

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
December 4, 2014

Contact: Brittany Covich
(530) 823-4686
brittany.covich@sierranevada.ca.gov



Sierra Nevada Conservancy Board awards grants for forest and abandoned mine land restoration projects

(AUBURN) – Today the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Governing Board awarded grants for three projects that will restore forest health and remediate abandoned mine lands in the Sierra Nevada Region.

Forests of the Sierra Nevada are the source of more than 60% of California's developed water supply, but the health of many of these forests is in rapid decline. Last month, the SNC released the [State of the Sierra Nevada's Forests Report](#) detailing the current unhealthy conditions that exist in many Sierra forests and highlighting the risks that those conditions place on California's primary water source.

"Sierra Nevada forests are critical to the health of California but decades of fire suppression and legacy mining activities place the benefits they provide at risk," said Jim Branham, Executive Officer for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. "Each of the projects awarded today will help to restore the health of this important region."

A grant in the amount of \$176,853.00 was awarded to the Tahoe National Forest for the Wood Chip Hydraulic Mine Restoration Project in Nevada County. This pilot project will use wood chips generated from a nearby forest thinning project as soil amendment on two historic hydraulic mine sites with severely degraded soils, minimal vegetation, mercury contamination, and erosion issues. The wood chips, a byproduct of the nearby forest health work, will help to stabilize the soil, and prevent sediment and contaminated materials from entering watersheds that feed the South Fork of the Yuba River.

The Sierra Foothill Conservancy received a grant in the amount of \$139,000 to complete forest restoration activities on the Stockton Creek Preserve in Mariposa County. The Stockton Creek Preserve Vegetation Removal Project will reduce the possibility of catastrophic wildfire around Stockton Creek Reservoir, the sole storage source for the community of Mariposa's drinking water, and will replant native plants on portions of the property previously burned.

Mono County received a \$215,000 grant to remove and replace an outdated and inefficient propane boiler system at a County building in Bridgeport with a new thermal biomass boiler system. The new system will utilize the small-diameter woody material,

branches, and diseased or insect infested wood that is not suitable for commercial use from nearby forest restoration activities.

Funding for these projects comes from Proposition 84, passed by voters in 2006. Additional information and local contact information can be found below.

The Board also approved the Conservancy's action plan for the coming year, discussed future distribution of grant funds, and heard presentations by local partners on biomass-to-energy efforts in the central Sierra. Materials from today's meeting are available online at <http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/>.

County	SNC ID	Organization	Project Title	Contact Information
Nevada	809	USDA Forest Service – Tahoe National Forest	Wood Chip Mine Site Reclamation Project	Rick Weaver 530-265-4531
Mariposa	811	Sierra Foothill Conservancy	Stockton Creek Preserve Vegetation Management Project	Bridget Fithian 209-742-5556
Mono	812	Mono County	Mono County Thermal Biomass Project	Wendy Sugimura 760-924-1814

About the Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Created in 2004, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is a state agency whose mission is to improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region. The SNC has awarded over \$50 million in grants for projects to protect and enhance the health of California's primary watersheds by improving forest health, remediating mercury contamination from abandoned mines, protecting critical natural resources and reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire. Funding for these projects comes from Proposition 84 passed by voters in 2006.

The Sierra Nevada Region spans 25 million acres, encompasses all or part of 22 counties, and runs from the Oregon border in the north, to Kern County in the south.

###