

## NEWS RELEASE



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### **Jobs, Cleaner Energy, and Sierra Sustainability to be Showcased as the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Board Meets In Shasta County March 3-4**

**(Auburn, CA)** – A more “sustainable Sierra” will be a common theme of discussion when the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) visits Shasta County March 3-4 for its quarterly governing board meeting and field tour. The board meeting takes place Wednesday, March 3 at the Gaia Hotel in Anderson. The tour will occur the next morning.

“One of the key items on the board agenda is the discussion of a proposed Sustainable Sierra Nevada Initiative,” said SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham. “It reflects a commitment to supporting and initiating sustainable forest management as a means of maintaining healthy communities throughout the Sierra.”

The initiative is intended to guide the SNC in bringing parties together—the environmental community, local government, business and local residents—to explore ways to prevent catastrophic wildfire while achieving ecologically healthy forests and vibrant local economies. The board will review the initiative and receive public comment. The initiative is non-regulatory and does not prescribe specific actions, but is a tool to build consensus around a set of common principles and objectives. [Sustainable Sierra Initiative](#)

The SNC will also be honoring several local organizations which participated in the first annual Great Sierra River Cleanup last September. A representative of Assemblyman Jim Nielsen’s office will be on hand to award certificates of appreciation and help kick off this year’s event. Nielsen participated in the cleanup last year. The organizations include the Modoc River Center, Shasta Land Trust, Western Shasta Resource Conservation District, Shasta Roots and Shoots, and Tehama County Resource Conservation District. Combined, these volunteers removed 1.5 tons of garbage from local rivers.

On Thursday, March 4, board members will visit a biomass-to-energy plant operated by Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) at their saw mill site in Anderson. Using wood waste that would otherwise be burned or discarded, the cleaner burning plant produces five megawatts of energy; more than enough to power their 400-employee operation and an additional 4,000 homes.

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“Shasta and neighboring counties are home to numerous biomass facilities, which not only provide jobs and stimulate the economy, but also provide cleaner energy and a more environmentally friendly way of disposing of forest wood waste,” Branham said. “We are looking forward to seeing an up-close demonstration of these operations and consider opportunities throughout the Sierra.”

During this stop on the tour, representatives from Pattern Energy will also make a presentation on the progress of the Hatchet Ridge wind energy project, which is being built on land leased by SPI. The project, when completed in 2011, will produce up to 100 megawatts of power from 44 wind turbines mounted on towers along the ridge.

The final leg of the field tour will be a visit to the Sacramento River Bend area, which is being considered for designation as a National Recreation Area under legislation by Congressman Wally Herger and US Senator Barbara Boxer. Nearly 18,000 acres of public lands along the Sacramento River between Anderson and Red Bluff would continue to be managed for public use by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), while increased funding would be sought for better facility maintenance and public access. Representatives of BLM and Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association will be on hand to answer questions.

**The public is invited to both the board meeting on March 3 and the tour the following day.** The board meeting begins with a public comment period at 1p.m. The field tour will take place between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m., starting at the Gaia hotel. (A bus will be provided but space is limited, so please call (530) 823-4672 to determine availability.)

The board will also consider a resolution, commending its outgoing chairman and former Secretary of California’s Natural Resources Agency, Mike Chrisman, for his service and leadership to the Conservancy. Chrisman recently accepted a post as a regional director with National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. A reception for Chrisman will be held immediately following the board meeting.

### **About the Sierra Nevada Conservancy**

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 Conservancy, 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.

One of the unique features of the Conservancy is the make-up of its board. “Six of our 13 voting members are local elected County Supervisors,” said Lassen County Supervisor Brian Dahle, a rancher and farmer who has been serving on the board since its inception. “We have responsibility for a vast and important region of the state with a lot of common concerns and having a strong local voice on these issues is critical to ensuring a balanced

approach.”

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s governing board meets quarterly around its region which spans 25 million acres, encompasses the mountains and foothills in parts or all of 22 counties, and runs from the Oregon border on the north to just south of Bakersfield. Parts of Shasta and Modoc counties and all of Lassen County make up the Conservancy’s North subregion, host of this meeting.

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