

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **\$10 million available for projects that restore forest and watershed health in the Sierra Nevada**

**North Fork** – The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Governing Board approved guidelines for the Proposition 1 grant program today during the SNC’s quarterly meeting in Madera County. Funding for this program is contained in the state budget currently being considered by the legislature. Upon enactment of the budget, the SNC anticipates that approximately \$10 million will be available for projects that restore Sierra Nevada forests and watersheds, including projects that reduce the risk of large, damaging wildfires. Funding for this program comes from Proposition 1, the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014.

Healthy forests play a critical role in California’s water supply system. They capture and filter precipitation, and Sierra meadows store runoff, releasing it slowly for use during summer months when it is needed most. The ongoing drought, an increase in large, damaging wildfires, and a changing climate have placed many Sierra watersheds at risk.

“Reducing the risk of large, damaging wildfires, and investing in the long-term health of the Sierra Nevada Region will benefit all Californians,” says Jim Branham, Executive Officer for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. “Healthy forests protect our water supply, and they provide habitat, places for recreation, and opportunities to reduce California’s greenhouse gas emissions.”

Projects funded through the SNC’s Proposition 1 grant program will complement the goals of the California Water Action Plan, and the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program - an integrated, collaborative program coordinated in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to increase the pace and scale of restoration in the Sierra Nevada. Public agencies, qualifying 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organizations, and eligible Tribal organizations can apply for grants to:

- Implement fuel treatment projects to reduce wildfire risks, protect watersheds tributary to water storage facilities, and promote watershed health.
- Protect and restore rural and urban watershed health to improve watershed storage capacity, forest health, protection of life and property, and greenhouse gas reduction.
- Implement watershed adaptation projects in order to reduce the impacts of climate change on California’s communities and ecosystems.

These types of projects are specifically called out in Proposition 1, in recognition of the critical role forests play in California's water future. Grants can be utilized for on-the-ground projects or for efforts directly leading to on-the-ground projects located within the Sierra Nevada Region, or that have a direct impact on lands or waters within the Region.

For more information about the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Proposition 1 grant program or the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program, visit [www.sierranevada.ca.gov](http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov).

### **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 came 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 on the north, to Kern County on the south. The Region is the origin of more than 60 percent of California's developed water supply.*

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