



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

BOARD MEETING

**SNC GOVERNING
BOARD MEETING**

MARCH 7 – 8, 2024

This meeting will be
held in Sacramento, CA.

Photo by Ken Etzel/Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship



Board Meeting Agenda

March 7 & 8, 2024 – Sacramento, CA

Board Meeting

March 7, 2024

10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (End time is approximate)

California Natural Resources Agency – Auditorium – 715 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Oath of Office for New Boardmembers**
3. **Roll Call**
4. [Approval of December 8, 2023, Meeting Minutes \(ACTION\)](#)
5. [Board Chair's Report \(ACTION\)](#)

The Board may take action to adopt SNC Resolution Number 03-24-01: Honoring Senator John Laird, Senator Brian Dahle, Jim Branham, Angela Avery, and regional champions for their efforts in the creation and ongoing support of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC).

6. **Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**
 - a. Executive Officer Update
 - b. [Administrative Update](#)
 - [Attachment A: Annual Budget Report](#)
 - c. [Policy & Outreach Update](#)

7. [Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program \(RFFCP\) Update \(INFORMATIONAL\)](#)

Staff will provide the Board an update on the status of the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) block grant and deliverables.

8. [Strategic Plan Update \(INFORMATIONAL\)](#)

- [Attachment A: Draft 2024-2029 Strategic Plan](#)

Staff will present the status of the Draft 2024-2029 Strategic Plan. This item will provide the Board with an opportunity to discuss the working draft, which has been made available for formal public comment. Members of the public may wish to address the Board with comments on the draft.

9. [Consent Agenda](#)

A consent agenda groups non-controversial items before the Board into a single agenda item. Recommendations will ordinarily be acted on without discussion. If any Boardmember, staff member, other interested party, or member of the public requests discussion of a consent item, it may be removed from consent and taken up in the agenda order, or in an order determined by the Board Chair.

Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program Award Recommendations

The Board may take action to make determinations under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and award grants to the following projects:

a. [#1645](#)

North Vegetation Assessment, Data Development and Project NEPA in Siskiyou, Shasta, Modoc, Lassen, and Tehama counties in the amount of \$3,580,500 to the Fall River Resource Conservation District with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

b. [#1646](#)

Forest Projects Plan - Phase Two Environmental Planning project in El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Alpine counties in the amount of \$723,542 to the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

c. [#1669](#)

Ishi Wilderness Fire Restoration Planning project in Tehama County in the amount of \$641,920 to the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

d. [#1672](#)

Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project in Placer County in the amount of \$657,500 to the Placer County Water Agency with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

e. [#1678](#)

Boca/Hobart Forest Health and Meadow Habitat Restoration project in Nevada County in the amount of \$168,820 to the Truckee River Watershed Council with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

f. [#1679](#)

Bungalow Resilience and Fuels Reduction Planning Project in Fresno County in the amount of \$2,902,715 to the National Forest Foundation with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

g. [#1682](#)

Tribal Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan project in Tuolumne County in the amount of \$920,000 to the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

h. [#1688](#)

Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration NEPA Planning project in Sierra and Nevada counties in the amount of \$386,100 to the Nevada Irrigation District with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

10. [Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program Award Recommendations \(ACTION\)](#)

The Board may take action to make determinations under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and award grants to the following projects:

a. [#1632](#)

Claremont Forest Resiliency Project in Plumas County in the amount of \$1,787,000 to the Mule Deer Foundation with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

b. [#1636](#)

Forest Projects Plan Phase One-B project in Amador County in the amount of \$4,739,056 to the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

c. [#1639](#)

Parker Peak Forest Restoration and Resilience Project in Tulare County in the amount of \$1,709,130 to the Tule River Indian Tribe with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

d. [#1641](#)

Northstar Community Services District Wood Energy Facility project in Placer County in the amount of \$1,000,000 to the Northstar Community Services District and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Determination as a responsible agency.

e. [#1644](#)

Soldier Mountain WUI Project in Shasta County in the amount of \$1,686,100 to the Fall River Resource Conservation District with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

f. [#1647](#)

Taylorsville Community Defense Zone Implementation project in Plumas County in the amount of \$751,665 to the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

g. [#1654](#)

South Fork Sacramento Fire Resilience project in Siskiyou County in the amount of \$3,628,600 to the United States Forest Service and the Shasta-Trinity National Forest with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

h. [#1666](#)

Giant Sequoia National Monument Restoration and Stewardship Phase Two project in Tulare County in the amount of \$2,225,300 to the Save the Redwoods League with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

11. Boardmembers' Comments

Provide an opportunity for members of the Board to make comments on items not on the agenda.

12. Public Comments

Provide an opportunity for members of the public who have not previously addressed the Board to comment on non-agenda items. The Board Chair reserves the right to limit the time allocated for each person providing public comment.

13. Adjournment

Additional Board Materials

- [Key Meetings and Presentations](#)
- [Letters of Support](#)
- [Sierra Spotlight](#)

Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Annual Summit

March 8, 2024

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

California Natural Resources Agency – Auditorium – 715 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

The Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Summit highlights, and helps California policymakers connect with, Sierra-Cascade issues that resonate across the state. This year, the SNC will celebrate its 20th year as a state agency by showcasing and recognizing the many accomplishments, people, projects, collaborations, and events that shaped the SNC and the Sierra-Cascade over the past two decades.

Additional Information

Meeting materials are available on the [SNC website](https://sierranevada.ca.gov) (sierranevada.ca.gov). For additional information, or to submit written comment on any agenda item, please contact Ms. Armstrong at (530) 721-0018; via email to tristyn.armstrong@sierranevada.ca.gov; in person or by mail at: 11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205, Auburn CA 95603. For reasonable accommodations, including documents in alternative formats, please contact Ms. Armstrong at least **five (5)** working days in advance.

Closed Session

Following, or at any time during, the meeting, the Board may recess or adjourn to closed session to consider pending or potential litigation, property negotiations, or personnel-related matters. Authority: Government Code Section 11126.



Board Meeting Minutes

December 7 & 8, 2023 – Central Subregion – Marysville, CA

Board Meeting

Yuba County Government Center
915 8th Street
Marysville, CA 95901

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.

2. Roll Call

Present:

- Terry O'Brien
- John Brissenden
- Lisa Lien-Mager
- Dwight Ceresola (present after roll call)
- Jeff Griffiths (present after roll call)
- Cindy Gustafson
- Bob Johnston
- Brian Oneto
- Michele Perrault
- Victoria Rome
- Ed Valenzuela
- Alan Olson

Absent:

- Heather Bernikoff
- Phillip Peters
- Christopher Heppe

3. Approval of June 1, 2023, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)

Action

Boardmember Ed Valenzuela moved and Boardmember Cindy Gustafson seconded a motion to approve the June 1, 2023, Meeting Minutes.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 9, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

4. Approval of September 7, 2023, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)

Action

Boardmember John Brissenden moved and Boardmember Victoria Rome seconded a motion to approve the September 7, 2023, Meeting Minutes.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 8, Nay – 0, Abstain – 1. The motion passed.

5. Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Terry O'Brien provided thanks to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Area Representative Chris Dallas and the other staff responsible for putting together the presentations provided the previous day. O'Brien stated that there is an ongoing urgency to address the needs of the forest.

Chair O'Brien acknowledged and provided thanks to Amador County Supervisor Brian Oneto, Plumas County Supervisor Dwight Ceresola, and Kern County Supervisor Phillip Peters for their service on the SNC Board.

6. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)

a. Executive Officer Update

Executive Officer Angela Avery provided thanks to the departing Boardmembers and emphasized the importance of the County Supervisors who serve on the Board and represent the SNC Subregions. Avery also acknowledged Alan Olson, United States Forest Service (USFS) Boardmember (alternate), and congratulated him on his upcoming retirement.

Boardmember Jeff Griffiths arrived at 9:10 a.m.

Avery also provided a quick update addressing the state budget/revenue decline. Avery told the Board that despite the state budget decline the SNC is in a good position to continue serving the Region.

Avery told the Board that SNC does not expect any updates on the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) Concepts submitted to the USFS until the budget is signed at the federal level.

Avery reported to the Board that staff believe SB 841 (Dahle), a second boundary expansion bill, will not be reintroduced in the new session.

Boardmember Dwight Ceresola arrived at 9:16 a.m.

Avery continued to acknowledge the resiliency of SNC staff and provided the Board with added assurance that despite state budget issues she is confident that the SNC will continue to support the Region.

b. Administrative Update

Deputy Executive Officer, Administration Amy Lussier reviewed the Administrative Staff Report provided in the Board materials. Lussier stated that the SNC has been busy preparing the 2024-25 budget, which involves calculating the amount that the SNC will receive as an augmentation to pay for the General Salary Increases and Special Salary Adjustments that many staff received as part of bargaining agreements. Increases in the cost of state-paid benefits will also trigger an augmentation, for a combined total increase of \$406,000 this fiscal year. Lussier referred Boardmembers to the detailed budget provided in the Board meeting materials package. Lussier did note that the table does not reflect the salary increases and augmentations at this time. Lussier continued to say that the SNC is on target to spend its entire budget.

Lussier announced the official retirement of Lynda Young who served as a business services analyst for over 14 years at the SNC. Lussier announced the hiring of Trinity Stirling who will be working in the Field Operations Unit assisting with grant management and invoicing.

Lussier also provided a COVID-19 update stating employers are no longer required to maintain a stand-alone COVID-19 prevention plan. In October of 2023, the SNC released a revised Injury and Illness Prevention Plan that incorporates the non-emergency COVID-19 prevention regulations and completed staff training on the changes.

c. Policy & Outreach Update

Policy & Outreach Division Chief Brittany Covich provided a PowerPoint presentation with a summary of 2023 accomplishments by the Policy & Outreach Division including legislative outreach and relationship development, eight 2023 high-profile events and speaking engagements, and media milestones.

Covich's presentation also included a 2023 fire-season review. Covich said the Communications Team has focused on the benefits of prescribed fire stating the team was able to track over 63,000 acres of prescribed fire and the benefits to the landscape in 2023.

Covich provided a high-level review of the 2024 Policy Platform outlined in the Board Meeting materials provided to the Board. Covich reviewed the 2024 Regional Policy Themes, which included sustained investment, funding coordination for landscape-scale initiatives, beneficial fire, workforce housing, and wildfire insurance. Covich referenced the SNC Policy Platform for 2024, which was included in the Board package.

Covich also provided the Board with a look at some 2024 SNC activities that included additional Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) Investments, organization and design of a Regional Priority Plan for RFFCP, 2024-29 Strategic Plan support, and more.

Covich announced the March 7 & 8, 2024, 20th Anniversary celebration to be held in conjunction with the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Summit.

Boardmembers engaged in conversation around the presentation, including Boardmember feedback on the 2024 Policy Platform document and approaches to address issues associated with wildfire and wood-processing infrastructure.

Avery responded to the Board noting the California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force) is working on some of these difficult issues. Avery also told the Board staff would share information regarding a UC Davis Workshop and encouraged the Board to look to the Task Force Biomass strategy that will be released in 2024. Avery also suggested inviting a Task Force member to present to the Board once that strategy is released.

Boardmember Alan Olson summarized some of the significant work completed by the USFS. Olson stated the USFS was able to treat/prescribe controlled burns on over 330,000 acres in 2023. This treatment consisted of various approaches but utilized a pilot program to move logs around to facilities with capacity. Olson also said he sees an uptick in grants and investment in Region 5, specifically.

d. Field Operations & Grants

Field Operations & Grants (FOG) Division Chief Andy Fristensky reviewed information provided in the Board materials. This information included workload adjustment, Board membership, website updates, and other issues that are impacted by the boundary expansion and the realignment of the Subregion.

Fristensky addressed the recent increase in workload in FOG and provided the Board with a review of workload-management ideas that are being implemented. Fristensky said that due to the inequity of grants in each of the Subregions, the team has come up with shared workload ideas and hired new staff to help manage grants. Shared workload with a focus on grant management regardless of Region location allows for the Area Representatives to engage with collaboratives and focus on other beneficial activities that are not specifically related to grant management.

Boardmembers engaged in conversation around capacity and lack of funds to distribute.

Boardmembers also discussed the equity of fund distribution. Fristensky responded to concerns raised by Boardmembers and said that while it is unfortunate many applicants who had competitive scores could not be funded due to a lack of funding, the SNC continues to provide those applicants with additional resources and possible other funding sources. Both Fristensky and Avery also highlighted the RFFCP administered by the SNC as another option to assist grantees that did not receive funds.

7. Election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair (ACTION)

Boardmember Brian Oneto nominated Terry O'Brien to serve as the Board Chair for the 2024 calendar year.

Action

Boardmember Brian Oneto moved and Boardmember Bob Johnston seconded a motion to approve the election of Terry O'Brien as the Board Chair.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 11, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

Action

Boardmember Jeff Griffiths moved and Boardmember Cindy Gustafson seconded a motion to approve the election of Ed Valenzuela as the Board Vice-Chair.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 11, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

8. 2024 Board Meeting Schedule (ACTION)

Executive Officer Angela Avery presented the Board with the proposed Board Meeting schedule for 2024.

Action

Boardmember Cindy Gustafson moved and Boardmember Ed Valenzuela seconded a motion to approve the 2024 Board Meeting schedule as follows:

- March 7 & 8, 2024, Sacramento
- June 5 & 6, 2024, Southeast Subregion – Inyo County
- September 4 & 5, 2024, Northwest Subregion - Siskiyou County
- December 12 & 13, 2024, North Central Subregion – Placer County

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 11, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

9. North Yuba Forest Partnership Presentation (INFORMATIONAL)

Members of the North Yuba Forest Partnership (NYFP) presented the landscape-scale approach of achieving forest resilience and community protection in the North Yuba River watershed. Panel Members included: JoAnna Lessard, Yuba Water Agency; Zach Knight, Blue Forest Conservation Group; and Eli Ilano, USFS.

Lessard presented the Board with an overview of the Yuba Water Agency's Watershed Resilience Program, which was created in 2018 to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, protect local communities, and safeguard water supply. Lessard described the geographic area of the Yuba River watershed and highlighted the risks posed to a watershed that is not resilient. Lessard also said that to further the Yuba Water's missions and programs (including the Watershed Resilience Program), the Yuba Water Community Impact Grant Program was created in 2020. This program has invested over \$10.8 million in Watershed Resilience projects, which have leveraged \$172 million in external funding.

Lessard's presentation included maps outlining project areas and listed the many partners making up the North Yuba Forest Partnership, including Yuba Water Agency, the National Forest Foundation, USFS, Sierra County, Blue Forest Conservation, Camptonville Community Partnership (CCP), Nevada City Rancheria, South Yuba River Citizens League, and The Nature Conservancy.

Lessard co-outlined additional Yuba River watershed resilience efforts that are not part of the Yuba Watershed Resilience Program. Efforts include working with the CCP to provide grants for biomass-utilization infrastructure planning and support assistance. Lessard said funding has also been provided to the Yuba Watershed Protection and Firesafe Council executive director position as part of a capacity-building grant.

Lessard highlighted several Yuba County Forest Health grants, which included the CAL FIRE-funded 2019 Foothills Healthy Forest Grant, the Yuba Foothills Healthy

Forest Grant, and the 2023 New Bullards Bar (NBB) Healthy Forest Grant. Lessard also said the California Vegetation Treatment Program (Cal VTP) Project Specific Analysis funding was utilized to cover all treatment areas designated in the NBB Forest Health Grant. Additional efforts include Yuba Community College Watershed Resilience Program and the Sierra Fund-Meadow Restoration and Mine Remediation Impact Bonds.

Lessard summarized the Watershed Resilience Program successes to date, which included collaborating with 19 partners, developing and funding 14 projects in Yuba County and the upper watershed, and treating more than 6,100 acres.

Zach Knight from Blue Forest Conservation spoke to the Board about forest-resilience financing. In his presentation, he talked about Blue Forest Finance, Inc., and gave an overview of timeline and key partners who played a role in the Blue Forest Foundation work with the Forest Resilience Bond (FRB) in the North Yuba Forest Partnership.

Knight's presentation defined the FRB as "a first-of-its-kind conservation finance tool that brings together stakeholders that benefit from forest restoration to share the cost of reimbursing investors as projects' environmental and social benefits are realized."

Knight included highlights of the Yuba I Pilot project, stating this pilot project is leading to multiple larger-scale projects.

Knight emphasized the added value of these kinds of pilot projects stating they are larger and faster projects, which provide capacity-building opportunities.

Knight also provided an overview of the California Wildfire Innovation Fund. Highlights include a unique climate-solutions strategy that blends private credit and equity strategies in a single fund. Knight noted that having CSAA Insurance Group as a \$25 million anchor investor is supporting targeted investment, the establishment of a forest restoration project pipeline, hiring in-house science experts, and creating an extensive industry network.

Eli Ilano, Tahoe National Forest Supervisor, provided background information on the North Yuba Pilot Project. Ilano outlined the phases of partnership formation and spoke about the innovation that resulted from bringing together a diverse group of people. Ilano noted the innovative ideas included use of a historic range of variability study, the Tahoe-Central Sierra Resilience Framework, and Lidar, as well as completion of acoustic surveys. The data used and collected was translated by Vibrant Planet and Pyrologix to complete an analysis of higher risk areas.

Ilano also spoke about respecting the diverse opinions and ideas of other groups.

Panel presenters stressed the importance of the role the SNC Governing Board and staff played in encouraging the North Yuba Forest Partnership (NYFP) and creating a real opportunity to test the use of the FRB. The SNC's efforts in telling the story of need and rallying potential partners at all local, state, and federal levels, were critical and deeply appreciated.

Boardmembers engaged in conversation with panel members discussing various ways to replicate the innovation and successes of the NYFP program.

10. Draft 2024-2029 Strategic Plan (INFORMATIONAL)

Chief Deputy Executive Officer Julie Alvis presented the status of the Draft 2024-29 Strategic Plan, providing the Board with the opportunity to discuss the working draft and share comments and guidance to staff on its development.

Alvis reviewed the current Strategic Plan and the current five Regional goals. Alvis outlined and noted where staff are in the planning process for development of the 2024-29 Strategic Plan. Alvis also provided Boardmembers with an overview of the 2024-29 Strategic Plan discussion draft included in the Board materials.

Alvis provided the Board with discussion topics and asked for Board guidance. Boardmembers engaged in conversation and provided feedback on the Strategic Plan discussion draft.

Topics and themes highlighted in Board discussion included: the plan's use as a policy platform for SNC activities in the Region; how the SNC might address Regional needs, such as home hardening and community protection, that may fall outside SNC authorities; that strategic land conservation should be broadened, kept "strategic" and focused on cost effectiveness considering active management versus only conservation; increasing environmental regulations that have affected the management of healthy forests and local economies; that the plan should be kept high-level and be flexible to support a variety of actions; that the plan be intentional about adaptive management; ways the SNC could work with community colleges or high schools to address workforce issues; advising against a plan that involves SNC in political issues that make progress difficult, such as affordable housing, but also how the SNC can offer support by working with sister agencies or other steps; clarity as to what's meant by SNC equitably serving its Region; recognizing increased visitation to Sierra places as a result of climate change; conveying a sense of urgency and need to underscore the importance of collaborative efforts between agencies to reach landscape-scale work getting done.

11. Boardmembers' Comments

Boardmember Griffiths reported on the Vibrant Recreation & Tourism initiatives funded by the SNC, in Inyo County, that are making a positive difference in the eastern Sierra.

Boardmember Oneto provided thanks to the Board and staff stating he has enjoyed his service on the Board.

Chair O'Brien provided thanks again to the three departing county supervisors.

12. Public Comments

Annie Cunial, Division Director, STEM Programs, Educational Services – San Joaquin County Office of Education provided a written statement, which was read aloud to the Board.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:29 p.m.

Additional Board Materials

- Key Meetings and Presentations
- Letters of Support
- [Sierra Spotlight](#)

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
March 7 & 8, 2024

Agenda Item 5

Board Chair's Report-

State of California
Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Resolution



State of California
Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Resolution



In Recognition of the Leadership and Champions that created the Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Whereas, The Sierra Nevada-Cascade Region is one of the most significant natural and biologically diverse regions in the world, and is the State's principal watershed, supplying more than 75 percent of the developed water supply to residents, agriculture, and other businesses and industries across the State; and

Whereas, The Sierra Nevada Conservancy was created as a California State agency by Assembly Bill No. 2600, bipartisan legislation, enacted by the California State Legislature and signed into law in 2004 as the Laird-Leslie Sierra Nevada Conservancy Act to protect this critical region; and

Whereas, Organizational leadership and staff developed and implemented the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's keystone initiative, the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP), a large-scale, holistic effort to restore resilience to the forested landscapes and communities of California's Sierra Nevada-Cascade Region; and

Whereas, The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is celebrating its twentieth anniversary in the year 2024, and has a distinguished record of developing and implementing programs and investments that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada-Cascade Region, its communities, and the people of California; and

Whereas, It is appropriate at this time to recognize the leadership across a broad network of legislative, organizational, and Regional representatives, who understood the need for establishing dedicated statewide support for the Region, thereby forming a network of champions who worked diligently to create the Sierra Nevada Conservancy; and

Whereas, The Regional Champions, with concern, understanding, and commitment, successfully advocated for resource investment and recognition of the important contributions the Sierra Nevada-Cascade Region provides to the State, thereby leading to the creation of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to support those goals; and

Whereas, Senator John Laird who has dedicated his career to serving the people and interests of California and protecting the natural resources of this great State; and, in partnership with Assemblymember Tim Leslie in 2004, was responsible for co-authoring the bill that created the Sierra Nevada Conservancy; and

Whereas, Senator Brian Dahle, who served first as a county supervisor and Regional voice representing Lassen County on the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board and then, in 2021, as a legislative champion for the Sierra Nevada-Cascade Region, and in partnership with Senator Laird, was responsible for expanding Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Region to include portions of Siskiyou and Trinity counties.

Whereas, Jim Branham, with diligence, effectiveness, and integrity, served as the first Executive Officer of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, focused on creating a highly efficient and effective State Conservancy to protect and serve California's 27-million-acre Sierra Nevada-Cascade Region; and

Whereas, Under the present-day leadership of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board, and with Angela Avery as the Executive Officer, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy continues to deliver on the original vision by providing critical funding and support with over 150-plus partners who complete the on-the-groundwork that is restoring and supporting healthy watersheds and resilient communities throughout Sierra Nevada-Cascade Region;

Therefore, Be It Resolved the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board that the representation, support, leadership, and service provided by Senator Laird, Senator Brian Dahle, Jim Branham, Angela Avery, and Regional champions, who have brought great impact to the Sierra Nevada-Cascade Region by their efforts to create the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, on the occasion of the Conservancy's twentieth anniversary, be commended for their efforts to establish the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, which now serves the Sierra Nevada-Cascade Region and residents, and the people of the State of California.

Be It Further Resolved, that this resolution be incorporated into the minutes of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and a suitable copy presented to Senator Laird, Senator Brian Dahle, and Jim Branham, who have brought great impact to the Sierra Nevada-Cascade Region.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Resolution No. 03-24-01
Dated this 7th Day of March 2024

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
March 7, 2024

Agenda Item 6b: Administrative Update

Human Resources

Senior Forest and Climate Advisor Elliott Vander Kolk has accepted a position as the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Program Manager at California State Parks. The position is housed at the division of natural resources at State Parks' headquarters and in it, Elliott will lead a small team to develop and assist each State Park district to implement wildfire- and forest-resilience projects. Elliott has been an invaluable member of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy since October 2016 and his loss will be a big one for the team, but he's not leaving the community and, of course, we'll look for ways to continue to collaborate with him. Elliott's last day with the SNC was Jan. 31.

Budget

A comprehensive [Annual Budget Report \(Attachment A\)](#) has been developed by the SNC budget team. This Annual Budget Report will be provided on an annual basis and is intended to give Boardmembers an in-depth SNC budget breakdown.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
March 7, 2024

Agenda Item 6b: Administrative Update
Attachment A – 2024 Annual Budget Report

Overview

New approach for budget reporting at Board meetings

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) strives to provide the most informative, helpful, and easy-to-understand resources to its Governing Board. As the SNC grows and changes, these resources are modified to continue providing the most pertinent information. As such, the SNC is updating how it presents budget information to the Board. Due to the timing of Board meetings in relation to standard accounting procedures and deadlines, reporting on quarterly budget numbers was always behind. As such, the SNC is updating how it presents budget information to the Board to provide comprehensive information at least once a year. Additionally, SNC would like to provide more context on the budget and budget cycle. It is hoped that a comprehensive budget overview each year—with smaller, as-needed updates in other Board meetings—will allow for a deeper understanding of the budget.

Beginning with this meeting, the SNC will provide an in-depth budget presentation at each March meeting. This will include information on the current year's budget and expectations for next year's budget. A written report will be included in the Board materials, with selected information presented verbally at the Board meeting. The SNC will provide supplemental information at the June, September, and December meetings as necessary, or if the Board requests an update. Of course, this plan can be adjusted as needed.

State budget process

Understanding the state budget process provides context for SNC's budget and the timing of when funding is known about and received. As a state department, the SNC follows the state budget cycle outlined below.

The fiscal year for the state of California is July 1 through June 30; we are currently in fiscal year (FY) 2023-24. The budget-building process is year-round with many players, technical details, and outside forces.

- California's constitution requires the governor to submit a budget to the Legislature by January 10 (commonly referred to as "Jan 10"). Included in the Governor's Budget are proposed appropriations for the budget year (currently, 2024-25 is the budget year), current year appropriations (2023-24), and past year expenditures

(2022-23). *At this point, the SNC knows what is officially proposed for the 2024-25 budget year.*

- Because the budget includes past year information, a lot of work has been completed by departments, including the SNC, for this purpose. This work is performed from August to October under the instruction of Budget Letters released by the Department of Finance (Finance) to provide past year expenditures and to calculate control section adjustments. These adjustments will provide the augmentations or reductions to departments based on changes to retirement contribution rates, health benefit changes, salary increases, etc.
- California uses incremental (or baseline) budgeting, which uses a department's current level of funding as the base amount for the following year; changes to amounts are requested using budget change proposals (BCP).
 - Departments, including the SNC, submit their BCPs for budget year in the fall (i.e., BCPs for 2024-25 were submitted in fall 2023). Approved BCPs would be included in the Governor's Budget released Jan 10. Because BCPs are submitted almost a year in advance, careful and thoughtful planning ahead is critical. (All BCPs are confidential until approved.)
- Also required by the constitution, a Budget Bill must be introduced in each house of the Legislature to accompany the Governor's Budget. These bills itemize the recommended expenditures.
- After the release of the Governor's Budget, both houses of the Legislature hold committee hearings on the budget. Agencies and departments may be called upon to testify, along with Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO).
 - Departments can submit additional proposed changes to the budget for the "May Revision" (or "May Revise"), which is the second iteration of the budget that is published. The proposed changes are typically referred to as "Spring Finance Letters" and submissions are more restricted than in the fall. Generally, only technical changes will be requested, such as extending an appropriation. *Upon release of the May Revise, the SNC will officially learn of any proposed revisions to its budget.*
- Legislative hearings continue through June. The Legislature is required by the constitution to pass the Budget Bill by June 15.
 - *Once the Budget Bill is signed by the governor and chaptered, the SNC officially has a set budget beginning July 1.*
- Assuming the budget is passed, on July 1 appropriations are in effect. There may be trailer bills (follow-up bills that determine and elaborate on specific programs in the

main budget) and “budget bill juniors” (amendments to the enacted budget) after the main Budget Bill is passed, usually through mid-September.

- Every year on June 30, appropriations expire as the fiscal year ends. Although it depends on the appropriation, generally two things happen: an encumbrance period ends but liquidation is still available, or funds revert and are no longer available without an appropriation. Because different funds (and references within those funds) have different expenditure, encumbrance, and liquidation dates, this is very closely monitored and prepared for.

This is a *very* brief overview of the budget cycle, and it is meant to reiterate the timeline, requirements, and boundaries of the very complex budget process. The SNC, like all other departments, must operate within this process, in collaboration with California Natural Resources Agency and Finance. It is critical to plan ahead but also to prepare for the unexpected.

The SNC has a relatively short budget history as the department was created 20 years ago. It received its first budget appropriation in 2005-06 for \$3.157 million in Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF) funding, which the SNC still receives today, proposed at \$5.655 for FY 2024-25. The SNC received its first bond fund appropriation in 2007-08 under Proposition 84. Since then, SNC’s budget continues to grow, both in dollars and funding sources.

Currently, the SNC has authorization to operate in nine funds (for direct appropriations and reimbursements). Each fund or fund type runs a bit differently, with various purposes, different encumbrance and liquidation periods, and varying appropriation types, among other differences. The SNC monitors and assesses the statuses of these funds continuously. Close and ongoing communication between the Executive Team, the budget unit, program staff, and procurement staff are critical for successful implementation of the budget.

SNC Operations

State Operations is the support funding that covers staff salaries, benefits, and operating expenditures (OE&E). The amounts budgeted each fiscal year can fluctuate depending on activity during the previous fiscal year (adjustments for benefit changes, salary increases, changes to projections for federal and non-federal agreements to be reimbursed, etc.), the current year’s activity, and projected changes in future years.

The SNC is funded by several funds and reimbursements:

ELPF: This is SNC’s baseline funding, which covers the majority of costs. The SNC receives a new appropriation every year in the Budget Act. The funding is available for the SNC to spend or encumber for one year with a two-year liquidation period. Funds that were not encumbered during the first year are no longer available in the liquidation

period. Once that two-year liquidation period has expired, any remaining funds revert and are returned to the main ELPF fund. The ELPF is administered and overseen by the CNRA.

General Fund: The SNC received one-time appropriations for local assistance funding in 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24. Up to 5 percent of the total General Fund received can be used for support costs until the final date of liquidation.

Bond funds: The SNC has received three bond appropriations. Because bond funding is approved by voters, once appropriations are made to departments, the funding cannot be pulled to be used for a different purpose and there is no set time limit for requesting use of these funds. (Appropriations from the bond funds must still be requested through the budget cycle and are given an encumbrance and liquidation date; any funds not used in this period will revert and can become available to the SNC again upon reappropriation. This is unlike many other types of funding—such as the ELPF—where reverted dollars are no longer available to the SNC.) This gives departments a bit more flexibility for spending bond funds timing-wise; however, policy-wise, bond fund expenditures must adhere to the purposes for which they were proposed and passed. Each bond fund allotment provides 5 percent of the funds for support, which the SNC uses internally to cover costs of administering the bonds (i.e., staff salaries), and up to 10 percent for planning and monitoring (CEQA reviews, monitoring of closed projects, etc.). These funds are available for use until they have fully been spent. To date, the SNC has been allocated funds from the following bond acts:

- Proposition 84 (2007-08): \$54 million
- Proposition 1 (2015-16): \$25 million
- Proposition 68 (2018-19): \$55 million

Special Deposit Fund: At the December 2021 Board meeting, Boardmembers authorized the SNC to finalize and execute a new grant agreement between itself and the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council (Stewardship Council). The agreement became effective in May 2022 and in July 2022, the SNC established an account in the Special Deposit Fund (SDF) to hold and administer the funds received from this agreement. As the Grantee in this agreement, the SNC has been taking on agreed-upon duties in stages and receiving the corresponding dollars to pay for these duties. By the time of the Stewardship Council's planned dissolution, the SNC expects to deposit a total of \$5 million for this agreement. Approximately \$1 million of this amount is for staff costs and SNC's responsibilities to this agreement will end once funds are fully expended. All funds received from the Stewardship Council are deposited into the SDF account, where they will remain until spent. The funding from this agreement cannot be used for any other purpose. This account earns interest quarterly, which can only be used for activities authorized by the Stewardship Council agreement.

Reimbursements: The SNC receives reimbursement authority from the Budget Act for two funds: Federal Trust Fund and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Fund (SNC Fund). It is important to note that the Budget Act does not provide actual funding for reimbursements; it only provides the *authority* for the SNC to enter into these agreements with a maximum amount it can request in reimbursements. The authority allows the SNC to provide services and/or execute sub-agreements that will provide services, and then request reimbursement for these costs from the grantor/contractor. These reimbursement agreements provide multiple benefits: disbursing more funding to the SNC Region, allowing the SNC to fund programs it may not normally fund, allowing the SNC to pay for staff time, building capacity of smaller entities, and opportunities to create connections and working relationships with more entities, to name a few. The SNC is also authorized to hold cash from donations or revenue in the SNC Fund.

Leadership and program staff at the SNC continue to look out for and assess potential reimbursement opportunities. Depending on the agreement, the SNC is able to work with the grantor/contractor on terms of the agreement, including time frame and budget, which provides additional flexibility.

The SNC entered into its first reimbursement agreement in 2015 for \$93,800. Today, it is actively managing over \$47 million in nine reimbursement agreements with 36 sub-agreements.

| Active Reimbursement Agreements | Local Assistance | SNC Operations | Total Agreement |
|---|------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| National Disaster Resilience (NDR) Term: Oct 22, 2105 – Dec 31, 2024 Sub-Agreements: 0 Addresses unmet recovery needs related to the Rim Fire disaster declaration in Tuolumne County by developing a Biomass Utilization Fund and coordinating with the USFS to implement a Forest and Watershed health project. | \$0 | \$863,134 | \$863,134 |
| CAL FIRE 2018 CCI Term: Oct 8, 2018 – Mar 31, 2025 Sub-Agreements: 6 <i>Note: Part of this agreement is for CEQA reviews and is not included in the sub-agreement count nor included in the local assistance or SNC operations total.</i> A collaborative effort between national forests, state agencies, and resource conservation districts to implement key activities that promote health forests and watersheds, increase carbon sequestration, and reduce catastrophic wildfire risk within the Tahoe Central Sierra Initiative footprint. | \$8,767,065 | \$1,245,578 | \$10,923,552 |
| Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (Original) Term: Aug 26, 2019 – Mar 30, 2025 Sub-Agreements: 11 | \$1,520,000 | \$380,000 | \$1,900,000 |
| Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (Early Action) Term: Oct 15, 2021 – Mar 31, 2025 Sub-Agreements: 13 | \$7,116,000 | \$1,554,000 | \$8,670,000 |
| Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (2022) Term: May 15, 2023 – Dec 31, 2027 Sub-Agreements: TBD To implement the Dept. of Conservation's Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program Goals to increase Regional capacity to prioritize, develop, and implement projects that improve forest health and fire resiliency in the Region. | \$12,442,000 | \$2,900,000 | \$15,342,000 |
| Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (AB 2551) Term: June 1, 2020 – Mar 30, 2025 Sub-Agreements: 4 To administer Dept. of Conservation watershed coordinator grants within the watersheds that feed Trinity, Shasta, and Oroville reservoirs. | \$380,000 | \$20,000 | \$400,000 |
| Plumas National Forest – Forest Restoration Activities Term: Aug 9, 2018 – Sept 30, 2028 Sub-Agreements: 1 Cooperative effort to restore watersheds affected by the Moonlight Fire in the Plumas National Forest, with Feather River RCD as the primary subgrantee and operating entity. | \$6,610,000 | \$925,000 | \$7,535,000 |
| USFS Region 5 – Managing Regional Resilience Term: Aug 26, 2021 – Nov 1, 2028 Sub-Agreements: 0 Pays for SNC staff to develop the Landscape Investment Strategy and Landscape Grant Pilot Project. | \$0 | \$500,000 | \$500,000 |

| Active Reimbursement Agreements | Local Assistance | SNC Operations | Total Agreement |
|---|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| USFS Region 5 – GNA Crystal Basin HELP Pilot Term: July 7, 2023 – Nov 1, 2028 Sub-Agreements: 1 Increases the pace and scale of forest-resilience efforts by aggregating state and federal funds and directing those funds through targeted collaborative partnerships. | \$909,091 | \$90,909 | \$1,000,000 |

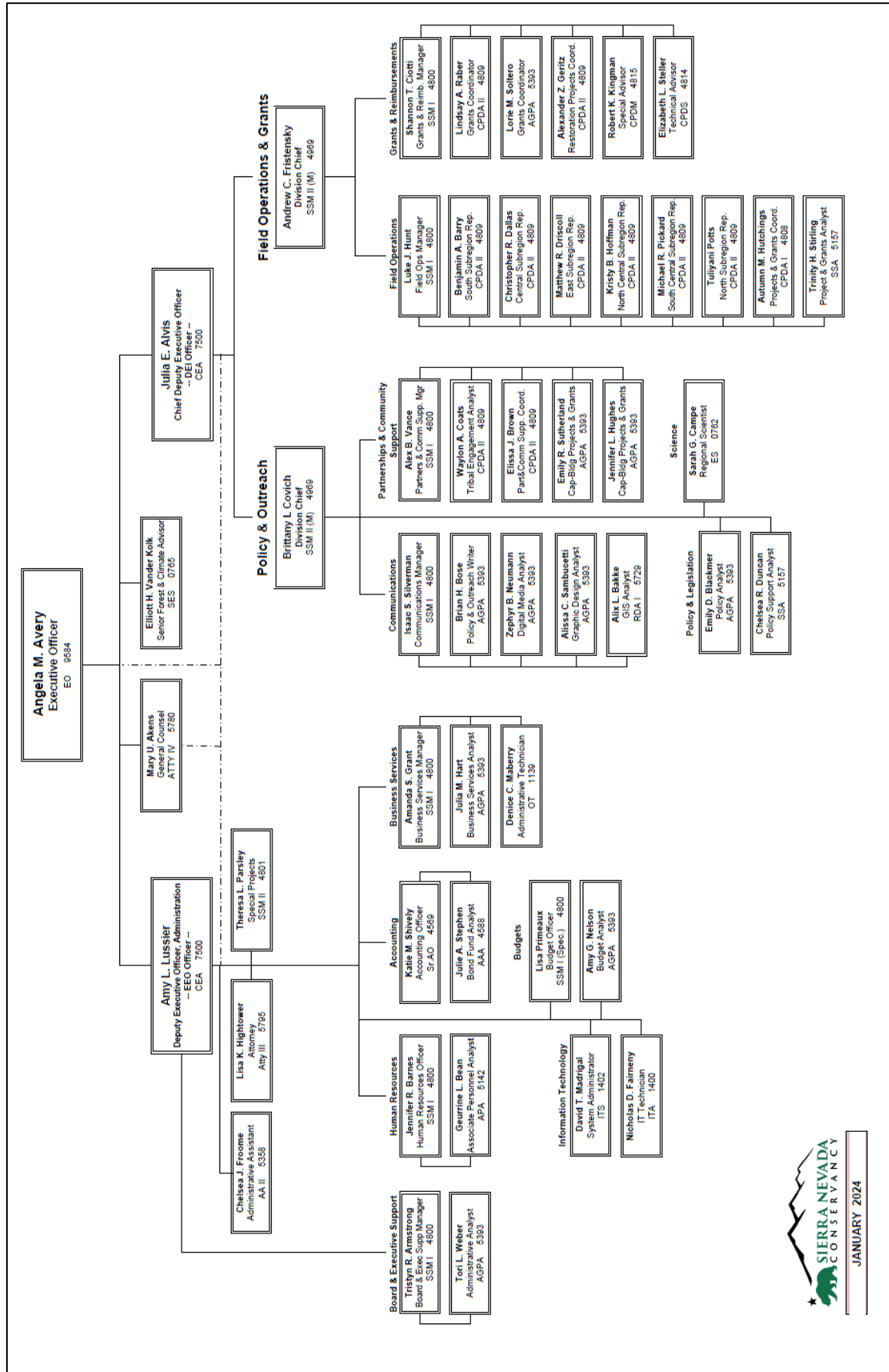
Staffing and Workload

The SNC currently has 46.3 approved positions, with nine of those positions received in the last three years to accommodate increased grant workload, SNC's boundary expansion, and corresponding adjustments in the Administrative Services Division. Whenever requesting a new position, SNC leadership carefully reviews the need, timing, and funding implications. The SNC has been careful not to request new positions unless long-term funding to cover the cost of a new position is in place.

Administering grant programs, providing expertise to Regional stakeholders, collaborating with partners, innovating ways to support the Region, and internal organizational health are critical aspects of SNC's work. These responsibilities take time, planning, and knowledge, and increased funding brings on additional workload. The SNC works hard to manage its workload and distribute accordingly. For example, in January 2018, SNC Area Representatives were managing 39 active grants; today that number is around 140. Aside from the SNC-grantee communication for each grant, there are invoicing, budgeting, and reporting workloads. To help accommodate this workload, the Partnerships & Community Support team was augmented with positions to increase Regional support; these redistributions of work are examples of SNC's dedication to the Region.

Staffing in the Administrative Services Division has also been augmented to manage the increased workload. For the most part, the SNC has two people within each administrative unit and it's important to note that small departments like the SNC are still subject to most of the same reports, data tracking, audits, etc. that larger state departments are, but with less staff to complete the work. As with the other divisions, SNC leadership continues to monitor and manage workload to meet the needs of the department, staff, and Region.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
 Agenda Item 6b: Administrative Update
 Attachment A – 2024 Annual Budget Report
 Page 8



SNC's 2023-24 Support Budget

On Jan. 10, the Governor released his proposed budget for FY 2024-25 ("Governor's Budget"), which includes the current year (2023-24) budget with adjustments. The SNC's budget was proposed as expected; however, reductions may occur over the next few months due to the significant declines in revenue and projected deficit.

Below is the FY 2023-24 budget breakdown based on the SNC's five-year spending plan:

| 2023-24 Budget Funding Sources | | % |
|----------------------------------|--|------|
| Environmental License Plate Fund | | 70% |
| General Fund | | 7.5% |
| Non-Federal Reimbursement | | 18% |
| Federal Reimbursement | | 4% |
| Special Deposit Fund | | 0.5% |
| Proposition 1 | | 0% |
| Proposition 68 | | 0% |
| Proposition 84 | | 0% |

| 2023-24 Estimated Operations Breakdown | | % |
|--|--|-----|
| Salaries | | 57% |
| Benefits | | 32% |
| OE&E | | 11% |

The benefit percentage above is based on the total budget. However, SNC's internal average benefit ratio for this fiscal year is 56 percent: on average, each position costs the SNC approximately 1.5 times the actual salary. Benefits include health and dental insurance, retirement, Medicare, OASDI (Social Security), and vision. Health insurance and retirement make up the highest costs at 26 percent (health) and 24 percent (retirement) of the benefit ratio. The benefit ratio has increased over the years due to increased costs and is an important consideration during budget planning.

SNC's 2024-25 Support Budget

Below is the FY 2024-25 budget based on the SNC's spending five-year plan:

| 2024-25 Budget Funding Sources | % |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Environmental License Plate Fund | 68% |
| General Fund | 15.5% |
| Non-Federal Reimbursement | 14% |
| Federal Reimbursement | 2% |
| Special Deposit Fund | 0.5% |
| Proposition 1 | 0% |
| Proposition 68 | 0% |
| Proposition 84 | 0% |

| 2024-25 Estimated Operations Breakdown | % |
|--|-----|
| Salaries | 56% |
| Benefits | 32% |
| OE&E | 12% |

Grant Funding

The SNC takes pride in its support of the Region and aims to disburse grant funding ("local assistance") quickly and efficiently. Over the course of its 20-year history, the SNC has received almost \$300 million in grant funding, of which \$271 million has been committed. This is an average of \$13.5 million awarded per year.

In addition to sending money into the Region efficiently, the SNC is also strategic about the timing of its grant rounds. There are several factors to consider when planning grants, including timing of other solicitations (for example, funding from one bond versus another), active reimbursement agreements, potential future funding, reversion dates, and program type (for example, wildfire versus land conservation). This is not an exhaustive list, but it begins to show competing factors and potential priorities when

planning out the budget. Thus, communication and planning are critical, and the SNC works very diligently to provide effective and well-run grant programs.

ALL-TIME LOCAL ASSISTANCE FUNDING DISBURSED TO REGION

| Fund or Entity | Funding Received by SNC | Amount Distributed* |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Prop 84 | \$ 49,030,000 | \$ 49,030,000 |
| Prop 1 | \$ 22,700,000 | \$ 22,166,000 |
| Prop 68 | \$ 45,375,000 | \$ 33,952,000 |
| TRFRF | \$ 1,000,000 | \$ 845,990 |
| 2020-21 GF | \$ 19,000,000 | \$ 19,000,000 |
| 2021-22 GF | \$ 58,045,000 | \$ 58,045,000 |
| 2022-23 GF | \$ 24,653,000 | \$ 24,652,500 |
| 2023-24 GF | \$ 35,150,000 | \$ 35,150,000 |
| CAL FIRE | \$ 13,221,544 | \$ 13,221,544 |
| Dept of Conservation | \$ 21,402,000 | \$ 7,799,009 |
| Federal Fund | \$ 7,519,091 | \$ 7,509,546 |
| Total | \$ 297,095,635 | \$ 271,371,589 |

**As of December 2023. Totals are funding that has already been encumbered or committed (including grants that are expected to be awarded in March 2024 and/or June 2024).*

At the March 2024 meeting, the SNC is bringing forward \$27.5 million in General Fund grants for award. Those numbers are included in the totals above and help illustrate the efficiency of SNC's grant program: it received this funding less than a year ago in July 2023. These grants also reflect the immense demand as the SNC received applications for double the amount of available funding.

The SNC's next expected grant program will disburse the remaining Proposition 68 funding. The timing of this grant program is still being considered and will be based on Regional need, SNC workload, and other sources of funding that may or may not come in the future.

