air quality

- Develop and make available a list of funding sources, resources, consultants, and organizations with skills, expertise and knowledge to assist communities with projects consistent with this goal. (December 2008)
-

Background

Due to the State's serious fiscal situation and the negative impact on the State's ability to sell bonds, on December 17, 2008, the Pooled Money Investment Board (PMIB) froze all funding for General Obligation Bond programs, including programs funded under Proposition 84, to preserve necessary cash resources to fund the day-to-day operational needs of the state for the balance of the fiscal year. As you know, Proposition 84 is the sole funding source for projects authorized by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) at this time.

Based on the PMIB's action, the Department of Finance instructed the SNC and other State funding agencies to take the following actions, effective December 18, 2008:

1. Suspend all grant-funded projects;
2. Suspend all payments on existing grants, including those that have received advances and those with invoices in process, until further notice;
3. Stop authorizing any new grants, including those awarded at the December 2008 Board meeting.

SNC staff sent an immediate email to all grantees on December 19th warning them of the need to stop work, followed by a second email and in some cases phone calls later in the day until we were certain that all grantees were alerted to the situation. We then notified the organizations whose grants were authorized at the December SNC Board meeting, letting them know that we would be unable to execute their grant agreements until further notice due to the freeze. We have been in contact with grantees and others since then, letting people know about the January PMIB meeting and offering information on other potential funding sources not affected by the state freeze.

Current Status

The PMIB's actions have had the following impacts:

Impacts to Existing Grantees

All grantees have had to stop work on their projects until further notice. The SNC is not currently able to pay any invoices that weren't already paid by close of business December 17, 2008. This includes approximately \$850,000 in invoices that the SNC has received for work already completed by grantees and their contractors prior to the 17th.

Impacts to Projects Authorized at December 4, 2008, SNC Board Meeting

For those projects authorized by the Board in December, we are not able to finalize grant agreements and authorize work until the freeze is lifted. We are continuing to process agreements, including sending them to grantees for signature, so that we will be in a position to move quickly if/when the suspension

is lifted. We will be working with grantees to add language to these and all future grant agreements that explicitly addresses possible suspension/termination as a result of future such actions by the State.

Impacts to 2008-09 Competitive Grants

This year's Competitive Grants were originally planned to be acted upon by the Board at this meeting. However, due to the freeze, these grants are not being considered. SNC staff will be prepared to bring recommendations forward at the first opportunity once the freeze has been lifted.

Impacts to Potential Future Applicants

The SNC has continued to accept applications for through February 27th for our second round of applications for the 2008-09 Strategic Opportunity Grants (SOGs). Staff will process applications received so that when this situation gets resolved we will be ready to recommend grants as soon as possible.

The Pooled Money Investment Board met again on January 16. That meeting did not result in any changes other than some clarifications regarding the potential timing for lifting the freeze. At that meeting the PMIB suggested that if a reasonable budget solution were reached by February 1st, it would be April or May at the earliest before any bond funds would be available, but more likely summer or beyond, especially for natural resource bonds. The PMIB did take action to ensure that staff funded through bond funds will be paid.

The impacts of the freeze are being felt by all grantees, with significant adverse consequences to many, including staff layoffs, office and program shutdowns and, in one case, even the threat of a lawsuit against a grantee by a contractor for failure to pay for project work already completed. There is an obvious concern about the potential long-term effects the freeze may have on some of our non-profit partners' ability to stay in business. If the freeze goes on beyond the summer, the Sierra Nevada as a Region is likely to experience a serious decline in capacity to achieve important conservation and community sustainability goals, as many non-profits and local government programs will be adversely impacted.

Next Steps

Regarding existing grants, SNC staff is currently working with grantees to address timing issues with existing grant agreements that are due to expire during the freeze period. In addition, we are actively researching other funding sources that grantees may be able to use and distributing that funding information on a regular basis.

We are also continuing to process agreements for projects authorized for funding at the December 2008 Board meeting. These will not be fully executed until the freeze is lifted, and no activity can be authorized for these projects until then.

As mentioned above, the 2008-09 Competitive Grants were to have been considered by the Board at this meeting. Based on consultation with Chairman Chrisman and Vice Chair Wilensky, it was agreed that the actions ordered by the Department of Finance would prohibit the Board from taking action on these grants. Staff is prepared to bring forth recommendations as soon as the freeze is suspended. Similarly, we agreed, with concurrence of Chairman Chrisman and Vice Chair Wilensky, to continue accepting and processing the SOG Round 2 applications with the intent of being prepared to recommend projects to the Board as soon as possible once the fiscal situation is resolved.

Finally, in order to preserve as much flexibility as possible to expend this fiscal year's Proposition 84 funds once the freeze is lifted, staff recommends that the Board extend the active life of all applications received this fiscal year to December 31, 2009 (instead of June 30, 2009). That would allow us to act expeditiously on these applications after the current fiscal year ends.

Staff will continue to keep the Board updated on new developments relating to the availability of bond funds for our program.

Recommendations

Staff recommends that the Board extend the "expiration date" of all grant applications received this year from June 30, 2009 to December 31, 2009 and that staff communicate this information to all applicants with pending applications.

