

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
February 23, 2012

Contact: Pete Dufour
(530) 823-4668
pdufour@SierraNevada.ca.gov



Sierra Nevada Conservancy Board to Discuss Grants for Healthy Forests, Farms and Agricultural Lands at Red Bluff Meeting

(Auburn) – Grants to fund on-the-ground projects to make forests healthier and to preserve working ranch and agricultural lands will be discussed at the March 8 Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Governing Board meeting in Red Bluff.

The SNC is in the process of reviewing applications for the \$5 million Healthy Forests grant program, and is finishing guidelines for a new round of grants, which will fund projects designed to preserve ranch and farmland. Funding comes from the Proposition 84 Safe Drinking Water Bond Act passed by California voters in 2006.

“When we thin the forests of unhealthy overgrowth, we not only make our forests healthier, we reduce the risk and consequences of catastrophic fire, increase water yield and create jobs,” said SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham.

The board will review the initial draft of the 2012-13 grant guidelines that are aimed at providing assistance to farmers and ranchers in the Sierra to help maintain the Region’s rich history of working landscapes. The board will also review the SNC’s formal action plan for 2012-13, and hear a report on progress in promoting tourism in the Region through an ongoing Web-based “geotourism” project with National Geographic and the Sierra Business Council.

Additional items on the agenda include updates on potential roles the SNC may play after the transfer of thousands of acres of PG&E lands and easements, and discussion of a possible role with the California Department of Fish and Game and Inyo County in determining the future of the Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery.

Members of the board and staff will participate in a field trip March 7 to the Lazy Y Ranch in the nearby town of Vina to hear about important partnerships between ranch owners and conservation groups. The field trip will start at 1 p.m. from the parking lot of the Hampton Inn & Suites, 520 Adobe Road in Red Bluff. Following the field trip, board members and staff will attend a reception at the Hampton Inn.

The board meeting will be held the following day at the Red Bluff Community/Senior Center, (1500 South Jackson Street in Red Bluff) from 9 a.m. to approximately 1 p.m. The public is invited to all SNC activities and time will be allotted for public comment at the board meeting.

—more—

Persons interested in attending the field trip must provide their own transportation. To RSVP for the field trip and reception, visit www.SierraNevada.ca.gov, and look under "Announcements."

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 approximately \$40 million in grants for projects including forest fuels reduction, conservation easements and acquisitions, and watershed and habitat restoration. Funding for these projects is provided by Proposition 84.

The SNC Governing Board meets quarterly around the Sierra Nevada Region, which spans 25 million acres, encompasses all or part of 22 counties (including eastern Tehama, Shasta and Butte Counties) and runs from the Oregon border on the north, to southeast of Bakersfield.

###