Five-Year Financial Plan

The table below is the SNC's projected five-year operations plan—these amounts are subject to change based on appropriations, reimbursement agreement changes, etc.

| Operations Plan | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| ELPF | \$5,634,000 | \$5,655,000 | \$5,655,000 | \$5,655,000 | \$5,655,000 |
| GF | \$607,000 | \$1,263,774 | \$1,510,582 | \$1,404,750 | \$968,316 |
| Non-Federal Reimbursement | \$1,424,978 | \$1,128,907 | \$650,274 | \$651,473 | \$367,208 |
| Federal Reimbursement | \$357,169 | \$156,547 | \$113,408 | \$57,508 | \$57,508 |
| SDF | \$36,861 | \$26,793 | \$56,517 | \$18,300 | \$18,300 |
| Prop 1 | \$0 | \$0 | \$67,000 | \$50,000 | \$100,000 |
| Prop 68 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$133,000 | \$893,000 |
| Prop 84 | \$0 | \$0 | \$55,000 | \$55,000 | \$55,000 |
| Totals | \$8,060,008 | \$8,231,021 | \$8,107,781 | \$8,025,031 | \$8,114,332 |

The SNC is diligent about carefully considering the future budget. For example, the Executive Team does not request new staff positions without having a plan to fund the positions for the long term. But while the SNC can make its best effort to look ahead and set a plan accordingly, it is not immune to the ups and downs of the state budget. The unpredictability of the budget over multiple years not only makes organizational planning challenging, but also is a risk to ongoing progress in the Region. Much of the work SNC funds builds upon the work before it, and funding delays can quickly negate work that's already been done.

Having diversity of funding sources is important as each funding method comes with drawbacks. Direct appropriations can be reduced or eliminated by the budget or other governmental processes, reimbursements depend on other entities and budgets, and federal reimbursements rely on the federal government's budget, regulations, and willingness to work with the state. (The SNC does not currently earn revenue.) With funding streams that are regulated or controlled by others, it is critical for the SNC to have a responsible budget plan for the organization. However, there is no way the SNC can truly prevent loss of funding if regulatory entities or control agencies take that action.

While it can do its best to receive, plan, and execute funding responsibly, if the SNC were to take a significant cut, it would cause major disruption to internal operations, external stakeholders in the Region, and the environment. Reimbursement agreements expiring without new incoming agreements could mean there would be no funding to pay those employees. Other cuts to SNC's budget could leave the SNC without enough funding to properly run the department.

SNC's grants program and the funding that goes out to the Region would also be severely affected by budget reductions. Already, the SNC cannot meet the immense Regional demand for funding. As noted above, the SNC could fund less than half of the project proposals received in the last grant round, illustrating the tremendous need for funding to continue the progress made in programs like wildfire and forest resilience. Additionally, SNC's bond-funded grant dollars are almost fully spent and a new natural resource-focused bond measure is uncertain.

The SNC will continue to look for ways to diversify funding sources and plan and execute responsible grant and reimbursement programs, while also looking for new and innovative ways to continue to support its mission.

Funding Goals

This report makes clear that ongoing, robust funding is needed to allow the SNC to continue its support of the Region. As evidenced by grant rounds, the SNC has less funding available than meets the Region's needs. In its latest grant round, the SNC could fund less than half of the projects that met the minimum scoring threshold. The SNC received grant requests totaling more than \$256 million for General Fund grant programs that disbursed \$136 million, meaning the SNC received requests for 188 percent of the available amount. By successfully pursuing steady and increased levels of funding, the SNC can continue to carry out its mission to support the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Region by advancing efforts that support forest and watershed health, resilient Sierra-Cascade communities, conservation and stewardship of natural and working lands, sustainable recreation and tourism, and outdoor access.

As mentioned above, the SNC is considering various ways to sustainably bring in funding to support its goals, noting that it is likely that a combination of the following is needed:

Ongoing grant funding

As described above, SNC's grant programs are funded by one-time appropriations, bonds, or reimbursements. While important to have various sources of funding, none of these are continuous appropriations (funding that is renewed each year without yearly legislative action). Ongoing funding for grant programs would allow the SNC to continuously fund important work in the Region while saving time and resources, allowing staff more time to work with grantees (potential or current), develop relationships with partners and stakeholders, and represent SNC on collaborative teams.

Direct local assistance appropriations

The SNC received more direct funding in the previous few years with the one-time General Fund appropriations than it ever has (excluding bond funding). With these General Fund appropriations, the SNC was able to demonstrate its ability to award and disburse funding quickly. Ideally, the SNC will receive additional direct local assistance appropriations in the future as direct funding is generally more efficient and less expensive to manage.

When larger departments are appropriated funds, which are then granted to the SNC via a reimbursement agreement, additional reporting, invoicing, and tracking are required. This extra work also extends the time it takes funding to get into the Region and takes valuable staff time, which could be spent on other resources. The SNC hopes to receive additional direct local assistance appropriations in the future to continue its support of the Region.

Revenue

Per Public Resources Code 33352 – 33354, the SNC may receive revenue in the form of gifts, donations, grants, and fees (among other methods). Revenue earned is deposited into a fund for future appropriation. The SNC believes that earning revenue would be advantageous in more difficult budget times; however, it is in a challenging situation with a large Region that does not have associated fees that are not specific to another entity. The SNC has looked at options for earning revenue in the past, but none have been realized. For example, in 2006, the SNC began working on its own license plate to bring in ongoing revenue for the department. Due to multiple factors, including an immense workload not permissible for state funding, the license plate never materialized. Various ideas have since been floated (a water tax, proceeds from established non-vehicle licenses, being a distributor of settlement funds, etc.) and the SNC will continue to consider and evaluate this potential funding stream.

Agenda Item 6c: Policy & Outreach Update

Background

The primary functions of Policy & Outreach are to inform policy development and funding direction that serve the needs of the Sierra-Cascade Region. This is accomplished through tracking and synthesizing the latest trends and scientific studies on forestry, watershed health, organizational capacity, wood utilization, and other relevant issues; utilizing the recommendations and outcomes of relevant research to inform policy development; and sharing those recommendations and outcomes through communication efforts. Policy & Outreach also provides strategic direction to special projects and programs that advance science and technology in the Region and build the capacity of partner organizations.

In addition, while Policy & Outreach supports all of the Regional Goals in the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC)'s Strategic Plan, it focuses heavily on the cultivation of an impactful Regional identity for the Sierra-Cascade. Staff members focus on educating key decision makers about the importance of the Sierra-Cascade and the policy and funding needs of the Region. In addition, Policy & Outreach also works alongside the Field Operations & Grants Division to educate partners about state policy and program trends to help in-Region efforts and projects align with state goals.

Current Status

State Legislative Update

The 2023-24 Legislative Session has reconvened, with the legislature returning to session on Jan. 3, 2024. In the second year of the two-year session, staff continues to track several bills that were introduced last year. Bills of note to the SNC include:

- **Assembly Bill 1567** by Assemblymember Garcia (D-Coachella) would enact a climate bond act that, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of nearly \$16 billion for safe drinking water, wildfire prevention, drought preparation, flood protection, extreme heat mitigation, clean energy, and workforce development programs. The SNC is currently included for \$75 million for watershed improvement, forest health, biomass utilization, and forest restoration workforce development; and \$65M for climate resilience. This bill is concurrently in the Senate Natural Resources & Water and Governance & Finance committees.
- **Senate Bill 867** by Senator Allen (D-Santa Monica) would enact a climate bond act that, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$15.5 billion for drought, flood, and water resilience, wildfire and forest resilience, coastal resilience, extreme heat mitigation, biodiversity and nature-

based climate solutions, climate smart agriculture, park creation and outdoor access, and clean energy programs. The SNC is currently included for \$75M for watershed improvement, forest health, forest restoration workforce development, and biomass utilization; and \$75 million for nature-based climate solutions. This bill is currently in the Assembly Natural Resources committee.

Additionally, staff have been tracking relevant new bills, which may be introduced until Feb 16. Policy committee hearings begin following that date.

Partnerships and Community Support

One of the capacity-building support services the SNC provides is free, one-on-one funding consultations with our partners in the Sierra-Cascade Region who are working towards goals that support the mission of the SNC. A few examples of funding consultations that occurred in the last quarter include:

- Cosumnes Culture and Water Ways (CCAWW), a program associated with the El Dorado Miwok, was the recent recipient of a large Land Back initiative, in which 320 acres of pristine ancestral lands were returned to the Miwok people. They see many opportunities for cultural preservation and environmental education and preservation. CCAWW reached out requesting a consultation to explore possible pathways for funding this work, as well as protecting the Cosumnes River that flows through these tribal lands. The SNC met with them and discussed river-protection strategies, as well as funding for land development and educational programs. The SNC's staff were able to refer them to other organizations and tribes doing related work, as well as suggest upcoming funding opportunities, specifically the Strategic Growth Council's Tribal Capacity Building Grant, which could be an excellent fit for their efforts.
- In another consultation, the Kern Fire Safe Council contacted SNC staff about a small, local, nonprofit (the Three Forests Interpretive Association), that is interested in supporting the USDA Forest Service Kernville Ranger District. The District currently has an abandoned golf course under an old special use permit. The Acting District Ranger is interested in doing an assessment of the land and developing a proposal of options to put the land back into a useable state. The land has a lot of potential for restoration and recreation, including both a wetland meadow and river access. Without knowing what the preferred uses may be, however, it would be difficult to get funding for planning and a feasibility analysis. The SNC staff was able to refer them to the National Park System Rivers and Trails Conservation Program, which is a program that instead of providing funding, provides expert staff assistance with recreation and park development. If awarded, the Council could work with the local stakeholders and tribes to identify and prioritize use of the land for maximum community benefit and could also provide suggestions for further funding opportunities.

Science Update

It is well-established that [Sierra-Cascade forests were shaped by regular, mostly low- and moderate- intensity fire](#), which played a critical role in reducing fuels, maintaining appropriate tree densities, and nutrient cycling. Over a century of fire suppression policies have left forests overly dense with dangerously high levels of fuels, making them vulnerable to droughts, insects and pathogens, and the high-severity “[megafires](#)” like those seen in the past decade. State and federal agencies are therefore prioritizing the reintroduction of low-severity fire into Sierra-Cascade ecosystems through prescribed burning and managing wildfire for resource benefits. [Low-intensity fires are critical for reducing the risk](#) of future, high-severity wildfires. The [Fire MOU partnership](#), which is devoted to advancing the use of fire for ecological benefit and improved fire management, held a December webinar to share recent policy advancements and on-the-ground progress.

There were reasons to celebrate: in 2023 both the United States Forest Service (USFS) and CAL FIRE set a record for the amount of prescribed fire. Funding through the federal [Wildfire Crisis Strategy](#) (WCS), paired with unprecedented investment from the state, is proving pivotal in enabling the USFS and other regional partners to approach fuels reduction and restoration work at scale.

One of the WCS “[Initial Landscape Investments](#)” is the Stanislaus National Forest’s Social and Ecological Resilience Across the Landscape ([SERAL](#)) project, which aims to make a 245,000-acre landscape “fire ready” through the strategic use of fuel breaks, thinning, mechanical fuels reduction, and prescribed fire. In 2023, the Stanislaus National Forest burned a record number of acres through prescribed fire and wildfire managed for ecological benefit. One of the keys to the SERAL success was a pilot program that allowed the Stanislaus Forest Supervisor to mobilize resources for prescribed burning similarly to what is done for wildfires, including provision of lodging, catering, travel authorities, and the use of Type 1 and Incident Management Teams. The success of this, and similar pilots, provides insight into what it takes to burn at a scale needed to restore the health of forests and watersheds.

The Fire MOU Partnership, of which the SNC is a signatory member, works to build the social license and the support infrastructure for prescribed fire. Although education and outreach to increase public “buy in” for the use of fire as a forest management tool is important, it is equally imperative to pair the scaling up of prescribed fire with investments in public health infrastructure and resources to [mitigate the impacts of smoke on human health](#). The SNC will continue to support both the increased use of fire to restore the health of Regional landscapes and efforts to mitigate impacts on Sierra-Cascade communities and residents.

Communications Update

The SNC published two Sierra Spotlight articles since the December Board meeting. Gearing up for the upcoming annual Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Summit in March, which will also mark the 20-year anniversary for the SNC, the Spotlight will spend the next few months focusing on projects and partners that have successfully addressed key issues throughout the Sierra-Cascade over the past two decades, including wildfire and climate resilience, natural land stewardship, and outdoor access. The first in this new series highlighted how [early support from the SNC led to critical federal funding for the North Yuba River watershed](#). This early support was integral in the North Yuba Forest Partnership securing \$160 million in federal funds to treat 270,000 acres within the watershed. Switching from forest health and wildfire resilience to natural land stewardship, the next post told the story of the [early SNC grant that led to Yosemite meadow protection and restoration](#).

With legislators in recess and most Californians spending the holidays with family and friends, the news cycle leading into and coming out of the New Year was slower than normal. Still, the buzz about the [Black-led Conservancy receiving \\$3 million to purchase 650 acres of land](#) continues to reverberate around the Golden State. The [American River Conservancy Protecting 1,025 acres on the Cosumnes River](#) was also in the news, along with more work being done in the North Yuba River watershed, including [Tahoe National Forest planning to prescribe burn up to 154 acres near Camptonville](#). Finally, the SNC is helping [New Technologies and Responsible Management Solve California's Water Crisis](#).

As the holiday season transitioned into exciting opportunities of the new year, social media initiatives centered on acknowledging the people and organizations integral to the success of the SNC. Engagement with key partners and regional influencers across the various social media platforms to reinforce commitment to meaningful connections was a priority. Recent storms in the Sierra-Cascade prompted updates on road closures and temporary pauses on certain projects for the winter. Noteworthy social media highlights included the acquisition of 982 acres in critical meadow habitat by the Tahoe National Forest, Sierra Buttes' progress on a 63-mile trail between Loyalton and Sierraville, and the Placer Land Trust's conservation efforts at Long Point North Fork Preserve. While work on the ground slows down due to winter weather, the momentum in conserving land and boosting economic growth throughout the SNC service area continues to rev up. The social media presence and follower base continues to grow and this growth reflects the effectiveness of the SNC's work and its robust outreach efforts.

Next Steps

The majority of SNC's Policy & Outreach activities in the first quarter of 2024 will be focused on preparing for the WIP Summit and rolling out communication products that highlight the impact the SNC has had in the Region over the last 20 years. In addition, staff will be focused on tracking new legislative bills and priorities and engaging with state policymakers on Regional priorities.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
March 7, 2024

Agenda Item 7:
Regional Forest and Fire Capacity
Program (RFFCP) Update

Background

In March 2019, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Governing Board approved receipt of an initial Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) block grant of \$1.9 million from the California Department of Conservation (DOC). This was followed by a second block grant of \$7.77 million, and, most recently, a third block grant was approved by the Board in the amount of \$14.5 million in December 2022.

The overarching goal of the RFFCP is to increase the ability of partners to develop, prioritize, and implement wildfire- and forest-resilience projects that have broad involvement from local people and groups or others who may be affected by impacts to the Region. The RFFCP supports the development of Regional priority strategies aimed at restoring health and resilience to communities, forests, and other wildfire-prone landscapes.

This report provides a high-level overview of the work the SNC has supported to date from the block grant funds it receives from the RFFCP, provides information about the next steps the SNC will take to implement the third round of block grant funding (\$14.5 million) within the Region, and describes the approach the SNC intends to take to meet the (DOC) deliverable of a Regional Priority Plan.

Current Status

Program Delivery Update

Of the original 11 subgrants awarded through the initial investment of \$1.9 million, 10 have successfully closed out, and the Feather River Resource Conservation District is on track to close out by March 30, 2024.

These grants have helped collaboratives successfully identify and prioritize work needed within their areas and have leveraged millions of dollars in grants for environmental permitting and implementation. This funding has also helped develop and strengthen partnerships and collaborations, better positioning them for project funding and large-scale implementation. These subgrantees received funding for a broad range of deliverables based on capacity needs, but all recipients have expanded collaborative efforts, advanced projects to ready them for implementation, and increased organizational capacity to plan and implement wildfire- and forest-resilience projects.

Agenda Item 7: Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) Update
Page 2

The subgrantees awarded under the \$1.9 million block grant include the Pit and Fall River Resource Conservation districts (\$201,300); Modoc Resource Conservation District (\$228,800); Eastern California Water Association (\$179,300); Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (\$49,500); Tuolumne River Trust (\$16,283); Yosemite Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council (\$68,200); the Feather River Resource Conservation District (\$170,225); American Forests, for Technical Assistance (\$82,000); Great Basin Institute, for Technical Assistance (\$104,500); Sierra Nevada Alliance, for Technical Assistance (\$253,000); and California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, for Technical Assistance (\$143,750).

In 2021, the SNC was granted \$7.77 million in additional RFFCP funding. This funding is enhancing and building upon the SNC's original block grant, and allowing the SNC to further support capacity building, planning, and project-pipeline-development activities in the Region. Of the \$7.77 million received, approximately \$1.77 million was available to cover SNC's administrative costs and completion of RFFCP deliverables, and \$6 million was administered as subgrants to 12 organizations throughout the SNC Region, all of which are targeted for completion by December 2024, including: Feather River Resource Conservation District (\$792,000); Modoc Resource Conservation District (\$639,100); Sierra Foothill Conservancy/Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation co-management demonstration project (\$286,000); Sierra County Fire Safe Council (\$258,500); El Dorado/Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation districts (\$302,500); Butte County Resource Conservation District (\$540,276); Fall River/Pit River Resource Conservation districts (\$759,000); Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (\$354,944); Whitebark Institute of Interdisciplinary Environmental Sciences (\$545,912); Tuolumne River Trust (\$450,412); Yosemite-Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council (\$495,000); Yuba County Resource Conservation District (\$170,000); and California Association of Resource Conservation Districts Technical Assistance Grant (\$474,257).

The SNC was also the recipient of two block grants from the (DOC) to administer watershed coordinator grants within the watersheds that feed Trinity, Shasta, and Oroville reservoirs. This effort is a part of RFFCP and fulfills a desire to increase tribal engagement in planning and project development in these watersheds. The first block grant was received in June 2020 for a total of \$400,000. This funding provided subgrants of \$95,000 each to the Pit River Tribe, the Maidu Summit Consortium, the Modoc Resource Conservation District and the Feather River Resource Conservation District.

The second block grant was received in May 2023 for a total of \$842,000. This funding has been distributed to two subgrantees. They include the Modoc Resource Conservation District, in partnership with the Fort Bidwell Tribe, for a total of \$421,000, and the Pit Resource Conservation District, in partnership with the Pit River Tribe, in the amount of \$421,000. Both the Modoc Resource Conservation District and the Pit Resource Conservation District have committed to preserving, safeguarding, and promoting the interests of the Fort Bidwell Tribe and the Pit River Tribe, respectively, with a harmonized approach that blends traditional ecological knowledge with

contemporary Western methodologies. This funding serves to empower these subgrantees to collaborate with their tribal partners to pinpoint critical projects related to forest and fire protection. The primary focus is directed towards tribal lands, although not exclusively. These collaborative efforts are pivotal steps towards the sustainable management of forest resources and the protection of tribal lands and ecosystems.

Regional Priority Plan Deliverable Update

A major deliverable of the SNC required by the (DOC) under the RFFCP is a Regional Priority Plan (RPP) to help identify, prioritize, and plan for projects that improve forest health and resilience to wildfire at scale. DOC block grantees, including the SNC, are being asked to describe Regional needs and vulnerabilities, provide a 10-year project portfolio, and summarize the governance and decision-making structure of the partnerships and organizations working on these landscapes.

The SNC is building the RPP around the concept of “readiness,” based on the premise that human capacity is foundational to working at scale. The SNC is therefore investing RFFCP dollars and providing staff and technical support to help interested partners throughout the Region develop strategic, large-scale, project portfolios to achieve community protection and watershed health and to build the capacity to implement those portfolios.

Staff at the SNC will be devoting time in 2024 to building the RPP as an updateable web map that will show which parts of the SNC Region have affiliated organizations, tribes, and partnerships, and the respective capacity and needs of those organizations. This will help the SNC tailor support to those groups and identify where in the Region there are gaps in capacity. The plan is also to use the RPP to compare spatially, human and landscape values – like communities, water infrastructure, old growth forests, biodiversity hotspots, or carbon rich zones – with human capacity to address risks to those values. The RPP will be built primarily for internal use to help deepen the SNC’s understanding of the Region, but also will be a resource for external communication and policy work.

A presentation will be provided to the Board at this meeting on the status and next steps for the most recent \$14.5 million block grant received from the DOC under the RFFCP. Staff will also present additional illustrations and a prototype web map of the RPP.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to manage these subgrants, provide technical assistance to subgrantees as they complete their work, and will report back to the Board on outcomes and accomplishments. Staff will also continue to flesh out and finalize SNC's RPP.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
March 7, 2024

Agenda Item 8: Strategic Plan Update

Background

In 2018, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Governing Board adopted a five-year Strategic Plan, *Securing California's Environmental and Economic Future: Protecting and Restoring the Health and Resilience of Sierra Nevada Watersheds and Communities*. The plan has served as a guide for SNC staff when developing programs and policies and it has shaped the way SNC communicates as an organization to bring awareness about the Region's statewide and global significance and the attention and resources needed to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire and other factors that put at risk the many values the Region holds: water, forest carbon, biodiversity, cultural significance, community, recreation, and natural beauty.

The current Strategic Plan supports SNC's mission, "to improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of California's Sierra-Cascade Region," and sets the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) as SNC's overarching initiative. The WIP has been foundational to focusing SNC efforts to address five regional goals: healthy watersheds and forests; resilient Sierra Nevada communities; vibrant recreation and tourism; strategic lands conserved; and impactful regional identity.

The SNC continues to carry out the activities in support of these goals and under the timeframe of the current Strategic Plan, which spans July 2019—June 2024.

Beginning in January 2023, SNC staff has been preparing the next Strategic Plan to guide operations for the next five years (state fiscal years: 2024-2029). The development process has allowed time for SNC staff, Boardmembers, external partners, community groups, tribes, and other interested public to offer suggestions and recommendations at several points during the drafting of the document.

Within the SNC's mission and authorities, the Strategic Plan will represent the Board's direction regarding Regional and organizational goals and will present strategies and actions for achieving those goals. In keeping with the structure of the current Strategic Plan, annual action plans will be developed each year to identify the specific activities that staff will undertake to make progress on goals, along with a report on the outcomes from the previous year.

At the Governing Board's June 2023 meeting, staff presented a timeline and the steps needed to prepare a draft Strategic Plan for Board consideration and adoption at the June 2024 meeting. At that time, the Board also formed an advisory committee (Boardmember Heather Bernikoff and Boardmember John Brissenden) to guide staff as Strategic Plan development moves forward.

Current Status

At the Board's December 2023 meeting, staff presented a Discussion Draft of the Strategic Plan for discussion and comment. Since December, staff has updated the Discussion Draft to reflect Board input and readied the document for a formal public comment process. In early February, the draft Strategic Plan was made available for formal public comment via the SNC website. The public comment process will run through the March Board meeting date to allow for in-person comments directly made to the Governing Board. The opportunity to comment on the Strategic Plan was shared via a [SNC Spotlight post](#), through SNC social media, and by staff through various networks.

At the March Board Meeting, staff will present a brief update on the timeline and progress, allowing time for Boardmember comments, and any member of the public who may wish to provide comments in person. A copy of the draft Strategic Plan is available in the Board packet as [Attachment A](#).

Next Steps

Following the March meeting, staff will incorporate Boardmember and public feedback into a final draft Strategic Plan. Staff may wish to convene the Board advisory committee prior to finalizing the document, and prior to presenting the final draft to the Board at its June meeting for recommended approval. At the June meeting, staff will also present and recommend for approval, a first Action Plan to correspond with the first year of the new Strategic Plan.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
March 7 & 8, 2024

Agenda Item 8

Strategic Plan Update-

Attachment A: Draft
2024-2029 Strategic Plan

Sierra Nevada Conservancy 2024-2029 Strategic Plan

Draft for Public Comment – February/March 2024

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Purpose and Audience

Purpose

As the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), the purpose of this document is to identify the SNC's priorities over the next five years, lay out the strategies and high-level actions that will advance those priorities, and communicate how this work meets Sierra-Cascade Regional needs and state priorities.

Building resilience for the landscapes and communities of the Region is at the heart of everything the SNC does. This Strategic Plan (Plan) is intended to guide the way for the SNC to pursue that purpose in all its work across the Region. Ultimately, work under this Plan strives to achieve SNC's vision, while working within the focus of its mission.

Vision: California's magnificent Sierra-Cascade Region enjoys outstanding environmental, economic, and social health with vibrant communities and landscapes sustained for future generations.

Mission: The SNC's mission is to initiate, encourage, and support efforts that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of California's Sierra-Cascade Region, its communities, and the people of the state.

The Region has experienced dramatic changes in recent years. Responding to the accelerating impacts of climate change on human and natural communities—and the emergence of feedback cycles between climate stressors and other ecological and socioeconomic conditions—will be central to the SNC's work over the next five years. So, too, will be efforts to create more equitable access to, and outcomes from, the environmental, social, and economic benefits of the Region. Given recent disasters and the likelihood of more in the future, supporting vulnerable communities in building resilience is more important than ever.

Despite challenges, the Region comes into this planning period following several years of significant momentum and resources. As the Region's profile (and needs) has grown, it has received unprecedented state and federal investment. Simultaneously, community leaders and organizations have made remarkable strides in developing their own capacity to tackle local challenges. Through this Plan, the SNC hopes to help the Region maintain and build on this momentum.

This Plan represents the SNC's best assessment of the Region's needs and priorities at this moment in time. As demonstrated over the past five years, things can change quickly. When they do, plans must change too. This Plan reflects a working set of priorities and offers a framework for action. Its purpose is to provide guidance and direction, while preserving flexibility as new circumstances arise. Listening closely and responding quickly are core to the SNC's identity; that will not change.

Finally, this Plan is intended to identify, reflect, and strengthen connections to community priorities and broader statewide initiatives, ensuring the SNC works cooperatively with partners at all scales. Community leadership, coordinated action, and a commitment to partnership have

1 always guided the SNC's work. By continuing to embrace these practices, the SNC
2 hopes to catalyze and contribute to positive outcomes far greater than what could be
3 achieved alone.

4 **Plan Overview**

5 This Plan will guide the operations of the SNC for five years (2024-2029). This Plan is
6 primarily intended as an internal guidance document for the SNC's Governing Board
7 (Board), leadership team, and staff. If necessary, the SNC may make changes to this
8 Plan prior to the scheduled update based on changing circumstances, new
9 developments, and available resources.

10 This Plan represents the Board's direction regarding Regional goals and objectives,
11 external and internal strategies to achieve those goals, and how we will measure
12 progress. As the Board guides the SNC throughout the planning period, this document
13 can serve as a signpost to help ensure that decision-making advances a cohesive,
14 vetted, and strategic set of intentions and actions.

15 Because it represents direction from the Board, the Plan will inform SNC operations and
16 support the leadership team in making programmatic decisions and prioritizing staff time
17 and the use of other resources. This Plan can also support and inform staff in their work
18 and their communications about the SNC. Staff, and particularly new hires, should look
19 to the Plan for clarity and guidance on the SNC's focus, Regional and organizational
20 goals, and its way of doing business in the Region.

21 The goals identified in this Plan are the SNC's north stars for the next five years. The
22 Plan's implementation will require both internal focus and ongoing collaboration with
23 partners within and beyond the Region. The SNC intends to advance the Strategic Plan
24 goals through the strategies identified herein. Separate annual Action Plans will identify
25 how each division will execute these strategies and move the SNC toward achieving its
26 objectives.

27 **Our Charge**

28 **The Sierra Nevada Conservancy**

29 The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is a California state agency created by bipartisan
30 legislation (*Laird-Leslie Sierra Nevada Conservancy Act*) signed into law in 2004. The
31 statute that created the SNC emphasizes the importance of carrying out its mission in a
32 collaborative and cooperative manner, while also establishing the role that the SNC
33 plays in bringing resources to the Region.

34 The SNC's enabling statute identifies 10 areas of work the SNC can contribute to:

- 35 • Increasing the opportunity for tourism and recreation for all in the Region.
- 36 • Protecting, conserving, and restoring the Region's diverse physical, cultural,
37 archaeological, historical, and living resources.
- 38 • Aiding in the preservation of working landscapes.
- 39 • Reducing the risk of natural disasters, such as wildfire.
- 40 • Protecting and improving water and air quality.
- 41 • Assisting the Regional economy through the operation of the SNC's program.

- Identifying the highest priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed.
- Enhancing public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public.
- Advancing both environmental preservation and the economic well-being of all residents in a complementary manner.
- Advancing climate resilience and equity.

The final change in this list – advancing climate resilience and equity – was added to the SNC’s scope of work following legislation in 2023 (Laird, Public Resources Code (PRC) Chapter 70). The SNC embraces this addition as the codification of an existing organizational priority. This legislation also expanded the list of the SNC’s cooperators to better reflect current partners, including “local governments, private businesses, nonprofit organizations, tribal entities, federal agencies, other California state governmental entities, and the public.”

Other recent statutory revisions have brought more significant changes to the SNC for this strategic planning period. In 2021, Senate Bill (SB) 208 (Dahle, PRC Chapter 182) expanded the boundary of the Region served by the SNC to include a greater portion of Shasta County and portions of two new counties: Siskiyou and Trinity. This expansion added approximately 1.3 million acres to the SNC’s service area, bringing the total land area to 26,937,668 acres.

As a result of this expansion, the [SNC’s service area](#)—stretching from Modoc County in the north, to Trinity County in the west, to Kern County in the south—covers nearly 27 million acres and all or part of 24 counties. Comprising approximately 25 percent of California’s total land area, it is one of the largest conservancy regions in the state. The SNC’s service area has always included the mountains and foothills of the Sierra Nevada range, the Mono Basin, Owens Valley, the Modoc Plateau, the western edge of the Great Basin, and part of the southern Cascade Range, including the Pit River watershed. Following the boundary expansion, the Region also encompasses the McCloud River, Upper Sacramento River, and Upper Trinity River watersheds. All the upper forested watersheds that feed the California State Water Project and the federal Central Valley Project are now within the SNC service area.

In 2023, SB 39 also revised the boundaries of the SNC Subregions and its Boardmember rotation to reflect the addition of Siskiyou and Trinity counties. The SNC’s service area continues to have six Subregions, and each Subregion now has four counties. Area representatives continue to work in-person in assigned counties, while the SNC headquarters remains in Auburn, California.

Plan Context

The State of the Sierra-Cascade

The Region includes some of the most significant and iconic landscapes in the world. A land of superlatives, Sierra-Cascade landscapes include the volcanic plains of the Modoc plateau, the soaring granite domes of Yosemite Valley, and the towering peak of Mt. Whitney. Correspondingly, this Region is a global destination, drawing tens of millions of visitors each year. The Region is also vital to California’s well-being: Sierra-Cascade headwaters feed some of the largest cities and most productive agricultural

lands in the world; its grasslands, wetlands, and forests store vast amounts of carbon; and its rivers are responsible for the majority of California's hydroelectric power. As significant carbon stores and producers of renewable energy, the Region's natural and working lands are essential to the realization of California's climate goals. The natural landscapes are interdependent with the people who live and work there: Sierra-Cascade communities and counties depend on the Region's healthy and resilient ecosystems to provide clean water, unpolluted air, healthy vegetation and soils, as well as the revenue associated with forest products, agriculture and ranching, and recreation on public and private lands. At the same time, supporting the health and resilience of the ecosystems depends upon resource experts, land managers, Indigenous communities, and other caretakers to steward forests, waters, meadows, grasslands, and sagebrush steppe.

These values, however, remain at risk. The Region continues to reckon with a legacy of fire suppression, removal of native peoples from their homelands, and aggressive mining, timber and grazing practices – all of which have increased the vulnerability of our natural and working lands to drought, pathogens, fire, floods, and other stressors. Historical land use policies have fragmented habitat and limited access to our public lands. Widespread demographic and economic shifts are displacing and marginalizing many of the people who have long lived and worked in the Sierra. Moreover, the threats facing the Region are accelerating at a scale, severity, and pace unimaginable even five years ago. The 2019-2024 Strategic Plan stated: "the Region's watersheds and communities are facing unprecedented risks," noting an increase in the number of acres burned in wildfires, the severity at which those burns occurred, and unprecedented drought and associated tree mortality. That observation proved to be both accurate for the time and prescient for what was to come. Shortly after the last Strategic Plan was released, the Region entered one of the most transformative years in recorded history. An August 2020 lightning storm began the most severe California fire year on record, ultimately resulting in over four million acres burned across the state, with more than half burning at high severity. That was followed by another record-setting fire year in 2021: over 1.5 million acres burned in the Region and the Dixie Fire became the largest single (non-complex) fire in the state's history, burning 983,309 acres across five counties, which included a single, 290,000-acre high-severity patch.

These fires occurred during, and were likely driven in part by, another extended, extreme drought. From 2020 to 2022, California experienced the driest three-year period on record, leaving reservoirs depleted and the Sierra Nevada almost devoid of snowpack. Although the dramatic tree mortality event of 2012-16 has not been replicated, background rates of mortality continue to rise: aerial detection surveys show generally elevated non-wildfire mortality, with moderate to very severe mortality in the central and northern Sierra Nevada. Elevated tree mortality is concerning both in and of itself, but also as a catalyst of high-severity fire; researchers found that high levels of

1 tree mortality in the southern Sierra Nevada strongly correlated with high-severity fire in
2 the 2020 Creek Fire¹.

3 The dry start to the 2020s was followed by one of the wettest winters on record. The
4 2022-23 winter dropped as much as 700 inches of snow, setting records in the central
5 and southern Sierra Nevada, causing prolonged power outages and road closures, and
6 catalyzing a new term: “hydroclimate whiplash.” Although it is not possible to tie any
7 single weather event to climate change, models show that climate change is
8 exacerbating California’s already highly variable climate, making both dry and wet
9 periods more extreme. Warmer temperatures increase the likelihood of rainfall-driven
10 floods and tinder-dry summer conditions that set the stage for extreme wildfires.

11 Naturally, these events carry consequences for the people who live and work here,
12 reflecting the interdependencies of the natural and human communities of the Region.
13 Despite covering one quarter of the state’s land mass, the Region is home to around
14 880,000 people, just over two percent of California’s population. Most residents rely on
15 healthy forests and watersheds for their security, livelihoods, and recreation. Although
16 socioeconomic data specific to Sierra-Cascade communities is limited, residents
17 struggle with issues shared by other rural Californians, including housing costs
18 disproportionate to local incomes, limited access to healthcare services, rural school
19 closures, and limited broadband internet. Vulnerable residents—including people with
20 disabilities or chronic illness, unhoused people, Indigenous people and people of color,
21 people with limited English proficiency, households without a car, housing- and energy-
22 burdened households, people living in poverty, and the elderly and children—face
23 disproportionate impacts from these circumstances. Many communities suffer from
24 interacting stressors exacerbated by climate change like extreme heat, excessive
25 wildfire smoke, record-setting snowfall, and destructive landslides. These are just some
26 examples of climate-related phenomena that regularly threaten communities in the
27 Region.

28 The COVID-19 pandemic further compounded climatological, ecological, and
29 socioeconomic stressors. Early in the pandemic, lockdowns grounded recreation-driven
30 economies to a standstill. Then, as urbanites sought outdoor space and clean air as a
31 respite from pandemic confinement, demand for recreation surged, raising questions
32 about how to manage use while mitigating negative impacts. In both 2020 and 2021,
33 visitation was interrupted, and businesses suffered their own form of whiplash during
34 public safety power shutoffs, suffocating wildfire smoke, and the unprecedented closure
35 of national forests across the Region (and state) due to extreme wildfire conditions.
36 Meanwhile, some communities have struggled to navigate an influx of higher-earning
37 remote workers who have contributed to a national trend of spiking housing costs.

38 Finally, it is important to note that the events of the last five years are not uniformly
39 negative. Policy makers and funders met new challenges with unprecedented
40 investments in natural and working lands protection, public lands access, wildfire- and

¹ Stephens, S.L., Bernal, A.A., Collins, B.M., Finney, M.A., Lautenberger, C., & Saah, D. (2022). Mass fire behavior created by extensive tree mortality and high density not predicted by operational fire behavior models in the southern Sierra Nevada. *Forest Ecology and Management*, 518. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foreco.2022.120258>

forest-resilience stewardship, and the human capacity to implement these goals. There are also silver linings in recent extreme fire and weather events: despite worrisome amounts of high-severity fire, the majority of acres burned have been low-to-moderate severity, effectively acting as a “first entry” treatment for fuel-laden forests. Scientists, managers, and other stakeholders are coordinating to leverage the benefits from that “good fire” to move our forests toward desired conditions. Partners and scientists are working together to plant “forests of the future” in areas that suffered from severe fire and/or high tree mortality and are using new climate-focused strategies to design those reforestation efforts. The 2022-23 winter pulled the state out of extreme drought for the first time in three years, and land managers seized the opportunity to increase the amount of prescribed fire. Finally, the SNC is part of an unprecedented level of coordination between local, state, and federal agencies, tribal entities, private landowners and organizations, and non-governmental organizations, all working towards a better future for the Region.

State Goals, Strategies, & Directives

As a California state conservancy, the SNC’s work aligns with and advances certain statewide policies, including action plans, strategies, laws, and executive orders. This Plan is informed by and designed to implement the following state policies in the Region.

Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan and Laird, Ch. 387, Statutes of 2021

Developed to comprehensively address the state’s wildfire crisis and reduce risk and catastrophic impacts for both landscapes and communities, the Action Plan identifies the SNC as a Regional leader for implementing the plan in the Region. Many of the strategies directly correspond to the SNC’s own work to improve forest health and build wildfire resilience.

Executive Order N-82-20 and the Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy

This strategy expands California’s climate action into the land-management sector, recognizing the benefits that natural and working lands offer to both climate mitigation and adaptation. Forest health is critical to preserving California’s stored carbon, preventing positive feedback loops of greenhouse gas emissions through wildfire and deforestation, and protecting other environmental, economic, and sociocultural values. The forest-based actions identified in the strategy are nearly identical to this Plan’s Healthy Forests and Watersheds goal.

Agreement for Shared Stewardship of California’s Forest and Rangelands Between California and the Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region

Through a close and enduring partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, the SNC contributes to the execution of the Agreement for Shared Stewardship and advances many of the principles included in that agreement, including science utilization, efficiency improvements, scaling up of ecologically based forestry, and collaboration and innovation with all stakeholders.

1 California's 30x30 Goal (Min, Ch. 392, Statutes of 2023), Executive Order
2 N-82-20, and the Pathways to 30x30 Strategy

3 Through its 30x30 goal, California seeks to conserve 30 percent of its lands and coastal
4 waters by 2030. Since its founding, the SNC has funded many projects that officially
5 contribute to the 30x30 target that also advance the strategies in the Pathways to 30x30
6 document. Continuing that contribution is a key goal of this Plan.

7 September 2020 Statement of Administration Policy Regarding Native
8 American Ancestral Lands

9 From Governor Newsom, this statement directs state agencies and departments to
10 "support California tribes' co-management of and access to natural lands" within their
11 ancestral territory and to "work cooperatively with California tribes that are interested in
12 acquiring natural lands." This directive will be advanced through the multiple goals of
13 this Plan.

14 California Climate Adaptation Strategy (Gardon, Ch. 603, Statutes of 2015)

15 Linking together the state's climate adaptation plans and actions, this strategy
16 recognizes nature-based climate solutions and the resilience of natural systems as a
17 priority for climate resilience. The SNC is identified as an implementing department for
18 multiple related goals and success metrics, many of which will be advanced through this
19 Plan.

20 Protecting Californians From Extreme Heat: A State Action Plan to Build
21 Community Resilience

22 As climate change supercharges extreme heat events, more Californians are seeking
23 refuge from the heat in the lakes, forests, and mountains of the Region. The Extreme
24 Heat Action Plan recognizes the need to ensure that outdoor access points and
25 recreation infrastructure in extreme heat refugia can remain safe, available, accessible,
26 and sustainable in the face of higher demand. The plan also calls for forest-health and
27 mountain-meadow restoration projects that retain mountain snowpack and support
28 water storage. The SNC is identified as an implementing department for these actions.

29 Outdoors for All: Providing Equitable Access to Parks and Nature

30 This strategy outlines pathways that governments, community organizations,
31 philanthropy, private sector, and residents across California can take together to
32 continue increasing access to the outdoors and nature.

33 **Funding Context**

34 The future of the SNC's funding landscape is uncertain. The launch of this Plan
35 coincides with a state budget shortfall that is projected to continue for multiple years.
36 The SNC does not know if or when it may receive funding from the state (beyond
37 ongoing base funding from the Environmental License Plate Fund), whether through
38 General Fund appropriations or one of several climate bond proposals that may be put
39 to voters.

1 This shortfall comes on the heels of a period in which the SNC received record amounts
2 of state funding. Over the period of the 2019-2024 Plan, the SNC was appropriated
3 \$178,148,000 in Local Assistance funding, and distributed \$143,041,904 for projects
4 consistent with the SNC's statute and primary initiative, the Sierra Nevada Watershed
5 Improvement Program (WIP). The SNC anticipates awarding the full \$178,148,000
6 before July 1, 2024.

7 Also, during the previous planning period, the SNC received just over \$24 million from
8 the Department of Conservation to implement the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity
9 Program in the Region, as well as additional funding through relationships with CAL
10 FIRE and the USDA Forest Service. Because of their relative flexibility, these
11 reimbursement grants (so-called because the SNC is reimbursed from the original
12 funder) are vital supplements to the SNC's direct appropriations.

13 Federal investment during the previous planning period was also significant. The USDA
14 Forest Service released "Confronting the Wildfire Crisis: A Strategy for Protecting
15 Communities and Improving Resilience in America's Forests" in January 2022 and
16 selected high-risk landscapes for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding in 2022
17 and 2023. Four landscapes fully or partially in the SNC's service area received funding
18 commitments totaling over \$440 million. Additional BIL funding was provided to two
19 landscapes in the Region through the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration
20 Program (CFLRP).

21 The collective impact of these recent state and federal investments in the Region has
22 been significant. Especially in the forest-health and wildfire-resilience space, multiple
23 years of significant funding for capacity building, planning, and implementation have
24 enabled Regional partners to build and maintain momentum, simultaneously advancing
25 multiple projects through various stages of development. Sustaining this momentum is
26 essential to continuing to improve the health of Sierra-Cascade forests and increase the
27 resilience of our communities and landscapes to wildfire.

28 Ultimately, the SNC's ability to make financial investments in support of the goals laid
29 out in this Plan depends largely on appropriations received from the state. However, the
30 SNC has and will continue to maintain other strategies to support and advance its goals,
31 including pursuing state and federal grants on behalf of partners, exploring and
32 diversifying funding opportunities, providing technical assistance to partners, supporting
33 community convening, and engaging in strategic communications and policy
34 development.

35 **Regional Goals for 2024-2029**

36 The SNC's Regional goals reflect the primary issue areas that the SNC will engage in
37 throughout the Region. At the intersection of the SNC's statutory mandate and mission,
38 Regional partners' needs, funding opportunities, and organizational expertise, the
39 SNC's programmatic work will focus on advancing these goals and the individual
40 actions and outcomes associated with these key issues: Healthy Forests and

1 Watersheds, Resilient Sierra-Cascade Communities, Sustainable Recreation and
2 Equitable Outdoor Access, and Conservation and Stewardship of Natural and Working
3 Lands.

4 The SNC cannot achieve any of its goals alone. These issue areas are complex and
5 dynamic, and progress is most likely when communities, land managers, partner
6 organizations, funders, and local, state, and federal leaders communicate and work
7 collaboratively. Achieving these goals—and in some cases even taking the actions
8 identified to advance each goal—may depend on external factors, such as the capacity
9 of the SNC's partners and state and federal funding landscapes. If the SNC does not
10 meet all the objectives identified in this Plan, that does not signify failure; rather, it offers
11 an opportunity to analyze ongoing needs and barriers and develop new strategies and
12 tools.

13 The nature of these goals is such that they are rarely, if ever, fully accomplished. For
14 this reason, progress measurements offer value in assessing what headway has—or
15 has not—been made, and when and where new approaches are needed. Given the
16 disruption experienced by the Region over the past five years, the SNC anticipates
17 twists, turns, and bumps in the road as it works to advance these goals. But no matter
18 the challenges, the SNC will continue its work to catalyze and contribute to building
19 resilience across the Region.

20 Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program

21 This Plan recognizes the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Plan (WIP) as the
22 SNC's keystone initiative. The WIP is an integrated and dynamic approach to restoring
23 resilience in ecological and human communities of the Region. It has been recognized
24 as a model program for focusing resources and activities on the most difficult problems,
25 lifting communities by meeting them where they are, and breaking down capacity,
26 funding, and bureaucratic barriers. In light of the existential threat that degraded forests
27 pose to ecological and human communities across the Region (and state), forest and
28 watershed health serve as the foundation of the WIP. By using the WIP as an “umbrella”
29 program that weaves together the four Regional goals described below, the SNC offers
30 a program of work that is consistent with its broad mission and that acknowledges the
31 interrelationships and dependencies inherent to the Region.

