

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board awards \$3.5 million for forest health projects**

**(AUBURN, Calif.)** – Today the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Governing Board approved nearly \$3.5 million in grants for projects that will reduce wildfire risk, protect water supplies, and restore forest and watershed health in the Sierra Nevada region. The projects awarded support the goals and objectives of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program, a large-scale restoration program designed to address ecosystem health in the Sierra Nevada. This program is coordinated by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy in close partnership with other federal, state, and local agencies, as well as diverse stakeholders, and aims to increase the pace and scale of restoration across the Sierra by increasing funding, addressing policy barriers, and increasing infrastructure needed to support restoration.

Funding for these projects comes from Proposition 1, The Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014. This is the seventh set of awards made under the SNC's [Proposition 1 grant program](#).

“The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is proud to support this kind of work across the Sierra Nevada because it results in better recreational experiences, more stable carbon storage, more reliable water supply, safer communities, and more resilient forests in the future,” says Jim Branham, Executive Officer for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. “We’re happy to see the level of attention and investment in these kinds of projects increasing in California as our decisionmakers embrace the value of proactive, forest restoration projects for our climate, our communities, and our water.”

The projects approved for funding include (from north to south):

- **Lassen, Shasta, and Plumas Counties - Improving Landscape and Watershed Health through Restoring Fire Regimes in Lassen Volcanic National Park, \$494,783**

This grant to the Sierra Institute for Community and the Environment will complete preparations on 1,795 acres for eventual prescribed burning in the southeast corner of the Lassen Volcanic National Park. The project will reduce fuel loading around park infrastructure, inholdings, and along existing roads and trails in three strategic

locations. This will enable the National Park Service to manage prescribed or wildland fire for resource and watershed benefits across the headwaters of the North Fork of the Feather River. This project was developed by the South Lassen Watershed Group, and will serve as an anchor for subsequent work downstream to protect the Warner Valley Wildland Urban Interface, U.S. Forest Service lands, California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Warner Valley Wildlife Area, as well as hundreds of private landholders throughout the valley.

- **Plumas County - Little Grass Valley Reservoir Watershed Protection, \$500,000**

This grant to the Plumas County Fire Safe Council will complete hand and mechanical thinning to treat hazardous fuels on a minimum of 480 acres and expand into an additional 770 acres if funds, time, and conditions allow over a two-year period. The project area is located two miles north of La Porte in Plumas County on the Plumas National Forest, and encompasses the Little Grass Valley Reservoir which is fed by the South Fork of the Feather River and flows to Lake Oroville. In addition to protecting rural communities and their water source, this project will limit extreme ecological impacts from future wildfires and increase watershed storage capacity.

- **Plumas County - Butterfly Twain Fuels and Forest Health Project, \$500,000**

This grant to the Plumas County Fire Safe Council will complete hand and mechanical thinning treatments to reduce extreme fire risk and establish conditions that will allow regular underburning on 454.9 acres of Wildland Urban Interface within a larger 4,641-acre project area on the Mt. Hough Ranger District of the Plumas National Forest. Completion of this project will contribute to a forest resistant to large, damaging wildfires, with defensible space around the Wildland Urban Interface community, and decreased groundwater demands – safeguarding the unique wetland areas of the project and benefitting downstream water users throughout the state of California.

- **Nevada and Sierra Counties - Sagehen Forest Project: A Watershed Improvement and Forest Health Initiative, \$496,338**

This grant to the University of California at Berkeley will complete prescribed low-intensity broadcast burning over three years on a minimum of 973 acres and up to 1,500 acres at the Sagehen Experimental Forest, north of Truckee in Nevada and Sierra Counties. Prescribed burn treatments will protect and increase future water supply and quality for both the ecosystem and downstream water users in the Truckee and Feather River watersheds; improve key reproductive and foraging habitat for wildlife; enhance carbon storage; increase forest resiliency and resistance to destructive wildfire, climate change, disease and insect infestation; and complete a previously funded SNC forest health thinning prescription.

- **Calaveras County - South Fork Mokelumne Watershed Restoration, \$500,000**

This grant to Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions, Inc. will treat 217 acres of hazardous fuels and restore forest health on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property in the Wildland Urban Interface near the town of Railroad Flat. The Project is one of seven contiguous fuels-management projects designed to stop the spread of wildfire up the steep slopes of the South Fork Mokelumne River canyon while increasing forest resiliency to wildfire, drought, and disease. Once implemented, the

project will increase downstream water supply; protect the upper watershed from large, damaging wildfires; and restore public forestland to a more resilient state. The South Fork Mokelumne River flows into Pardee and Comanche reservoirs, which supply water to 1.4 million people in the East Bay.

- **Calaveras County - Cabbage Patch Restoration Project, \$500,000**

This grant to the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority will complete hand thinning and mastication to reduce wildfire threat, increase stand and tree health and vigor, accumulate and retain snowpack, and provide high-quality wildlife habitat across 314 acres of a larger 1,219-acre project area within the Stanislaus National Forest. Developed collaboratively with the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group, the Project is part of the larger 14,065-acre Hemlock Landscape Restoration Project, which in turn is a component of the even larger Cornerstone Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (390,904 acres). These restoration activities in the Mokelumne River watershed may provide greater water yields for downstream beneficiaries that include local water agencies and the East Bay Municipal Utility District.

- **Mono County - Lakes Basin Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project, \$500,000**

This grant to the Mammoth Lakes Fire Safe Council will complete mechanical and hand thinning, fuel breaks, roadside and campground fuels reduction, forest restoration, and meadow aspen release treatments on a minimum of 406 acres and up to 632 acres on Inyo National Forest land over a two- to three-year period. These activities will protect public infrastructure, recreational access, and forest and watershed resources. The project lies within the headwaters of Mammoth Creek which provides municipal water to the town of Mammoth Lakes and flows into the Owens River, a significant source of water for the city of Los Angeles.

To date, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has funded 54 Proposition 1 projects totaling \$16,337,289 that support the restoration goals of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program. Additional information about each of these projects can be found at [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 \$68 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 large, damaging wildfires. Funding for these projects came from Proposition 84 passed by voters in 2006 and Proposition 1 passed by voters in 2014.*

*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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