

NEWS RELEASE

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Forest Biomass Energy Development in the Sierra on Agenda at Sierra Nevada Conservancy Board Meeting in Marysville

(Auburn) – Advancements in “bioenergy” derived from forest by-products and how forest thinning relates to California’s new Bioenergy Action Plan will be discussed at the Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s (SNC) governing board meeting to be held Dec. 6 in Marysville.

The public is invited to attend the board meeting, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Caltrans’ District 3 offices, 703 B St.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is identified as one of the key responsible agencies for action in the state’s [2012 Bioenergy Action Plan](#), in particular, conducting outreach and assistance to diverse stakeholders about the benefits of biomass energy and assisting communities to develop small-scale biomass energy facilities.

“The Sierra Nevada Conservancy will play a significant role in the development of sustainable energy production connected to forest fuels reduction in the Sierra,” said SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham. “Development of additional small scale biomass power generation facilities in the Sierra would provide a ready market for biomass, while protecting our communities from catastrophic fire.”

According to the SNC staff report, the most common practice for managing woody biomass currently is open-pile burning. Recent innovations in biomass energy technology and new policies promoting bioenergy provide an opportunity for the overstock of woody biomass to be used as a source of renewable energy for California, while at the same time creating jobs, protecting forests and communities from catastrophic wildfire, and reducing air pollution emissions.

During the past five years, more than 4.5 million acres of California forests have been burned by wildfire. Costs to suppress these wildfires have averaged approximately \$1.2 billion per year.

The Board will also hear from SNC staff on the progress of awarding \$5 million in grants to aide ranchers and farmers with conservation measures. Those grant applications will be before the Board at its March 2013 meeting. SNC staff will also present updates on the Sierra Forest System Indicators project, the Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative, and the Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide project.

On Dec. 5, the Board will tour Teichert Aggregates operation in the Yuba Gold Fields, visit the Blue Point Mine in Smartsville to learn about the impacts of historic mining activities, and visit the Apollo Olive Oil company in Oregon House.

The field trip is scheduled from 1:00-6:30 p.m. and will start from the parking lot of the Comfort Inn, 1034 North Beale Road, Marysville. A reception will be held at the Alcouffe Community Center following the tour at 5:00 p.m. Persons interested in joining the tour should be prepared to provide their own lunch and transportation.

(Complete information on the meeting agenda, staff reports and field trip are available online at www.SierraNevada.ca.gov.)

About the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Governing Board

Created in 2004, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy is a state agency whose mission is to improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada region. The SNC, which receives no general fund tax dollars, has awarded approximately \$45 million in grants for projects including fuels reduction, conservation easements and acquisitions, and watershed and habitat restoration. Funding for these projects comes from Proposition 84 passed by voters in 2006.

The SNC Governing Board meets quarterly around the Sierra Nevada region, which spans 25 million acres, encompasses all or part of 22 counties and runs from the Oregon border on the north, to southeast of Bakersfield.

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