32 Goal 1: Healthy Forests and Watersheds

33 Healthy forests and watersheds are the foundation of a healthy Sierra-Cascade Region,
34 which, in turn, is critical to a healthy California. Characteristics of a healthy watershed
35 include disturbance processes, such as nutrient cycling and beneficial fire, that enhance
36 the overall vitality of the system, rather than precipitating rapid and catastrophic change.
37 A diversity of plant and animal species and heterogeneity in forest structure,
38 composition, and age all contribute to making ecosystems resilient to climate change
39 and other stressors. Healthy meadows maintain water quality and attenuate runoff, and,
40 together with healthy forests, store and sequester carbon. Essential to all of this is a
41 balanced interaction with people who live among, enjoy, and steward these landscapes.

42 Unfortunately, the impacts of the mega-disturbances of the last five years are
43 threatening the ecological, economic, and social systems of the Region. Due to the

1 combination of wildfire, drought, and drought-associated beetle epidemics, 30 percent
2 of the Region's forests have transitioned to non-forest vegetation. In the last five years,
3 residents have dealt with dwindling water supplies, wildfires that have destroyed
4 communities and resulted in prolonged evacuations, and record-setting snowfall and
5 damaging winter storms—all of which tested the limits of individual and community
6 resilience. These stressors are compounded by the increasing complexity of well-
7 intended environmental regulations that can make both the work of recovery and
8 proactive planning and prevention at scale challenging – especially for small, rural
9 organizations and community groups.

10 Nevertheless, embedded in these challenges is opportunity, political interest, and
11 attention. California met challenges head-on with unprecedented funding, almost \$140
12 million of which the SNC was able to implement through its Forest and Watershed
13 Health and Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience grant programs. The SNC also
14 launched its Landscape Investment Strategy, exploring ways to enable project leads to
15 efficiently fund and administer programs of work across a landscape, realize economies
16 of scale for project implementation, and achieve resilience at landscape-scale. Finally,
17 the SNC's Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) implementation helped
18 build Regional capacity to prioritize, develop, and implement landscape-level forest-
19 health and wildfire-resilience projects. These projects put into practice our scientific and
20 common understanding of how to build resilience and protect communities: reduce
21 fuels, thin overcrowded forests, invest in biomass infrastructure to cleanly process forest
22 materials, reintroduce beneficial fire, and make landscapes "fire ready." To support this
23 goal, the SNC has established the following objectives:

- 24 • Build the capacity of partners to plan, prioritize, and implement projects.
 - 25 ○ Help grant-eligible organizations, partnerships, and tribes develop the
 - 26 capacity to effectively acquire and administer funding to improve the
 - 27 health and resilience of Regional forests and watersheds.
 - 28 ○ Work with partners to identify and apply for funding to implement activities
 - 29 that support this goal.
 - 30 ○ Support Regional tribes to develop capacity to advance tribal priority
 - 31 projects, build tribal workforce, protect and manage tribal lands, and
 - 32 contribute tribal expertise to forest health and watershed projects.

33 *Progress Measurements:*

34 * Funds secured by Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program partners
35 for forest and watershed health projects.

36 * Number of projects funded by the SNC that are led by tribes or that
37 include tribal co-management.

- 38 • Support partners' readiness for and implementation of large-landscape programs
39 of work in forests and upper watersheds.
 - 40 ○ Develop partners' ability to acquire and administer significant, long-term
 - 41 investment and implement projects at the landscape-scale.
 - 42 ○ Support partners to develop an assessment of landscape conditions and
 - 43 risks to communities and other assets.

- Support partners to develop and prioritize a multi-year portfolio of strategic actions and projects to address vulnerabilities and needs.
- Organize and advocate for significant, multi-agency, state, and federal funding to be directed to collaborative land management partnerships to develop, plan, and implement portfolios of projects.
- Advocate for and secure increased funding for forest and watershed health activities, including funding for the SNC and other agencies and organizations.

Progress Measurements:

* Number of landscape-scale partnerships that have advanced along the readiness pipeline with SNC's assistance.

* Number of landscape-scale investments in the Region that SNC contributes funding to.

- Administer grant programs and other funding opportunities through which eligible partners may access SNC funding to plan and implement projects that advance forest and watershed health and wildfire resilience.

Progress Measurements:

* Acres restored or managed with SNC funding.

* Acres planned and prioritized for restoration or management with SNC funding.

- Support the planning and development of infrastructure to process and utilize biomass generated by forest health and restoration projects.
 - Fund and/or partner with other funding entities and partners to develop community-scale biomass utilization and wood products facilities throughout the Region.
 - Support community-scale biomass utilization and wood processing as a tool to enhance local economies.
 - Support the long-term stability of forest carbon and process residual material from thinning and fuels-reduction projects in ways that minimize climate-harming emissions.

Progress Measurement:

* Number of biomass utilization and wood products facility projects funded by SNC.

* Number of biomass utilization and wood products facility projects receiving technical assistance from SNC.

Goal 2: Resilient Sierra-Cascade Communities

Many communities in the Region were built by economic engines fueled with natural resources—namely precious metals in the ground and timber growing from it. As these Regional natural resource industries faded, once thriving towns shrank; first after the gold rush and again in the 1980s when global economic forces and a changing regulatory environment took their tolls on the timber industry.

1 Some communities adapted by welcoming increasing numbers of retirees and
2 Californians willing to trade long commutes to economic centers for a rural lifestyle and
3 more affordable housing. More remote parts of the Region, and those located next to
4 well-known recreational and scenic amenities, turned to tourism. Results have been
5 mixed, but neither strategy has led to widespread *and* stable economic opportunities
6 that support livelihoods for residents.

7 Today, Regional communities also face a new set of varied challenges. Towns that
8 turned to tourism are dealing with housing affordability crises as local housing costs
9 outpace earning power, and some struggle to support full-time residents with seasonal
10 industries. Access to basic services, like health care, is difficult in many smaller
11 communities, including those with relatively older populations. Rural hospitals are
12 struggling, broadband internet is still unreliable or unavailable for some, and rural
13 communities share many of the same challenges associated with mental health issues
14 and addiction experienced by more urban areas across the state. And in this context of
15 relative economic insecurity, Regional communities have recently confronted an
16 unprecedented string of environmental disasters and continue to face high risk from
17 wildfire.

18 To support this goal, the SNC has established the following objectives:

- 19 ○ Deepen relationships and expertise regarding the social and economic
20 challenges facing the Region.
 - 21 ○ Perform or commission a socioeconomic analysis of the Region to better
22 understand, reflect, and respond to community resilience opportunities
23 through outreach and funding activities.
 - 24 ○ Perform or commission an analysis of the SNC's programs to date to
25 understand which communities/populations have and have not benefitted
26 from SNC investments. Utilize the outcomes of this assessment to assess
27 whether modifications can be made to make the SNC's impact more
28 equitable.
 - 29 ○ Elevate Regional economic and social opportunities and challenges in
30 SNC's outreach and education activities to encourage funding and policy
31 solutions that benefit Regional communities.

32 *Progress Measurements:*

33 * Identified opportunities where SNC could better contribute to community
34 resilience through outreach, capacity assistance, and funding.

- 35 ○ Administer grant programs and other funding opportunities through which eligible
36 partners may access SNC funding to plan and implement projects that advance
37 community resilience in the Sierra-Cascade Region.
 - 38 ○ Provide local assistance funding, as available, for projects that support
39 resilient Sierra-Cascade communities and the Region's social and
40 economic health, in a manner keeping with the SNC's statutory obligations
41 and natural resource focus.

- Support capacity building, project development, and large-scale project readiness for efforts to help communities build resilience to wildfire and other climate-related impacts.

Progress Measurements:

* Number of projects funded by the SNC that support community resilience.

* Number of partnerships advancing community resilience that the SNC supports (through funding or technical assistance).

Goal 3: Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access

The magnificent and diverse outdoor opportunities of the Sierra-Cascade are one of the Region's defining features. Many visitors come to know and love the Region through one of its infinite outdoor recreation opportunities. For many residents, outdoor recreation is a way of life; for many communities, it is a primary economic driver.

In the Region and across the country, outdoor recreation has been growing in popularity—and economic value—for many years. This was reflected in the 2018 passage of Prop 68, through which SNC received funding to support outdoor recreation in the Region. Today, some parts of the Region are in the early stages of developing recreation opportunities, while others already have a thriving recreation-based economy.

The COVID-19 pandemic pushed the demand for outdoor experiences to new heights. As more and more people sought ways to enjoy life outside, the Region experienced a dramatic surge in visitors. This period also led to a more widespread understanding of the importance of outdoor access for physical and mental health, while also illuminating the inequitable access to outdoor spaces and activities.

Recent years have also exposed the vulnerability of the Region's recreation infrastructure and recreation-based economies. In some places, the pandemic's surge in demand overwhelmed recreation sites and the local towns to the detriment of visitor experience, environmental quality, and residents' quality of life. At the same time, in 2020 and 2021, the National Forest System in California—including nearly two-thirds of all the land in the Region—shut down due to record-breaking wildfires. As forest closures and dense smoke kept visitors home for weeks at a time, the economic pendulum swung dramatically for local businesses dependent on tourism and outdoor recreation.

Serving the Region's diverse recreation and outdoor access needs requires an approach that can support critical recreational needs, balance disparate interests, and create opportunities for everyone to access the outdoors. Accordingly, actions under this goal are intended to support recreation planning and infrastructure; help communities anticipate, avoid, and mitigate challenges associated with high recreation use and recreation-based economies; and improve outdoor access for communities that have not traditionally had equitable access to nature. To support these goals, the SNC has established the following objectives:

- Build the capacity of partners to plan, prioritize, and implement projects.
 - Help grant-eligible organizations, partnerships and tribes develop the capacity to effectively acquire and administer funding to plan and develop recreation infrastructure; anticipate, avoid, and mitigate impacts from high recreation use; and create outdoor opportunities for diverse communities.
 - Work with partners to identify and apply for funding to implement projects that support this goal.

Progress Measurements:

* Number of projects receiving technical assistance from the SNC that advance recreation, tourism, and access project development and planning.

- Administer grant programs and other funding opportunities through which eligible partners may access SNC funding to plan and implement projects that advance the sustainable recreation and equitable outdoor access priorities described above.

Progress Measurements:

* Number of trail miles and infrastructure facilities built and/or maintained with SNC funding.

* Number of projects funded by the SNC that support recreation, tourism, and access planning and project development.

- Support the planning, development, and maintenance of recreation and outdoor infrastructure that anticipates or adapts to increased use and pressure from climate change and visitors escaping extreme heat.

Progress Measurements:

* Number of projects incorporating climate-resilient outdoor recreation and access that the SNC supports (through funding or technical assistance).

- Support increased access to nature for communities that have not traditionally had equitable access.

Progress Measurements:

* Number of projects funded by the SNC that advance equitable access for historically-excluded communities.

* Number of projects receiving technical assistance from SNC that advance equitable access for historically-excluded communities.

- Support landscape-based partnerships to develop an assessment of landscape conditions and risks to recreational infrastructure and other assets.
 - Support partners to develop a multi-year portfolio of strategic actions and projects to address vulnerabilities and needs.
 - Advocate for and secure increased funding for sustainable recreation and equitable outdoor access, including funding for the SNC and other agencies and organizations.

- Provide staff and/or technical support to partners to develop and implement strategies to improve recreational experience, mitigate impacts from recreation, and improve equitable access.

Progress Measurements:

* Number of projects funded by the SNC that integrate sustainable recreation, tourism, and equitable outdoor access projects or outcomes into a broader program of work.

Goal 4: Conservation and Stewardship of Natural & Working Lands

The SNC's Conservation and Stewardship of Natural & Working Lands Goal recognizes the values that natural and working lands contribute to human and ecological communities across the Region. From critical habitat and migration corridors to places of cultural, spiritual, and social connection, to agricultural and working landscapes that produce useful materials and goods, the Region's lands and waters are a cornerstone of its identity.

A core component of the SNC's mission, the Conservation and Stewardship of Natural & Working Lands goal was reinvigorated over the previous planning period with funding from Proposition 68 and the budget allocations for nature-based climate solutions. Looking forward, voluntary conservation will continue to be an essential tool to achieve California's landmark 30x30 goal, which seeks to protect 30 percent of the state's lands and coastal waters by 2030. Initiated through Executive Order N-82-20 in 2020 and codified in statute in 2023, this target recognizes both the accelerating biodiversity crisis and the role of conservation in building climate resilience.

Through the Conservation and Stewardship of its Natural & Working Lands Goal, the SNC seeks to build the resilience of our natural communities and help protect the connection between land and people. This may include activities that preserve key habitat or connect migration corridors for climate-vulnerable species, conserve the significant carbon stores held within our agricultural and working lands, or protect lands that have cultural, economic, or recreational value. The ongoing stewardship of protected lands is equally necessary to maintain or improve ecological processes and functions, retain unique or vulnerable characteristics of specific landscapes, and enhance the resilience to climate change and other stressors. Finally, the conservation and stewardship of our natural and working lands is essential to sustain the vital cultural and spiritual relationship between land and people.

To support this goal, the SNC has established the following objectives:

- Build the capacity of partners to plan, prioritize, and implement projects.
 - Help grant-eligible organizations, partnerships and tribes develop the capacity to effectively acquire and administer funding to plan and implement land conservation and stewardship projects.
 - Work with partners to identify and apply for funding to implement projects that support this goal.

1 *Progress Measurement:*

2 * Number of projects receiving technical assistance from the SNC that
3 advance land conservation and stewardship project development and
4 planning.

- 5 • Administer grant programs and other funding opportunities through which eligible
6 partners may access SNC funding to plan and implement projects that advance
7 the conservation and stewardship access priorities described above.

8 *Progress Measurement:*

9 * Acres of land conserved and/or conserved land stewarded with SNC
10 funding.

- 11 • Support conservation and stewardship by partners that have not historically
12 participated in or benefitted from traditional land conservation actions.
13 ○ Support return of ancestral lands to tribes and tribal entities, in recognition
14 of their role as original stewards of the Sierra-Cascade Region.
15 ○ Support partners representing and delivering benefits to diverse
16 communities that have been historically underrepresented in Sierra-
17 Cascade conservation and stewardship.

18 *Progress Measurement:*

19 * Number of land conservation and stewardship projects funded by the
20 SNC that are led by tribes and historically underrepresented groups.

- 21 • Support and, if possible, fund integrated programs of work that include
22 conservation and stewardship of natural and working lands.
23 ○ Support landscape-based partnerships to develop an assessment of
24 landscape conditions and risks to unique and/or vulnerable landscapes.
25 ○ Support partners to develop a multi-year portfolio of strategic actions and
26 projects to address vulnerabilities and needs.
27 ○ Advocate for and secure increased funding for conservation and
28 stewardship, including funding for the SNC and other agencies and
29 organizations.
30 ○ Provide staff and/or technical support to partners to develop and
31 implement strategies to conserve and steward lands.

32 *Progress Measurement:*

33 * Number of projects funded by the SNC that integrate land conservation
34 and stewardship projects or outcomes.

35 **How SNC Works to Support its Regional Goals**

36 The SNC advances its goals through a multi-pronged strategy that is designed to
37 support the Region from multiple angles at once. This strategy reflects SNC's core
38 functions and capacities in the Region and describes how the SNC intends to operate
39 over the course of this Plan. It has evolved from several core principles included in the
40 SNC's initial strategic planning process, which emphasized contributing value to the
41 region, working in a collaborative manner, and operating with integrity. These principles

1 remain at the heart of how the SNC works in the Region, and within its own
2 organizational structure.

3 Given the multi-faceted and complex nature of the Regional goals, the SNC anticipates
4 employing multiple strategic approaches in pursuit of each goal. In the case of some
5 goals, every approach will be used. Conversely, not every approach will be used to
6 advance every goal. This flexibility enables the SNC to tackle a problem from multiple
7 sides and to respond to key needs and opportunities in an integrated manner, while also
8 operating efficiently and accommodating resource limitations.

9 Strategy for Building Regional Resilience

10 The SNC's strategy reflects one of its great strengths: the ability to be nimble. As the
11 opportunity for the SNC to invest directly in Regional projects is often at the whims of
12 the state budget and funding decisions, this multi-pronged strategy ensures that the
13 SNC can continue to support the Region even when funding for grant programs is not
14 available. By developing and maintaining the internal capacity to build understanding,
15 identify needs, develop partnerships, create opportunities, identify and leverage non-
16 traditional funding opportunities, and propose and communicate new approaches and
17 policies, the SNC ensures that it can continue to problem solve, support partners, and
18 advance Regional goals throughout fiscal ups and downs.

19 At the foundation of this multi-pronged strategy are two of the SNC's most valuable and
20 unique attributes: its deep Regional expertise, developed through close relationships
21 with partners and direct engagement in communities, and its ability to innovate by
22 working in partnership with others. These attributes underpin all the SNC's work in the
23 Region.

24 The SNC's strategy to build Regional resilience as described by this Plan is to:

25 Develop Regional expertise grounded in strong relationships and direct 26 community engagement

- 27 • Employ and position staff throughout the Region.
- 28 • Build strong and lasting relationships with partners, including grantees, land
29 managers, nonprofit organizations, tribes and tribal entities, community leaders,
30 etc.
- 31 • Maintain a strong Regional presence by showing up, listening, and, when able,
32 responding to needs.

33 Regional Goals Supported: All

34 Innovate to meet critical needs and opportunities

- 35 • Identify and respond to emerging needs and opportunities.
- 36 • Support and develop new partnerships and initiatives and engage diverse
37 stakeholders that can help advance the SNC mission.
- 38 • Think and act outside the box to develop, pilot, and establish creative solutions.

39 Regional Goals Supported: All

1 Build capacity and catalyze partnerships within the Region

- 2 • Support capacity-building programs through staff time and grant awards.
- 3 • Provide direct technical assistance to partners.
- 4 • Convene and facilitate collaboration among diverse community partners, land
- 5 managers, government entities, funders, and scientists.

6 Regional Goals Supported: All

7 Invest at every stage in the life of a project, and across all scales

- 8 • Invest in capacity-building programs that support organizational development,
- 9 convening, project development, and project planning to increase efficacy and
- 10 likelihood of funding and to support the engagement of broad stakeholders.
- 11 • Support high-priority planning and implementation projects that protect and
- 12 sustain key values in the Region.
- 13 • Fund landscape-scale programs of work that create efficiencies for partners and
- 14 respond to needs at the appropriate scale.

15 Regional Goals Supported: Healthy Forests and Watersheds, Sustainable Recreation
16 and Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access, and Conservation and Stewardship of
17 Natural & Working Lands

18 Leverage multiple funding streams to accelerate partners' work in the
19 Region

- 20 • Allocate and disburse appropriations received in the state budget process and
- 21 from bonds.
- 22 • Apply for and manage grants from other state and federal agencies.
- 23 • Build funding partnerships with other agencies to invest at scale.
- 24 • Pursue funding from novel sources.
- 25 • Build regional, state, and federal understanding and support for effective funding
- 26 partnerships.

27 Regional Goals Supported: All

28 Communicate about the Region to inform and inspire SNC partners and
29 state decision-makers

- 30 • Tell stories about the Region, its value and needs, and the critical work of our
- 31 partners in ways that are accessible to a diverse audience.
- 32 • Build relationships with key decision-makers.
- 33 • Inform Regional and statewide policy conversations, assessments, and
- 34 decisions.
- 35 • Develop understanding of and support for the SNC's unique approach and
- 36 impact among key stakeholders.

37 Regional Goals Supported: All

Organizational Goals

For the SNC to be successful in implementing Regional goals and advancing its mission, it must also set organization goals that support SNC staff, sustain and improve operations, and set a solid foundation for delivering quality work into the Region. Over the past five years, the SNC experienced a period of significant growth, both in terms of staff size and the amount of local assistance funding and technical assistance delivered to the Region. This growth not only developed the SNC's own understanding of the impact it can have in the Region, but also helped identify additional opportunities to maintain momentum, more fully live organizational values, make business practices more efficient, and support SNC employees and sustain its people-first culture. To keep SNC on track and on solid footing in the years ahead, we will work to support the following organizational goals over the next five years:

Secure consistent, reliable, and diverse funding to ensure long-term organizational health and the ongoing ability to provide needed resources across the Region

- Respond to high demand for funding across the Region by continuing to fund eligible projects with SNC funding when possible and supporting partners in the pursuit of other funds when not.
- Showcase SNC's ability to efficiently and effectively distribute state funding to meet policy objectives.
- Manage resources with transparency and accountability to maintain stability, support staff, and fully deliver on the mission.
- Maintain internal readiness to support existing programs, or establish additional programs, as funding allows.

Focus on equity

- Support and foster a welcoming and inclusive environment, within the SNC organization and Governing Board, so as to benefit from a diversity of backgrounds, expertise, and perspectives.
- Embed equity throughout all components of the SNC's work.
 - Distribute funding, support, and other resources through an equity lens, with an emphasis on supporting communities that have historically been excluded from decision-making and access to related funding and resources.
- Grow staff knowledge and understanding of the demographics of the Region, and the socio-economic challenges and opportunities that exist, to broaden SNC's reach to all communities within the Region.

Maintain strong internal operations

- Continuously strive to improve operational systems, including payroll, accounting processes, software management systems, and purchasing to ensure efficient use of resources and delivery of services.
- Build upon SNC's strong organizational foundation to operate as a leader amongst state conservancies.

Support staff as the SNC's greatest asset

- Support staff recruitment and retention by building and maintaining SNC's culture as a great place to work.
- Create professional growth opportunities and career pathways based on employee interests and core and leadership competencies—within the SNC and broader civil service—by offering training, resources, and by building opportunities for advancement and/or enrichment within the organizational structure.
- Create a safe working environment by completing and implementing workforce assessments and plans to identify and address any workforce-related risks.

Accountability: Planning, Tracking and Reporting Progress

The SNC is committed to taking action that supports progress in establishing and achieving its Regional Goals and objectives, operating within the principles of transparency, efficiency, and accountability. The SNC has identified its goals, objectives, and progress measurements through a public process and will report publicly on planned actions and on progress, opportunities, and challenges met throughout the course of a fiscal year.

Planning

In this Plan, the SNC has established goals, objectives, and progress measurements. Implementation of this Plan will be guided by the creation of annual Action Plans that present a prioritized list of efforts and focus of resources to guide staff actions in the coming year. Actions will be developed by staff, presented publicly, and be approved by the Board each June.

The annual Action Plans will correspond with the overarching objectives of the five-year Strategic Plan and will provide a level of specificity on the priority activities the SNC will strive to accomplish within the year. Identifying actions on an annual basis provides flexibility, recognizing there are a number of factors that can affect the level of activity undertaken by the SNC year-to-year, such as the availability of funding, staffing changes, and state policy priorities.

Tracking and Reporting Progress

The SNC will implement Action Plans throughout its organizational structure, via periodic operational reviews, and through regular meetings across the SNC's various divisions. The SNC will report annually to the Governing Board on progress made under the Action Plan(s).

Progress measurements noted above are intended to help the SNC track progress toward its objectives and better characterize its impact in the Region. These will serve as an internal accountability mechanism, enable regular evaluation and adaptation, and help the SNC to communicate the outcomes of its work in a metrics-driven environment. However, the SNC understands that much of its work and impact, such as building capacity, participating in community collaboratives, and providing technical assistance, is far more qualitative than quantitative. For this reason, the SNC approaches these

1 progress measurements as only one indicator of progress, rather than the sole
2 assessment of whether it has achieved its goals.

3 If the SNC does not succeed in achieving the goals and objectives identified in this Plan
4 to advance the Regional goals, that may not signify failure. Rather, it offers an
5 opportunity to analyze ongoing needs and barriers and to develop new strategies and
6 tools. The SNC leadership team and staff will use the objectives and progress
7 measurements to continuously assess success, challenges, and unanticipated
8 opportunities through regular internal meetings, reports to the Board, and in
9 conversation with Regional partners and the interested public.

Agenda Item 9: Consent Agenda

Background

A consent agenda groups non-controversial items before the Board into a single agenda item. Recommendations will ordinarily be acted on without discussion. If any Boardmember, staff member, other interested party, or member of the public requests discussion of a consent item, it may be removed from consent and taken up in the agenda order, or in an order determined by the Board Chair.

For a grant recommendation to qualify for the consent agenda it must be a) under \$500,000 and/or b) a planning grant, and c) not involving an action subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (i.e., items exempt from CEQA or to which CEQA is not applicable).

Consent Agenda

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) staff is currently recommending approval of funding for eight grant awards on this consent agenda, under the Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program. Additional awards that do not fit the criteria for this consent agenda are recommended under the separate Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Program agenda item.

The table below provides an overview of grant award recommendations on the consent agenda. Summaries and links to details of each project follow the table.

Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Grant Program: March 2024 Consent Agenda Recommended Projects

| Project Number | Project Name | Applicant | Subregion | County | Planning or Implementation | Funding Recommended |
|-----------------------|--|---|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1645 | North Vegetation Assessment, Data Development and Project NEPA | Fall River Resource Conservation District | Northwest Northeast | Siskiyou, Shasta, Modoc, Lassen, Tehama | Planning | \$3,580,500 |
| 1646 | Forest Projects Plan - Phase Two Environmental Planning | Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority | South Central, Southeast | El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Alpine | Planning | \$723,542 |
| 1669 | Ishi Wilderness Fire Restoration Planning | Resource Conservation District of Tehama County | Northwest | Tehama | Planning | \$641,920 |
| 1672 | Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project | Placer County Water Agency | North Central | Placer | Planning | \$657,500 |
| 1678 | Boca/Hobart Forest Health and Meadow Habitat Restoration | Truckee River Watershed Council | North Central | Nevada | Planning | \$168,820 |
| 1679 | Bungalow Resilience and Fuels Reduction Planning Project | National Forest Foundation | Southwest | Fresno | Planning | \$2,902,715 |
| 1682 | Tribal Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan | Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians | South Central | Tuolumne | Planning | \$920,000 |
| 1688 | Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration: NEPA Planning | Nevada Irrigation District | Northeast, North Central | Sierra, Nevada | Planning | \$386,100 |

Consent Agenda: Project Details

a. *Project #1645*

North Vegetation Assessment, Data Development and Project NEPA

Fall River Resource Conservation District

\$3,580,500

Siskiyou, Shasta, Modoc, Lassen, and Tehama counties

The North Vegetation Assessment, Data Development and Project NEPA, led by the Fall River Resource Conservation District (RCD), is a large-scale, cross-jurisdictional data assessment and planning project to enhance existing forest and watershed conditions and reduce wildfire risk across 6.4 million acres. The project includes three national forests in the McCloud, Upper Sacramento, Battle Creek, Klamath, and Pit River watersheds in the northern subregions of the SNC. The project will produce (1) consistent and high-resolution lidar-based vegetation structure analysis and biomass estimates; (2) lidar and imagery-based resilient forest assessment (including assessment of departure of existing conditions from desired conditions) to inform design and planning of forest-health and fuels-management projects; (3) surface fuels classifications; (4) 3D-National Hydrograph Dataset (NHD) watershed dataset update to inform project planning, provide comprehensive waterbody inventory and post-fire recovery tools; (5) site surveys, reports, and support for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for approximately 314,000 acres of federal lands on the Lassen and Modoc National forests; and (6) establish and facilitate a new collaborative in the Upper Sacramento River Watershed. The creation of more precise and comprehensive assessment tools to analyze conditions across the project area and the development of a collaborative will increase capacity and momentum for federal, state, nonprofit, and small landowners to design, plan, and implement projects. Project partners include the Fall and Pit RCDs, 34 North, the Watershed Research and Training Center, Shasta College, University of Washington Forest Research Lab, Lassen National Forest, Modoc National Forest, Shasta-Trinity National Forest, American Rivers, Trout Unlimited, Resilient Forests, and the Desert Research Institute.

CEQA Compliance: The project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, Information Collection. The project is also Statutorily Exempt from CEQA under Public Resources Code Section 21150, CEQA Guidelines Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1645\)](#)

b. Project #1646

Forest Projects Plan - Phase Two Environmental Planning

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority

\$723,542

El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Alpine counties

Forest Projects Plan – Phase Two Environmental Planning is a landscape-level planning project located on both Stanislaus and Eldorado National forest lands within El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Alpine counties. The Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (UMRWA) will generate a landscape-level Draft Environmental Impact Statement National Environmental Policy Act document to improve forest and watershed health on a minimum of 40,000 and up to 225,000 acres. This is a continuation of the 26,000-acre Forest Projects Plan Phase One project currently being implemented. This landscape-level plan is focused in the Upper Mokelumne River watershed, providing downstream benefits to multiple communities within the Sierra Nevada, as well as providing municipal water to the nearly two million California residents within East Bay Municipal Utility District's service area in the East Bay. UMRWA is a Joint Powers Authority comprised of six local water agencies and the counties of Alpine, Amador, and Calaveras. Other project partners include the Eldorado National Forest, Stanislaus National Forest, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

CEQA Compliance: The project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, Information Collection. The project is also Statutorily Exempt from CEQA under Public Resources Code Section 21150, CEQA Guidelines Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1646\)](#)

c. Project #1669

Ishi Wilderness Fire Restoration Planning

Resource Conservation District of Tehama County

\$641,920

Tehama County

The Ishi Wilderness Fire Restoration Planning project will complete the environmental compliance documentation required to implement large-scale prescribed fire within and adjacent to the Ishi Wilderness in eastern Tehama County. The 33,868-acre project is situated within ancestral Yahi Yana territory on the western edge of the Lassen National Forest and includes 16,814 acres of the federally designated wilderness. The Resource Conservation District of Tehama County will support the Lassen National Forest to protect nearby communities of Campbellville and Cohasset from the threat of uncharacteristically severe wildfire; restore and maintain fire-adapted ecosystems; protect culturally significant resources; and maintain water quality and stream flow for downstream users, while having minimal impact on wilderness character. Additional project partners include the Ishi Wilderness

Partnership Group, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, local tribes and cultural organizations, wilderness advocacy groups, nonprofit organizations, universities, and local landowners.

CEQA Compliance: The project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, Information Collection. The project is also Statutorily Exempt from CEQA under Public Resources Code Section 21150, CEQA Guidelines Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1669\)](#)

d. *Project #1672*

Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project

Placer County Water Agency
\$657,500
Placer County

The Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project is a landscape-level, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and (CEQA) environmental planning program led by Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) in the headwaters of the Middle Fork American River Watershed. The project will improve forest health and resilience, reduce the threat of high-severity forest fires, and build on the successful collaborative effort of the French Meadows Project Watershed that is just north of the project area. The project is located on the Georgetown District of the Eldorado National Forest, due east of Foresthill and Auburn. This project will complete NEPA/CEQA for forest-restoration work to improve ecological resilience and protect water resources, nearby communities, and infrastructure in the Long Canyon Creek Watershed. The completed NEPA/CEQA will provide environmental compliance for forest health and fuels-reduction treatments on approximately 6,200 acres within a 16,519-acre planning area. The project is part of a public/private partnership, which includes a nonprofit organization, an industrial forest landowner, a utility, and federal and local governments. It spans multiple land ownerships and jurisdictions.

CEQA Compliance: The project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, Information Collection. The project is also Statutorily Exempt from CEQA under Public Resources Code Section 21150, CEQA Guidelines Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1672\)](#)

e. *Project #1678*

Boca/Hobart Forest Health and Meadow Habitat Restoration

Truckee River Watershed Council
\$168,820
Nevada County

The Boca/Hobart Forest Health and Meadow Restoration project is a 2,800-acre forest health planning project on lands owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service – Tahoe National Forest in Nevada County. The project is west of Boca Reservoir and north of Prosser Reservoir in the Middle Truckee River watershed, approximately 10 miles east of the town of Truckee. The applicant, Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC), in partnership with Tahoe National Forest, will conduct planning activities that will result in implementation-ready forest health treatments to enhance ecological function and reduce the risk of fire, drought mortality, and other unplanned disturbances. The project was collaboratively identified as a priority by the Middle Truckee River Watershed Forest Health Partnership, which is comprised of multiple agencies and nonprofit organizations, including the Tahoe National Forest, National Forest Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Truckee Meadows Water Authority, and TRWC.

CEQA Compliance: The project is Categorical Exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, Information Collection. The project is also Statutorily Exempt from CEQA under Public Resources Code Section 21150, CEQA Guidelines Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1678\)](#)

f. Project #1679

Bungalow Resilience and Fuels Reduction Planning Project

National Forest Foundation
\$2,902,715
Fresno County

The Bungalow Resilience and Fuels Reduction Planning Project will draft a proposed action for NEPA analysis on roughly 44,000 acres of Forest Service land. The project will plan implementation for fuel and vegetation management practices to reduce the risk of wildfire and protect forest resources and neighboring communities. The project is led by the National Forest Foundation and will occur entirely on the Sierra National Forest lands within Fresno County, near the communities of Shaver Lake and Dinkey Creek. This project occurs within the Dinkey Collaborative Landscape, and collaboration with the Dinkey Collaborative group will be ongoing. Members of that collaborative include local environmentalists, logging stakeholders, nonprofit groups, and state and federal agencies. The Dinkey Collaborative group is eager to help throughout the planning process and is acknowledged as vital stakeholders.

CEQA Compliance: The project is Categorical Exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, Information Collection. The project is also Statutorily Exempt from CEQA under Public Resources Code Section 21150, CEQA Guidelines Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1679\)](#)

g. Project #1682

Tribal Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan

Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians

\$920,000

Tuolumne County

The Tribal Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan is a planning proposal located in Tuolumne City in Tuolumne County. The applicant, the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, will prepare a comprehensive fuels-reduction/wildfire-reduction plan and joint NEPA/CEQA on 2,895 acres of tribal property. The tribe will develop two distinct documents: the Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan and the joint NEPA/CEQA document. While completing the plan, the tribe will conduct multiple public engagement events and stakeholder meetings to include input from the community on how best to protect and prioritize aspects of the property. The tribe will also contact the County, Tuolumne Utilities District, the Stanislaus National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, Pacific Gas and Electric, and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for input on the creation of the plan.

CEQA Compliance: The project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, Information Collection. The project is also Statutorily Exempt from CEQA under Public Resources Code Section 21150, CEQA Guidelines Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1682\)](#)

h. Project #1688

Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration: NEPA Planning

Nevada Irrigation District

\$386,100

Sierra and Nevada counties

The Nevada Irrigation District (NID), in partnership with the Tahoe National Forest, will complete forest restoration and fuels reduction treatment plans including surveys, reporting and consultation associated with biological, hydrological, and archaeological resources to complete NEPA analysis on at least 2,000 acres of Tahoe National Forest lands within the headwaters region of the Middle Yuba River Watershed. The project is near Jackson Meadows and Milton reservoirs on the Tahoe National Forest Sierraville Ranger District, in Nevada and Sierra counties. This project leverages ongoing 10-year planning work by the Tahoe National Forest using Vibrant Planet's Land Tender tool to identify high-priority areas for treatment and treatment options within the Middle Yuba River Watershed and will complete the necessary environmental compliance and forestry/fuels planning to define and prepare at least 2,000 acres for treatment to return the Middle Yuba River headwaters region to a healthier state. This project will increase the resiliency of the forest with the goal of protecting reservoir water quality and capacity, unique montane meadow environments and other wildlife habitats in the Sierra Nevada, and popular

recreational sites like the Pacific Crest Trail, campgrounds, and publicly accessible roads.

CEQA Compliance: The project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, Information Collection. The project is also Statutorily Exempt from CEQA under Public Resources Code Section 21150, CEQA Guidelines Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1688\)](#)

Next Steps

Upon authorization by the Board, SNC staff will file all adopted CEQA documentation and prepare agreements for the authorized grants.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board:

- a. Authorize the Executive Officer to file Notices of Exemption for the North Vegetation Assessment, Data Development and Project NEPA (1645); Forest Projects Plan - Phase Two Environmental Planning project (1646); Ishi Wilderness Fire Restoration Planning project (1669); Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project (1672); Boca/Hobart Forest Health and Meadow Habitat Restoration project (1678); Bungalow Resilience and Fuels Reduction Planning Project (1679); Tribal Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan project (1682); Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration: NEPA Planning project (1688); and**
- b. Authorize a grant award to each of the projects listed above for the amounts recommended by staff; and**
- c. Authorize the staff to enter into the agreements necessary for project implementation.**

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1645

SNC ID Number: 1645

Applicant: Fall River Resource Conservation District

Project Title: North Vegetation Assessment, Data Development and Project NEPA

SNC Subregions: Northwest and Northeast

Counties: Siskiyou, Shasta, Modoc, Lassen, and Tehama

Funding Amount Requested: \$3,729,000

Funding Amount Recommended: \$3,580,500

Total Project Cost: \$5,589,000

Project Scope / Description

The North Vegetation Assessment, Data Development and Project NEPA (Project) led by the Fall River Resource Conservation District (RCD) is a large-scale, cross-jurisdictional data assessment and planning project to enhance existing forest and watershed conditions and reduce wildfire risk across 6.4 million acres. The Project includes three National forests in the McCloud, Upper Sacramento, Battle Creek, Klamath, and Pit River watersheds in the northern Subregions of the SNC. The Project will establish a forest-resilience collaborative in the Upper Sacramento watershed, a recognized need within SNC's expanded service area. The Project planning region is ecologically diverse and populated by rural and Indigenous communities, supporting 2.5 million acres of mixed conifer and eastside pine forests, as well as three million acres of other vegetation types, including grasslands, oak woodlands, and high-elevation desert plateau. The creation of more precise and comprehensive assessment tools to analyze conditions across the Project area and the development of a collaborative will increase capacity and momentum for federal, state, nonprofit, and small landowners to design, plan, and implement projects throughout the Project area.

The Project will produce (1) consistent and high-resolution lidar-based vegetation structure analysis and biomass estimates; (2) lidar and imagery-based resilient forest assessment (including assessment of departure of existing conditions from desired conditions) to inform design and planning of forest-health and fuels-management projects; (3) surface fuels classifications; (4) 3D-National Hydrograph Dataset (NHD) watershed dataset update to inform project planning, provide comprehensive waterbody inventory and post-fire recovery tools; (5) site surveys, reports, and support for National

Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for approximately 314,000 acres of federal lands on the Lassen and Modoc National forests; and (6) establish and facilitate a new collaborative in the Upper Sacramento River Watershed. These tools will be leveraged with other relevant data including the Sierra Nevada Regional Resource Kit information to help all regional stakeholders and tribes plan and prioritize projects.

The Project is bounded on the west by the Upper Trinity River Watershed Fire Resilience Planning and Prioritization Project (SNC #1381), a landscape-scale data analysis and project development and prioritization project, which also includes development of a new forest-resilience collaborative. That project provided a model and inspiration for this Project, in a region which is challenged by numerous jurisdictional boundaries and data gaps.

The RCD has successfully developed and implemented over 25 projects in the last 10 years totaling over \$12 million, including previously funded SNC projects. The RCD has Master Stewardship Agreements with the Lassen National Forest and the Modoc National Forest. The primary project team includes the Fall and Pit RCDs, 34 North, the Watershed Research and Training Center, Shasta College, University of Washington Forest Research Lab, Lassen National Forest, Modoc National Forest, Shasta-Trinity National Forest, American Rivers, Trout Unlimited, Resilient Forests, and the Desert Research Institute.

In addition to the numerous project team members, the Project has wide support from communities within the planning area, the scientific community, land managers and legislative representatives. Project match includes \$1,060,000 additional funding from CAL FIRE, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, and other sources. An additional \$800,000 in-kind match will be provided by Lassen and Modoc National forests through NEPA staff time and from the Shasta-Trinity National Forest for review and assessment of data products and contributions to the Upper Sacramento Resilient Forest Collaborative.

The Project will reduce the risk of severe wildfire in forest lands adjacent to communities, major ingress-egress routes, and popular recreation areas. The benefits from this Project support the goals of the SNC Strategic Plan by improving Regional integrated planning, which is necessary to leverage limited resources and maximize results to increase the pace a scale of forest-health work, returning ecological processes to the landscape. The Project includes strategic engagement with tribes to protect culturally significant landscapes in the Pit River and Sacramento watersheds in the project design and planning phases and contributes to sustainable local economies by providing direct jobs and developing projects on a landscape scale.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|---|---|
| Six-month Progress Reports | Every six months through Project Completion |
| NEPA – Modoc National Forest (survey reports and scoping documents for Resilient Corridors, Medicine Lake EA) | May 2024 – May 2027 |
| NEPA – Lassen National Forest (survey reports and scoping documents for Mountain-Valley, Onion, Wiley, and Five Priority Watershed Projects. Lassen Plantations planning and prioritization.) | May 2024 – December 2027 |
| Vegetation Structure Assessment and Lidar Analysis | August 2024 – December 2027 |
| Forest Resilience Departure Analysis | September 2024 – December 2025 |
| Surface Fuels Classification (final fuels map) | June 2025 – December 2025 |
| Establish Upper Sacramento Forest Resilience Collaborative | December 2024 – June 2025 |
| Upper Sacramento Forest Resilience Collaborative Platform and Data Management | April 2024 – December 2025 |
| Assessment Atlases and Data Access | May 2024 – December 2027 |
| Assessment and Local Partner Workshops and Training | March 2025 – March 2027 |
| NHD3D USGS update | June 2025 |
| Facilitation and Facilities | December 2024 – December 2027 |
| Tribal Engagement Action Plan | August 2024 |
| Tribal Engagement | August 2024 – December 2027 |
| SNC Final Report with Performance Measures Reporting | January 1, 2028 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | January 1, 2028 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|--|--------------------|
| NEPA – Modoc National Forest | \$800,000 |
| NEPA – Lassen National Forest (survey reports and scoping documents for Mountain-Valley, Onion, Wiley, and Five Priority Watershed Projects) | \$665,000 |
| Vegetation Structure Mapping and Resilient Forest Assessment | \$1,045,000 |
| Upper Sacramento Forest Resilience Collaborative | \$370,000 |
| NV5 Geospatial for NHD3D USGS update | \$300,000 |
| Facilitation and Facilities | \$45,000 |
| Tribal Participation | \$30,000 |
| Administrative Costs (10%) | \$325,500 |
| Total | \$3,580,500 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Modoc National Forest
- Lassen National Forest
- CAL FIRE, Lassen Modoc Unit Chief
- University of Washington
- California State Senate, Brian Dahle, Senator, 1st Senate
- Assembly California Legislature, Megan Dahle, 1st Assembly District
- USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station, Malcolm North
- Modoc Resource Conservation District
- The Watershed Research and Training Center
- American Rivers
- Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy
- Pit Resource Conservation District
- Resilient Forestry
- Stewardship West, Kevin Zeman, CEO
- Trout Unlimited

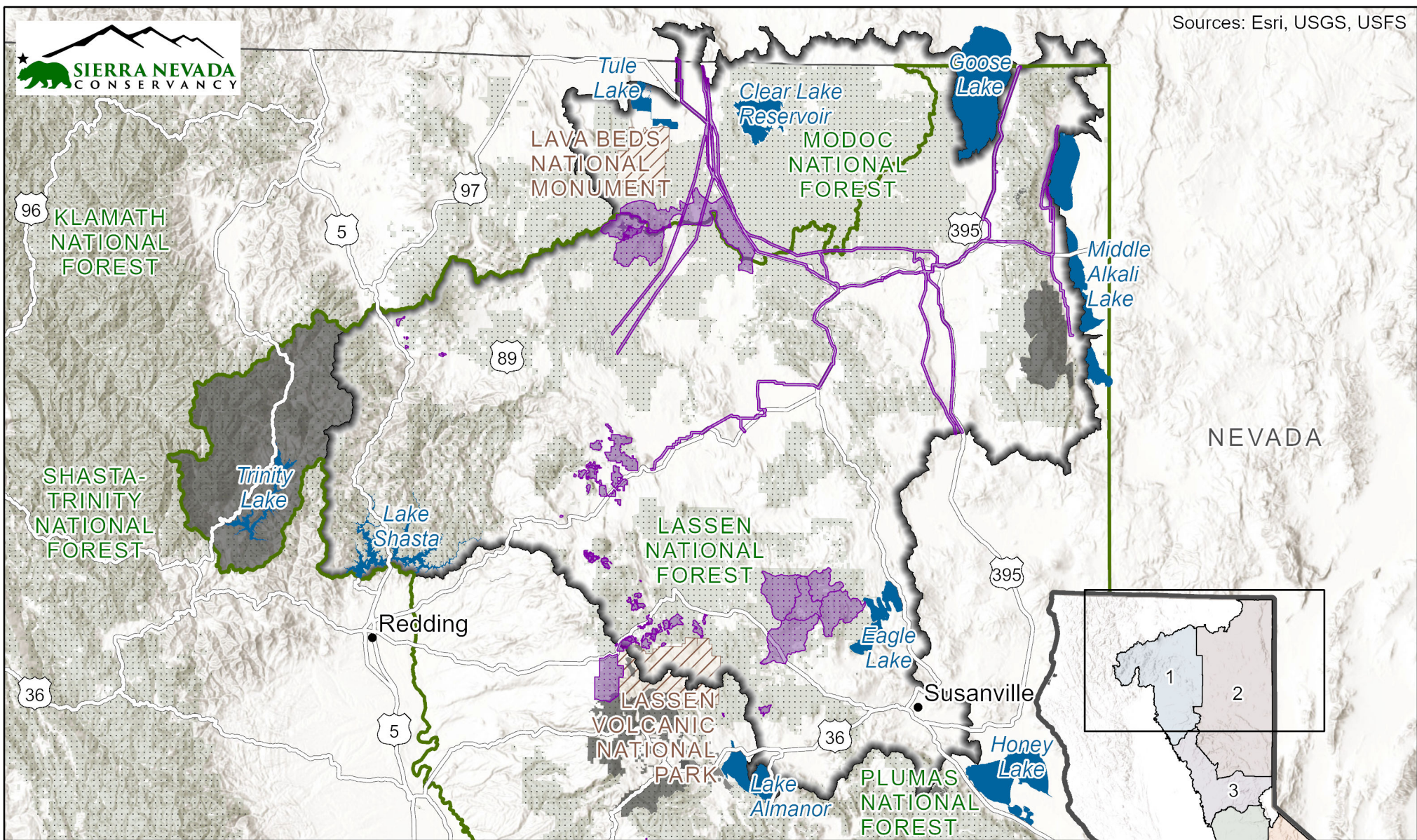
Opposition:

- None received.

