

NEWS RELEASE

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\$5 Million Program for Forest and Watershed Projects to be Considered by Sierra Nevada Conservancy Board

(Auburn) – The Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s (SNC) Governing Board is set to consider proposed guidelines for a \$5 million grant program designed to promote “healthy forests” at its Sept. 8 quarterly meeting in Alturas (Modoc Co.).

Funding for the grant program will come from Proposition 84 bond funds and will be made available through a competitive grant process aimed at restoring the Sierra Nevada’s forests to ecological health. The final draft [Grant Guidelines](#), which reflect changes made as a result of public comment, will be considered for approval by the SNC Board at the meeting.

“We are proposing to focus on projects that improve forest health due to the dire need for action,” said SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham. “Many of our forests are overgrown, with the risk of catastrophic fire presenting a real threat to our Sierra communities, wildlife habitat, watersheds, and drinking water throughout the state.”

Eligible projects would include those designed to preserve or improve Sierra Nevada forest health by reducing the risk and impacts of large, damaging fires and/or preserving or restoring ecosystem function in forests and related meadows.

Public agencies, qualifying nonprofit organizations and federally recognized Tribal entities are eligible to apply. The SNC expects to open solicitations for potential grantees Sept. 26, 2011. Potential applicants may obtain more information on how to develop and submit a project at the SNC website at www.SierraNevada.ca.gov after that date.

The board will also consider final approval of the SNC’s strategic plan, which will guide the agency’s activities for the next three years. Approved areas of focus in this plan include the following:

- healthy forests;
- preservation of ranches and agricultural lands;
- watershed protection and restoration;
- promotion of sustainable tourism and recreation; and,
- long-term effectiveness of the SNC.

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Members of the board and SNC staff will participate in a field trip Wednesday, Sept. 7, to explore issues and activities relevant to the SNC's mission in the area. Members of the public are invited to both the board meeting and the field trip. The field trip will begin at 1:30 in the main parking lot of the Best Western Trailside Inn located at 343 N. Main Street, [Alturas](#). Participants need to provide their own transportation and lunch.

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, awarded approximately \$40 million in grants for projects including fuels reduction, conservation easements and acquisitions, and watershed and habitat restoration. Funding for these projects comes from Proposition 84 passed by voters in 2006.

The SNC Governing Board meets quarterly around the Sierra Nevada Region, which spans 25 million acres, encompasses all or part of 22 counties and runs from the Oregon border on the north, to southeast of Bakersfield. Six of the 13 voting members are selected by county boards of supervisors in each Subregion.

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