

NEWS RELEASE

SIERRA NEVADA
CONSERVANCY

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**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board to Consider
Forest and Community Resolution to Create Jobs,
Protect Ecosystems, and Reduce Fire Risk**

Quarterly Board Meeting in Alpine County June 2-3

Auburn— A resolution to guide the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC) efforts to create healthier, safer Sierra forests while revitalizing local communities will be before the SNC Governing Board when it holds its quarterly meeting in Markleeville (Alpine Co.) June 2-3. The "Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative" strives to reduce fire risk, protect habitat, water supply and the environment, and create economic opportunities in the Sierra.

"The resolution before the SNC Board establishes a broad collaborative effort involving state and federal agencies, the environmental community, local government, businesses and local residents to address the sustainable management of public forest lands in the Sierra," said SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham. "We believe there is considerable consensus among a wide range of parties regarding the need to take a different approach – one that reduces the occurrence and impact of large and damaging fires while improving local economic health."

The initiative points out that many Sierra Nevada public forest lands are in an unhealthy condition, overgrown and are in need of sustainable management. At the same time, many communities are feeling the effects of the lack of management activities. The closures of mills and the various businesses associated with forest management has added to local economic woes.

The resolution calls for the formation of a coordinating council and directs the SNC to work collaboratively to identify, support and implement actions that will:

- reduce the risk of catastrophic fire;
- protect and restore habitats;
- promote biomass energy; and
- protect and enhance the production of wood products resulting from sustainable forest management.

The successful implementation of the initiative will attract additional investment to carry out needed work in the Sierra Nevada Region, resulting in the protection of the state's primary watershed – the place where 65 percent of California's water originates.

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Public comment will be taken as part of the board meeting, which will take place June 3 at Turtle Rock Park Community Center, 17300 State Route 89, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

“Alpine is the smallest county by population in the state, but the issue of managing our public forests is one that impacts all of California,” said SNC Board Member and Alpine County Supervisor Don Jardine. “We look forward to hosting this important meeting, and more importantly, to the positive benefits of well-managed forests.”

The board will also review an initial set of services the SNC could perform to ensure long-term public benefit for lands transferred by the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council.

On June 2, the Board and SNC staff will participate in a field tour focusing on issues and activities relevant to the Conservancy’s mission in the area. The public is invited. For information, call (530) 823-4672. Following the tour, the SNC Board, staff and members of the public will discuss the SNC’s progress to date and key issues to be addressed in its upcoming Strategic Plan Update.

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. In its first five years, the SNC, which receives no general fund tax dollars, has awarded nearly \$30 million in grants for projects ranging from fuels reduction to trail improvements, and conservation easements to watershed restoration. Funding for these projects comes from Proposition 84 passed by voters in 2006.

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

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