Project Performance Measures

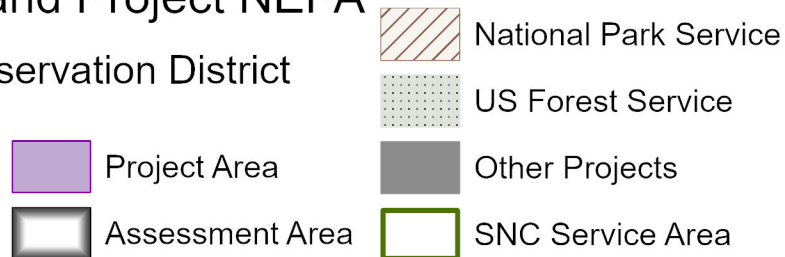
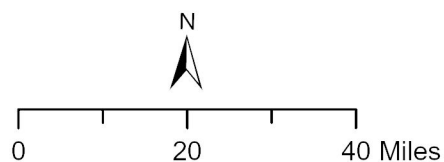
There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, the Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Number of Acres Completing Pre-Implementation Planning and Environmental Compliance



1645: North Vegetation Assessment, Data Development and Project NEPA

Fall River Resource Conservation District



1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: North Vegetation Assessment, Data Development and Project NEPA (SNC 1645).

Project Location – Specific: The project is a large-landscape assessment across 6.4 million acres including Modoc, Lassen, and Shasta National forests in the McCloud, Upper Sacramento, Battle Creek, Klamath, and Pit River watersheds, located within Siskiyou, Shasta, Modoc, Lassen, and Tehama counties.

Project Location - City: Cities within the assessment area include Mount Shasta, Alturas, Susanville, and Burney.

Project Location - County: Portions of Siskiyou, Shasta, Modoc, Lassen, and Tehama.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is funding project #1645 North Vegetation Assessment, Data Development and Project NEPA, led by Fall River Resource Conservation District. The project is a large-scale, cross-jurisdictional data collection, assessment, and planning project to enhance existing forest and watershed conditions and reduce wildfire risk across 6.4 million acres. The project includes environmental assessments in portions of Modoc, Lassen, and Shasta National forests in the McCloud, Upper Sacramento, Battle Creek, Klamath, and Pit River watersheds, in portions of Siskiyou, Shasta, Modoc, Lassen, and Tehama counties. The project will produce (1) consistent and high-resolution, lidar-based vegetation structure analysis and biomass estimates; (2) lidar and imagery-based resilient forest assessment (including assessment of departure of existing conditions from desired conditions) to inform design and planning of forest health and fuels-management projects; (3) surface fuels classifications; (4) 3D-National Hydrograph Dataset (NHD) watershed dataset update to inform project planning, provide comprehensive waterbody inventory and post-fire recovery tools; (5) site surveys, reports, and support for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for approximately 314,000 acres of federal lands on the Lassen and Modoc National forests; and (6) establish and facilitate a new collaborative in the Upper Sacramento River watershed. These tools will be leveraged with other relevant data including the Sierra Nevada Regional Resource Kit information to help all Regional stakeholders and tribes plan and prioritize projects. The activities to reach these deliverables involve remote sensing and remote data analysis, NEPA-related surveys and reports, database creation, and collaborative meetings and workshops. There will be no ground or resource disturbance as part of this project.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Fall River Resource Conservation District
Sharmie Stevenson, Executive Director
P.O. Box 83, McArthur, CA 96056
(530) 336-6591

Exempt Status:**Statutory Exemption:** Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies**Categorical Exemption:** Section 15306, Information Collection**Reasons why project is exempt:**

The activities under this project involve remote sensing and remote data analysis, NEPA-related surveys and reports, database creation, and collaborative meetings and workshops. There will be no resource or ground disturbance as part of this project. The project is Statutorily Exempt under Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies as the project only involves assessment and planning studies for possible future actions that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board has not approved, adopted, or funded; there is no legally binding effect on later activities. The project is also Categorically Exempt under Section 15306 Information Collection because it consists of basic data collection and resource evaluation activities that do not result in a disturbance to environmental resources. The proposed activities are for information gathering purposes and are part of a study leading to an action that a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.

Lead Agency**Contact Person:** Mary Akens**Area Code/Telephone/Extension:** 530-450-5177**If filed by applicant:** N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.

2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:

Yes__ No__

Signature:_____**Title:**_____**Date:**_____**Signed by Lead Agency:** Yes**Signed by Applicant:** No**Authority cited:** Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.**Date received for filing at OPR:** _____**Reference:** Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1646

SNC ID Number: 1646

Applicant: Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority

Project Title: Forest Projects Plan – Phase Two Environmental Planning

SNC Subregion: South Central

Counties: El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Alpine

Funding Amount Requested: \$723,542

Funding Amount Recommended: \$723,542

Total Project Cost: \$1,380,712

Project Scope / Description

The Forest Projects Plan – Phase Two Environmental Planning (Project) is a planning project located on Stanislaus National Forest and Eldorado National Forest lands within El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Alpine counties. The Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (UMRWA) will generate a landscape-level National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document to improve forest and watershed health on a minimum of 40,000 acres and up to 225,000 acres.

UMRWA will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) as the final deliverable for this grant. While planning for this Project has been underway for some time now, these funds will be taking the Project from the public-scoping stage to the DEIS. Specific actions that UMRWA will perform include regular coordination and outreach with the two forests, the Technical Advisory Group, Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG) members, and local tribes. UMRWA will also oversee focused field surveys and consultation with the United States Department of Fish and Wildlife. Additionally, UMRWA will oversee modeling efforts underlying the DEIS analysis and come up with alternatives. After the DEIS is completed, outside of the scope of this grant, UMRWA will make the final edits to create the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and prepare two separate Decision Memos, one for each national forest to sign.

The Project is a landscape-level project. Similar scaled efforts are taking place nearby: the Social and Ecological Resilience Across the Landscape (SERAL) project to the south and the Tahoe Central Sierra Initiative to the north. UMRWA has been actively

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience
Directed Grant Program
SNC Project Number 1646
Exhibit A - Page 2

treating the first phase of the Forest Projects Plan, a 26,000-acre forest health project located in the Eldorado National Forest.

UMRWA is a Joint Powers Authority comprised of six local water agencies and the counties of Alpine, Amador, and Calaveras. UMRWA's mission is to enhance water supply and protect water quality and the environment, to perform water resource planning for the region, and to seek and secure grants and other funding for local agency implementation activities. The Project takes place in the Amador District of the Eldorado National Forest and in the Calaveras District of the Stanislaus National Forest. Both districts have been key partners in the ACCG and have a current Master Stewardship Agreement with UMRWA.

UMRWA has primarily partnered with both the Eldorado and Stanislaus National forests. Members of the ACCG and other interested stakeholders make up a technical advisory group that actively advises on direction of the landscape-level plan. UMRWA has secured funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, CAL FIRE, the Stanislaus National Forest, and UMRWA membership contributions.

The outcome of this Project meets the "Healthy Watersheds and Forests" goal in the SNC Strategic Plan. This landscape-level plan is focused in the Upper Mokelumne River watershed, providing downstream benefits to multiple communities within the Sierra Nevada, as well as providing municipal water to the nearly two million California residents within East Bay Municipal Utility District's service area in the East Bay.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience
Directed Grant Program
SNC Project Number 1646
Exhibit A - Page 3

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|--|---|
| Six-Month Progress Report | Every six months through Project Completion |
| Coordination and Outreach with Partners/Stakeholders | April 2024 – March 2026 |
| Focused Field Surveys and Studies | April 2024 – September 2024 |
| NEPA Process, Planning and Modeling | April 2024 – March 2026 |
| Threatened and Endangered Species Consultation | April 2024 – March 2026 |
| Tribal Outreach and Participation | April 2024 – March 2026 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | June 30, 2026 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|--|------------------|
| Project Management/Coordination and Outreach | \$239,360 |
| Focused Field Surveys and Studies | \$77,050 |
| NEPA Process, Planning and Modeling | \$291,374 |
| Threatened and Endangered Species Consultation | \$23,236 |
| Tribal Liaison and Participation | \$15,000 |
| Administrative Costs | \$77,522 |
| Total | \$723,542 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Amador Ranger District, Eldorado National Forest
- Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions
- Calaveras Ranger District, Stanislaus National Forest
- California State Senator, Marie Alvarado-Gil
- East Bay Municipal Utility District
- Foothill Conservancy
- Jackson Valley Irrigation District

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience
Directed Grant Program
SNC Project Number 1646
Exhibit A - Page 4

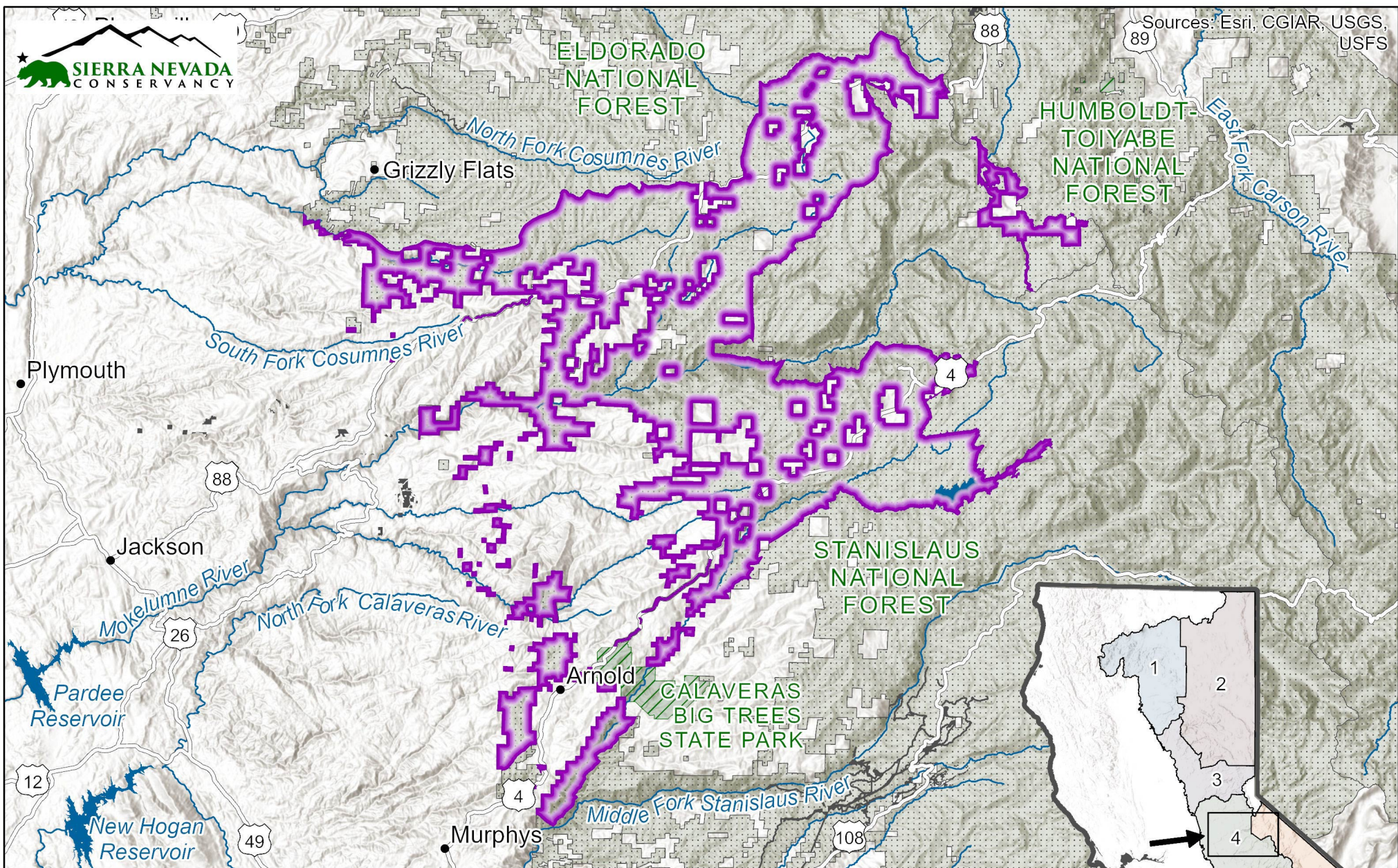
Opposition:

- None received.

Project Performance Measures

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

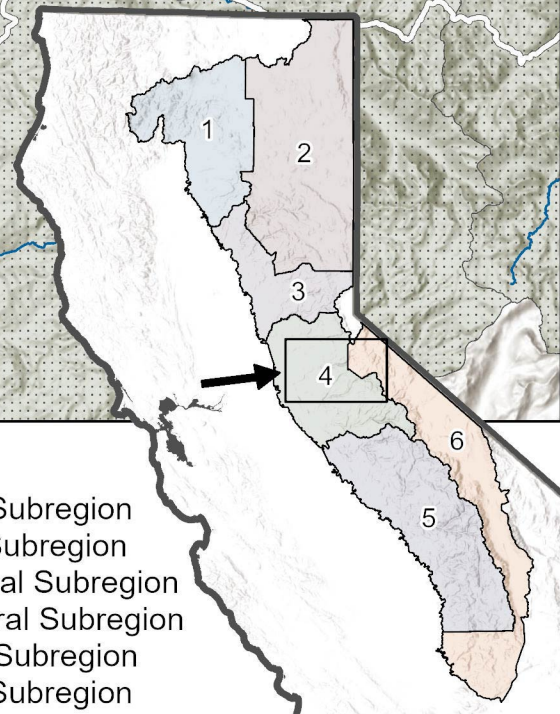
- Number of Acres Completing Pre-Implementation Planning and Environmental Compliance



1646: Forest Projects Plan – Phase Two Environmental Planning Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority



1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion



To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: Forest Projects Plan – Phase Two Environmental Planning (SNC 1646).

Project Location – Specific: Approximately 225,000-acre landscape planning project located on Stanislaus National Forest and Eldorado National Forest lands within El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Alpine counties.

Project Location - City: Communities near the planning area include Murphy, Arnold, and Pioneer to the west of the project area and Kirkwood and Cape Horn to the east.

Project Location - County: Portions of El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Alpine.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is funding Project #1646 Forest Projects Plan – Phase Two Environmental Planning, led by the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (UMRWA). The project is a landscape-scale planning project to conduct an environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to analyze potential future projects to improve forest and watershed health on Stanislaus National Forest and Eldorado National Forest lands. UMRWA, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, will generate a landscape level NEPA Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) document considering potential future forest and watershed-health projects on a minimum of 40,000 acres and up to 225,000 acres. While planning activities are already underway separate from SNC involvement, SNC funding would take the project from the public scoping stage to the DEIS. Specific actions include regular coordination and outreach with the two forests, the Technical Advisory Group, Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group members, and the local tribes. UMRWA would also oversee focused field surveys and consultation with the United States Department of Fish and Wildlife, modeling efforts underlying the DEIS analysis, and developing alternatives. There will be no ground or resource disturbance as part of this project.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority
Regine Miller, Project Manager
35 Court St, Suite 3. Jackson, CA 95642
(530) 277-3843

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, Section 21150; CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies

Categorical Exemption: CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306, Information Collection

Reasons why project is exempt:

The planning activities under this project are resource surveys, data analysis and modeling, and outreach and coordination meetings towards the development of a Draft NEPA Environmental Impact Statement considering potential future forest and watershed-health projects, which have not yet been approved, adopted, or funded. The planning and due diligence activities to be carried out as part of the project involve no ground or resource disturbance. The project is Statutorily Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies as the project only involves planning studies for possible future actions, which the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board has not approved, adopted, or funded; there is no legally binding effect on later activities. The project is also Categorically Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306 Information Collection because it consists of basic data collection and resource evaluation activities, which do not result in a disturbance to environmental resources. The proposed activities are for information gathering purposes and are part of a study leading to an action, which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.

Lead Agency**Contact Person:** Mary Akens**Area Code/Telephone/Extension:** 530-450-5177**If filed by applicant:** N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes__ No __

Signature:_____**Title:** _____**Date:** _____**Signed by Lead Agency:** Yes**Signed by Applicant:** No**Authority cited:** Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.**Date received for filing at OPR:** _____**Reference:** Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1669

SNC ID Number: 1669

Applicant: Resource Conservation District of Tehama County

Project Title: Ishi Wilderness Fire Restoration Planning

SNC Subregion: Northwest

County: Tehama

Funding Amount Requested: \$641,920

Funding Amount Recommended: \$641,920

Total Project Cost: \$980,059

Project Scope / Description

The Ishi Wilderness Fire Restoration Planning (IWFRP) project, led by the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County (RCDTC) will complete the environmental compliance documentation required to implement large-scale prescribed fire within and adjacent to the Ishi Wilderness in eastern Tehama County. The 33,868-acre project is on the western edge of the Lassen National Forest (LNF) and includes 16,814 acres of federally designated wilderness. The project will protect nearby communities of Campbellville and Cohasset from the threat of uncharacteristically severe wildfire, restore and maintain fire-adapted ecosystems, protect culturally significant resources, maintain water quality for downstream users, and maintain wilderness character.

The landscape consists of a series of east-west running ridges framed by rugged river canyons and includes a diverse conifer forest (including old-growth “pineries”), oak woodlands, montane chaparral, grasslands, and lush riparian corridors. The area provides habitat for the largest migratory deer herd in California, several sensitive plants and animals, and anadromous populations of threatened Chinook salmon and steelhead trout in Deer Creek, Pine Creek, and Toomes Creek. The area’s rich cultural history makes it a landscape of great significance to the local tribes, encompassing multiple archaeological sites. Tribal participation in the project will ensure cultural objectives are prioritized.

The removal of fire from the landscape over the last 100 years has resulted in unnatural forest conditions at risk of uncharacteristic, high-severity wildfire, as demonstrated by wildfire behavior modeling completed under SNC 1205. Prescribed fire treatments will reduce the potential for elevated greenhouse gas emissions that would result from

severe wildfire, protect and maintain forest carbon storage reserves by restoring forest structure and resilience, and protect habitat. Nearby forest-health projects include Upper Butte Creek Forest Health, West Lassen Headwaters Planning (SNC 1548), Onion Ridge L-Line Fuel Break (SNC 1040), Collins Pine Vegetation Management Project, and the Boone Docks Defensible Space Assistance Project. Deliverables include the following: biological evaluation/assessment, invasive plant risk assessment, specialist reports, draft environmental assessment and decision notice, tribal partnership meetings and field tours, and the development of cultural burn objectives.

Formed in 1987, the RCDTC's mission is to provide conservation leadership through technical, financial, and educational support for voluntary stewardship of natural resources on public and private lands. Over the past 15 years, the RCDTC has completed nearly \$25 million in fuel management and ecological restoration projects throughout Tehama County and is active in leading community wildfire preparedness. The LNF manages the wilderness area in addition to the lands outside of the wilderness area that are part of this project area.

The IWFRP project is a collaboration between the LNF, the RCDTC, CAL FIRE, SNC, local tribes and cultural foundations/organizations (Pit River Tribe, Redding Rancheria, Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria, Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians, Tasmam Koyom Foundation, California Open Lands), wilderness advocacy groups (The Wilderness Society, Friends of Plumas Wilderness, Lassen Preservation Group), nonprofit environmental organizations (Sierra Forest Legacy, Fire Restoration Group), colleges and universities (CSU Chico, Penn State), and local landowners (Sierra Pacific Industries and Collins Pine). It also includes the Ishi Wilderness Partnership Group (IWPG), which includes Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, tribal representatives, Traditional Ecological Knowledge practitioners, and fire practitioners from numerous tribes, agencies, universities, and nonprofits working to co-develop Forest Service and cultural objectives to restore the landscape. Other project contributions include a match from the LNF for \$297,000 (surveys/reports, tribal participation, grant administration, and professional meeting facilitation), and RCDTC for \$41,138 (administration).

The implementation of the IWFRP project addresses multiple priorities of the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan and the SNC Watershed Improvement Program. It will restore healthy ecosystems by implementing prescribed fire treatments that lower the likelihood of future high-severity fire, reduce the potential for elevated greenhouse gas emissions that would result from severe wildfire, and protect and maintain forest carbon storage reserves by restoring forest structure and resilience. In addition to protecting habitat for multiple fish, plant and animal species, it will also protect the communities of Campbellville and Cohasset and adjacent ranches and timberlands by reducing the risks and consequences of wildfire escaping from the wilderness area.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| SNC six-month Progress Reports | Every six months |
| Prepare Biological Evaluation/Biological Assessment and Invasive Plant Risk Assessment | April 2024 – August 2024 |
| Prepare Specialist Reports – hydrology/soils, fire and fuels, cultural resources | August 2024-June 2025 |
| Prepare Draft Environmental Assessment and Draft Decision Notices | June 2025-May 2026 |
| Facilitate IWPG Meetings and Tribal Participation | Quarterly |
| Facilitate IWPG Field Tours | October 2024, October 2025, June 2026 |
| Develop cultural burn objectives and suggested practices | October 2024-May 2026 |
| SNC Final Report with Performance Measures Reporting | June 30, 2026 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | June 30, 2026 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|--|------------------|
| Project Management | \$45,775 |
| Implementation/Contractual | \$441,544 |
| Meetings – facility rental, materials, field tour supplies | \$3,500 |
| Office Supplies - printing | \$500 |
| Travel - mileage | \$1,310 |
| Tribal Participation | \$65,562 |
| Administrative Costs | \$83,729 |
| Total | \$641,920 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Boone Dock Homesteaders, Inc.
- Butte County Prescribed Burn Association
- Butte County Resource Conservation District
- CAL FIRE Tehama-Glenn Unit
- California Open Lands
- Friends of Plumas Wilderness
- Tasmam Koyom Foundation/Global Cultural Resources Inc.

- Lassen Fire Safe Council
- Lassen Forest Preservation Group
- Northern Sacramento Valley Coalition
- Sierra Institute for Community and Environment
- Tehama-Glenn Fire Safe Council
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Wilderness Society

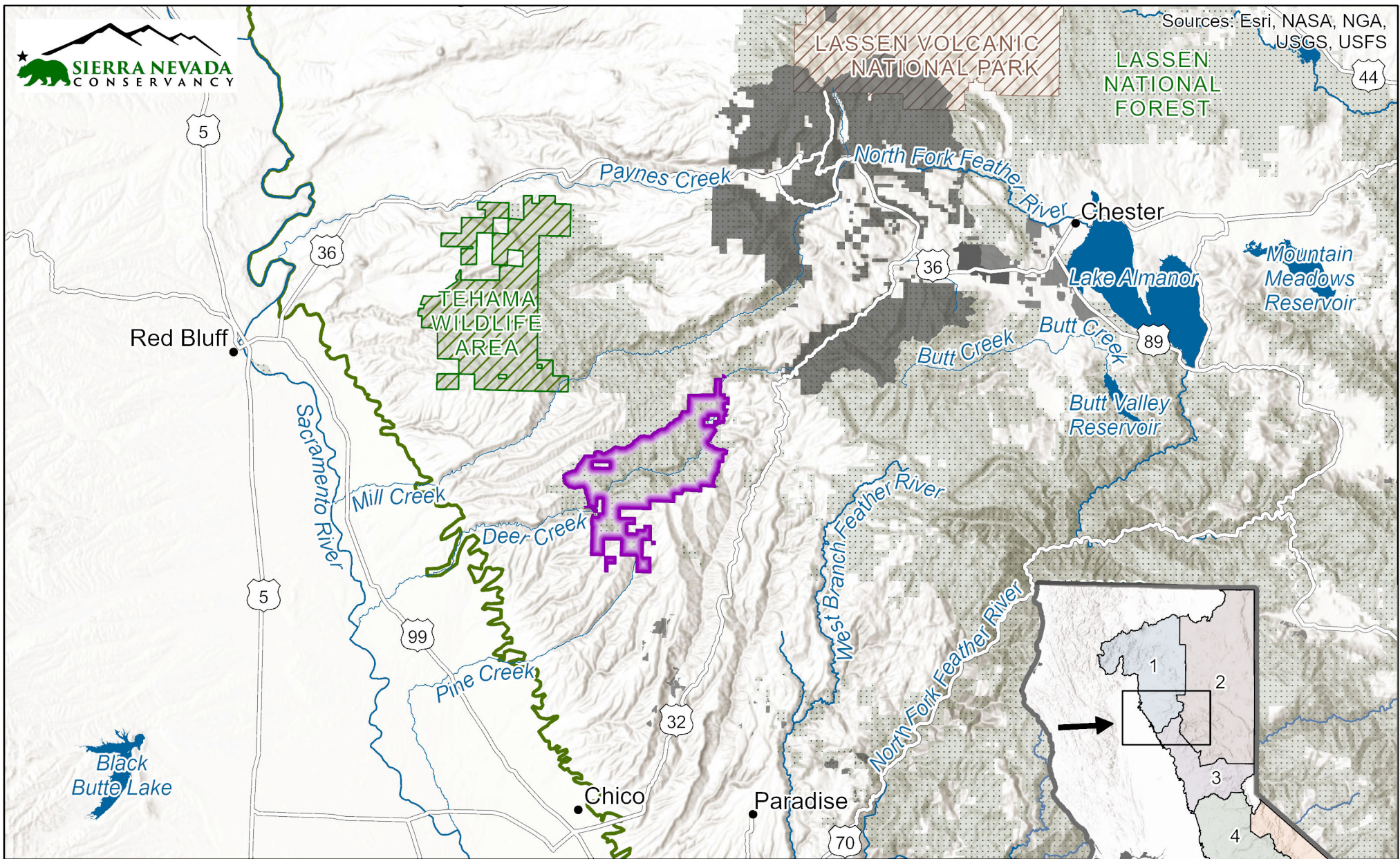
Opposition:

- None received.

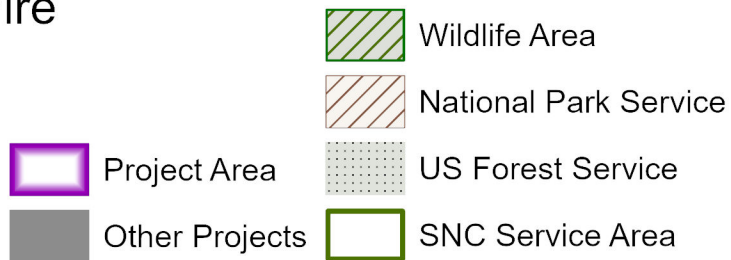
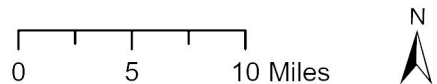
Project Performance Measures

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

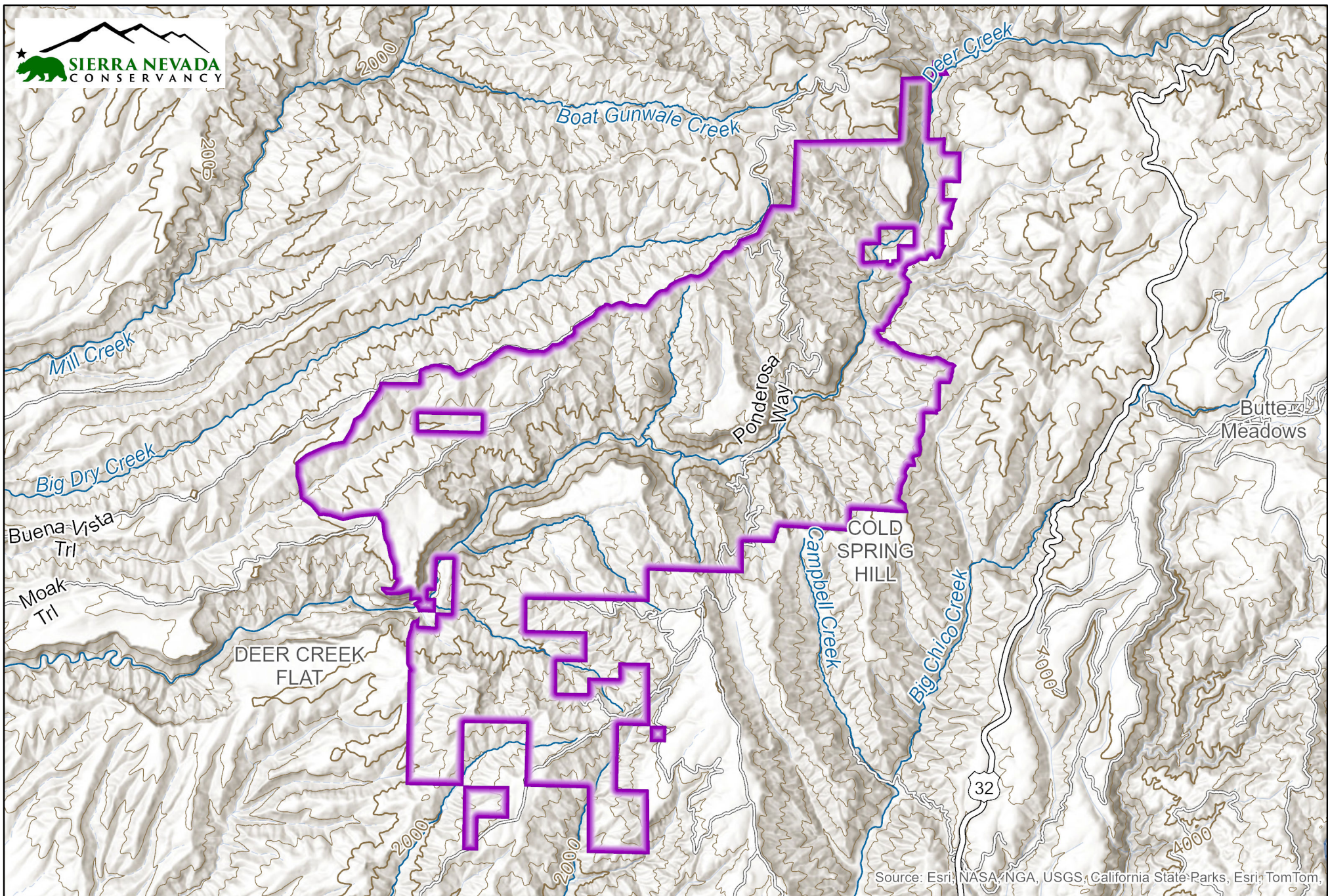
- Number of Acres Completing Pre-Implementation Planning and Environmental Compliance



1669: Ishi Wilderness Fire Restoration Planning Resource Conservation District of Tehama County



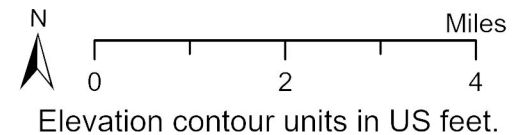
1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion

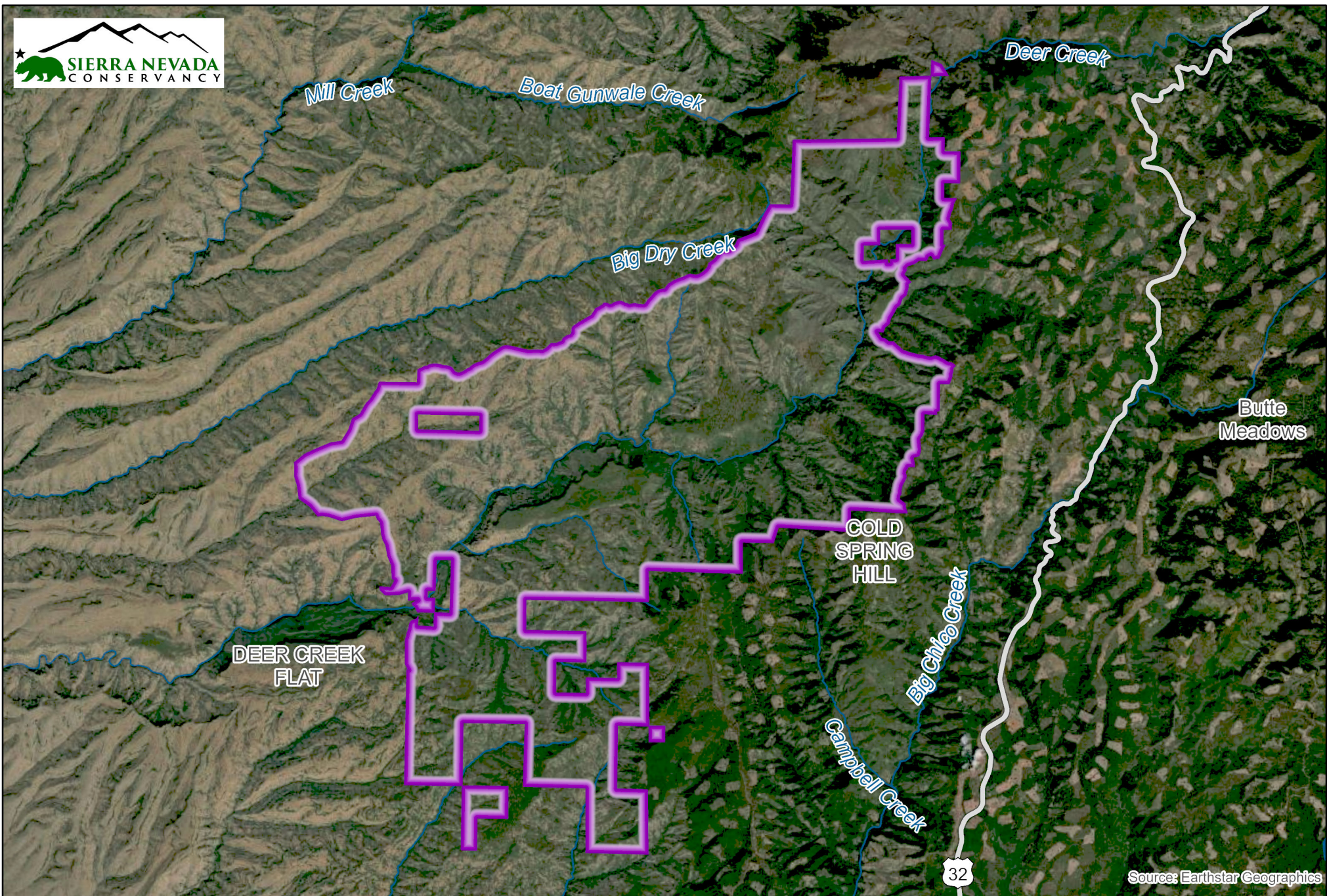


1669: Ishi Wilderness Fire Restoration Planning

Resource Conservation District of
Tehama County

 Project Area





1669: Ishi Wilderness Fire Restoration Planning

Resource Conservation District of
Tehama County

 Project Area



To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: Ishi Wilderness Fire Restoration Planning (SNC 1669).

Project Location – Specific: Approximately 34,000-acre landscape planning project located in western Lassen National Forest in eastern Tehama County within the Deer Creek, Pine Creek, and Toomes Creek watersheds. Project center approximately at -121.743 and 40.074 degrees.

Project Location - City: No communities within the planning area; nearby communities include Campbellville, Boone Docks Homestead, and Cohasset in Butte County.

Project Location - County: Tehama

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is funding Project #1669 Ishi Wilderness Fire Restoration Planning, led by the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County. The project will complete the environmental compliance documentation required to implement potential future large-scale prescribed fire within and adjacent to the Ishi Wilderness in eastern Tehama County. The 33,868-acre project is on the western edge of the Lassen National Forest and includes 16,814 acres of federally designated wilderness. The project will protect nearby communities of Campbellville and Cohasset from the threat of uncharacteristically severe wildfire, restore and maintain fire-adapted ecosystems, protect culturally significant resources, maintain water quality for downstream users, and maintain wilderness character. Specific activities to take place under the project include resources surveys and analysis for biological evaluation/assessment, invasive plant risk assessment, specialist reports, development of a draft National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice, tribal partnership meetings and field tours, and the development of cultural burn objectives. There will be no ground or resource disturbance as part of this project.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Resource Conservation District of Tehama County
Kathryn Raeder, Forestry Project Specialist
2 Sutter Street, Suite D, Red Bluff, CA 96080
(530) 727-1280

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, section 21150; CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies

Categorical Exemption: CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306, Information Collection

Reasons why project is exempt:

The planning activities under this project are resource surveys, data analysis, and outreach and coordination meetings towards the development of a Draft NEPA Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice considering potential future prescribed fire for forest and watershed-health projects, which have not yet been approved, adopted, or funded. The planning and due diligence activities to be carried out as part of the project involve no ground or resource disturbance. The project is Statutorily Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies as the Project only involves planning studies for possible future actions, which the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board has not approved, adopted, or funded; there is no legally binding effect on later activities. The project is also Categorical Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306 Information Collection because it consists of basic data collection and resource evaluation activities, which do not result in a disturbance to environmental resources. The proposed activities are for information gathering purposes and are part of a study leading to an action, which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.

Lead Agency**Contact Person:** Mary Akens**Area Code/Telephone/Extension:** 530-450-5177**If filed by applicant:** N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes__ No __

Signature:_____**Title:** _____**Date:** _____**Signed by Lead Agency:** Yes**Signed by Applicant:** No**Authority cited:** Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. **Date received for filing at OPR:** _____**Reference:** Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1672

SNC ID Number: 1672

Applicant: Placer County Water Agency

Project Title: Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project

SNC Subregion: North Central

County: Placer

Funding Amount Requested: \$657,500

Funding Amount Recommended: \$657,500

Total Project Cost: \$1,399,900

Project Scope / Description

The Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project (LCP) is a landscape-level, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental planning program led by Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) in the headwaters of the Middle Fork American River watershed. The project will improve forest health and resilience, reduce the threat of high-severity forest fires, and build on the successful collaborative effort of the French Meadows Project watershed, which is just north of the project area. The project is located on the Georgetown District of the Eldorado National Forest (ENF), east of Foresthill and Auburn.

This project will complete NEPA/CEQA for forest-restoration work to improve ecological resilience and protect water resources, nearby communities, and infrastructure in the Long Canyon Creek watershed. The project has four focal areas: 1) Long Canyon Creek project; 2) Star Fire restoration; 3) Mosquito Fire restoration; and 4) Mosquito Fire recovery. The completed NEPA/CEQA will provide environmental compliance for forest health and fuels-reduction treatments on approximately 6,200 acres within a 16,519-acre planning area. The funding SNC provides will support project management and coordination/facilitation of the project Leadership Team; NEPA Proposed Action and scoping package; conduct archaeological field surveys and reports, organize references and prepare evaluations and reports (aquatic, wildlife, and botanical evaluations), management indicator species report, migratory bird report, water and soils report; prepare USFWS biological assessment and consultation; prepare the administrative draft environmental assessment, and prepare CEQA environmental documentation.

Nearby restoration has occurred in areas burned by the Star Fire, Ralston Fire, American River Complex Fire, American Fire, King Fire, and, most recently, the Mosquito Fire. Once implemented, the proposed planning project will complement these, and other previously funded projects, to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire and improve landscape-scale watershed health. The LCP is downstream of French Meadows and Hell Hole reservoirs and extends the work of the French Meadows Project down the watershed. The SNC-funded Michigan Bluff Project (#1322) is just below the LCP.

The PCWA owns and manages water, recreation, and power generation facilities that serve over 160,000 residents, primarily in Placer County. The PCWA has been a major partner in the French Meadows Project, partially funded by the SNC. The PCWA works closely with Placer County and other partners supporting this project. The LCP is on the ENF, which the SNC has a long history of project engagement.

While this project is led by the PCWA and planned on National Forest System land, it is part of a public/private partnership that includes a nonprofit organization, an industrial forest landowner, a utility, and federal and local governments. It also spans land ownerships and jurisdictions. Both the PCWA and ENF have been developing the LCP since 2021 and will serve as main partners for the proposed NEPA/CEQA planning, and for the future implementation. The PCWA will contribute \$742,400 in-kind costs toward the completion of the NEPA/CEQA process. These costs include additional project management, development of treatments, field surveys, and environmental planning.