Background

At its December 2008 meeting, the SNC Board directed staff to develop a grant allocation plan for FY 2009-10 that would help to focus SNC's grantmaking toward projects that result in "on-the-ground" benefits. Staff is currently developing draft Grants Guidelines and Grants Application Packets to reflect this direction. Based on input from staff, applicants and grantees, we have identified some additional policy and process improvements that will also require changes to the Guidelines and application materials.

Because the proposed changes involve a number of policy-level questions, we are outlining the basic recommendations in this staff report and invite further discussion and direction from the Board. The revised Guidelines will be made available for review by the public on approximately April 1 with Board approval planned for the June 2009 SNC Board meeting.

Current Status

SNC staff is recommending that we proceed with the development of 2009-10 Guidelines, despite the current bond funds freeze. By putting new Guidelines in place at the beginning of the Fiscal Year, SNC will be in position to begin awarding grants as soon as funds are available for this purpose.

The primary programmatic changes being considered for the FY 2009-10 grant program include:

- (a) Moving to a single grant cycle (one deadline for all applications with a single evaluation process and a single set of recommendations to the Board); and
- (b) Redefining eligible projects to include those that focus on implementation of specific on-the-ground projects (i.e. existing Competitive and SOG 1 projects), along with a subset of existing SOG 2 project types that address project planning or due diligence activities, such as appraisal work, CEQA/environmental studies, etc.).

Grant Cycle

A significant proposed change for next fiscal year is to move from a three-cycle program to a single cycle. While it is always our goal to be as flexible as possible, we believe that such a change will allow staff to be more proactive in working with stakeholders to ensure successful project implementation and assisting in development of on-the-ground project applications. This is especially important for those Subregions that have been less prolific with on-the-ground project applications in the past.

Further, a single cycle next year will allow staff more time to devote to assisting existing grantees get their projects back on track once the Proposition 84 bond freeze is lifted.

This will require working with grantees to amend their deliverables schedules and address other issues, such as the loss of staff and/or subcontractors, that could affect the timing or scope of their projects as approved.

Grant Categories

Staff is currently determining the best approach to address the Board's direction to give preference to "on-the-ground" projects. One approach being considered is to merge the existing Competitive and SOG 1 categories – both of which address on-the-ground acquisition or site improvement/restoration activities. The act of merging these two categories would simply remove the current dollar distinction between what we've called *Competitive* (projects in amounts between \$250,000 and \$1 million) and *SOG 1* (projects between \$5,000 and \$250,000). This would result in a single category for all acquisition and site improvement projects, regardless of dollar amount. All such projects would be evaluated using the same evaluation criteria.

Key Question:

Does the Board have any further direction regarding this approach or alternatives?

Staff is also considering including a subset of projects currently categorized as SOG 2, including project planning and preparation activities required to ready a specific acquisition or site improvement project, such as:

- (a) preparing and completing plans, acquiring permits, completing the environmental review process (CEQA), performing appraisals, performing necessary studies and assessments and developing necessary project designs related to a particular site or physical project;
- (b) preparing plans or supplementing existing plans that establish a set of projects designed to protect or improve the health of specific rivers, lakes and streams and their associated lands and watershed(s)

Key Question:

Does the Board have any further direction regarding what, if any, types of projects should be deemed eligible from the former SOG 2 category?

Funding Allocations

Assuming that we are able to expend this fiscal year's \$14 million Proposition 84 allocation once the bond freeze is lifted, we would have approximately \$10 million each

for the FY 2009-10 and FY 2010-11 grant programs (subject to appropriation in the State budget).

Staff is considering a recommendation to divide next year's \$10 million allocation as follows:

- \$1 million for the highest-ranked projects in each of the 6 Subregions, for a total of \$6 million.
- \$4 million for the highest-ranked remaining projects, regardless of geographic location.
- If a particular Subregion does not have \$1 million worth of high-ranked projects, the remaining funds from that Subregion are rolled up into the non-geographic pot to augment the \$4 million.

This formula would ensure that each Subregion has its own pot to fund the highest-value projects; but it also allows the flexibility to fund the highest-value remaining projects, regardless of their geographic location.

Key Questions:

Should an alternative be considered allowing "unexpended funds in a particular Subregion to roll over to the following year and be considered additive to that year's allocation?"

Should we consider setting a goal of funding roughly equal amounts of acquisition vs. site improvement or restoration projects?

Executive Officer Authorization

Staff is recommending that the current Executive Officer Authorization would remain in place, allowing for reward of projects of \$50,000 or less that have an urgent need. The total amount awarded through this mechanism would not exceed \$500,000 for the fiscal year. Funds awarded in this manner will be accounted for in the appropriate Subregional or overall allocation.

Next Steps

Following direction from the Board on the key questions identified in this staff report, staff will prepare a public review draft of the 2009-10 Guidelines. We are currently planning to release the draft in early April, accepting public comment for approximately 30 days, and bringing a final draft back to the Board for discussion and final approval at the June 2009 Board meeting. The Board will be discussing the meeting schedule for the remainder of 2009 at this meeting and in the event that the Board does not meet in June, staff recommends that a three member committee of the Board be authorized to approve the Guidelines, following public review and comment, in order to the 2009-10 Grant program to proceed.

Recommendation

No formal action on the Guidelines is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments, especially as they relate to the key questions outlined above. The Board may wish to authorize a three member committee of the Board to approve the Guidelines following public review and comment in the event that the Board does not meet in June.