The project area contains critical infrastructure that supplies drinking water and produces hydropower energy to power more than 160,000 homes in the greater Sacramento region. The project is designed to protect this infrastructure, as well as recreation resources and nearby rural communities, including Georgetown and Foresthill. Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) and PG&E own and/or manage thousands of acres directly adjacent to and within the proposed LCP planning area. Anticipated coordinated treatments on SPI and PG&E lands, concurrent with the LCP, will boost project outcomes and establish a broader area of wildfire resistance.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|---|----------------------------|
| Project Management and Facilitation of Leadership Team | April 2024 – December 2025 |
| Prepare Proposed Action and Scoping Notices; Organize Relevant References and Reports; and Track Forest Service NEPA “Project Record” | June 2024 – December 2025 |
| Prepare NEPA Project Records Reports, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Consultation, And Environmental Assessment | July 2024 – December 2025 |
| Progress Report #1 | August 1, 2024 |
| Progress Report #2 | February 1, 2025 |
| Progress Report #3 | August 1, 2025 |
| Progress Report #4 | February 1, 2026 |
| Final Report | March 1, 2026 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | March 1, 2026 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|---|------------------|
| Project Management and Facilitation of Leadership Team | \$150,000 |
| Prepare Proposed Action and Scoping Notices; Organize Relevant References and Reports; and Track Forest Service NEPA “Project Record” | \$100,000 |
| Prepare NEPA Project Records Reports, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Consultation, And Environmental Assessment | \$400,000 |
| Tribal Participation | \$7,500 |
| Administrative Costs | 0 |
| Total | \$657,500 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Eldorado National Forest, Forest Supervisor
- Colfax-Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe
- United Auburn Indian Community, Preservation Department
- Roger Niello, California State Senator, Sixth Senate District
- Brian Dahle, California State Senator, First Senate District
- James Gallagher, Assemblyman, Third District
- Joe Patterson, Assemblyman, Fifth District
- Sierra Pacific Industries
- The Nature Conservancy
- Placer County

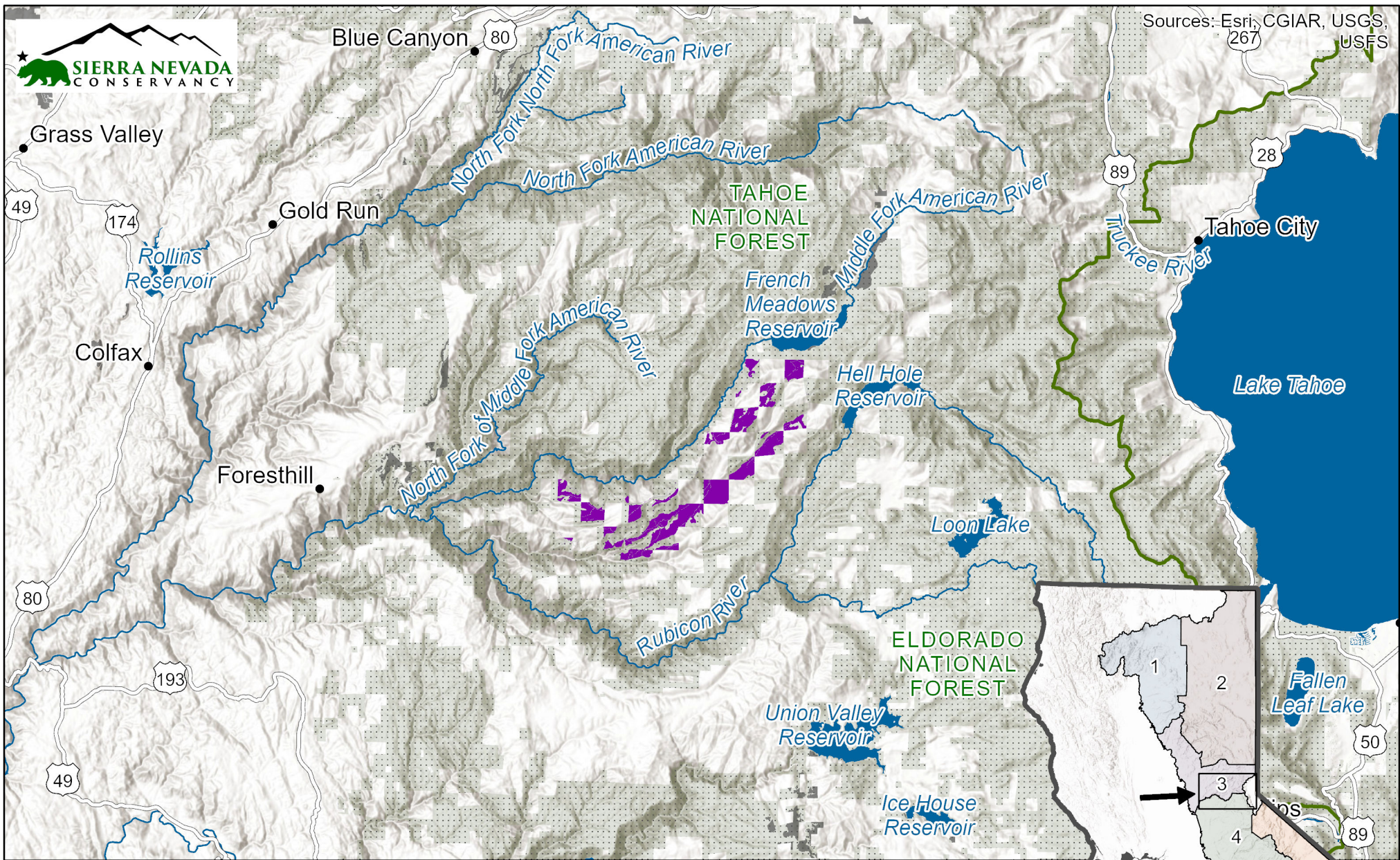
Opposition:

- None received

Project Performance Measures

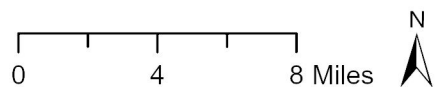
There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

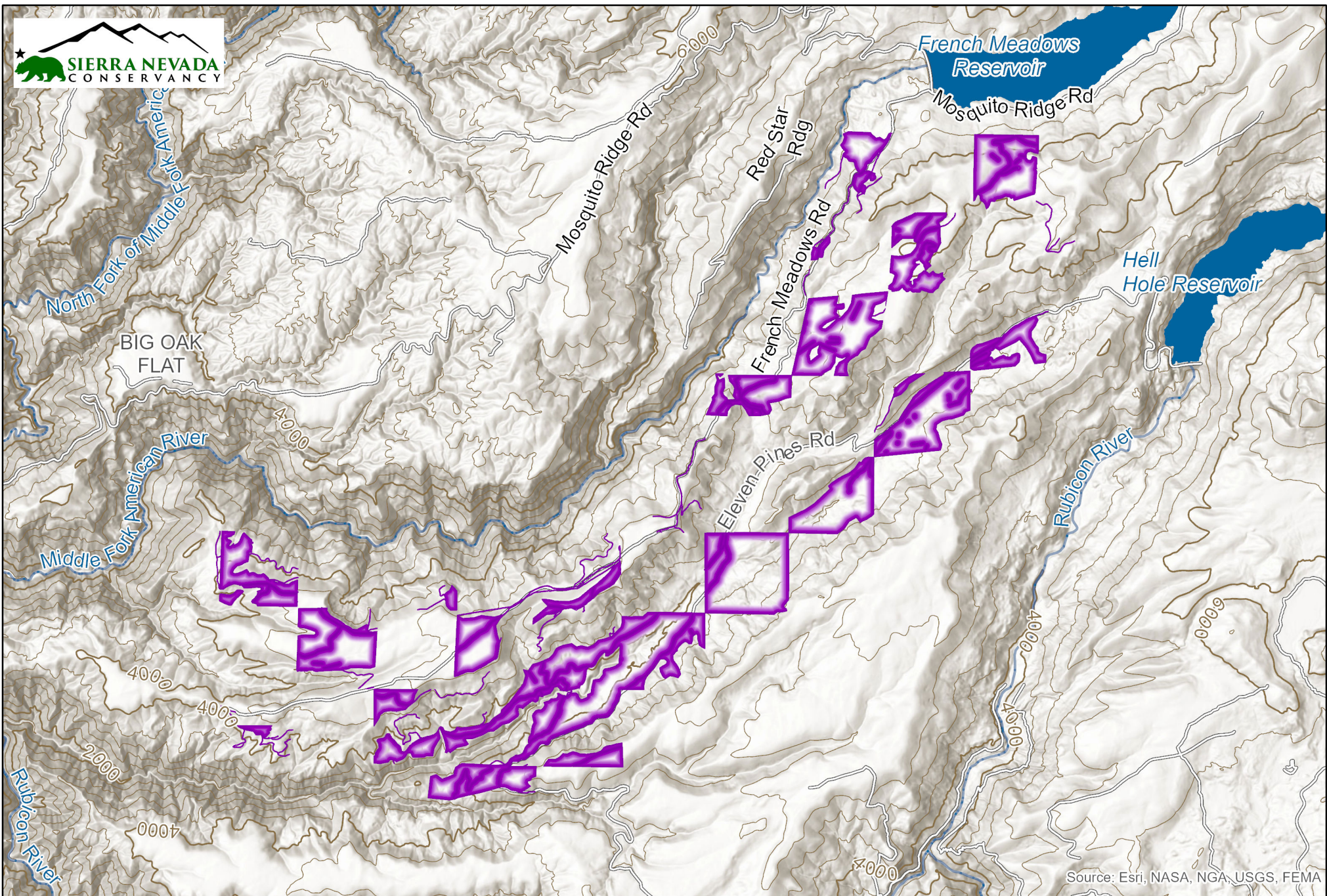
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1672: Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project

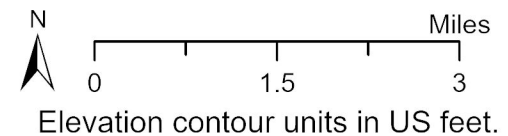
Placer County Water Agency

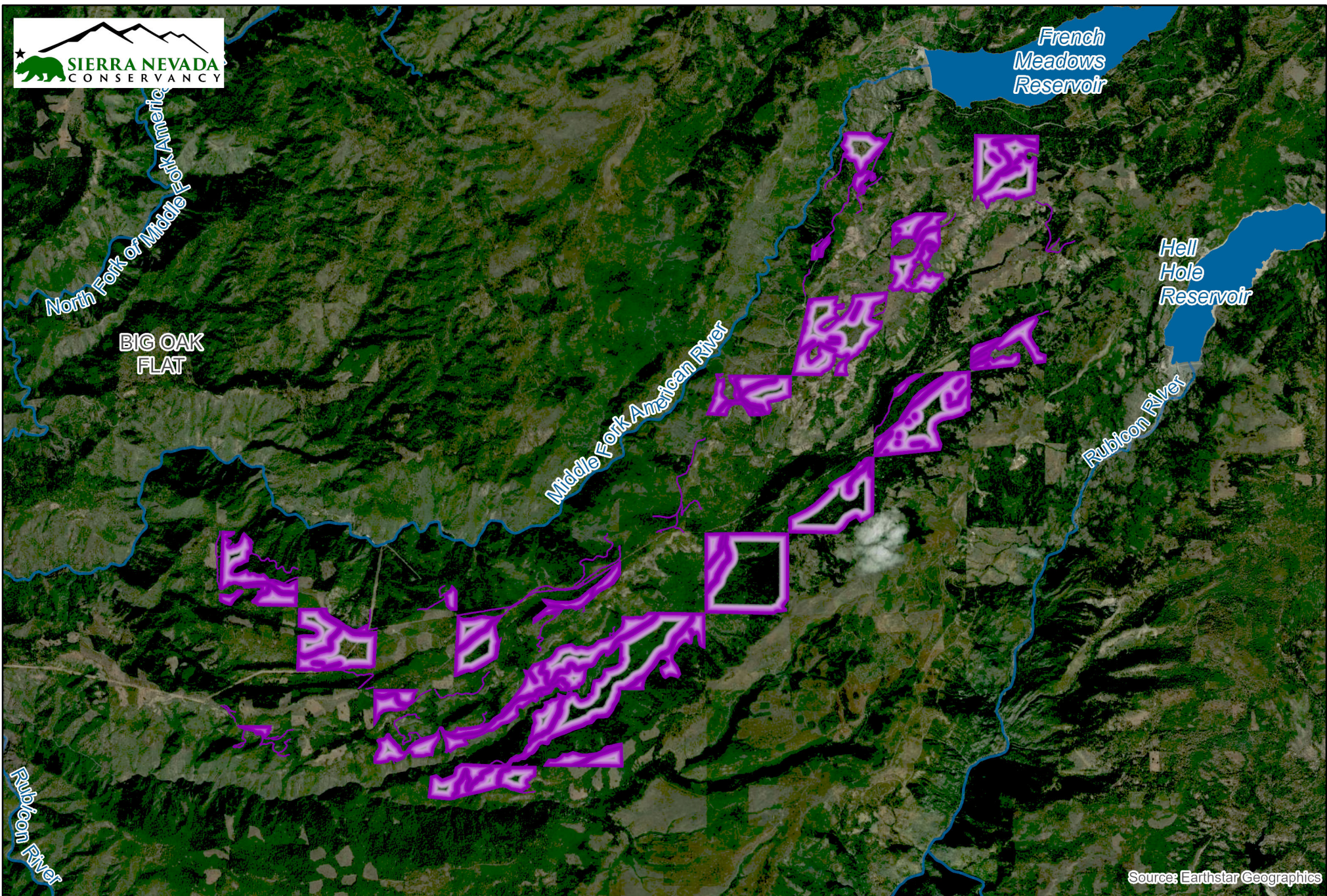




1672: Long Canyon Watershed
Protection Project
Placer County Water Agency

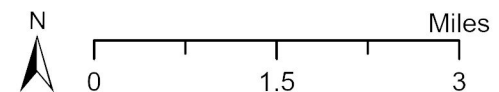
 Project Area





1672: Long Canyon Watershed
Protection Project
Placer County Water Agency

 Project Area



To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project (SNC 1672).

Project Location – Specific: This project is an approximately 16,500-acre, landscape-level planning project located in the Georgetown Ranger District of Eldorado National Forest in Placer County within the Long Canyon Creek watershed, headwaters of the American River watershed. Planning area is just southeast of French Meadows Reservoir, project center approximately at -120.352 and 39.014 degrees.

Project Location - City: Planning area western boundary approximately 10 miles east of Foresthill and southwestern boundary approximately 1.5 miles north of Zuver.

Project Location - County: Placer

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is funding the #1672 Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project, which is a landscape-level, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental planning program led by Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) in the headwaters of the Middle Fork American River watershed. The project will conduct environmental compliance analyses for potential future projects to improve forest health and resilience, and reduce the threat of high-severity forest fires. The project is located on the Georgetown District of the Eldorado National Forest, southeast of French Meadows Reservoir, and east of Foresthill and Auburn. This project would complete NEPA/CEQA for potential future forest-restoration work to improve ecological resilience and protect water resources, nearby communities, and infrastructure in the Long Canyon Creek watershed. The project has four focal areas: 1) Long Canyon Creek Project; 2) Star Fire restoration; 3) Mosquito Fire restoration; and 4) Mosquito Fire recovery. The completed NEPA/CEQA would provide environmental compliance for potential future forest health and fuels-reduction treatments on approximately 6,200 acres within a 16,519-acre planning area. Funding from the SNC would provide project management and coordination/facilitation of the project leadership team; NEPA Proposed Action and scoping package; conduct archaeological field surveys and reports, organize references and prepare evaluations and reports (aquatic, wildlife, and botanical evaluations), management indicator species report, migratory bird report, water and soils report); prepare United States Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Assessment and Consultation; prepare the Administrative Draft environmental assessment, and prepare draft CEQA environmental documentation. There will be no ground or resource disturbance as part of this project.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Placer County Water Agency
Darin Reintjes, Director of Resource Management
144 Ferguson Road, Auburn, CA 95604
(530) 823-4891

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, Section 21150; CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies

Categorical Exemption: CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306, Information Collection

Reasons why project is exempt:

The planning activities under this project are resource surveys, data analysis, and outreach and coordination meetings towards the development of a Draft NEPA Environmental Assessment and draft CEQA documents considering potential future forest health and resilience projects, which have not yet been approved, adopted, or funded. The planning and due diligence activities to be carried out as part of the project involve no ground or resource disturbance. The project is Statutorily Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies as the project only involves planning studies for possible future actions, which the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board has not approved, adopted, or funded; there is no legally binding effect on later activities. The project is also Categorically Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306 Information Collection because it consists of basic data collection and resource evaluation activities, which do not result in a disturbance to environmental resources. The proposed activities are for information gathering purposes and are part of a study leading to an action, which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Mary Akens

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-450-5177

If filed by applicant: N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes___ No __

Signature:_____

Title: _____

Date:_____

Signed by Lead Agency: Yes

Signed by Applicant: No

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.**Date received for filing at OPR:** _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1678

SNC ID Number: 1678

Applicant: Truckee River Watershed Council

Project Title: Boca/Hobart Forest Health and Meadow Habitat Restoration

SNC Subregion: North Central

County: Nevada

Funding Amount Requested: \$168,820

Funding Amount Recommended: \$168,820

Total Project Cost: \$412,620

Project Scope / Description

The Boca/Hobart Forest Health and Meadow Restoration project is a 2,800-acre forest health planning project on lands owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service – Tahoe National Forest (TNF) in Nevada County. The project is west of Boca Reservoir and north of Prosser Reservoir in the Middle Truckee River watershed, approximately 10 miles east of the town of Truckee. The applicant, Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC), in partnership with the TNF, will conduct planning activities that will result in implementation-ready, forest-health treatments to enhance ecological function and reduce the risk of fire, drought mortality, and other unplanned disturbances.

The project will conduct baseline wildlife, vegetation, aquatic, and cultural surveys to determine the presence of any sensitive species or resources and will also include a comprehensive stand inventory, detailed prescription treatments, and proposed actions. In addition, the project will complete design plans and environmental compliance documents for the meadow habitat restoration component, resulting in 100 percent stamped engineered design plans. The project has been identified as a priority area by the Middle Truckee River Watershed Forest Health Partnership and has received other funding that will support some of the planning activities. The SNC's funding will be allocated to the completion of baseline surveys, report development and final (90%/100%) prescription treatments, a draft National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) decision, and design documents that will ready the project for implementation.

The project is adjacent to other forest-health projects that have either been completed or are in the planning phase. Approximately 7,000 acres of treatments were completed in 2019 in the Dry Creek watershed and planning has been completed on another 2,900

acres for the Alder 89 project, both of which are to the west of this project. To the north of the project, the TNF is currently in the planning stage to treat approximately 2,100 acres around the unincorporated community of Russell Valley.

The TRWC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that brings the community together to protect, enhance, and restore the Truckee River watershed. The TRWC has a long history of successfully administering and completing grants from the SNC across various grant programs, as well as grants from other funders. The land manager and project partner, TNF, also has a long and successful history of completing forest-health and restoration projects.

The project was collaboratively identified as a priority by the Middle Truckee River Watershed Forest Health Partnership, which is comprised of multiple agencies and nonprofit organizations, including the TNF, National Forest Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Truckee Meadows Water Authority, and TRWC. The TRWC is the lead entity for the project and has already secured \$243,800 in additional funds from the California Wildlife Conservation Board and the National Forest Foundation to complete the project. The TNF will provide staff consultation and serve in an advisory capacity for consultant oversight and be the final signatory on the anticipated Notice of Decision.

The project supports the California Wildfire and Forest Resiliency Plan by providing multiple ecosystem and community benefits that will improve climate resilience, reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, safeguard water security and water quality, protect wildlife habitat, and enhance biodiversity in the Middle Truckee River watershed. In addition, the project supports the SNC Strategic Plan by directly leading to ecological forest restoration in an area of high fire danger, therefore protecting nearby communities and existing natural resources. It will also protect Boca and Prosser reservoirs and the numerous recreation assets in the area for locals and visitors.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|--|---|
| SNC Six-month Progress Reports | Every six months through project completion |
| Complete Baseline Surveys | May – September 2024 |
| Draft CEQA/NEPA Reports | September 2024 – January 2025 |
| 100% Design Plans and Specifications | June 2025 |
| SNC Final Report | October 2025 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | December 31, 2025 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|--|------------------|
| Project Management | \$11,500 |
| Project Surveys | \$94,300 |
| CEQA/NEPA Report Compilation and Proposed Action | \$18,200 |
| 100% Design Completion | \$14,500 |
| Invoicing and Reporting | \$3,800 |
| Tribal Participation | \$4,500 |
| Administrative Costs | \$22,020 |
| Total | \$168,820 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Nevada County
- U.S. Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest, Truckee Ranger District
- Truckee Fire Protection District
- Truckee Meadows Water Authority
- The Nature Conservancy

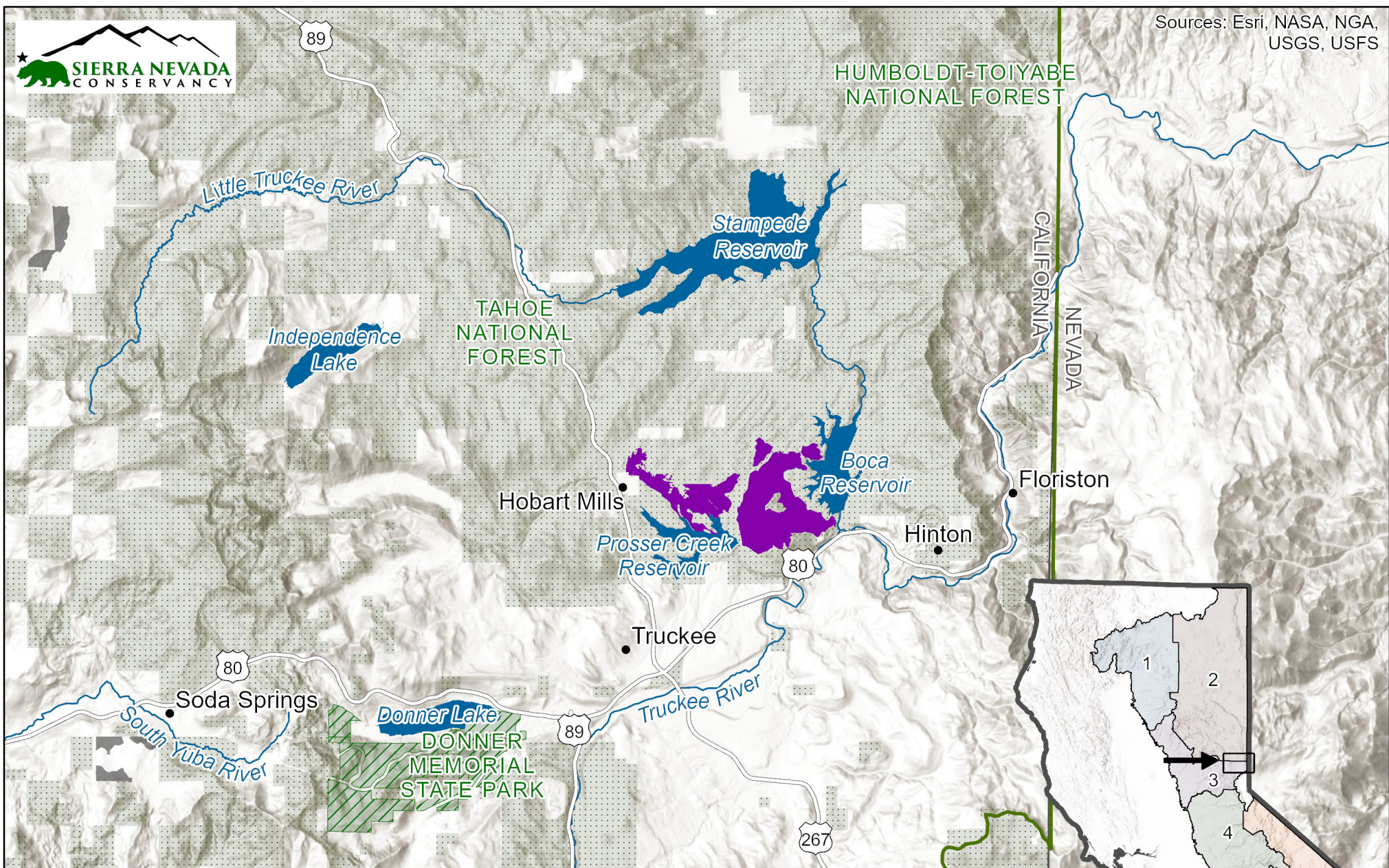
Opposition:

- None received

Project Performance Measures

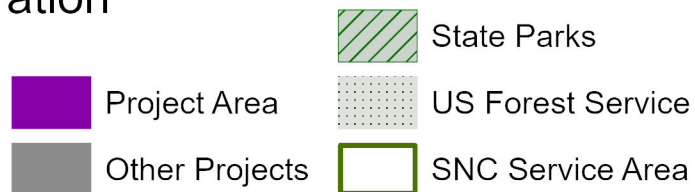
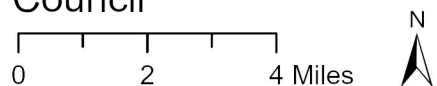
There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Number of Acres Completing Pre-Implementation Planning and Environmental Compliance

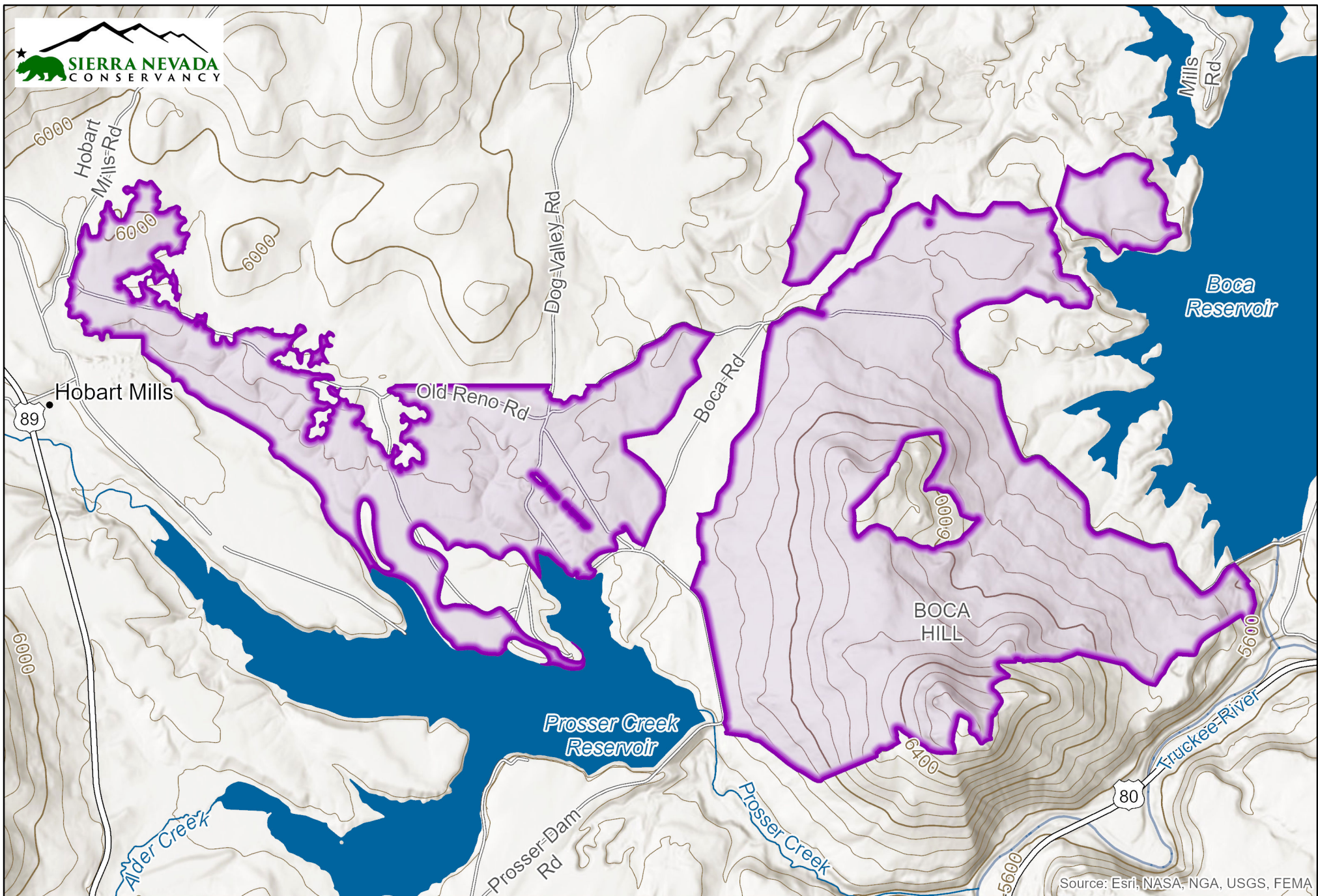


1678: Boca/Hobart Forest Health and Meadow Habitat Restoration

Truckee River Watershed Council

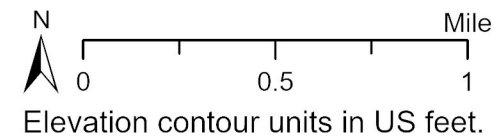


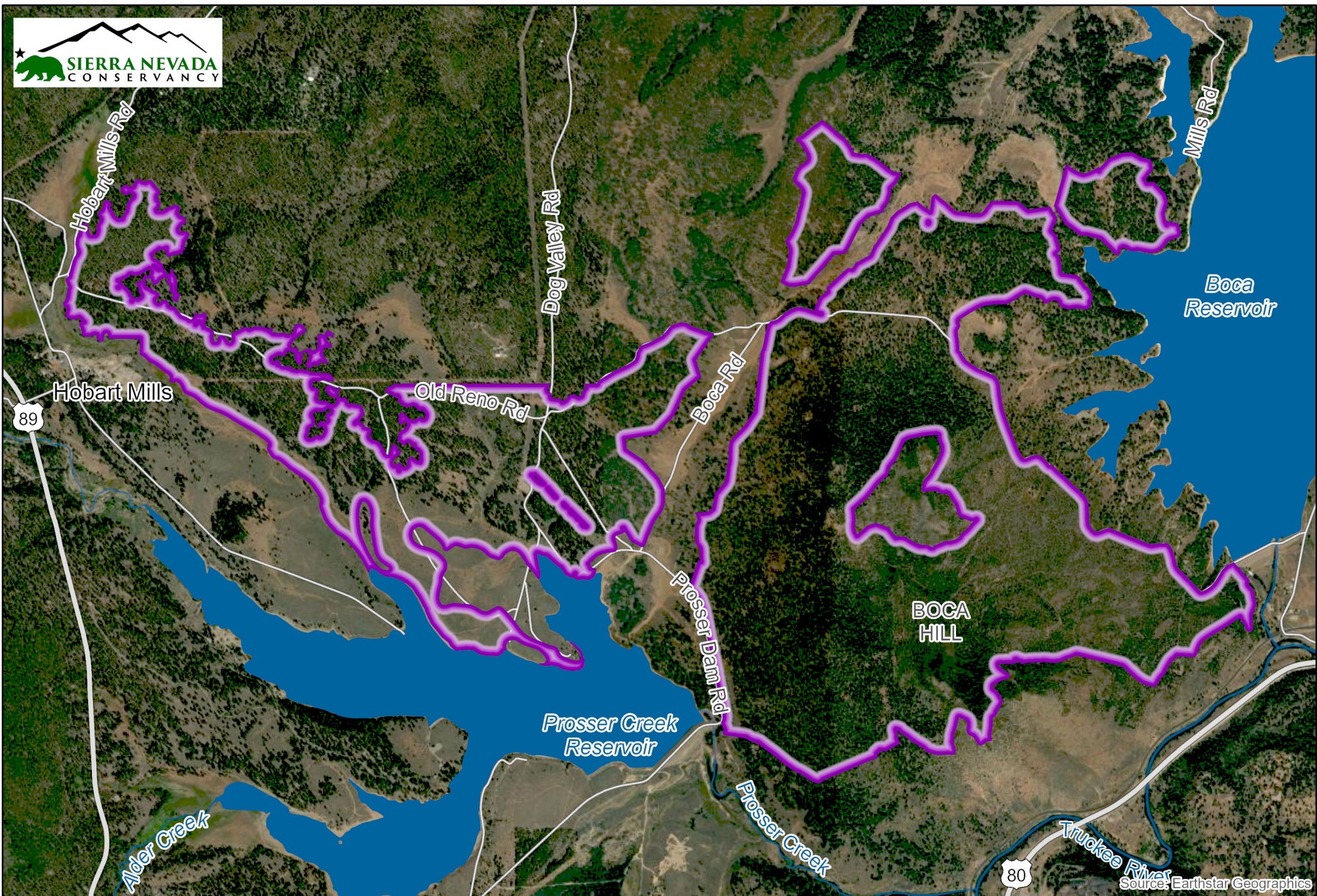
1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion



1678: Boca/Hobart Forest Health and Meadow
Habitat Restoration
Truckee River Watershed Council

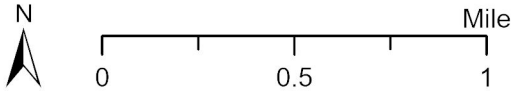
 Project Area





1678: Boca/Hobart Forest Health and Meadow
 Habitat Restoration
 Truckee River Watershed Council

 Project Area



To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: Boca/Hobart Forest Health and Meadow Habitat Restoration (SNC 1678).

Project Location – Specific: Approximately 2,800-acre planning project located in Tahoe National Forest in Nevada County, between Boca and Prosser reservoirs, about 5 miles northeast of the town of Truckee. Project center approximately at -120.132 and 39.404 degrees.

Project Location - City: Approximately five miles northeast of Truckee.

Project Location - County: Nevada

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) will provide funding to the Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC) for project #1678 Boca/Hobart Forest Health and Meadow Habitat Restoration project. The project is a 2,800-acre forest health planning project on Tahoe National Forest (TNF) lands in Nevada County. The project is west of Boca Reservoir and north of Prosser Reservoir in the Middle Truckee River watershed, approximately five miles northeast of the town of Truckee. The TRWC, in partnership with TNF, would conduct planning activities that could result in potential future forest-health treatments to enhance ecological function and reduce the risk of fire, drought mortality, and other unplanned disturbances. The project would conduct baseline wildlife, vegetation, aquatic, and cultural surveys to determine the presence of any sensitive species or resources and would also include a comprehensive stand inventory, detailed prescription treatments, and proposed actions. In addition, the project would complete design plans and environmental compliance documents for a meadow habitat restoration component. The proposed project has been identified as a priority area by the Middle Truckee River Watershed Forest Health Partnership and has received other funding that will support some of the planning activities. The SNC's funding would be allocated to completion of baseline surveys, report development and prescription treatment plans, a draft National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) decision, and draft design documents. There will be no ground or resource disturbance as part of this project.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Truckee River Watershed Council
Eben Swain, Project Director
PO Box 8568, Truckee, CA 96162
(530) 550-8760

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, Section 21150; CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies

Categorical Exemption: CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306, Information Collection

Reasons why project is exempt:

The planning activities under this project are resource surveys, data analysis, and planning and design towards the development of a Draft NEPA decision considering potential future forest and watershed-health projects, which have not yet been approved, adopted, or funded. The planning and due diligence activities to be carried out as part of the project involve no ground or resource disturbance. The project is Statutorily Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies as the project only involves planning studies for possible future actions, which the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board has not approved, adopted, or funded; there is no legally binding effect on later activities. The project is also Categorically Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306 Information Collection because it consists of basic data collection and resource evaluation activities, which do not result in a disturbance to environmental resources. The proposed activities are for information gathering purposes and are part of a study leading to an action, which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Mary Akens

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-450-5177

If filed by applicant: N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes__ No__

Signature:_____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Lead Agency: Yes

Signed by Applicant: No

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.**Date received for filing at OPR:** _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1679

SNC ID Number: 1679

Applicant: National Forest Foundation

Project Title: Bungalow Resilience and Fuels Reduction Planning Project

SNC Subregion: Southwest

County: Fresno

Funding Amount Requested: \$2,902,715

Funding Amount Recommended: \$2,902,715

Total Project Cost: \$3,002,715

Project Scope / Description

The Bungalow Resilience and Fuels Reduction Planning Project will draft a proposed action for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis on roughly 44,000 acres of Forest Service land. The project will plan implementation for fuel and vegetation management practices to reduce the risk of wildfire and protect forest resources and neighboring communities. The project is led by the National Forest Foundation (NFF) and will occur entirely on Sierra National Forest lands within Fresno County, near the communities of Shaver Lake and Dinkey Creek.

The NFF, partnering with a 3rd-party NEPA consultant, will process the necessary environmental compliance documents to draft a NEPA proposed action for the planning area, enabling the Sierra National Forest to analyze the project, issue a final decision, and complete environmental compliance. In addition to the planning process, specific surveys will be completed for cultural resources, biology, wildlife, and botany.

The project is near several other planning areas, including the Gigantea Project, located north of Bungalow, which has NEPA planning underway and is focused on restoration and fire resilience. Likewise, similar work is also underway within the Teakettle Experimental Forest and McKinley Grove, both also located in the Sierra National Forest.

The NFF is dedicated to restoring and enhancing National Forests and Grasslands, and has been an official nonprofit partner of the Forest Service since the early 1990s. Within California, the NFF has successfully managed and implemented dozens of grant-funded projects, including projects funded by the SNC and CAL FIRE.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience
Directed Grant Program
SNC Project Number 1679
Exhibit A - Page 2

This project occurs within the Dinkey Collaborative Landscape, and collaboration with the Dinkey Collaborative group will be ongoing. Members of the collaborative include local environmentalists, logging stakeholders, nonprofit groups, and state and federal agencies. The group is eager to help throughout the planning process and is acknowledged as vital stakeholders.

This is a Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience grant, maintaining the supply of implementation-ready projects that will help the SNC meet its goals of creating more fire-resilient forest landscapes, reducing wildfire risk, and accelerating recovery from recent fires within the Sierra-Cascade Region. The project is within the Dinkey Creek watershed, which flows into the Kings River and eventually onto the Tulare Lake Basin.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|--|---|
| Six-month progress reports | Every six months until project completion |
| Hire NEPA contractor | April 2024 |
| Develop proposed action | January 2025 |
| Surveys, reporting, and analysis | March 2026 |
| Scoping and public comment | June 2026 |
| Draft Decision Notice | August 2026 |
| Final Report with performance measures reporting | September 2026 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | September 2026 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Project management | \$340,600 |
| Project contracting | \$2,158,500 |
| Supplies | \$10,000 |
| Travel | \$15,000 |
| Administrative Costs | \$378,615 |
| Total | \$2,902,715 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Dinkey Collaborative Steering Committee
- Dunlap Band of Mono Indians
- Sierra RCD
- Sierra National Forest
- Fresno County

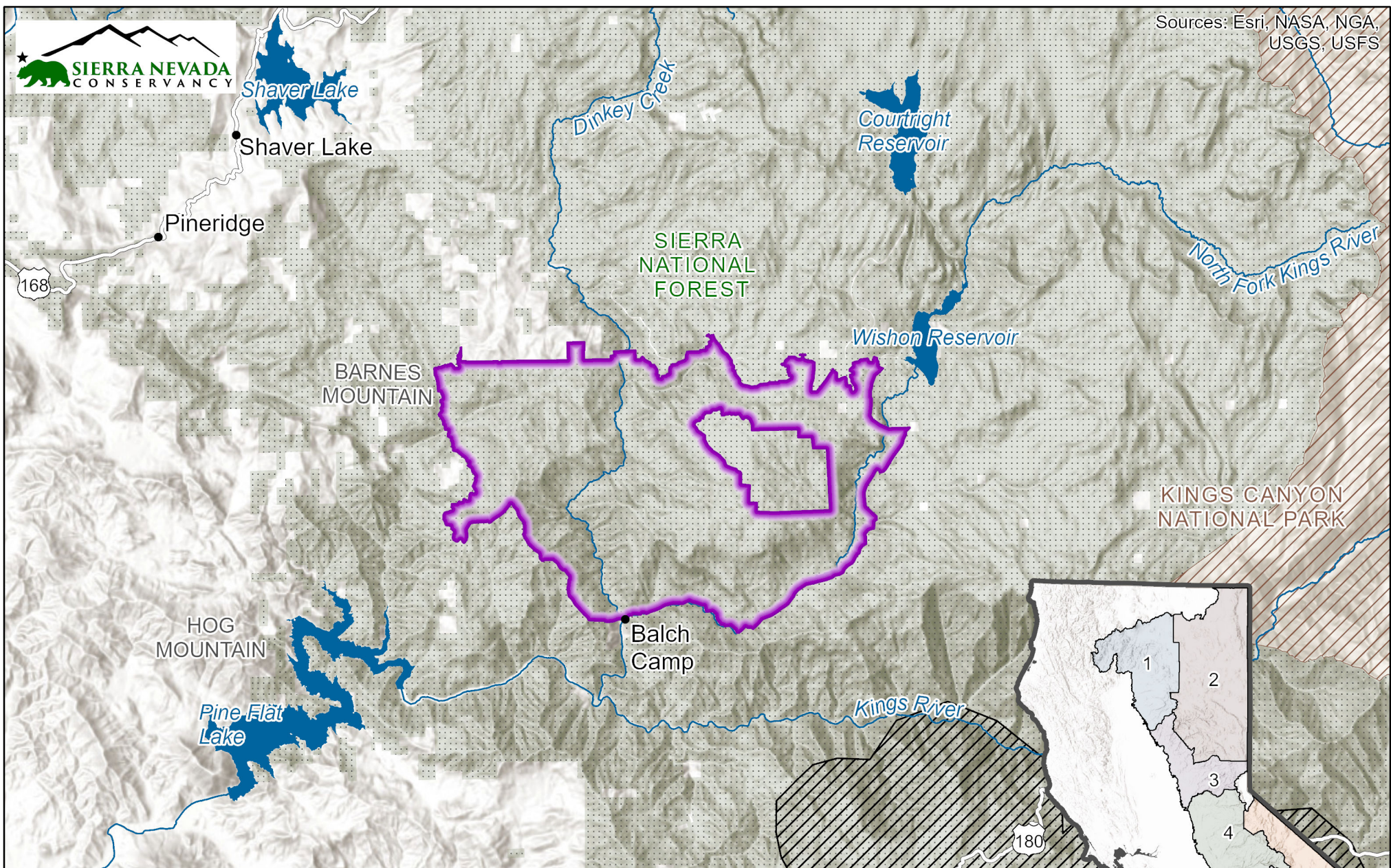
Opposition:

- None received

Project Performance Measures

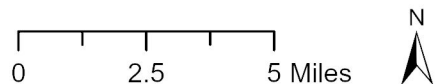
There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Number of Acres Completing Pre-Implementation Planning and Environmental Compliance



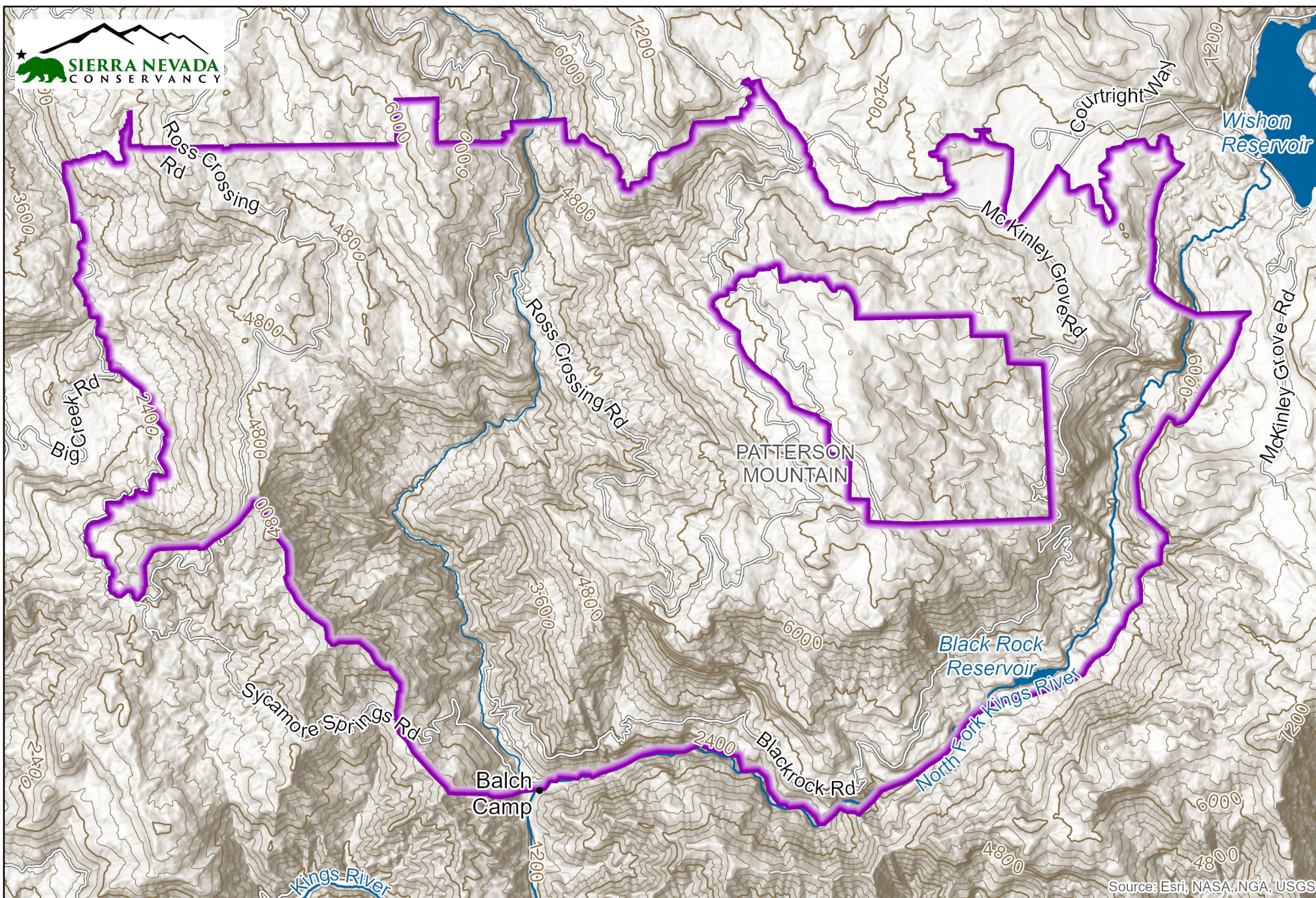
1679: Bungalow Resilience and Fuels Reduction Planning Project

National Forest Foundation



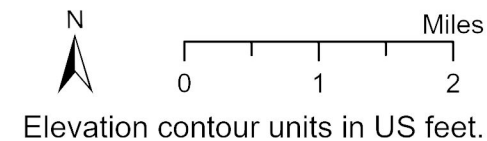
-  Project Area
-  Other Projects
-  National Park Service
-  US Forest Service

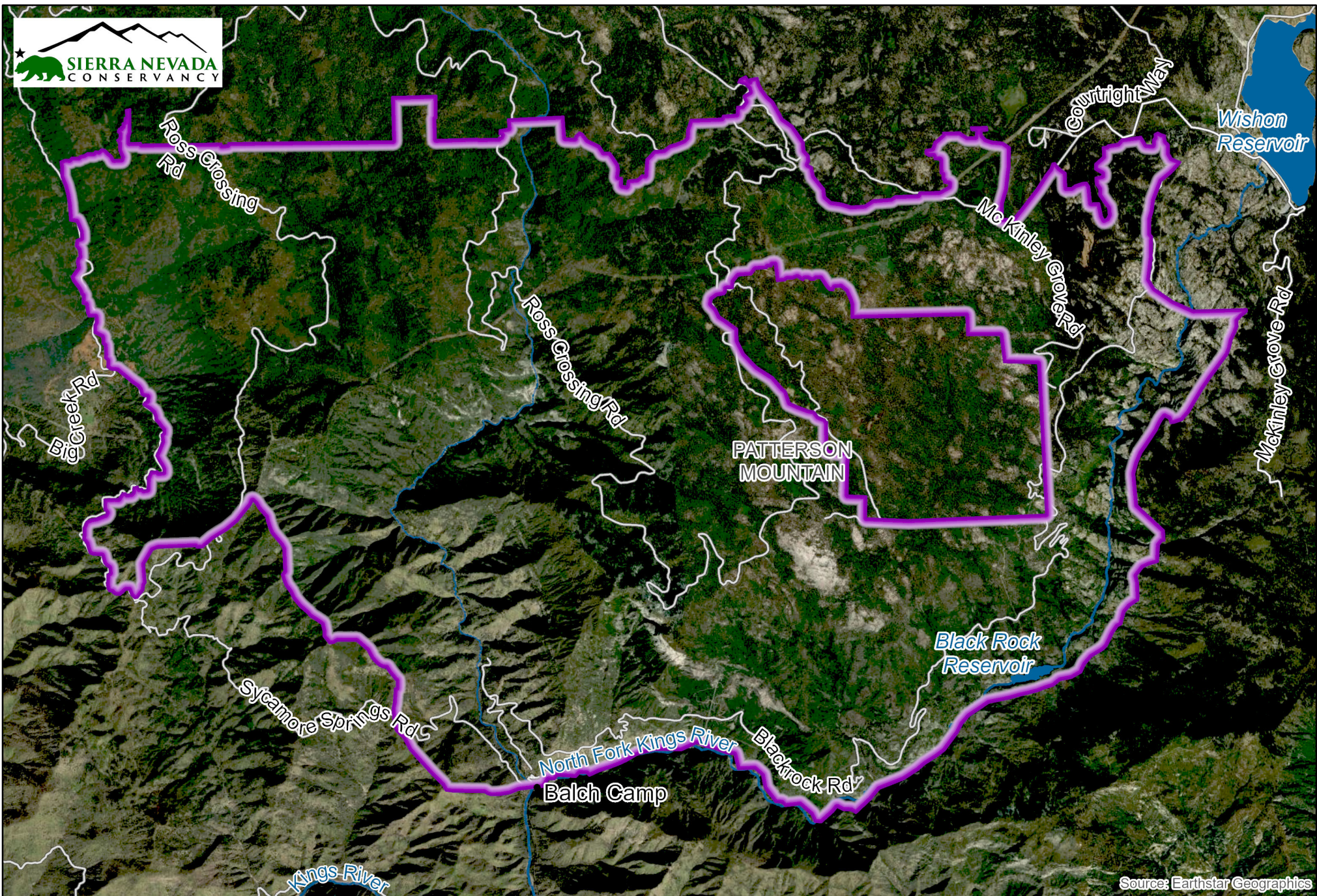
1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion



1679: Bungalow Resilience and Fuels
Reduction Planning Project
National Forest Foundation

Project Area





1679: Bungalow Resilience and Fuels
Reduction Planning Project
National Forest Foundation

 Project Area



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To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: Bungalow Resilience and Fuels Reduction Planning Project (SNC 1679).

Project Location – Specific: Approximately 44,000-acre landscape planning project located in Sierra National Forest in Fresno County, east of Pine Flat Lake and west of Wishon Reservoir, in the area of Patterson Mountain. Project center approximately at -19.084 and 36.981 degrees.

Project Location - City: Southern project boundary by the community of Balch Camp, northern boundary approximately seven miles southwest of Shaver Lake.

Project Location - County: Fresno

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) will provide funding to the National Forest Foundation (NFF) for the #1679 Bungalow Resilience and Fuels Reduction Planning Project. In partnership with Sierra National Forest (SNF), NFF will draft a proposed action for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis on roughly 44,000 acres of Forest Service land. The project will plan potential future implementation for fuel and vegetation management practices to reduce the risk of wildfire and protect forest resources and neighboring communities. The project is led by the NFF and will occur entirely on SNF lands within Fresno County, near the communities of Shaver Lake and Dinkey Creek, east of Pine Flat Lake and west of Wishon Reservoir. The NFF, partnering with a 3rd-party NEPA consultant, will complete surveys for cultural resources, biology, wildlife, and botany, complete data analyses, and draft a NEPA proposed action for the planning area, enabling the SNF to move forward with additional analysis and NEPA activities towards a potential future NEPA decision and forest health and resilience treatments. The project activities include only the planning, resource surveys, and environmental analysis to develop draft NEPA documents for potential future projects. There will be no ground or resource disturbance as part of this project. None of the planning or analysis activities to be conducted under this proposed project will have a legally binding effect on future activities or are for a possible future project, which an agency has already approved, adopted, or funded.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

National Forest Foundation
Sarah Vaughan, California Program Manager, Southern Sierra
27 Ft Missoula Rd, #3, Missoula, MT 59804
(530) 919-8745

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, Section 21150; CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies

Categorical Exemption: CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306, Information Collection

Reasons why project is exempt:

The planning activities under this project are resource surveys, data analysis, and planning and design towards the development of draft NEPA documents considering potential future forest and watershed-health projects, which have not yet been approved, adopted, or funded. The planning and due diligence activities to be carried out as part of the project involve no ground or resource disturbance. The project is Statutorily Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies as the project only involves planning studies for possible future actions, which the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board has not approved, adopted, or funded; there is no legally binding effect on later activities. The project is also Categorically Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306 Information Collection because it consists of basic data collection and resource evaluation activities, which do not result in a disturbance to environmental resources. The proposed activities are for information gathering purposes and are part of a study leading to an action, which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Mary Akens

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-450-5177

If filed by applicant: N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes__ No__

Signature:_____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Lead Agency: Yes

Signed by Applicant: No

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.**Date received for filing at OPR:** _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1682

SNC ID Number: 1682

Applicant: Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians

Project Title: Tribal Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan

SNC Subregion: South Central

County: Tuolumne

Funding Amount Requested: \$920,000

Funding Amount Recommended: \$920,000

Total Project Cost: \$920,000

Project Scope / Description

The Tribal Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan (Project) is a planning proposal located in Tuolumne City in Tuolumne County. The applicant, the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians (Tribe), will prepare a comprehensive fuels-reduction/wildfire-reduction plan and joint National Environmental Policy Act/California Environmental Quality Act (NEPA/CEQA) on 2,895 acres of tribal property (Property).

The Tribe will develop two distinct documents: the Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan (Plan) and the joint NEPA/CEQA document. The Tribe and its consultants anticipate generating an Environmental Assessment with a Mitigated Negative Declaration. While completing the Plan, the Tribe will conduct multiple public engagement events and stakeholder meetings to include input from the community on how best to protect and prioritize aspects of the Property.

The Tribe is an active partner with the Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Forest Collaborative (YSS) and is currently engaged in the Social and Ecological Resilience Across the Landscape (SERAL) 2.0 effort. SERAL 2.0 will complete a landscape-scale environmental analysis across United States Forest Service lands south of Highway 108 and will analyze, and eventually treat, USFS lands adjacent to the Property.

The Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians is a federally recognized sovereign nation dedicated to the preservation of community, culture, and self-reliance through the conservation, management, and economic development of land resources. The Tribe has worked on multiple SNC projects, including partnerships with its hand/fire crew. While the Tribe owns the majority of the lands to be analyzed in the Project,

approximately one-third of the Project is land held in trust, meaning the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs is the legal owner of the property.

There are many partners including Tuolumne County, Tuolumne Utilities District, the Stanislaus National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, Pacific Gas and Electric, and CAL FIRE, who will be individually contacted for input on the creation of the Plan. No additional funding has been secured for this Project.

The Project, once implemented, will directly support SNC's "Forest and Watershed Health" pillar of the Strategic Plan. The Tribe will be in a better position to manage its property for forest health and wildfire resilience, therefore benefiting not only the community but the greater Tuolumne River watershed. Additionally, the fuels-reduction projects that this Project will generate will directly protect and benefit the people of Tuolumne City.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|--|---|
| Six-month Progress Reports | Every six months through Project Completion |
| Stakeholder and Public Engagement | April 2024 – May 2025 |
| Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan | October 2024 – February 2026 |
| Prepare Appropriate CEQA/NEPA Documents | September 2025 – May 2026 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | June 30, 2026 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|--|------------------|
| Project Management/Staff Engagement | \$26,461 |
| Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan | \$407,216 |
| Environmental Compliance (CEQA/NEPA) | \$302,525 |
| Stakeholder Engagement/Public Outreach | \$63,798 |
| Administrative Costs | \$120,000 |
| Total | \$920,000 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- None received.

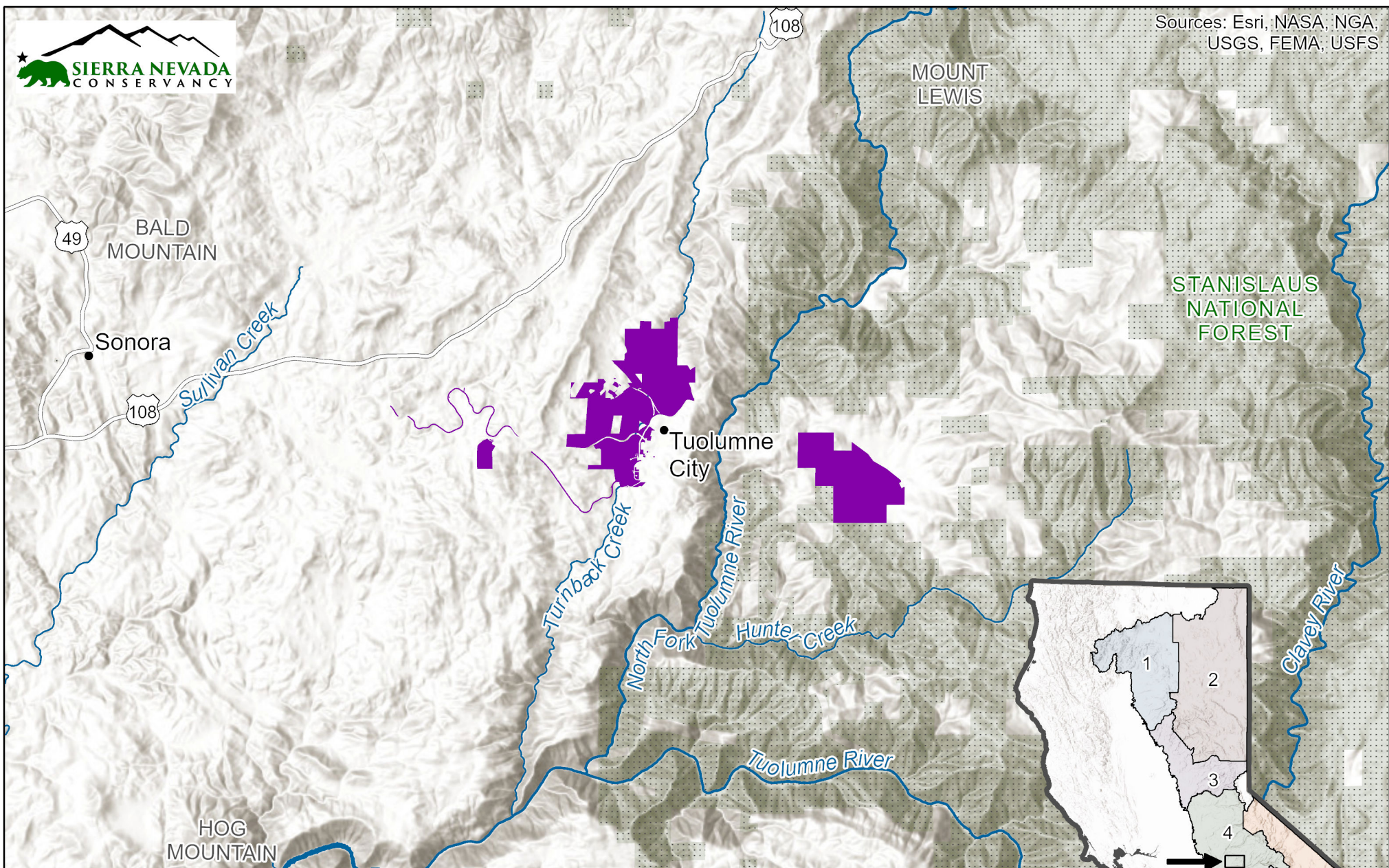
Opposition:

- None received.

Project Performance Measures

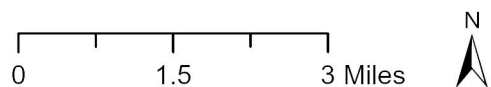
There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Number of Acres Completing Pre-Implementation Planning and Environmental Compliance.

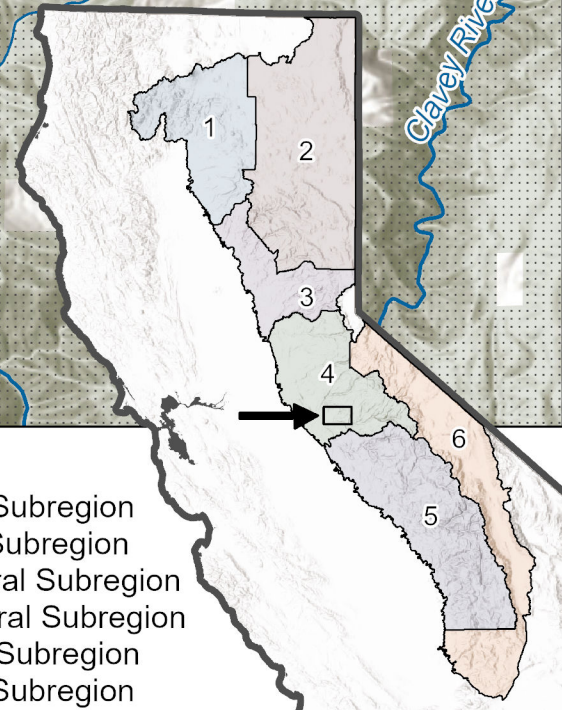


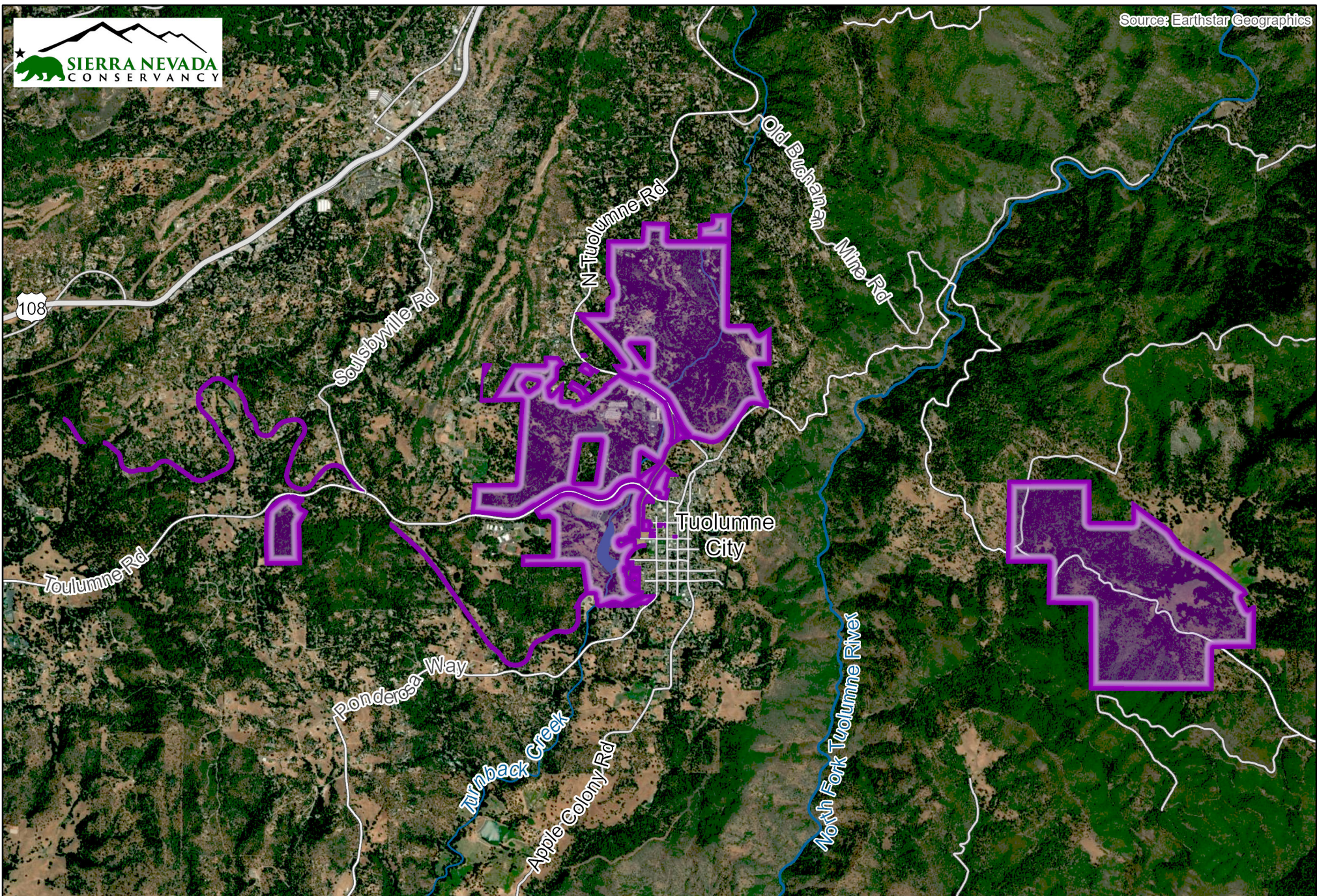
1682: Tribal Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan

Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians



1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion





1682: Tribal Wildfire Resilience and
Land Use Plan
Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians

 Project Area



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To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: Tribal Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan (SNC 1682)

Project Location – Specific: Approximately 2,900-acre planning project located on the Tuolumne Rancheria in Tuolumne County. One portion of the property is along the western side of Tuolumne City, another portion is about three miles east of Tuolumne City.

Project Location - City: Tuolumne Rancheria, near Tuolumne City.

Project Location - County: Tuolumne

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) will provide funding to the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians for project #1682, a planning effort to prepare a comprehensive fuels-reduction/wildfire-reduction plan and joint National Environmental Policy Act/California Environmental Quality Act (NEPA/CEQA) analysis on 2,895 acres of the Tuolumne Rancheria. The Rancheria is located in Tuolumne County, with the primary portion of the Rancheria along the western boundary of Tuolumne City, with an additional parcel about three miles east of Tuolumne City. The Rancheria is within the Tuolumne River watershed, with Turnback, Bear, Preacher's, Westside, and Duckwall creeks on tribal land. The project would develop two distinct documents: the Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan and a joint NEPA/CEQA document. The activities to complete these documents include surveys for cultural resources, biology, wildlife, and botany; data analysis; document development; and partner coordination and stakeholder outreach meetings. There will be no ground or resource disturbance as part of this project.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians
Diana Beasley, Planning & Development Manager
P.O. Box 699, Tuolumne, CA 95379
(209) 928-5367

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, Section 21150; CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies

Categorical Exemption: CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306, Information Collection

Reasons why project is exempt:

The planning activities under this project are resource surveys, data analysis, and planning and design towards the development of a forest-management plan and environmental compliance documents considering potential future forest-management projects, which have not yet been approved, adopted, or funded. The planning and due diligence activities to be carried out as part of the project involve no ground or resource disturbance. The project is Statutorily Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies as the project only involves planning studies for possible future actions, which the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board has not approved, adopted, or funded; there is no legally binding effect on later activities. The project is also Categorical Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306 Information Collection because it consists of basic data collection and resource evaluation activities, which do not result in a disturbance to environmental resources. The proposed activities are for information gathering purposes and are part of a study leading to an action, which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.

Lead Agency**Contact Person:** Mary Akens**Area Code/Telephone/Extension:** 530-450-5177**If filed by applicant:** N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.

2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:

Yes___ No ___

Signature:_____**Title:** _____**Date:**_____**Signed by Lead Agency:** Yes**Signed by Applicant:** No**Authority cited:** Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.**Date received for filing at OPR:** _____**Reference:** Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1688

SNC ID Number: 1688

Applicant: Nevada Irrigation District

Project Title: Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration: NEPA Planning

SNC Subregions: North Central and Northeast

Counties: Nevada and Sierra

Funding Amount Requested: \$386,100

Funding Amount Recommended: \$386,100

Total Project Cost: \$556,100

Project Scope / Description

The Nevada Irrigation District (NID) in partnership with the Tahoe National Forest (TNF), will complete forest restoration and fuels reduction treatment plans, including surveys, reporting, and consultation associated with biological, hydrological, and archaeological resources to complete National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis on at least 2,000 acres of TNF lands within the headwaters of the Middle Yuba River watershed. The project is near Jackson Meadows and Milton reservoirs on the Sierraville Ranger District, TNF, in Nevada and Sierra counties.

This project leverages ongoing 10-year planning work by the TNF using Vibrant Planet's Land Tender tool to identify high-priority areas for treatment within the Middle Yuba River watershed and will complete the necessary environmental compliance and forestry/fuels planning to define and prepare at least 2,000 acres for treatment to return the Middle Yuba River headwaters region to a healthier state. The project will conduct surveys, reporting, and consultation associated with biological, hydrological, and archaeological resources; finalize forest restoration and fuels reduction treatment plans; and complete draft NEPA documents (including proposed action, scoping, comment period, and decision memo). This project will increase the resiliency of the forest with the goal of protecting reservoir water quality and capacity, unique montane meadow environments and other wildlife habitats in the Sierra Nevada, and popular recreational sites like the Pacific Crest Trail, campgrounds, and publicly accessible roads.

The planning area surrounds Jackson Meadows Reservoir and connects to other TNF and NID work in the watershed that improves forest health, recreational value, human safety, and water-infrastructure protection. The project is near NID's English Meadow

Restoration Project and the current Sierra Nevada Conservancy-funded Upper Yuba Headwaters Project.

Staff from the TNF will develop project treatment locations, develop contractor scopes of work, provide information to, and work directly with contractor(s) to ensure products meet the needs of the United States. Forest Service (USFS) survey, reporting, and NEPA process, and utilize an interdisciplinary team of specialists (biologists, silviculturists, archaeologists, hydrologists, etc.) to review and revise all reports and documents. Outreach to the Washoe Tribe will be part of the NEPA process. The NID has a long history of working with the SNC on both planning and implementation projects, including multiple phases of forest treatment at Scotts Flat Reservoir and current work on River Fire recovery on NID land in the Bear River watershed.

The TNF is partnering with the NID to complete this project and facilitate and expedite the planning and environmental compliance process. The partnership is focused on the restoration of TNF lands surrounding one of NID's most important water storage facilities in a fairly remote area. The TNF will provide \$97,000 in staff time and the NID will contribute \$23,000 in staff time for project management. TNF staff will also work directly with Wildfires.org to complete NEPA for this project, which will provide \$50,000 in-kind services.

This project will leverage ongoing planning work by the TNF to improve forest health within the Middle Yuba River watershed. It supports multiple goals of the SNC Watershed Improvement Program by implementing treatments to achieve the goals of restoring watershed and forest health through active forest management. This project will expand on past and planned restoration projects that protect montane meadow habitats and forestry projects for wildlife and ecosystem health and resiliency and supports the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative Pillars of Resilience.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|---|---|
| Progress Reports | Every six months through project completion |
| Bid Development & Contracting of Surveyors | May - June 2024 |
| Surveys (Wildlife, Aquatic, Botanical, Hydrological, Archaeological) | July 2024 – October 2024 |
| All Survey Reports Submitted | November 2024 |
| DRAFT Proposed Action | March 2025 |
| Tribal Consultation, SHPO Consultation, USFWS Consultation, Public Comment Period | March 2025 – September 2025 |
| FINAL Proposed Action | December 2025 |
| NEPA Decision Memo | January 2026 |
| Final Report | June 1, 2026 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | June 30, 2026 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|--|------------------|
| Surveys and Reporting by Consultants and Contractors | \$300,000 |
| NEPA Consultant | \$50,000 |
| Tribal Participation | \$1,000 |
| Administrative Costs | \$35,100 |
| Total | \$386,100 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Tahoe National Forest, Supervisor's Office
- Nevada County, Office of Emergency Services

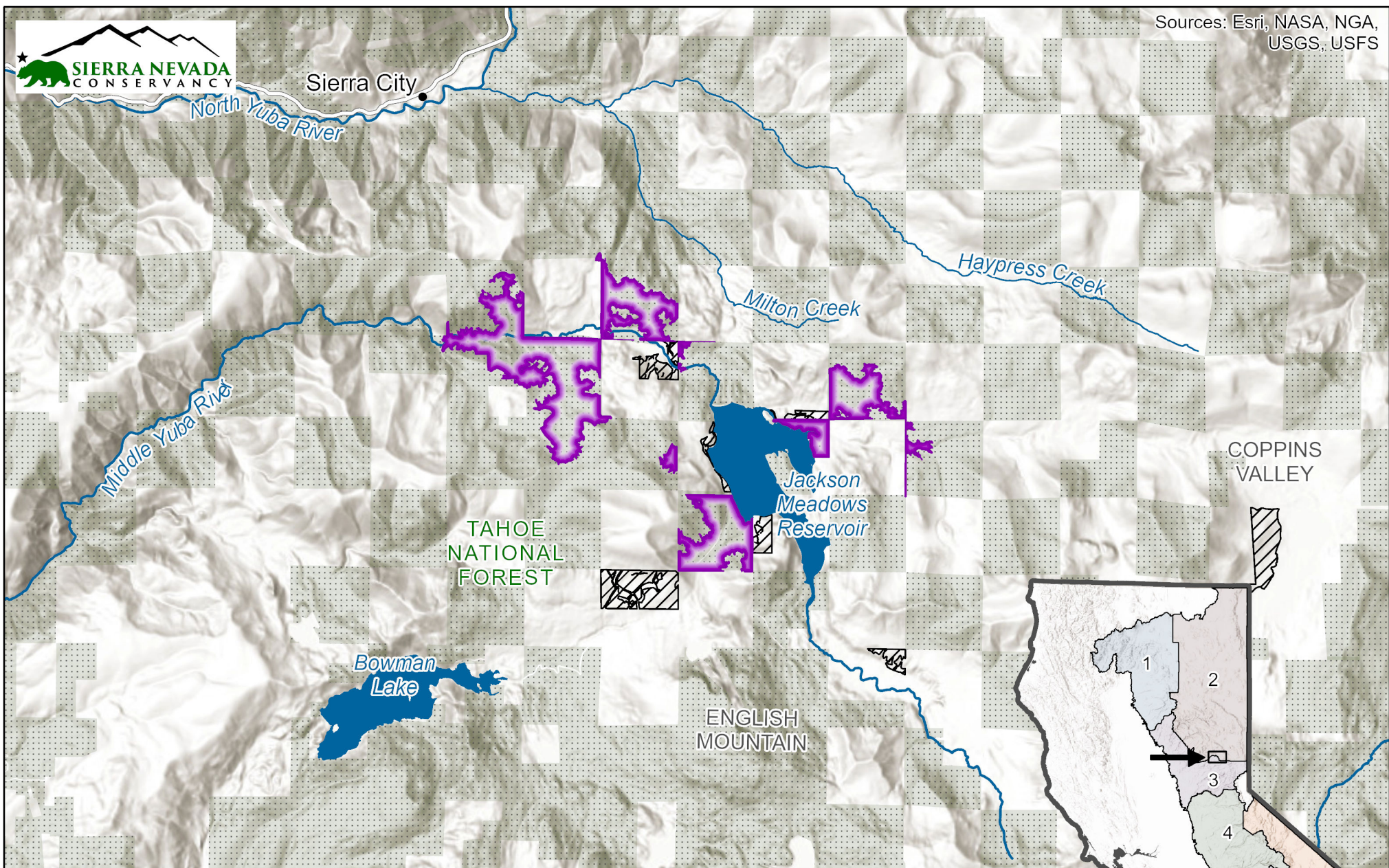
Opposition:

- None received

Project Performance Measures

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments



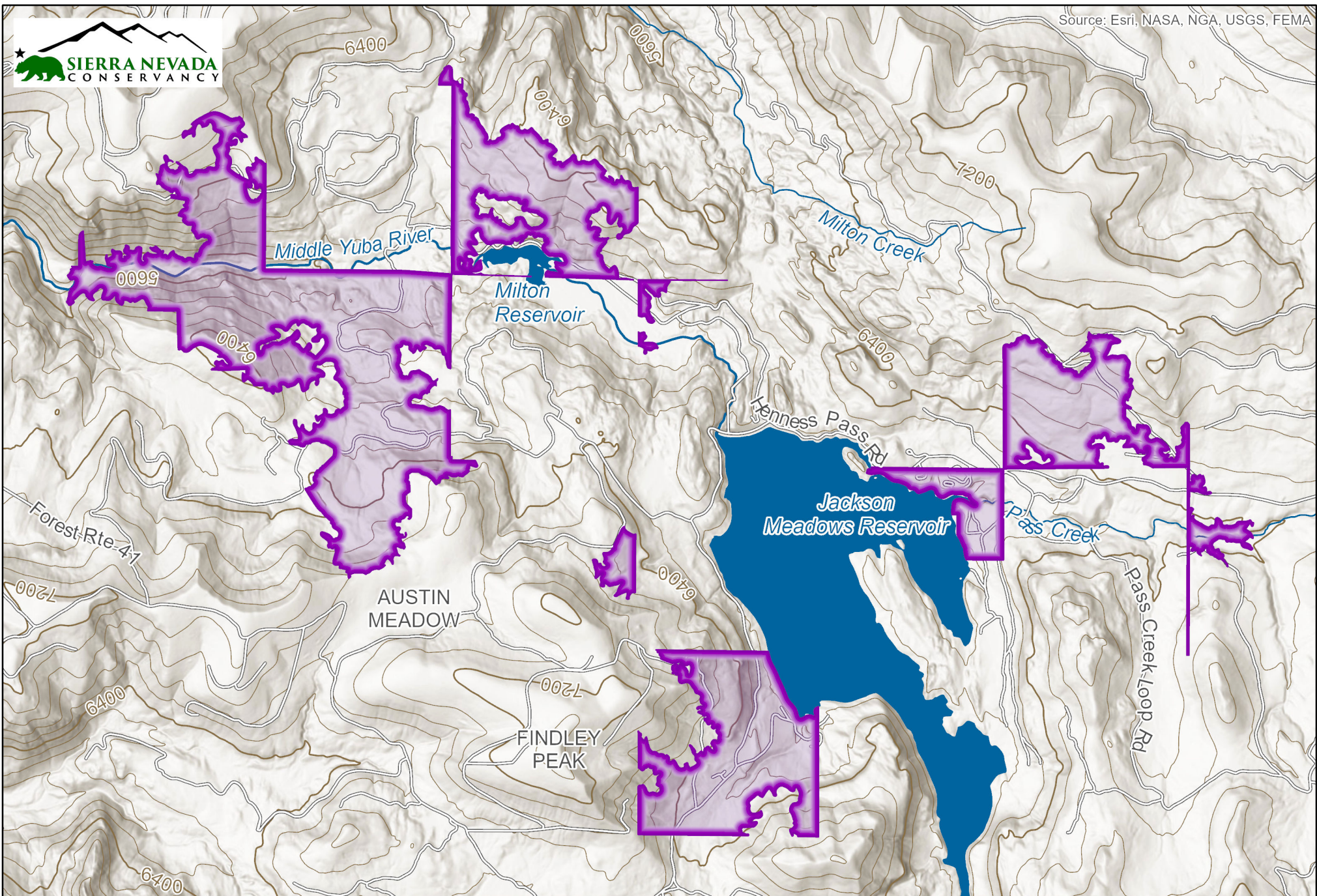
1688: Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration: NEPA Planning Nevada Irrigation District

0 1 2 Miles



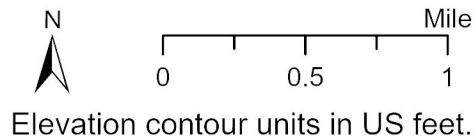
-  Project Area
-  Other Projects
-  US Forest Service

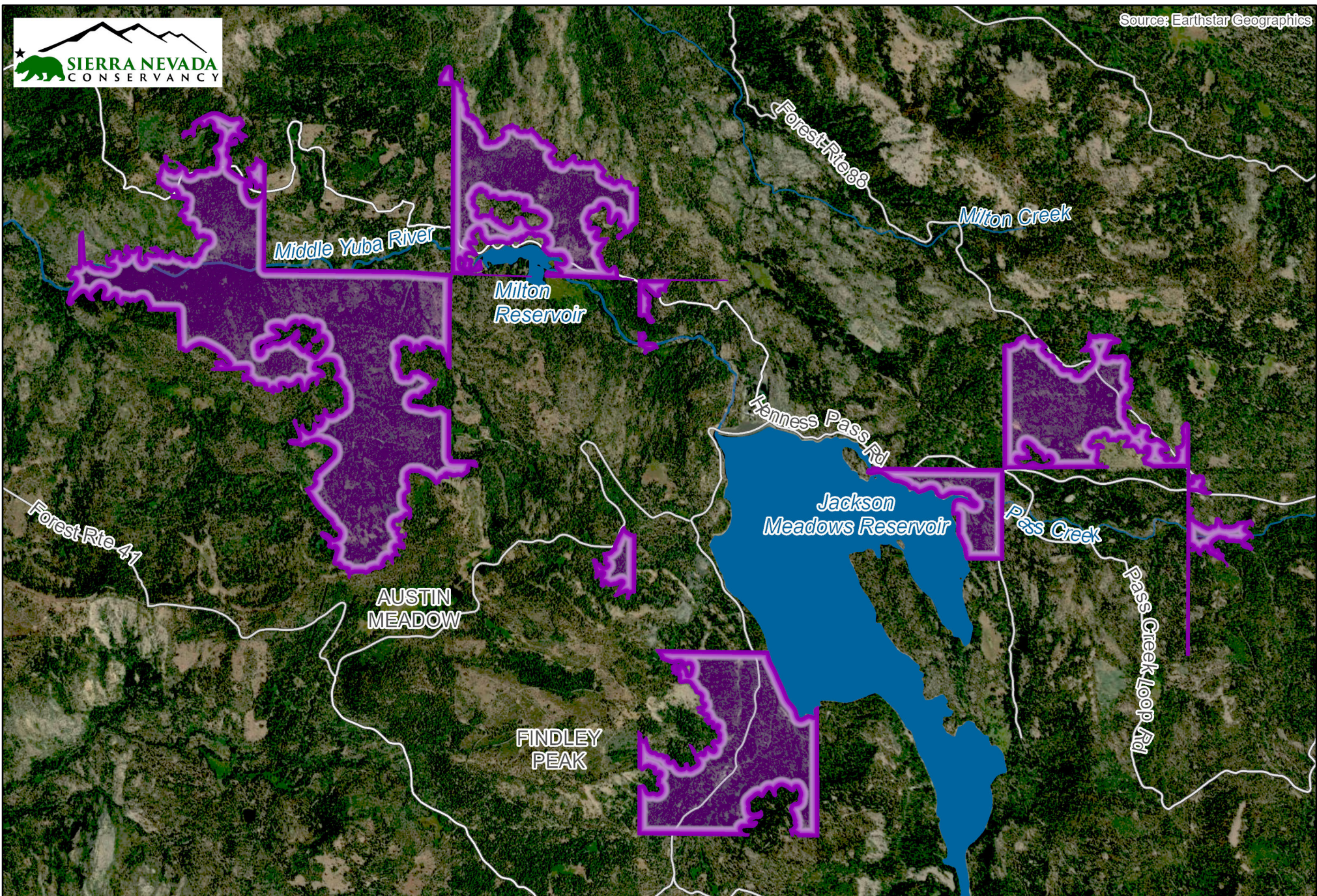
1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion



1688: Upper Middle Yuba Watershed
Forest Restoration: NEPA Planning
Nevada Irrigation District

Project Area





1688: Upper Middle Yuba Watershed
Forest Restoration: NEPA Planning
Nevada Irrigation District

 Project Area



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0 0.5 1

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration: NEPA Planning (SNC 1688)

Project Location – Specific: Approximately 2,000-acre planning project located adjacent to Jackson Meadows and Milton reservoirs on the Sierraville Ranger District, Tahoe National Forest, in Nevada and Sierra counties

Project Location - City: Approximately four miles southeast of Sierra City

Project Location - County: Nevada and Sierra

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) would provide funding to the Nevada Irrigation District (NID), in partnership with the Tahoe National Forest (TNF), for project #1688 Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration: NEPA Planning. It is a planning effort to develop forest restoration and fuels reduction treatment plans and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis on at least 2,000 acres of TNF lands within the headwaters of the Middle Yuba River watershed. The project is adjacent to Jackson Meadows and Milton reservoirs on the Sierraville Ranger District, TNF, in Nevada and Sierra counties. The project will complete the necessary environmental compliance and forestry/fuels planning to define and prepare at least 2,000 acres for potential future treatment to return the Middle Yuba River headwaters region to a healthier state. The project will conduct surveys, reporting, and consultation associated with biological, hydrological, and archaeological resources; finalize forest restoration and fuels reduction treatment plans; and prepare draft NEPA documents. Project activities include only the planning, resource surveys, environmental analysis, and coordination to develop NEPA environmental documents for potential future forest-treatment projects. There will be no ground or resource disturbance as part of this planning project. None of the planning or analysis activities to be conducted under this proposed project will have a legally binding effect on future activities, or for a possible future project, which an agency has already approved, adopted, or funded.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Nevada Irrigation District
Neysa King, Environmental Resources Administrator
1036 W Main Street, Grass Valley, CA 95945
(530) 271-6733

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, Section 21150; CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies

Categorical Exemption: CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306, Information Collection

Reasons why project is exempt:

The planning activities under this project are resource surveys, data analysis, and coordination and outreach towards the development of a forest-treatment plan and environmental compliance documents considering potential future forest-management projects, which have not yet been approved, adopted, or funded. The planning and due-diligence activities to be carried out as part of the project involve no ground or resource disturbance. The project is Statutorily Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies as the project only involves planning studies for possible future actions, which the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board has not approved, adopted, or funded; there is no legally binding effect on later activities. The project is also Categorical Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306 Information Collection because it consists of basic data collection and resource evaluation activities, which do not result in a disturbance to environmental resources. The proposed activities are for information gathering purposes and are part of a study leading to an action, which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.

Lead Agency**Contact Person:** Mary Akens**Area Code/Telephone/Extension:** 530-450-5177**If filed by applicant:** N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes__ No __

Signature: _____**Title:** _____**Date:** _____**Signed by Lead Agency:** Yes**Signed by Applicant:** No**Authority cited:** Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. **Date received for filing at OPR:** _____**Reference:** Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Agenda Item 10: Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program Award Recommendations

Background

In December 2021, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Board approved the Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Grant Guidelines (Guidelines). The program prioritizes planning and implementation of forest-health projects that promote wildfire recovery and forest resilience and support the goals of California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan and the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP). Focal areas include:

- Multi-benefit projects
- Landscape-scale projects
- High-impact projects
- Wildfire recovery
- Regional Forest and Fire Capacity projects

In the 2020 through 2022 budget cycles, the SNC was appropriated \$83 million in General Fund for wildfire- and forest-resilience priorities, with \$78,850,000 dedicated to local assistance. The Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force identifies these priorities in [California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan: A Comprehensive Strategy](#). The SNC administered one cycle of the Immediate Action Wildfire and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program for the 2020 appropriation, and two cycles of the Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program for the later appropriations. The SNC received just under \$152 million in requests. The SNC Board awarded the full \$78,850,000 to 58 projects for planning and treatment on about 640,000 acres across the SNC service area.

The California Budget Act of 2023 appropriated an additional \$37 million in General Fund for wildfire- and forest-resilience priorities. The SNC administered a grant cycle in 2023 to award the full \$35,150,000 dedicated to local assistance.

2023 Grant Cycle

The SNC announced a new solicitation for proposals in April 2023. By mid-June the SNC received 51 concept proposals requesting just under \$94 million. Members of the evaluation team, including a technical expert and SNC Area Representatives, conducted site visits to the proposed implementation project sites. Feedback was provided by staff on all proposed projects. By late September, the SNC received 43 project proposals requesting over \$72 million.

Current Status

Proposals received were evaluated based on the scoring criteria published in the Guidelines. Notifications of projects under consideration were sent to the appropriate water agencies, county planning departments, and SNC Boardmembers. Notifications of projects considered for recommendation were sent to the appropriate tribal representatives. After evaluation, SNC staff selected one existing project for augmentation in the amount of \$43,904 and is recommending 21 projects totaling the remaining \$35,106,096 available to complete planning and assessments on over 445,000 acres, treatment on over 10,500 acres, and support of three biomass and wood-utilization facilities. See the table below for proposals received and recommended by Subregion through this grant cycle.

Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Grant Program: 2023 Proposals Received and Recommended by Subregion

| Subregion* | Number of Full Proposals Received | Amount of Funding Requested | Number of Full Proposals Recommended | Amount of Funding Recommended |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Northeast | 6 | \$10,176,514 | 3 | \$6,119,165 |
| Northwest | 10 | \$16,098,005 | 4 | \$7,456,620 |
| North Central | 10 | \$10,906,594 | 8 | \$8,310,568 |
| South Central | 9 | \$19,927,005 | 3 | \$6,382,598 |
| Southwest | 5 | \$12,322,346 | 3 | \$6,837,145 |
| Southeast | 3 | \$2,770,054 | 0 | \$0 |
| Total | 43 | \$72,200,518 | 21 | \$35,106,096 |

*For the purposes of this table, projects in more than one Subregion were assigned to a primary Subregion

Of the 21 projects to be recommended to the Board, 16 totaling \$27,507,948 have completed due diligence and are being presented at the March 2024 Board Meeting. Eight of these projects are presented to the Board on the Consent Agenda, and eight are presented in this Agenda Item. The remaining five projects from the 2023 grant cycle, totaling \$7,598,148, are anticipated to be recommended at the June 2024 Board Meeting.

The first table below summarizes grant awards currently recommended. The second table summarizes projects from the summer 2023 grant cycle that are undergoing due diligence, anticipated to be recommended at the June 2024 Board Meeting.

Project summaries and links to project details and CEQA documentation follow the tables.

Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Grant Program: March 2024 Recommended Projects

| Project Number | Project Name | Applicant | Subregion | County | Planning or Implementation | Funding Recommended |
|-----------------------|--|--|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1632 | Claremont Forest Resiliency Project | Mule Deer Foundation | Northeast | Plumas | Implementation | \$1,787,000 |
| 1636 | Forest Projects Plan Phase One-B | Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority | South Central | Amador | Implementation | \$4,739,056 |
| 1639 | Parker Peak Forest Restoration and Resilience Project | Tule River Indian Tribe | Southwest | Tulare | Implementation | \$1,709,130 |
| 1641 | Northstar Community Services District Wood Energy Facility | Northstar Community Services District | North Central | Placer | Implementation | \$1,000,000 |
| 1644 | Soldier Mountain WUI Project | Fall River Resource Conservation District | Northwest | Shasta | Implementation | \$1,686,100 |
| 1645* | North Vegetation Assessment, Data Development and Project NEPA | Fall River Resource Conservation District | Northwest Northeast | Siskiyou, Shasta, Modoc, Lassen, Tehama | Planning | \$3,580,500 |
| 1646* | Forest Projects Plan - Phase Two Environmental Planning | Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority | South Central, Southeast | El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Alpine | Planning | \$723,542 |
| 1647 | Taylorville Community Defense Zone Implementation | Sierra Institute for Community and Environment | Northeast | Plumas | Implementation | \$751,665 |

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Agenda Item 9: Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience
Directed Grant Program Award Recommendations
Page 4

| Project Number | Project Name | Applicant | Subregion | County | Planning or Implementation | Funding Recommended |
|----------------|---|--|--------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1654 | South Fork Sacramento Fire Resilience | United States Forest Service, Shasta-Trinity National Forest | Northwest | Siskiyou | Implementation | \$3,628,600 |
| 1666 | Giant Sequoia National Monument Restoration and Stewardship Phase Two | Save the Redwoods League | Southwest | Tulare | Implementation | \$2,225,300 |
| 1669* | Ishi Wilderness Fire Restoration Planning | Resource Conservation District of Tehama County | Northwest | Tehama | Planning | \$641,920 |
| 1672* | Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project | Placer County Water Agency | North Central | Placer | Planning | \$657,500 |
| 1678* | Boca/Hobart Forest Health and Meadow Habitat Restoration | Truckee River Watershed Council | North Central | Nevada | Planning | \$168,820 |
| 1679* | Bungalow Resilience and Fuels Reduction Planning Project | National Forest Foundation | Southwest | Fresno | Planning | \$2,902,715 |
| 1682* | Tribal Wildfire Resilience and Land Use Plan | Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians | South Central | Tuolumne | Planning | \$920,000 |
| 1688* | Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration NEPA Planning | Nevada Irrigation District | Northeast, North Central | Sierra, Nevada | Planning | \$386,100 |

* Projects are on Consent Agenda.

Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Grant Program: Anticipated June 2024 Recommended Projects

| Project Number | Project Name | Applicant | Subregion | County | Planning or Implementation | Funding Recommended |
|-----------------------|---|------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1637 | Little Deer Creek Landscape Resilience Project | Yuba Watershed Institute | North Central | Nevada | Implementation | \$823,500 |
| 1663 | Northwest End Royal Gorge Fuels Reduction | Truckee Donner Land Trust | North Central | Placer | Implementation | \$1,280,200 |
| 1689 | Hat Creek Lumber | Pit Resource Conservation District | Northwest, Northeast | Shasta, Lassen, Modoc | Implementation | \$1,500,000 |
| 1692 | Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project | National Forest Foundation | North Central | Placer | Implementation | \$2,449,498 |
| 1694 | Alpenglow Timber Sawmill Project | Sierra Business Council | North Central | Nevada | Implementation | \$1,544,950 |

a. Project #1632

Claremont Forest Resiliency Project

Mule Deer Foundation
\$1,787,000
Plumas County

The Claremont Forest Resiliency Project is located in Plumas County on Plumas National Forest (PNF) lands, adjacent to the communities of Meadow Valley and Quincy. The project is in the Feather River watershed and borders the Middle Fork of the National Wild and Scenic Feather River. The project is part of the PNF's 30,000-acre landscape-scale Claremont Project focused on protecting Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) communities. The Mule Deer Foundation (MDF) will work with the PNF to protect communities and wildlife habitat by completing a 950-acre project that includes four separate strategically placed treatment units within a mosaic of units implemented by the United States Forest Service (USFS) and other adjacent landowners. The MDF's 950-acre treatment units will accomplish fuels reduction and forest-health treatments utilizing mechanical thinning, hand thinning, piling, and mastication. The location is one of the few remaining green forested areas in the PNF that has not burned in recent years. Treatments will protect forested areas supporting diverse vegetation types and wildlife species, as well as surrounding communities, communication towers, water-district infrastructure, transmission lines, UC Berkeley Forestry Camp, recreation trails, and campgrounds. Additional project partners include UC Berkeley Forests, Feather River Resource Conservation District, Plumas Audubon Society, and the Plumas County Fire Safe Council.

CEQA Compliance: The project is statutorily exempt under Public Resources Code Section 4799.05, subd. (d)(1) for projects undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act, under specified circumstances.

[Access the Project Details and Notice of Exemption \(Project #1632\)](#)

b. Project #1636

Forest Projects Plan Phase One-B

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority
\$4,739,056
Amador County

The Forest Projects Plan Phase One-B project is an implementation project in eastern Amador County. The Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (UMRWA) will thin 1,595 acres of Eldorado National Forest lands with a mixture of mechanical mastication and hand-thinning techniques. This project is a piece of a much larger landscape-level strategy and is the result of a prior SNC planning grant that completed analyses for National Environmental Policy Act and California

Environmental Quality Act on approximately 26,000 acres of Eldorado National Forest land. The project areas were identified as high-priority areas for thinning within the region by the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG), a local forest collaborative. The UMRWA has secured \$11.7 million through grants from CAL FIRE and contributions from the USFS and UMRWA members to start treatment on the larger 26,000-acre project area. The larger plan that UMRWA is implementing is focused in the Upper Mokelumne River watershed, providing downstream benefits to multiple communities within the Sierra Nevada, as well as providing municipal water supply to the nearly two million California residents within East Bay Municipal Utility District's service area in the East Bay. The UMRWA is a Joint Powers Authority comprised of six local water agencies and the counties of Alpine, Amador, and Calaveras, and is partnering with the Eldorado National Forest to complete the project.

CEQA Compliance: The project is statutorily exempt under Public Resources Code Section 4799.05, subd. (d)(1) for projects undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act, under specified circumstances.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1636\)](#)

c. *Project #1639*
Parker Peak Forest Restoration and Resilience Project

Tule River Indian Tribe
\$1,709,130
Tulare County

The Parker Peak Forest Restoration and Resilience Project is a forest-health project by the Tule River Indian Tribe, on the Tule River Indian Reservation within Tulare County. The reservation spans 56,000 acres near the communities of Porterville, Springville, and Camp Nelson. It also shares a boundary with the Sequoia National Forest to the east, northeast, and southeast. This project will fund treatments on 1,500 acres of the larger 2,500-acre Parker Peak Project Area (PPPA). The PPPA includes two giant sequoia groves, the Parker Peak Grove and the Cold Springs Grove; of which the latter grove will be treated with SNC funds. The project focuses on improving forest health and hydrologic function by reducing hazardous fuels accumulations, conducting restoration, and stabilizing burn scars. The 2021 Windy Fire burned approximately 1,400 acres of the PPPA, resulting in widespread tree mortality and erosion. Much of this project is aimed at either restoring areas that burned, or treating areas that either did not burn or burned at low intensity so they will be more resilient to future fires. Input on project design has been incorporated from other members of the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, especially from Save the Redwoods League and the Sequoia National Forest. Additional funding partners on the project include the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, The USFS, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

CEQA Compliance: The project is statutorily exempt under Public Resources Code Section 4799.05, subd. (d)(1) for projects undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act, under specified circumstances.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1639\)](#)

d. Project #1641

Northstar Community Services District Wood Energy Facility

Northstar Community Services District
\$1,000,000
Placer County

The Northstar Community Services District Wood Energy Facility will utilize otherwise un-merchantable forest biomass from regional fuels-management projects to generate renewable heat energy for all the major buildings within the Northstar Village. The wood-energy facility will be able to process up to 3,800 bone dry tons (BDT) of forest residuals per year. The energy facility will be on land owned by the Northstar Community Services District (NCSD). The wood-energy facility will include a cross laminated timber (CLT) building, which will house a boiler system, all the mechanicals, and connective hot water piping to Northstar Village. The connected facilities are currently served by natural gas-fired boilers; thus the proposed project would reduce natural gas use within the community. The total project cost will be about \$8.6 million. The SNC grant will pay for approximately half of the cost of the CLT building package. The wood-energy facility will provide a destination for biomass generated by forest-management projects by the Northstar Community Services District, as well as other fuels generated in the Northstar-Truckee area. Estimates have suggested there is a need to dispose of 80,000 to 120,000 BDT of woody biomass material annually within the Tahoe-Truckee region. While this facility will only accommodate a small portion of this need, it can serve as a model to develop small-scale biomass energy for local needs. Additional funding partners include California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, USFS, Placer County Water Agency, and the Tahoe Fund.

CEQA Compliance: The NCSD, as lead agency under CEQA, prepared an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the NCSD Wood Energy System and filed a Notice of Determination as Lead Agency on June 21, 2023. On November 15, 2023, the NCSD approved an addendum to MND, and filed a Notice of Determination reflecting its approval of the Addendum to the MND on November 17, 2023. On December 14, 2023, the Placer County Planning Commission filed an NOD reflecting its approval of the Conditional Use Permit. Before reaching a decision on the project, the Board must consider the environmental effects of the project. (Cal. Code Regs., § 15096, subd. (f).) When approving/authorizing the project, the Board must certify that it reviewed and considered the information in the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Addendum prior to project approval. (Cal. Code Regs., §15050,

subd. (b).) The SNC may file a Notice of Determination as a Responsible Agency on the IS/MND.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Determination \(Project #1641\)](#)

[Access the IS/MND and associated Lead Agency documents.](#)

e. *Project #1644*

Soldier Mountain WUI Project

Fall River Resource Conservation District
\$1,686,100
Shasta County

The purpose of the Soldier Mountain WUI Project (Project), led by the Fall River Resource Conservation District (RCD), is to reduce fuel levels and increase resilience to wildfire, drought, and insect mortality in a priority wildland urban interface (WUI). The Project is in Shasta County and will improve forest health around a network of Forest Service roads to support efficient emergency response and recreation opportunities. The Project is located entirely on Lassen National Forest lands managed by the Hat Creek Ranger District and is in proximity to the communities of Glenburn, Dana, and Fall River Mills in the Pit River watershed. The Fall River RCD, Lassen National Forest, Pit River Tribe, and project partners have identified the Soldier Mountain WUI Project as high priority due to a combination of excessive fuel levels, proximity to residences and critical infrastructure, and frequency of public use for recreation. The Project includes fuels reduction on 2,336 acres using mechanical fuels-reduction techniques, removal of 9,060 bone dry tons of biomass, enhancement of approximately 13 miles of road network improvement, repair of 0.75 miles of damaged and hazardous livestock fencing, retention of between five and 15 jobs for forestry workforce, and improved access to and utilization of Soldier Mountain Lookout for fire detection. Following the Project, reintroduction of low-severity prescribed fire on 2,336 acres will occur. Additional project partners include the Pit River Tribe, Fall River Fire Safe Council, the Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group, and the McConnell Foundation.

CEQA Compliance: The Project is statutorily exempt under Public Resources Code Section 4799.05, subd. (d)(1) for projects undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act, under specified circumstances.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1644\)](#)

f. Project #1647

Taylorsville Community Defense Zone Implementation

Sierra Institute for Community and Environment
\$751,665
Plumas County

The Sierra Institute for Community and Environment will implement forest thinning and fuels reduction for a strategic shaded fuel break around the community of Taylorsville by working with nine private landowners. The approximately 300-acre Taylorsville Community Defense Zone (TCDZ), located in Plumas County, lies adjacent to the Plumas National Forest and near the communities of Greenville, Crescent Mills, and Genesee. Treatments will reduce the risk to the community during future wildfire events by creating a stand structure intended to moderate fire behavior and provide safe and effective opportunities for fire-suppression actions. The TCDZ will directly protect approximately 88 homes and 140 residents and increase the resilience of a critical portion of remaining green forest in Indian Valley following the 2021 Dixie Fire. Project partners include the Taylorsville Firewise Committee, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, the University of California Cooperative Extension, and the Plumas National Forest.

CEQA Compliance: The project is categorically exempt under California Code of Regulations, tit. 14, section 15304, Minor Alterations to Land, for minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation, which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention reviewed the project and issued Forest Fire Prevention Exemption No. 2-23EX-00799-PLU under the Forest Practice Act, Cal. Code Regs. title 14, section 1038.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1647\)](#)

g. Project #1654

South Fork Sacramento Fire Resilience

United States Forest Service, Shasta-Trinity National Forest
\$3,628,600
Siskiyou County

The South Fork Sacramento Fire Resilience project, led by the United States Forest Service (USFS) Shasta-Trinity National Forest, is a 1,157-acre multi-benefit forest-health project within a larger 21,400-acre area that has been analyzed under NEPA. The project is located entirely on lands administered by the Shasta-Trinity National Forest within Siskiyou County, near the City of Mt. Shasta, along the South Fork Sacramento River, and the Pacific Crest Trail, numerous high alpine lakes, and year-round high-use recreation amenities exist within the project area. The purpose of the project is to improve fire resilience of forested ecosystems and to improve public safety by reducing the likelihood of severe wildfire within the wildland urban interface.

The project will improve wildlife habitat and restore the natural role of fire to the ecosystem. The project, in concert with treatments on the entire 21,400-acre analysis area, will allow for the reintroduction of prescribed fire to a 16,285-acre landscape in the headwaters of the Sacramento River. Partners include the Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District, Mount Shasta Fire Safe Council (FSC), Siskiyou County FSC, United States Fish & Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish & Wildlife, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Pacific Forest Trust, Siskiyou County Public Works.

CEQA Compliance: The project is statutorily exempt under Public Resources Code Section 4799.05, subd. (d)(1) for projects undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act, under specified circumstances.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1654\)](#)

h. Project #1666

Giant Sequoia National Monument Restoration and Stewardship Phase Two

Save the Redwoods League
\$2,225,300
Tulare County

The Giant Sequoia National Monument Restoration and Stewardship Phase Two is a 1,462-acre forest-health project led by Save the Redwoods League (League). The project will take place in two giant sequoia groves, the Alder Creek Grove and the Freeman Grove, both managed by the Sequoia National Forest. The project is located entirely within Tulare County on the Western Divide Ranger District around 6,500ft, near the small community of Sequoia Crest. A continuation of other Save the Redwood League treatments within Giant Sequoia National Monument, ecological-restoration activities will reduce hazardous fuel loads using treatments designed to protect monarch giant sequoias, restore fire and drought resistance, promote reforestation in areas that previously burned, prepare for more regular use of prescribed fire, and to improve habitat complexity across the area. Both phases of this project are part of the U.S. Forest Service Giant Sequoia Emergency Response and help meet the goals of the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, of which the League and Sequoia National Forest are both members. Project partners include Sequoia National Forest, Tule River Tribe, and Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions.

CEQA Compliance: The project is statutorily exempt under Public Resources Code Section 4799.05, subd. (d)(1) for projects undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act, under specified circumstances.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1666\)](#)

Next Steps

Upon authorization by the Board, staff will file all adopted CEQA documentation and prepare agreements for each authorized grant.

Staff will continue due diligence on the five remaining recommended projects, with anticipated award recommendations to the Board in June 2024.

Staff will continue consultation with proponents of projects that were not recommended for funding regarding additional project development and identification of alternate potential funding sources.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board:

- a. **Authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Claremont Forest Resiliency Project (1632), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$1,787,000 to the Mule Deer Foundation, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.**
- b. **Authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Forest Projects Plan Phase One-B project (1636), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$4,739,056 to the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.**
- c. **Authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Parker Peak Forest Restoration and Resilience Project (1639), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$1,709,130 to the Tule River Indian Tribe, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.**
- d. **Certify that it reviewed and considered the information in the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Addendum, and if the Board concurs with the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Addendum, authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Determination as a responsible agency for the Northstar Community Services District Wood Energy Facility project (1641), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$1,000,000 to the Northstar Community Services District, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.**
- e. **Authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Soldier Mountain WUI Project (1644), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$1,686,100 to the Fall River Resource Conservation District, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.**
- f. **Authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Taylorsville Community Defense Zone Implementation project (1647), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$751,665 to the Sierra Institute for**

Community and Environment, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

- g. Authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the South Fork Sacramento Fire Resilience project (1654), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$3,628,600 to the United States Forest Service, Shasta-Trinity National Forest, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.**
- h. Authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Giant Sequoia National Monument Restoration and Stewardship Phase Two project (1666), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$2,225,300 to the Save the Redwoods League, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.**

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1632

SNC ID Number: 1632

Applicant: Mule Deer Foundation

Project Title: Claremont Forest Resiliency Project

SNC Subregion: Northeast

County: Plumas

Funding Amount Requested: \$1,787,000

Funding Amount Recommended: \$1,787,000

Total Project Cost: \$15,537,000

Project Scope / Description

The Claremont Forest Resiliency Project is located in Plumas County adjacent to the communities of Meadow Valley and Quincy, the county seat. Situated in the Plumas National Forest (PNF), the project is in the Feather River watershed and borders the Middle Fork of the National Wild and Scenic Feather River. The Mule Deer Foundation (MDF) will work with the PNF to protect communities and wildlife habitat by completing a 950-acre project that includes four separate strategically placed treatment units within a mosaic of units implemented by the United States Forest Service (USFS) and other adjacent landowners.

The project is part of the PNF's 30,000-acre landscape-scale Claremont Project focused on protecting Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) communities. The MDF's 950-acre treatment units will accomplish fuels reduction and forest-health treatments utilizing mechanical thinning, hand thinning, piling, and mastication. The project will accomplish removal of roughly 309 acres of understory biomass up to 12 inches in diameter, 498 acres of hand thinning and piling of understory biomass up to 12 inches in diameter on slopes too steep for mechanical equipment, and 143 acres of mastication of brush and understory trees up to 10 inches in diameter. Depending on available markets for biomass material at the time of removal, the material will either be transported to a biomass facility or piled and burned. The areas of implementation are geographically separated into four separate units that will complement other projects nearby. The project will protect forested areas supporting diverse vegetation types and wildlife species, as well as surrounding communities, communication towers, water district infrastructure, transmission lines, UC Berkeley Forestry Camp, recreation trails and

campgrounds. The location is one of the few remaining green forested areas in the PNF that has not burned in recent years.

The project falls within the PNF's Wildfire Crisis Strategy Community Protection landscape aimed at reducing risk of wildfire to communities and critical infrastructure, improving ingress and egress to communities, and reducing potential for extreme fire behavior in the WUI. The initiative focuses on community zones that have been determined to have moderate, high, or very high risk of wildfire hazard potential. Nearby forest health and fuels projects include Bucks Lake Hazardous Fuels Reduction (2,063 acres), Butterfly Twain Fuels Reduction and Landscape Restoration Project (4,642 acres with a portion funded by SNC 1032), and the recently SNC-funded American Valley Community Services District Hazardous Fuels Reduction (SNC 1081 planning and SNC 1567 implementation on 169 acres).

The MDF is a nonprofit organization working to conserve mule deer, black-tailed deer, and their habitat. Over the last three years, the MDF has helped implement over 334 projects affecting 391,921 acres across the west with over \$76 million MDF and partner dollars put directly onto the ground. The MDF has a Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA) with Region 5 of the USFS and nine active Supplemental Project Agreements (SPA) for implementation of habitat and forest-health projects. This includes a SPA with the PNF, which covers the entire forest for conservation. The Claremont project will be implemented under a second SPA with the PNF tiered to MDF's new national MSA with the USFS. The MDF has a Habitat Partnership Coordinator who oversees all agreements in Region 5 and a Conservation Forester, who works in a shared position with the USFS on the PNF. This is MDF's first grant with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

The PNF is the primary project partner. Secondary partners include UC Berkeley Forests, Feather River Resource Conservation District, Plumas Audubon Society, and the Plumas County Fire Safe Council. The project leverages \$13,750,000 dedicated to the USFS's Claremont Project by way of the federally funded Wildfire Crisis Strategy.

The objectives of the Claremont Forest Resiliency Project directly align with California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan and SNC's Watershed Improvement Program by restoring the health and resilience of California's forested landscapes. Reducing fuel loading and continuity by removing overstocked trees and vegetation will promote the health of the forest ecosystem by decreasing competition for resources among retained trees. These efforts will improve the safety of local communities and provide economic opportunities to the local workforce. The project will help to protect municipal water supply for the town of Quincy, as well as protect the Middle Fork Feather River, a significant contributor to the State Water Project that provides drinking water to millions of Californians.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Units laid out, flagged | June – August 2024 |
| Bid solicitation | July 2024 |
| Bid selection/awards | August 2024 |
| Pre/post implementation monitoring photos | June 2024 – December 2026 |
| Monthly mapped updates of areas/acres treated | Monthly |
| First season of implementation | August 2024 – December 2024 |
| Second season of implementation | June 2025 – December 2025 |
| Third season of implementation | June 2026 – December 2026 |
| Sign – plan, construction, installation | January 2025 – August 2025 |
| SNC six-month Progress Reports | Every sixmonths |
| SNC Final Report with Performance Measures Reporting | December 2026 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | December 31, 2026 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Project Management | \$145,000 |
| Implementation | \$1,425,000 |
| Supplies – Field gear, PPE, Sign | \$2,430 |
| Travel | \$5,070 |
| Publications, Media/Video | \$10,000 |
| Equipment Rental - UTV | \$30,000 |
| Administrative Costs | \$169,500 |
| Total | \$1,787,000 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Plumas National Forest, Supervisor's Office
- Plumas National Forest, Mount Hough Ranger District
- University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, Cooperative Extension
- Feather River Resource Conservation District

Opposition:

- None received

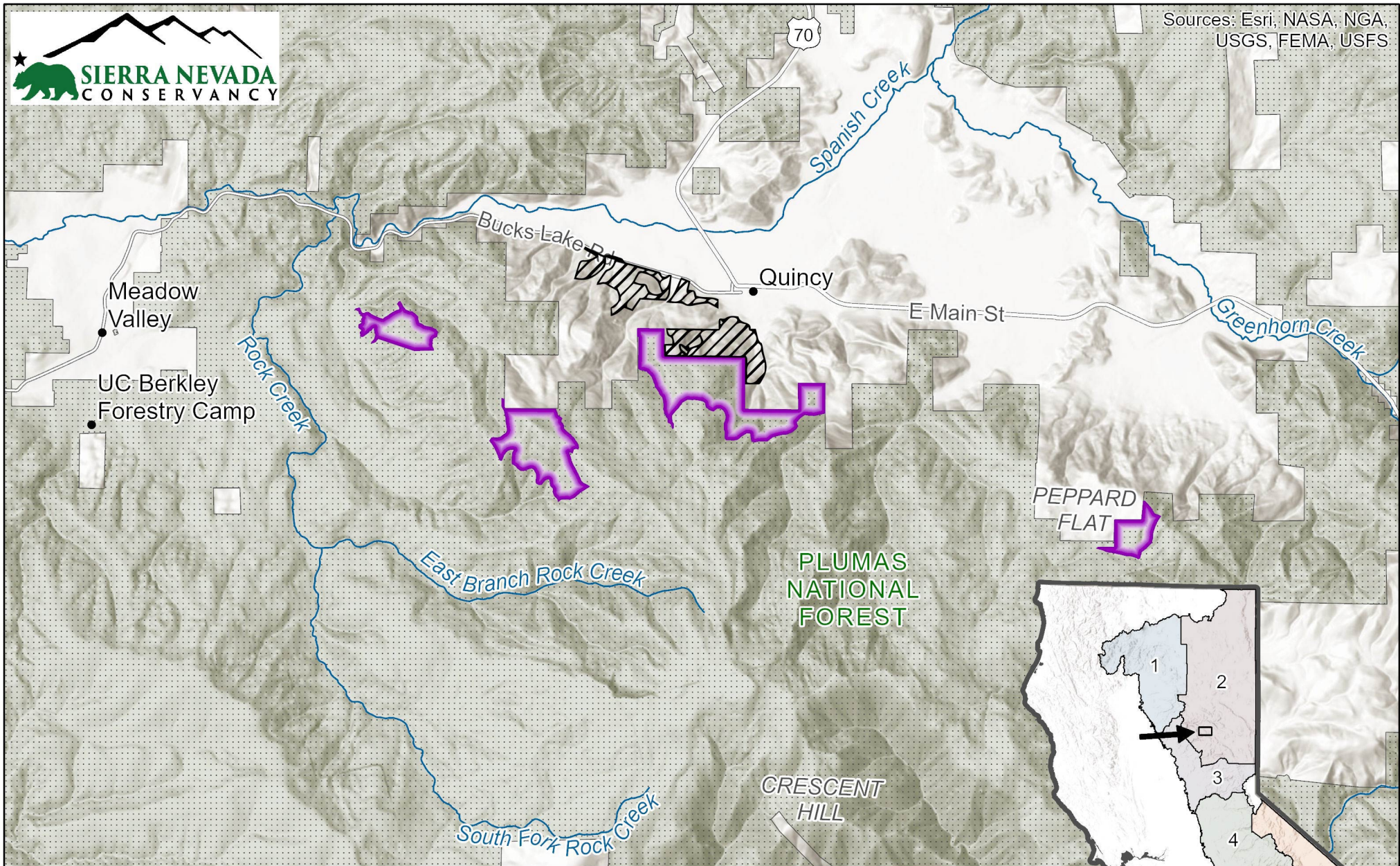
Project Performance Measures

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Acres of Land Improved or Restored



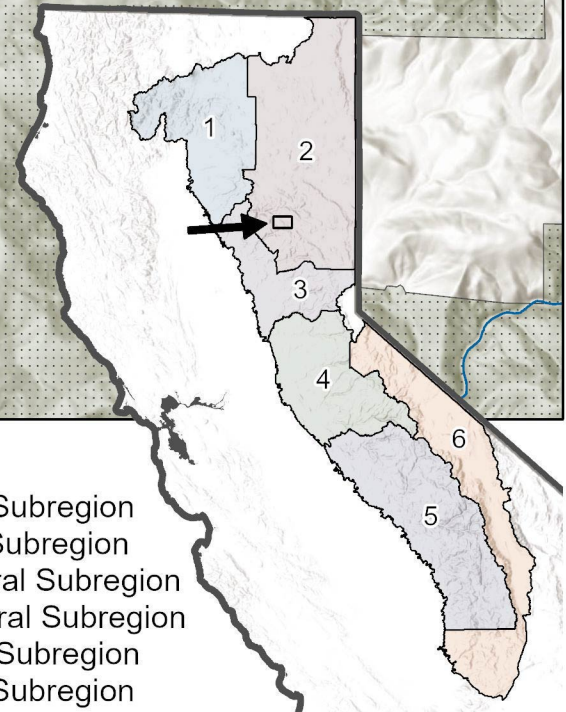
Sources: Esri, NASA, NGA,
USGS, FEMA, USFS

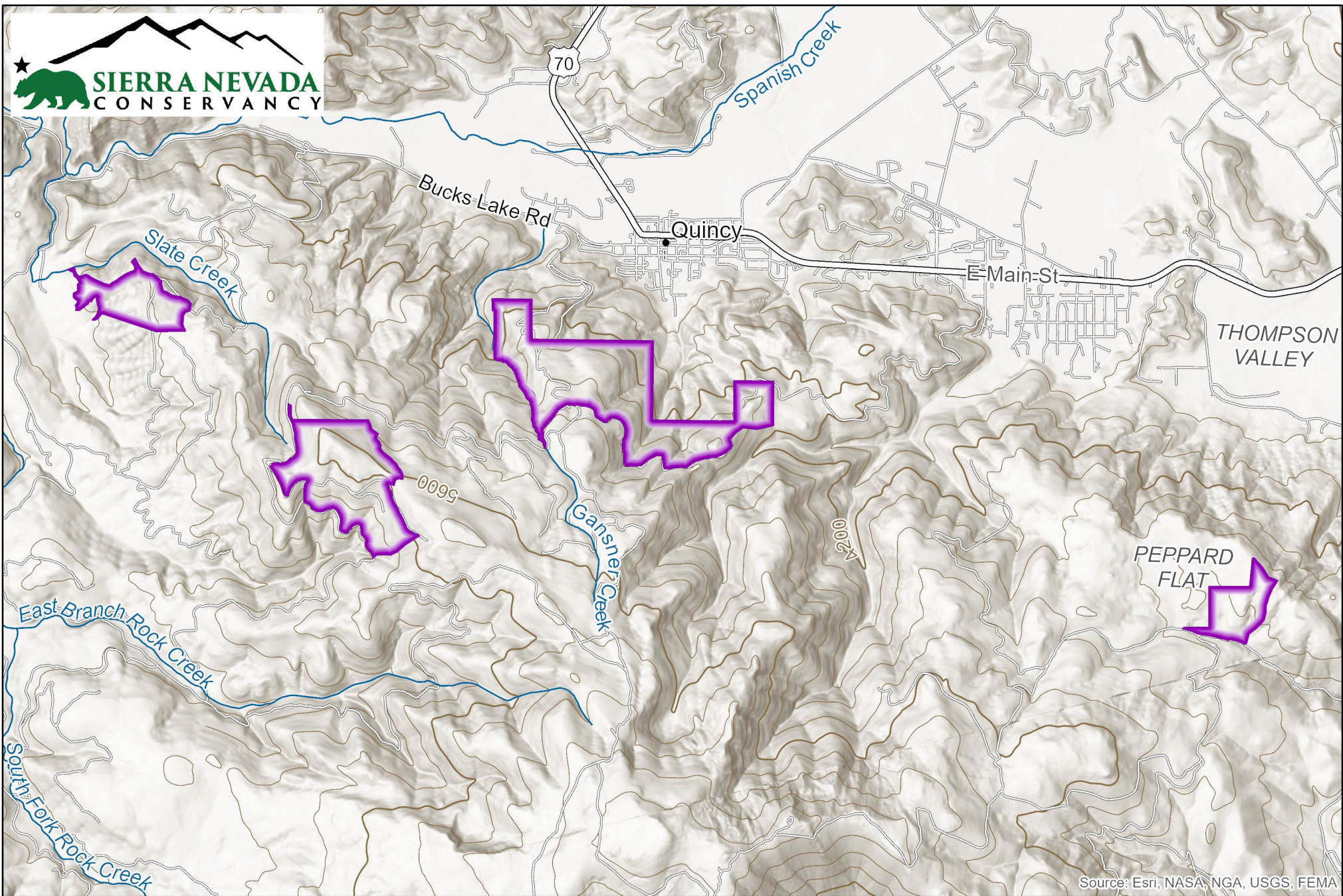


1632: Claremont Forest Resiliency Project Mule Deer Foundation



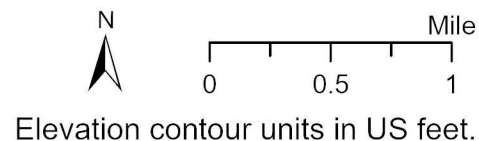
1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion

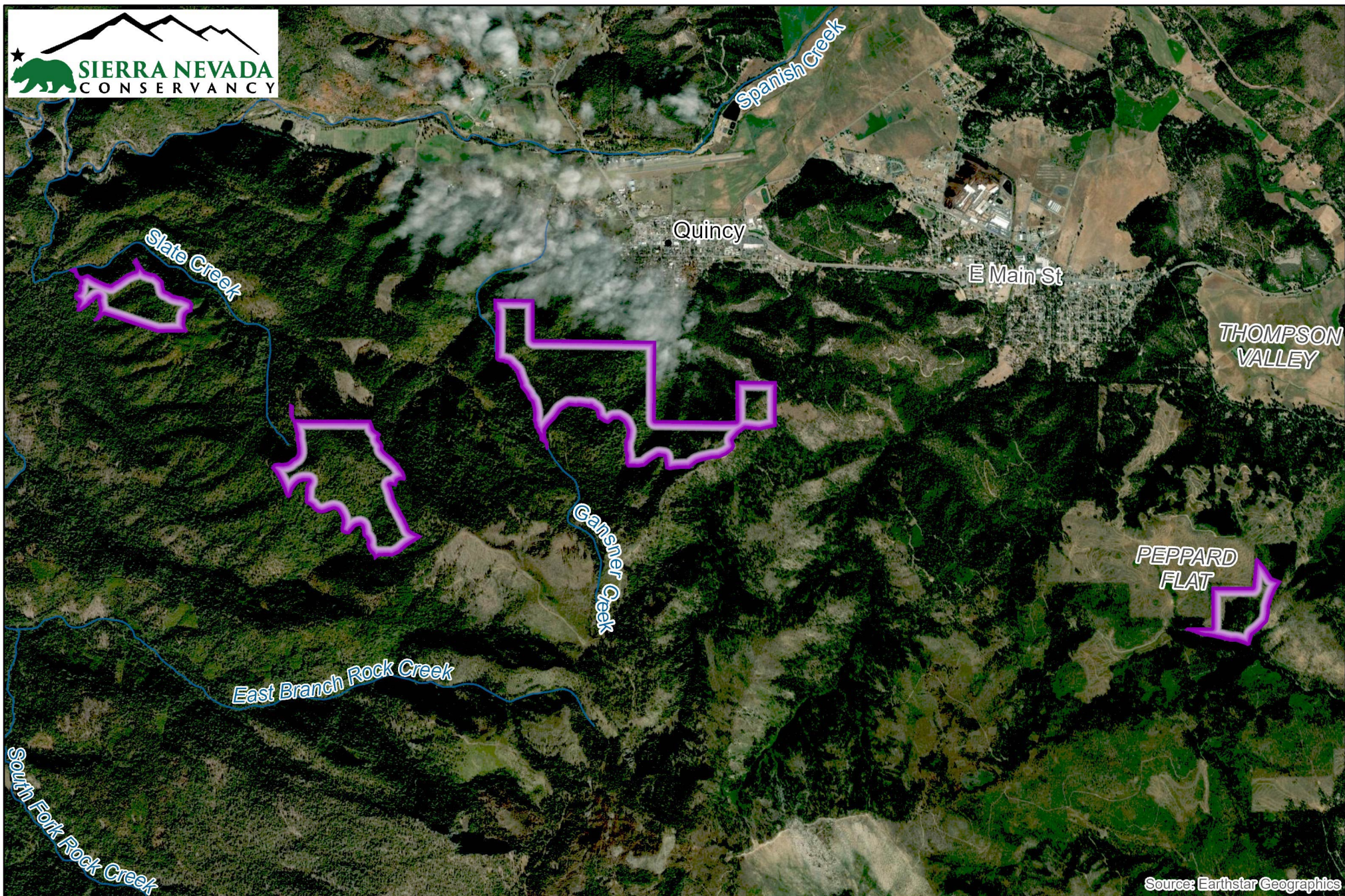




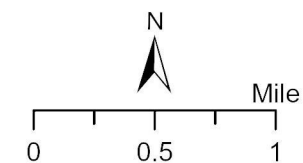
1632: Claremont Forest
Resiliency Project
Mule Deer Foundation

 Project Area





1632: Claremont Forest
Resiliency Project
Mule Deer Foundation



To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

To: Plumas County Clerk-Recorder
520 Main Street, Room 102
Quincy, CA 95971

Project Title: Claremont Forest Resiliency Project (SNC 1632)

Project Location – Specific: Approximately 950 acres in Plumas National Forest, Mount Hough Ranger District, adjacent to the south side of the communities of Meadow Valley and Quincy, in the Feather River watershed. Project center at approximately - 120.945, 39.914 degrees.

Project Location - City: Adjacent to the south side of Quincy

Project Location - County: Plumas

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is funding the #1632 Claremont Forest Resiliency Project (Proposed Project) located in Plumas County adjacent to the communities of Meadow Valley and Quincy, the County seat. Situated in the Plumas National Forest (PNF), the project is in the Feather River watershed and borders the Middle Fork of the National Wild and Scenic Feather River. The Mule Deer Foundation (MDF) will work with the PNF to protect communities and wildlife habitat by completing an approximately 950-acre project that includes four separate strategically placed treatment units within a mosaic of units implemented by the United States Forest Service (USFS) and other adjacent landowners. The MDF's treatment units will accomplish fuels reduction and forest-health treatments utilizing activities which include but are not limited to mechanical thinning (including mastication), hand thinning, and piling, following a variable density thinning approach. Depending on available markets for biomass material at the time of removal, the material will either be transported to a biomass facility or piled and burned. The project is part of the PNF's 30,000-acre landscape-scale Claremont Forest Resiliency Project focused on reducing the risk of high-severity wildfire threat to communities and wildlife habitat, improving forest health, controlling non-native invasive species, and improving watershed conditions.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Mule Deer Foundation
Chris Daunt, Conservation Forester
159 Lawrence Street, Quincy, CA 95971
530-400-2414

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, section 4799.05, subd. (d)(1)

Reasons why project is exempt:

Public Resources Code, section 4799.05 statutorily exempts from CEQA projects for prescribed fire, reforestation, habitat restoration, thinning, or fuel-reduction projects, or to related activities included in the project description, undertaken, in whole or in part, on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. The SNC is funding the project to conduct fuels reduction and forest-health treatments in the PNF. The project was reviewed in its entirety under NEPA in the PNF Claremont Forest Resiliency Project Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impacts, with final Decision Notice for the EA/FONSI documents signed on April 7, 2023.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Mary Akens

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-450-5177

If filed by applicant: N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes___ No ___

Signature:_____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Lead Agency: Yes

Signed by Applicant: No

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.**Date received for filing at OPR:** _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1636

SNC ID Number: 1636

Applicant: Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority

Project Title: Forest Projects Plan Phase One-B

SNC Subregion: South Central

County: Amador

Funding Amount Requested: \$4,761,456

Funding Amount Recommended: \$4,739,056

Total Project Cost: \$16,461,793

Project Scope / Description

The Forest Projects Plan Phase One-B (Project) is an implementation project in eastern Amador County. The Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (UMRWA) will thin 1,595 acres of Eldorado National Forest lands with a mixture of mechanical mastication and hand-thinning techniques.

The Project is the result of a prior Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) planning grant that completed analyses for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) on approximately 26,000 acres of Eldorado National Forest land. The Project areas were identified as high-priority areas for thinning within the region by the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG), a local forest collaborative. The UMRWA will target 1,595 of these high-priority acres and conduct field preparations, including flagging of unit boundaries and sensitive exclusion areas. UMRWA will complete pre-commercial thinning operations with a majority of the work being mechanical mastication and, where slopes are too steep, hand thinning. Mastication units will spread chips across the forest floor and hand thinning units will use a combination of lop-and-scatter, chipping, and piling for future burning.

This Project is just a piece of a much larger landscape-level strategy. UMRWA, the United States Forest Service (USFS), and ACCG finished NEPA/CEQA clearance on approximately 26,000 acres of Eldorado National Forest land in late 2022. The UMRWA has already secured funding to start treatment on thousands of acres through grants from CAL FIRE and contributions from the Forest Service and UMRWA members.

The UMRWA is a Joint Powers Authority comprised of six local water agencies and the counties of Alpine, Amador, and Calaveras. The UMRWA's mission is to enhance water supply and protect water quality and the environment, to perform water resource planning for the region, and to seek and secure grant and other funding for local agency implementation activities. The Project takes place completely on the Amador District of the Eldorado National Forest. This district has been a key partner in the ACCG and has a current Master Stewardship Agreement with UMRWA.

The UMRWA is partnering with the Eldorado National Forest and members of the ACCG to complete the Project. The UMRWA has already secured \$11.7 million in funding from CAL FIRE, USFS, and its own member contributions to start treatment on the larger 26,000-acre project area.

The outcome of this Project meets the "Healthy Watersheds and Forests" goal in the SNC Strategic Plan. The larger plan that UMRWA is implementing is focused in the Upper Mokelumne River watershed, providing downstream benefits to multiple communities within the Sierra Nevada, as well as providing municipal water supply to the nearly two million California residents within East Bay Municipal Utility District's service area in the East Bay.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|--|---|
| Six-month Progress Reports | Every six months through project completion |
| Field Preparation | May 2024 – September 2027 |
| Forest Thinning on 1,595 acres | September 2024 – September 2027 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | December 31, 2027 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|---|--------------------|
| Project Management | \$200,000 |
| Environmental Monitoring and Compliance | \$230,000 |
| Hand Treatments and Mastication | \$3,801,300 |
| Administrative Costs | \$507,756 |
| Total | \$4,739,056 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group
- California Senator Marie Alvarado-Gil
- Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions
- East Bay Municipal Utility District
- Foothill Conservancy
- Jackson Valley Irrigation District
- Pacific Gas and Electric Company
- Ray Cablayan, District Ranger, Calaveras District, Stanislaus National Forest

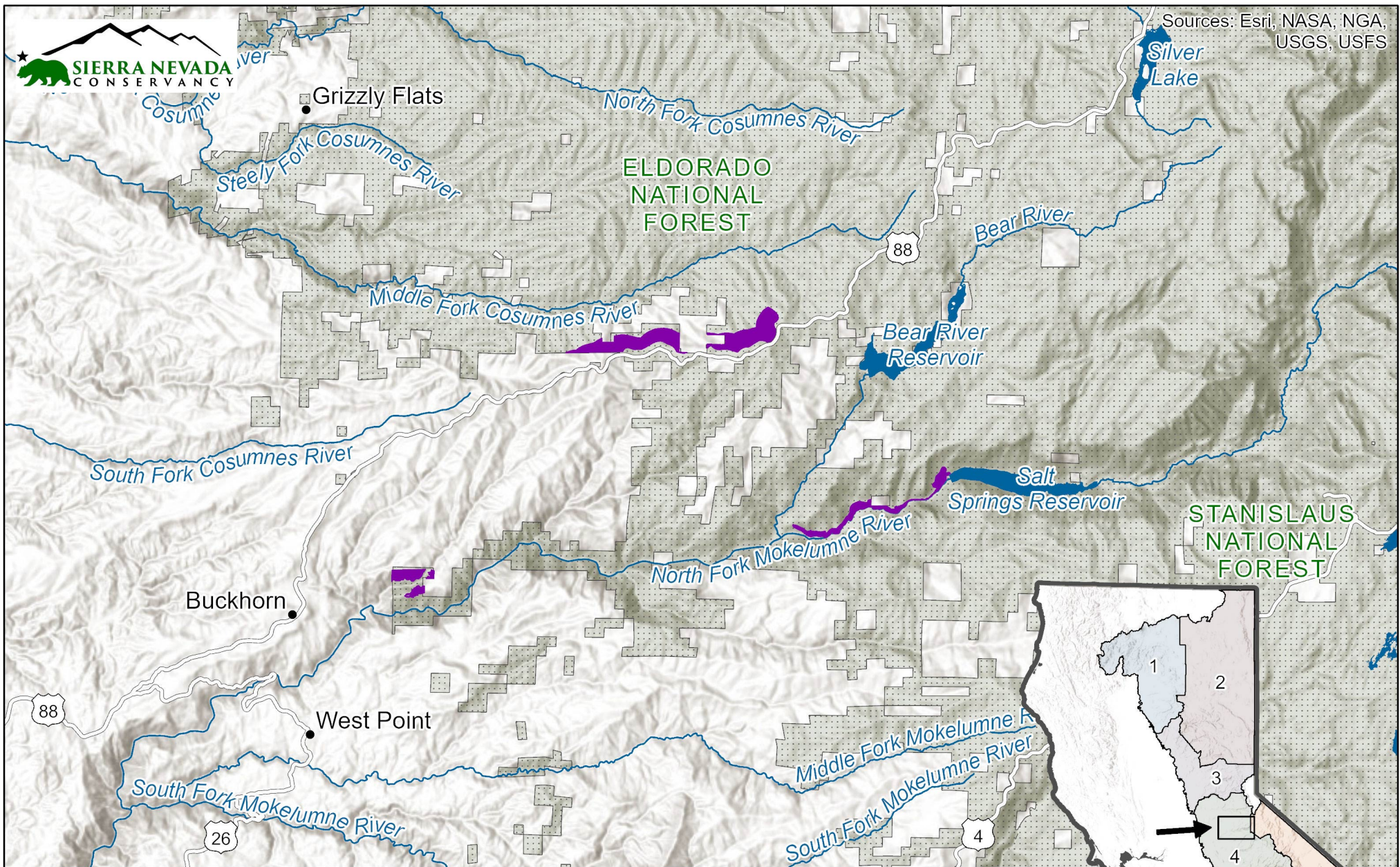
Opposition:

- None received

Project Performance Measures

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Acres of Land Improved or Restored




1636: Forest Projects Plan

Phase One-B

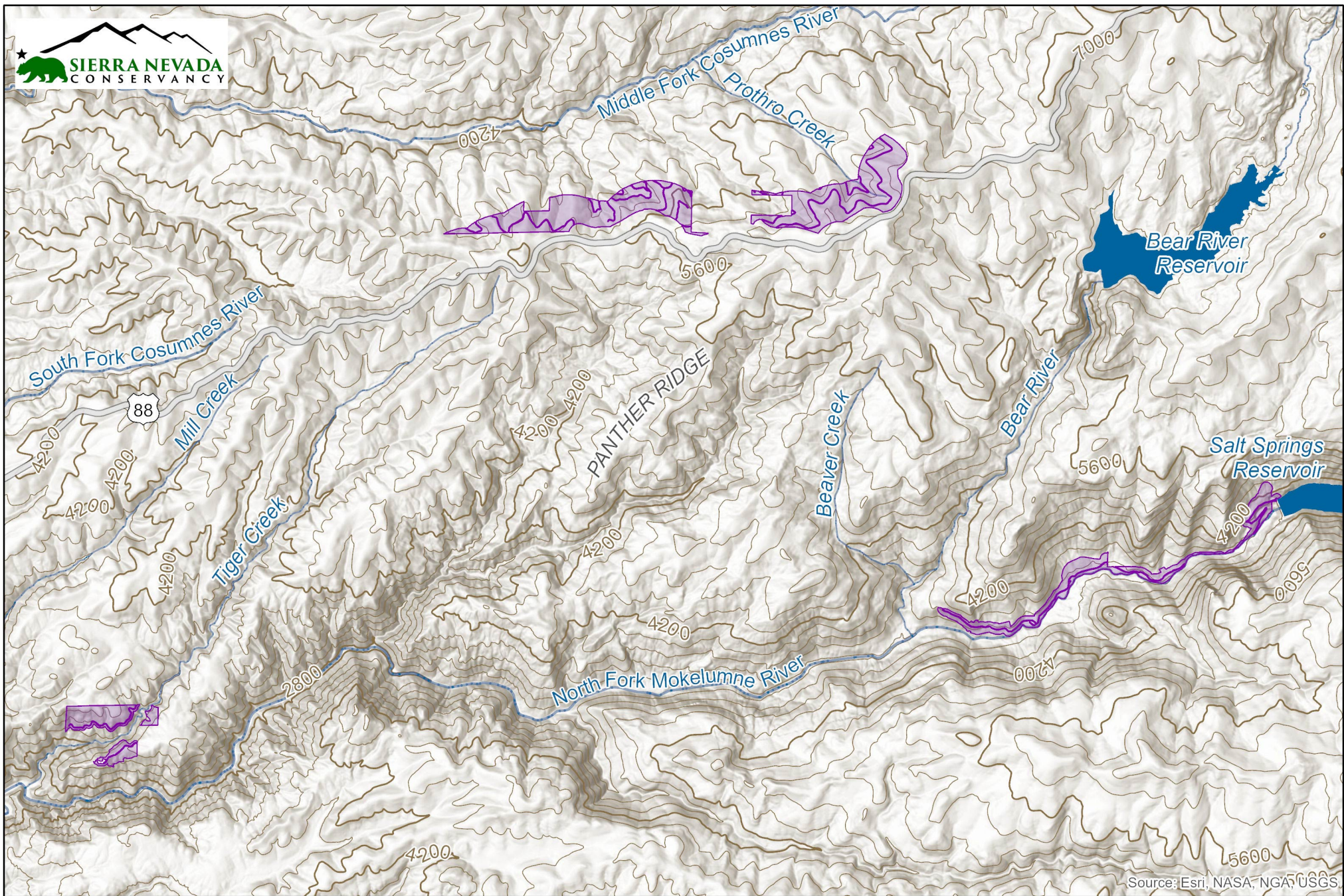
Upper Mokelumne River
Watershed Authority

0 2.5 5 Miles



-  US Forest Service
-  Project Area

1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion



1636: Forest Projects Plan Phase One-B

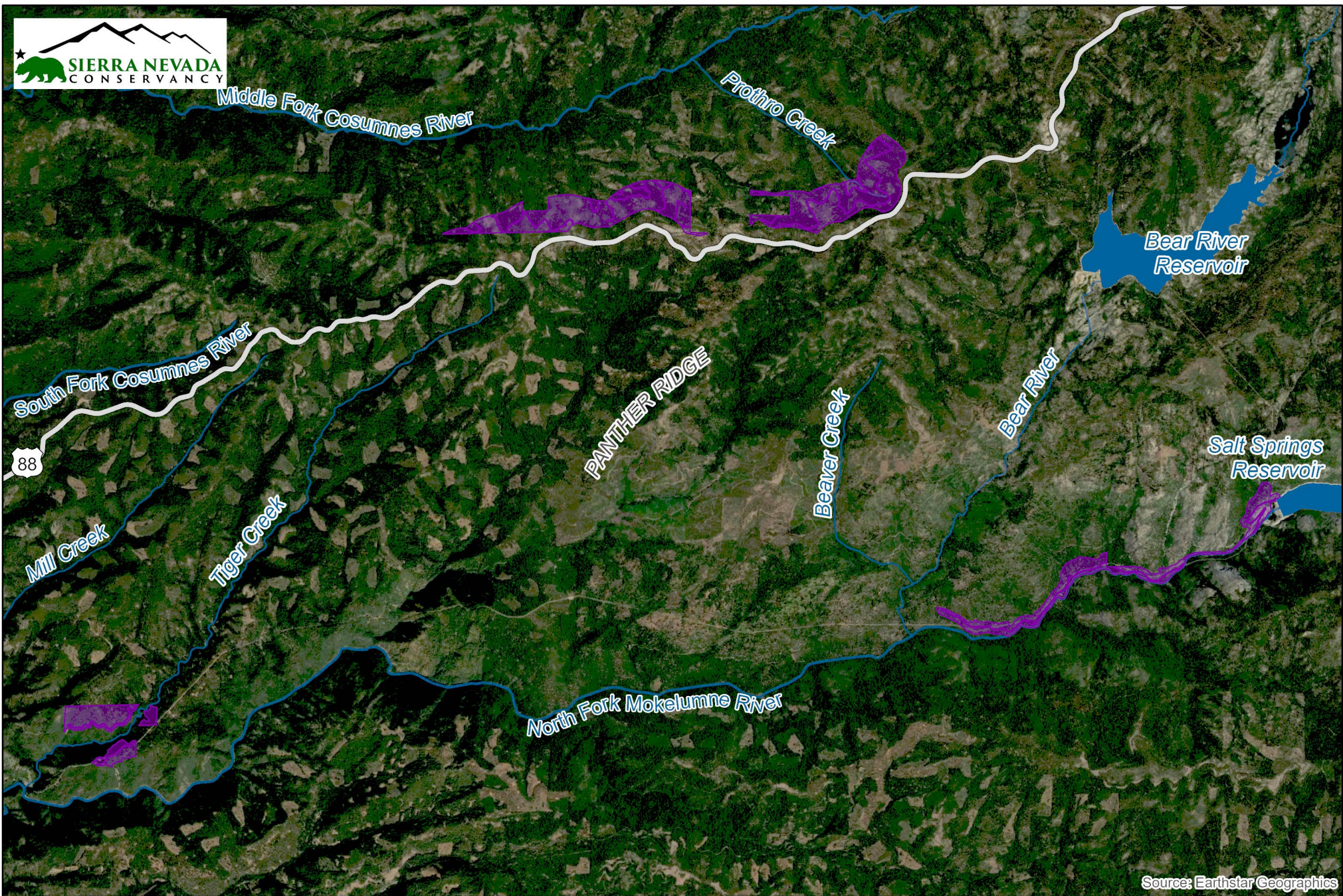
Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority

 Project Area



Miles
0 1 2

Elevation contour units in US feet.



1636: Forest Projects Plan Phase One-B

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority

 Project Area



Miles
0 1 2

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

To: Amador County Clerk
810 Court Street
Jackson, CA 95642

Project Title: Forest Projects Plan Phase One-B (SNC 1636)

Project Location – Specific: Eldorado National Forest, Amador Ranger District. Three project areas 1) along Salt Springs Road west of Salt Springs Reservoir, 2) approximately three miles west of Lower Bear River Reservoir, north of State Highway 88, 3) along Salt Springs and Tiger Reservoir roads, in the vicinity of Tiger Creek Forebay.

Project Location - City: Five – 15 miles east of the town of Pioneer.

Project Location - County: Amador

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is funding the #1636 Forest Projects Plan Phase One-B (Project), which is a minimum 1,595-acre fuels reduction and forest-health implementation project within Eldorado National Forest (ENF) in the Upper Mokelumne River watershed in eastern Amador County, and implemented in partnership between the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (UMRWA) and the ENF. Activities under the Project include, but are not limited to: Completing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) required, pre-implementation natural and cultural resource surveys; mechanical thinning/mastication with chips to be spread on the forest floor; and/or hand-thinning. The Project is part of the larger landscape-scale 25,671-acre ENF Forest Projects Plan Phase One project, a timber stand and wildlife-habitat improvement and protection project designed to help prevent high-intensity, larger scale wildfires, improve forest conditions, and protect important wildlife habitat and other resources. Phase One consists of non-commercial actions to reduce forest ladder fuels and implement other forest-management activities on the Amador Ranger District.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority
Karen Quidachay, Program Director
2864 Ray Lawyer Drive, Suite 205, Placerville, California 95667
530-903-0116

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, section 4799.05, subd. (d)(1)

Reasons why project is exempt:

Public Resources Code, section 4799.05 statutorily exempts from CEQA projects for prescribed fire, reforestation, habitat restoration, thinning, or fuel-reduction projects, or to related activities included in the project description, undertaken, in whole or in part, on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the NEPA if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. The SNC is providing funding to the UMRWA to conduct fuels reduction and forest-health treatments in the ENF. The Project was reviewed in its entirety under NEPA in the ENF Projects Plan Phase One Decision Notice signed on November 23, 2022.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Mary Akens

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-450-5177

If filed by applicant: N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes __ No __

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Lead Agency: Yes

Signed by Applicant: No

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. **Date received for filing at OPR:** _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1639

SNC ID Number: 1639

Applicant: Tule River Indian Tribe

Project Title: Parker Peak Forest Restoration and Resilience Project

SNC Subregion: Southwest

County: Tulare

Funding Amount Requested: \$1,709,130

Funding Amount Recommended: \$1,709,130

Total Project Cost: \$6,384,130

Project Scope / Description

The Parker Peak Forest Restoration and Resilience Project is a forest-health project by the Tule River Indian Tribe, on the Tule River Indian Reservation. This project will fund treatments on 1,500 acres of the larger 2,500-acre Parker Peak Project Area (PPPA), located within Tulare County. The reservation spans 56,000 acres near the communities of Porterville, Springville, and Camp Nelson. It also shares a boundary with the Sequoia National Forest to the east, northeast, and southeast. The PPPA includes two giant sequoia groves, the Parker Peak Grove and the Cold Springs Grove; of which the latter grove will be treated with Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) funds.

The project focuses on improving forest health and hydrologic function by reducing hazardous fuels accumulations, conducting restoration, and stabilizing burn scars. The 2021 Windy Fire burned approximately 1,400 acres of the PPPA, resulting in widespread tree mortality and erosion. Much of this project is aimed at either restoring areas that burned or treating areas that either did not burn or burned at low intensity so they will be more resilient to future fires. All activities are consistent with goals and methodologies described in the reservation's Forest Management Plan and have been unanimously approved by the Tule River Tribal Council. The Bureau of Indian Affairs completed National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance in 2023.

The project complements ongoing activities on nearby Sequoia National Forest lands, especially within Sequoia National Monument where several other giant sequoia groves are also being treated. This includes grove treatments that the SNC is funding, including the Alder Grove and Freeman Grove, as well as data collection and planning related to the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition. Other areas of the reservation are also receiving

treatments, namely the Black Mountain Grove where treatments are also focused on post-fire recovery and fuel reduction.

The Tule River Tribe is predominantly descended from the Yokut-speaking people who once inhabited the now drained wetlands of Lake Tulare and the San Joaquin Valley. In the late 1800s, these lands were converted to agriculture, forcing cultures to become confined to the unplowable, rocky land along the South Fork Tule River. In addition to Yokut-speaking people, this homeland has also absorbed people from the Tübatulabal, Mono, Yowlumne, and Wukchumni who were driven out of their ancestral homes. The Tule River Indian Reservation is a treasure that has been managed sovereignly for 150 years, with the Parker Peak area holding unique and special cultural importance.

Input on project design has been incorporated from other members of the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, especially from Save the Redwoods League and the Sequoia National Forest. In addition to SNC funding, the Tule River Tribe is providing funds for the project and has secured additional funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Forest Service. Further funds in support of the project are anticipated from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

This grant helps the SNC meet its goals of creating more fire-resilient forest landscapes, reducing wildfire risk, and accelerating recovery from recent fires within the Sierra-Cascade Region. The project occurs within the South Fork Tule River watershed, which is also the main source of drinking water for the reservation. Increased hydrologic function resulting from this project will directly benefit the people and ecology of the Tule River.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|---|---|
| Six-month progress reports | Every six months until project completion |
| Project initialization | May 2024 |
| Identify and prepare contractors | June 2024 |
| Tribal hand-crews conduct thinning and chipping | July 2024 |
| 1,500 acres of treatments within the Parker Peak Project Area | 2024-2027 |
| Final Report with performance measures reporting | 2024-2027 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | December 1, 2027 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Project management | \$421,200 |
| Project contracting | \$940,000 |
| Supplies | \$85,000 |
| Travel | \$15,000 |
| Tribal participation | \$25,000 |
| Administrative costs | \$222,930 |
| Total | \$1,709,130 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Sequoia National Forest
- USFS Pacific Southwest Regional Office
- University of California, Berkeley
- Save the Redwoods League
- Tulare County

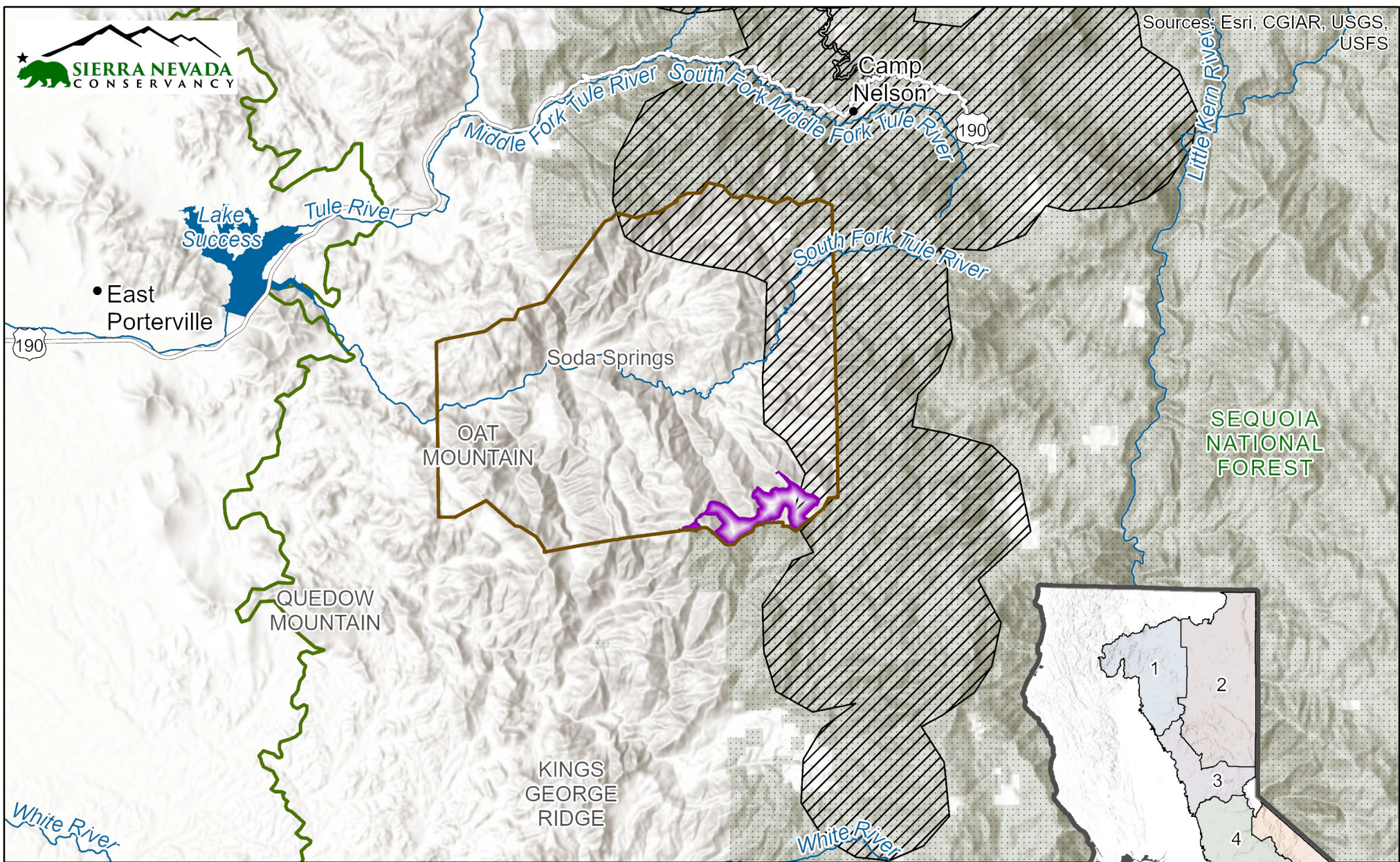
Opposition:

- None received

Project Performance Measures

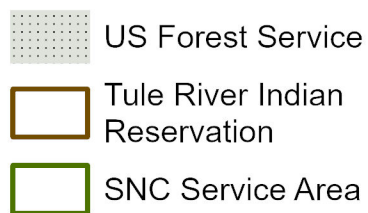
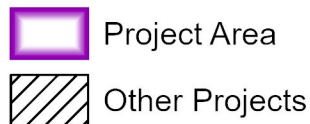
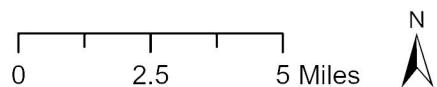
There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Acres of land improved or restored.

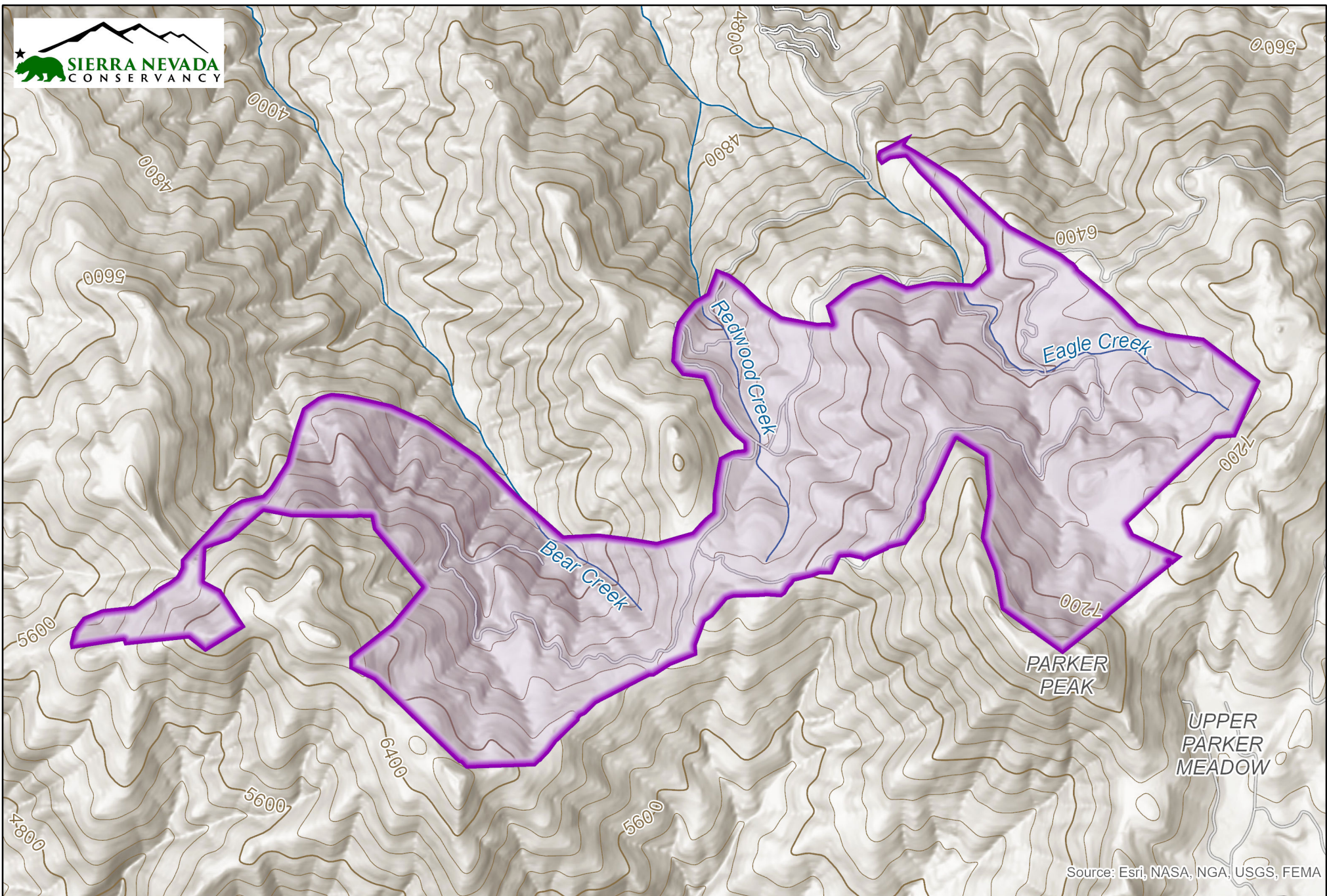


1639: Parker Peak Forest Restoration and Resilience Project

Tule River Indian Tribe

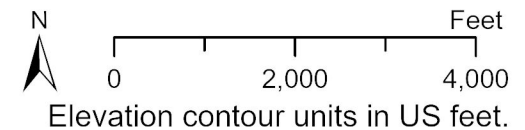


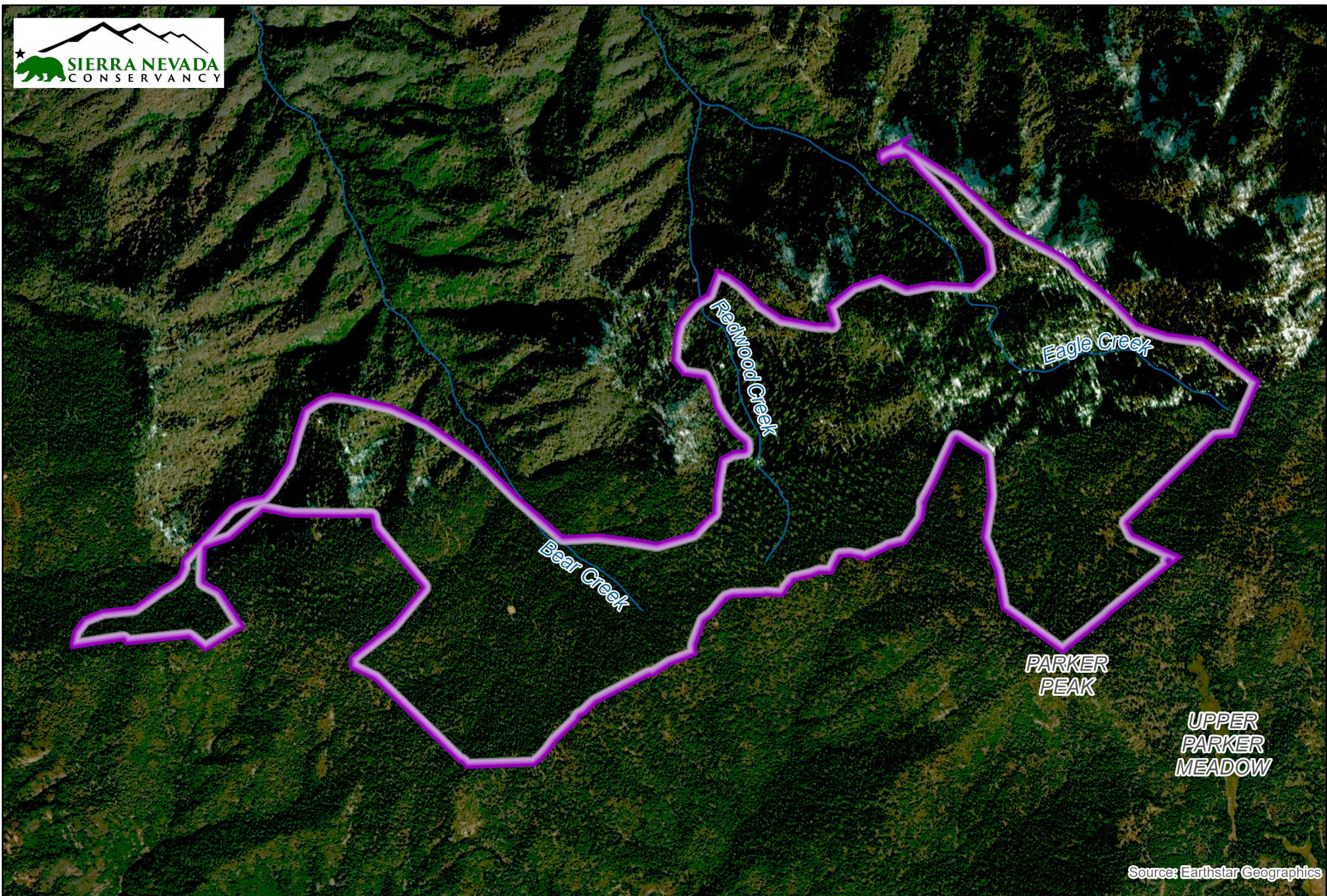
1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion



1639: Parker Peak Forest Restoration and Resilience Project
Tule River Indian Tribe

 Project Area





1639: Parker Peak Forest Restoration and Resilience Project
Tule River Indian Tribe

 Project Area



0 2,000 4,000 Feet

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

To: Tulare County Clerk / Recorder
221 S. Mooney Blvd, Room 105
Visalia, CA 93291

Project Title: Parker Peak Forest Restoration and Resilience Project (SNC 1639)

Project Location – Specific: Southwest corner of the Tule River Indian Reservation in the South Fork Tule River watershed. Project center at approximately -118.651, 35.984 degrees.

Project Location - City: 20 miles east/southeast of Porterville, 12 miles south/southeast of Springville, 10 miles south of Camp Nelson

Project Location - County: Tulare

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) would provide funding to the Tule River Indian Tribe to work in partnership with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to implement project #1639 Parker Peak Forest Restoration and Resilience Project (Project). The Project is an approximately 1,500-acre hazardous fuel reduction and wildfire-recovery project on the Tule River Indian Reservation in Tulare County. The Project is planned entirely on tribal trust lands administered by the Tule River Tribal Council through the Tribal Natural Resources Department, with oversight provided by the BIA. The Project focuses on improving forest health and hydrologic function by reducing hazardous fuels, conducting restoration, and stabilizing burn scars caused by the 2021 Windy Fire. The 2021 Windy Fire burned over 97,000 acres, including over 19,000 acres of the Tule River Indian Reservation, resulting in widespread tree mortality and erosion. The Project is aimed at restoring areas that burned, and treating areas that burned at low intensity so they will be more resilient to future fires. Activities under the Project include, but are not limited to: pre-implementation surveys and delineation; manual and mechanical thinning/mastication; and off-hauling of biomass, as feasible.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Tule River Indian Tribe
Ian Cummings, Tribal Forester
1010 Indian Reservation Drive, Porterville, CA 93257
559-853-6163

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, section 4799.05, subd. (d)(1)

Reasons why project is exempt:

Public Resources Code, section 4799.05 statutorily exempts from CEQA projects for prescribed fire, reforestation, habitat restoration, thinning, or fuel-reduction projects, or to related activities included in the project description, undertaken, in whole or in part, on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide funding to the Tule River Indian Tribe to conduct fuels reduction, wildfire recovery, and forest-health treatments on the Tule River Indian Reservation, tribal trust lands held by and with oversight provided by the BIA. The Project was reviewed in its entirety under NEPA in the Windy Fire Emergency Stabilization and Salvage Sale Projects Environmental Assessment (EA) and the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) determination signed on June 13, 2023.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Mary Akens

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-450-5177

If filed by applicant: N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes __ No __

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Lead Agency: Yes

Signed by Applicant: No

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. **Date received for filing at OPR:** _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1641

SNC ID Number: 1641

Applicant: Northstar Community Services District

Project Title: Northstar Community Services District Wood Energy Facility

SNC Subregion: North Central

County: Placer

Funding Amount Requested: \$1,000,000

Funding Amount Recommended: \$1,000,000

Total Project Cost: \$8,661,426

Project Scope / Description

The Northstar Community Services District Wood Energy Facility will utilize otherwise un-merchantable forest biomass from regional fuels management projects to generate renewable heat energy for all the major buildings, including several pools, within the Northstar Village. The wood energy facility will be able to process up to 3,800 bone dry tons (BDT) of forest residuals per year. The energy facility will be on land owned by the Northstar Community Services District (NCSD). Northstar is a major ski resort located about 5 miles southeast of the Town of Truckee in Placer County.

The wood energy facility will include a cross laminated timber (CLT) building which will house a boiler system, all the mechanicals, and connective hot water piping to Northstar Village. The total project cost will be about \$8.6 million. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) grant will pay for approximately half of the cost of the CLT building package. Other components of the project are the \$2.9 million boiler system; mechanical, electrical, plumbing, thermal systems; and engineering, permitting, and management; and prior site demolition. Along with the SNC grant, about \$4.75 million will be secured through grant funding. The remainder will be debt financed by NCSD. The NCSD will bill Northstar Village entities for energy use to pay off the debt and to provide revenue to fund continued forest management.

The Wood Energy Facility will provide a destination for biomass generated by forest management projects by the (NCSD), as well as other fuels generated in the Northstar-Truckee area.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience
Directed Grant Program
SNC Project Number 1641
Exhibit A - Page 2

The (NCSD) is a municipal government entity providing water, sewer, solid waste, fire protection, hazardous forest fuels management, snow removal, road maintenance, and recreational trails in the community surrounding the Northstar California ski resort in unincorporated Placer County. The NCSD has an annual budget of \$20 million and assets of \$100 million, including fire stations, a water treatment facility, and other water and sewage facilities, and has extensive experience with facility construction and management. The associated Northstar Fire Department successfully completed an SNC-funded fuels treatment project in 2014.

Secured funding includes CAL FIRE (\$2 million in Wood Products and Bioenergy Grant Program Funding), the USDA Forest Service (\$1 million in USFS Community Wood Energy Grant Program Funding), CAL FIRE/USDA Forest Service (\$250,000 in Wood Innovations Grant Program Funding), Placer County Water Agency (\$250,000 in Financial Assistance Program Funding) and the Tahoe Fund (\$50,000). In total, about \$3.75 million has been secured to leverage the \$1 million SNC grant.

This project aligns with the SNC strategic plan to increase wood utilization infrastructure. Estimates have suggested that there is a need to dispose of 80,000 to 120,000 BDT of woody biomass material annually within the Tahoe-Truckee region, as a part of SNC's goal to improve forest structure and health and reduce the risk of wildfire. While this Wood Energy Facility will only accommodate a small portion of this need, other entities are already looking at this NCSD project to model their efforts to develop small-scale biomass energy for local needs.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|--|---|
| Progress Reports | Every six months through project completion |
| Connected Entity Heat Energy Purchase Agreements | Underway – complete March 2024 |
| Fuel Procurement Agreement | Underway – complete March 2024 |
| Complete Funding Package and Secure Remaining Funding | Underway – complete March 2024 |
| Complete Design Work | Underway – complete March 2024 |
| Wood Boiler Procurement | March 2024 – May 2025 |
| Cross Laminated Timber Building Package Procurement and Erection | March 2024 – May 2025 |
| Wood Boiler Procurement and Installation | March 2024 – May 2025 |
| Connected Hot Water Piping | March 2024 – May 2025 |
| Heat Delivery | July 2025 |
| Final Report | September 1, 2025 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | September 1, 2025 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|---|--------------------|
| Wood Energy Facility Cross laminated Timber Structural Shell Building Package (SNC grant covers approx.. 50% of the cost) | \$1,000,000 |
| Administrative Costs | 0 |
| Total | \$1,000,000 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Tahoe National Forest, Supervisor's Office
- Tahoe Fund
- Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation
- County of Placer, Forest Health Division
- County of Nevada, Hardy Bullock, 5th District Supervisor
- Town of Truckee
- Vail Resorts, Northstar California
- Placer County Air Pollution Control District
- Placer County Water Agency
- Tahoe Truckee Sierra Disposal
- Eastern Regional Landfill
- Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs Association
- Northstar Fire Department
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
- Taylor Builders

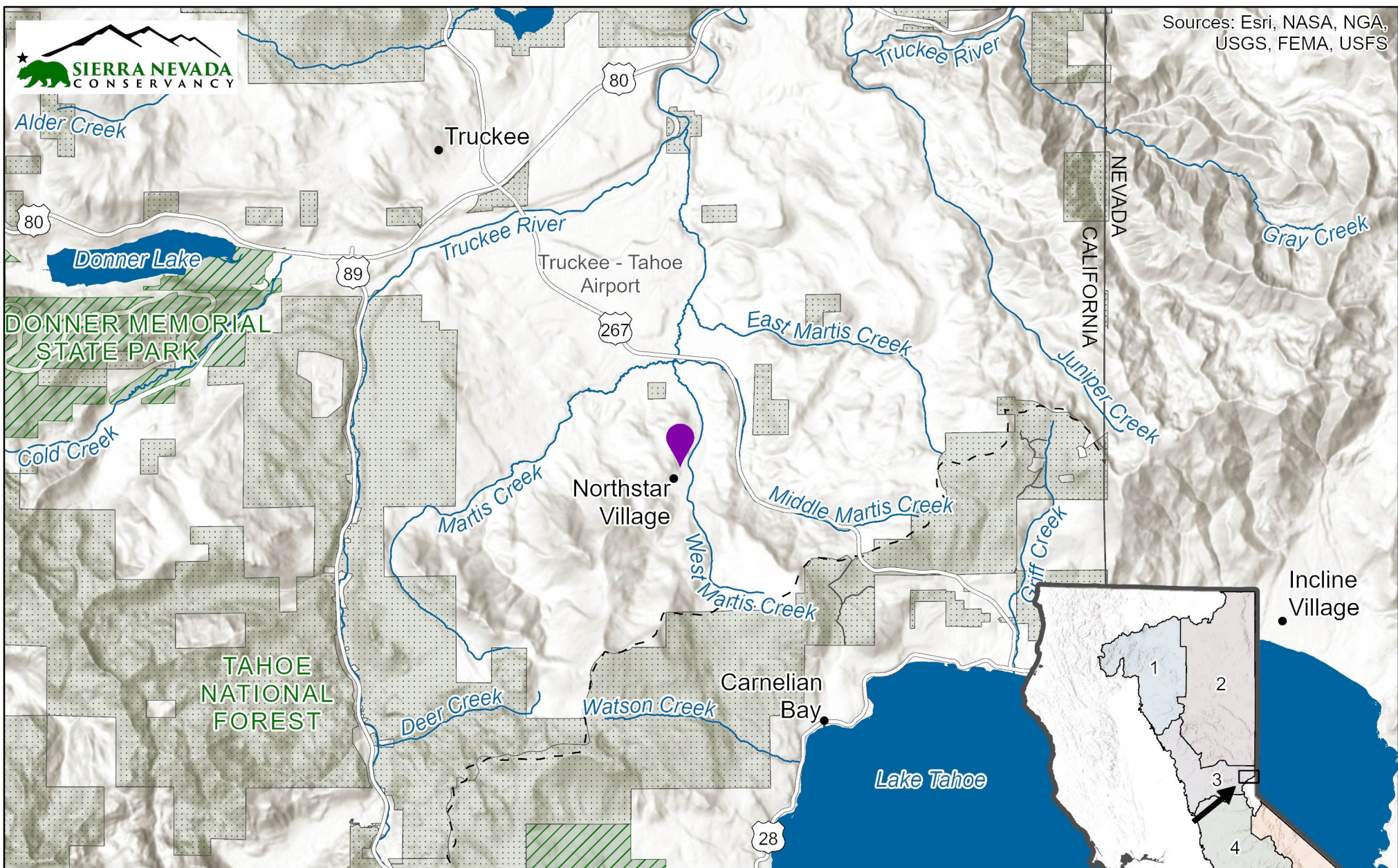
Opposition:

- None received

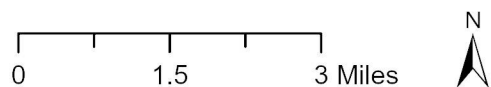
Project Performance Measures





There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- [Kilowatts of Renewable Energy Production Capacity Maintained or Created](#)

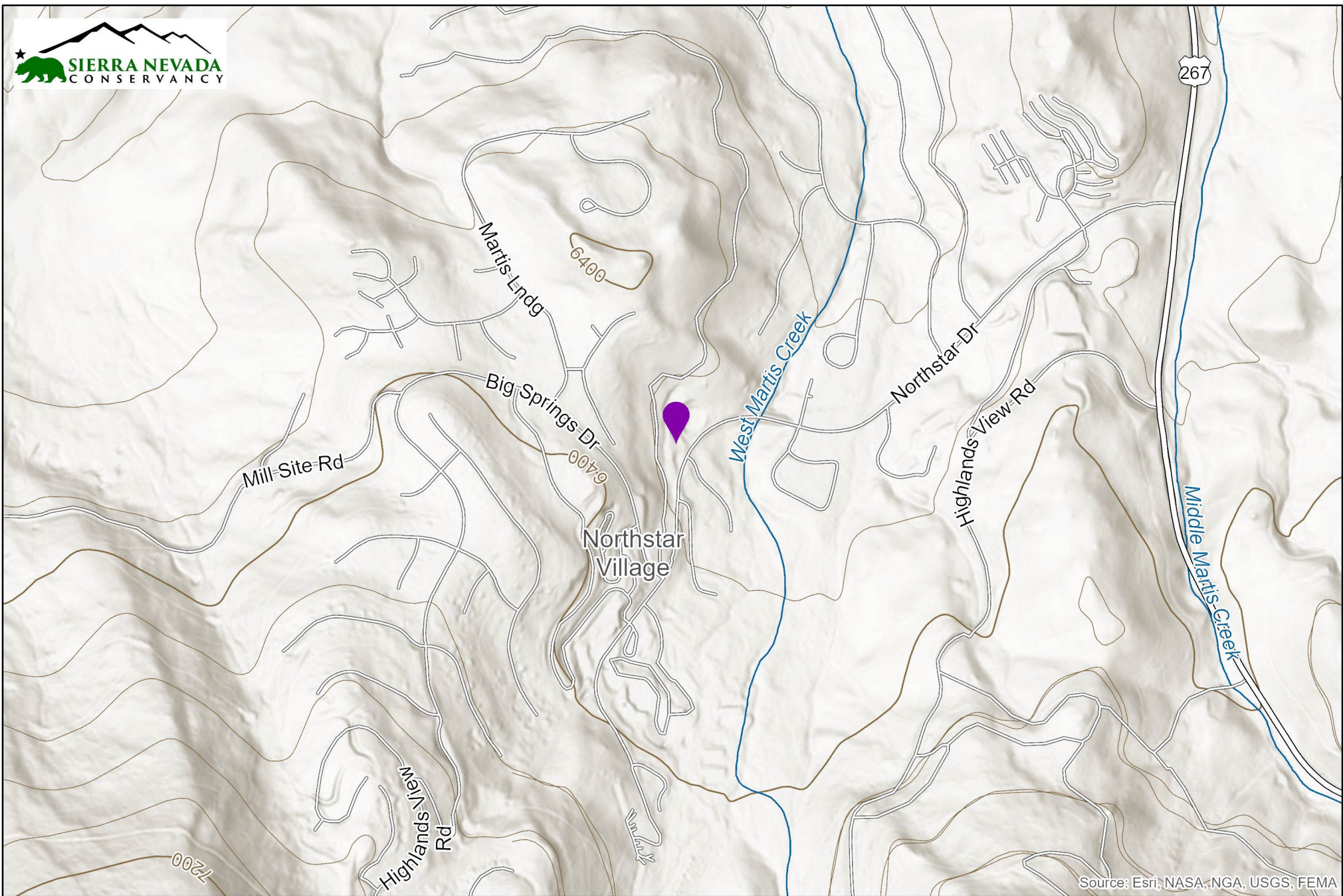


1641: Northstar Community Services District Wood Energy Facility Northstar Community Services District



-  Project Location
-  State Parks
-  US Forest Service
-  SNC Service Area

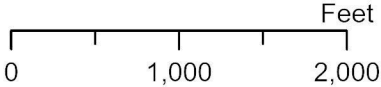
1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion



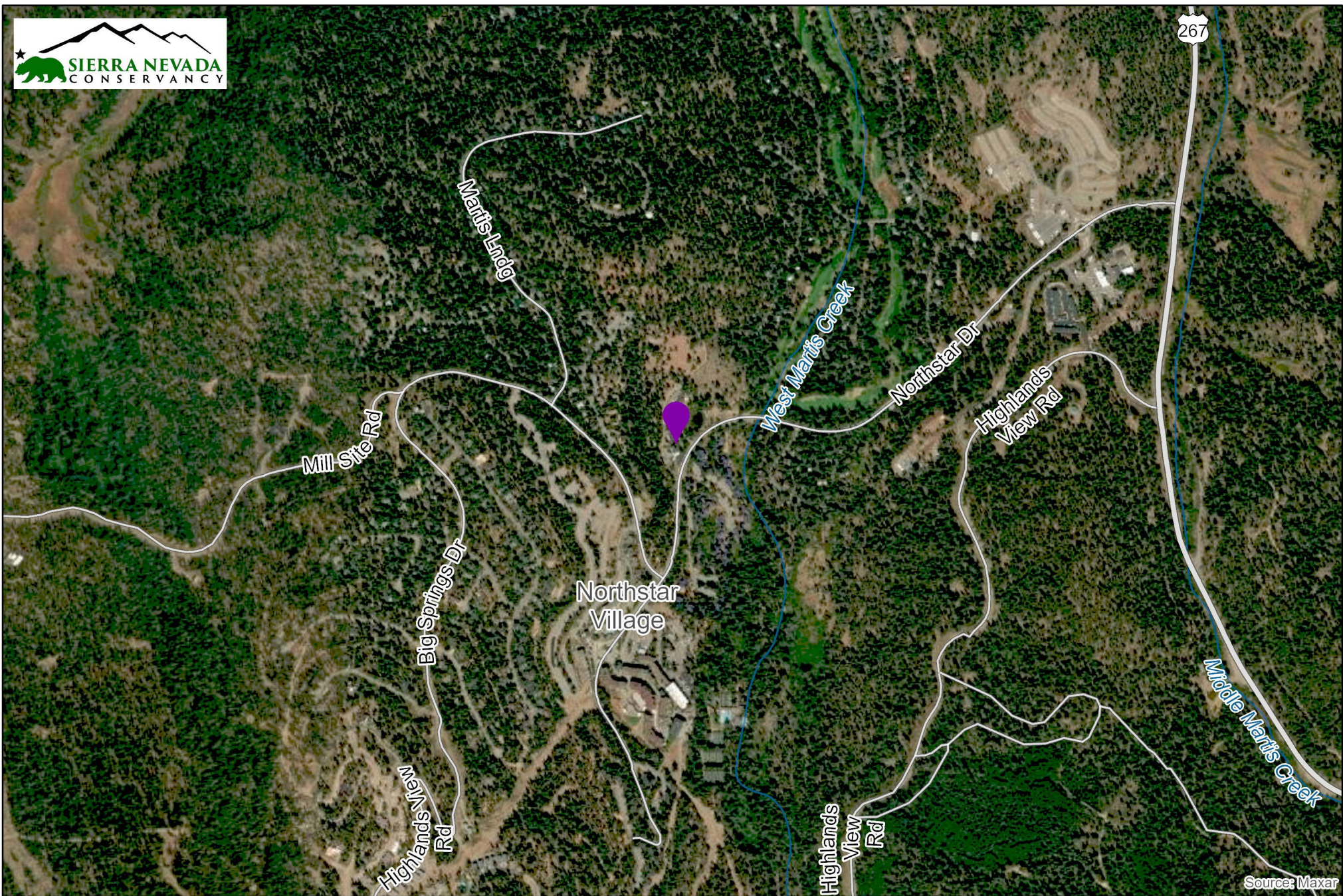
1641: Northstar Community Services District
Wood Energy Facility
Northstar Community Services District



Project Location



Elevation contour units in US feet.



1641: Northstar Community Services District
Wood Energy Facility
Northstar Community Services District



Project Location



0 1,000 2,000 Feet

To: Office of Planning and Research*U.S. Mail:*

P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

Street Address:

1400 Tenth St, Rm 113
Sacramento, CA 95814

To: County Clerk*County of:*

Placer

Address:

2954 Richardson Drive
Auburn, CA 95603

From:**Public Agency:**

Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Address:

11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Contact:

Mary Akens

Phone:

(530)450-5177

Lead Agency: (if different from above)

Northstar Community Services
District

Address:

900 Northstar Drive
Truckee, CA 96161

Contact:

Eric Martin, Director of Public
Works

Phone:

530-550-6133

SUBJECT: *Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code.*

State Clearinghouse Number (if submitted to State Clearinghouse):

SCH No. 2023040571

Project Title: Northstar Community Services District Wood Energy Facility (SNC 1641)

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Northstar Community Services District, Lead Agency.

Contact information, as listed above.

Project Location (include county):

908 Northstar Drive, north of the Northstar Fire Station located at 910 Northstar Drive on the same parcel, Northstar, Placer County.

Project Description:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) would be funding the community-scale wood energy system that will consist of two hot water boilers, which would be heated by combustion of wood chips at a wood energy utility facility and a thermal energy

distribution pipeline connected to existing heating systems within approximately 14 buildings and facilities, including residential and commercial spaces, swimming pools/spas, and potentially the snow melt system for the Village at Northstar plaza. The SNC's funds would specifically be used to pay a portion of the cost of constructing a cross-laminated timber building to house the boiler system.

This is to advise that the SNC (**Responsible Agency**) has approved the above-described project on March 7, 2024, and has made the following determinations regarding the above-described project:

1. The project **will not** have a significant effect on the environment.
2. A Negative Declaration **was** prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation measures **were** a condition of the approval of the project.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan **was** adopted for this project.
5. A statement of Overriding Considerations **was not** adopted for this project.
6. Findings **were not** made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

This is to certify that the Negative Declaration and record of project approval is available to the General Public at:

Sierra Nevada Conservancy, 11521 Blocker Drive Suite 205, Auburn, CA 95603

Signature (Public Agency):_____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Authority cited: Sections 21083, Public Resources Code
Reference Section 21000-21174, Public Resources Code

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1644

SNC ID Number: 1644

Applicant: Fall River Resource Conservation District

Project Title: Soldier Mountain WUI Project

SNC Subregion: Northwest

County: Shasta

Funding Amount Requested: \$1,686,100

Funding Amount Recommended: \$1,686,100

Total Project Cost: \$2,488,425

Project Scope / Description

The purpose of the Soldier Mountain WUI Project (Project) led by the Fall River Resource Conservation District (RCD) is to reduce fuel levels and increase resilience to wildfire, drought, and insect mortality in a priority wildland urban interface (WUI). The Project is in Shasta County and will improve forest health around a network of Forest Service roads to support efficient emergency response and recreation opportunities. The Project is located entirely on Lassen National Forest lands managed by the Hat Creek Ranger District (HCRD) and is in proximity to the communities of Glenburn (three miles), Dana, and Fall River Mills (seven miles) in the Pit River watershed. The Project is located approximately four miles northeast of Lake Britton, and five miles northeast of McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park, northeast of Highway 89.

The Project includes fuels reduction on 2,336 acres using mechanical fuels-reduction techniques, removal of 9,060 bone dry tons of biomass, enhancement of approximately 13 miles of road network improvement, repair of 0.75 miles of damaged and hazardous livestock fencing, retention of between five and 15 jobs for forestry workforce, and improved access to and utilization of Soldier Mountain Lookout for fire detection. Fuels reduction will include mastication, machine piling and hand piling on 1,430 acres (oak stands), and mechanical thinning and biomass removal on 906 acres (eastside ponderosa pine stands). Ground-based equipment will be used on slopes up to 35 percent to harvest trees and reduce fuel loading. Streamside areas and other sensitive areas will receive hand treatment. Following the Project, reintroduction of low-severity prescribed fire on 2,336 acres will occur. The Fall River RCD, HCRD, Pit River Tribe, and project partners have identified the Project as high priority due to a combination of

excessive fuel levels, proximity to residences and critical infrastructure, and frequency of public use for recreation.

The Project is a continuation of the Fall River Valley Fire Safe Council's priority fuel-reduction strategy funded through the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC) Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (SNC #964-RFFCP) and is on the priority list as finalized in 2022 through that funding. The Project is located adjacent to the Dana WUI project, led by the Fall River RCD, which involves hazardous fuels reduction on 700 acres of private land in Dana, and is a few miles from the 2,646-acre Crossroads Project (SNC #1020), which aims to reduce tree mortality, maximize retention of old growth trees, and increase resilience to wildfire (implementation complete in 2023).

The Fall River RCD has successfully developed and implemented over 25 projects in the last 10 years totaling over \$12 million, including previously funded SNC projects. The Fall River RCD relies on numerous project partners and local contractors for project success, and this Project will rely on the same partnerships and management principles. The Fall River RCD has a Master Stewardship Agreement with the Lassen National Forest.

Community support is demonstrated through the collaboration between the Fall River RCD, the Fall River Fire Safe Council, the HCRD of the Lassen National Forest, and the partners who have supported regional prioritization and planning through the Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group. The Pit River Tribe will be a partner on the Project. The tribe's hand crew will carry out the fence removal and repair work, and tribal monitors will be present during operations. The McConnell Foundation has supported the Project financially by partially funding the planning phase. Additional Project funds include \$802,325 in future prescribed-fire maintenance and pile burning, contract preparation and sale administration by the Lassen National Forest, and partner funding for layout and sale administration.

This Project supports the goals of the SNC Strategic Plan by restoring healthy ecosystems in strategic locations and preparing to return prescribed fire to the landscape. The Project protects culturally significant landscapes in the headwaters of the Pit River watershed and contributes to sustainable local economies.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|---|---|
| Six-month progress reports | Every six months through project completion |
| Project administration and management | April 2024 – December 2026 |
| Biomass thinning & removal (906 acres) | June 1, 2024 – September 1, 2026 |
| Mastication and piling (1,430 acres) | June 1, 2024 – September 1, 2026 |
| Tribal involvement (contract with Pit River Tribe) | June 1, 2024 - October 31, 2025 |
| SNC Final Report with Performance Measure Reporting | October 31, 2026 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | October 31, 2026 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|--|--------------------|
| Biomass thinning & removal (906 acres) | \$440,316 |
| Mastication and piling (1,430 acres) | \$1,089,660 |
| Project management (staff &/or contract) | \$95,000 |
| Tribal participation | \$20,000 |
| Administrative costs (2.5%) | \$41,124 |
| Total | \$1,686,100 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Pit River Tribe
- Shasta County Board of Supervisors
- Lassen National Forest

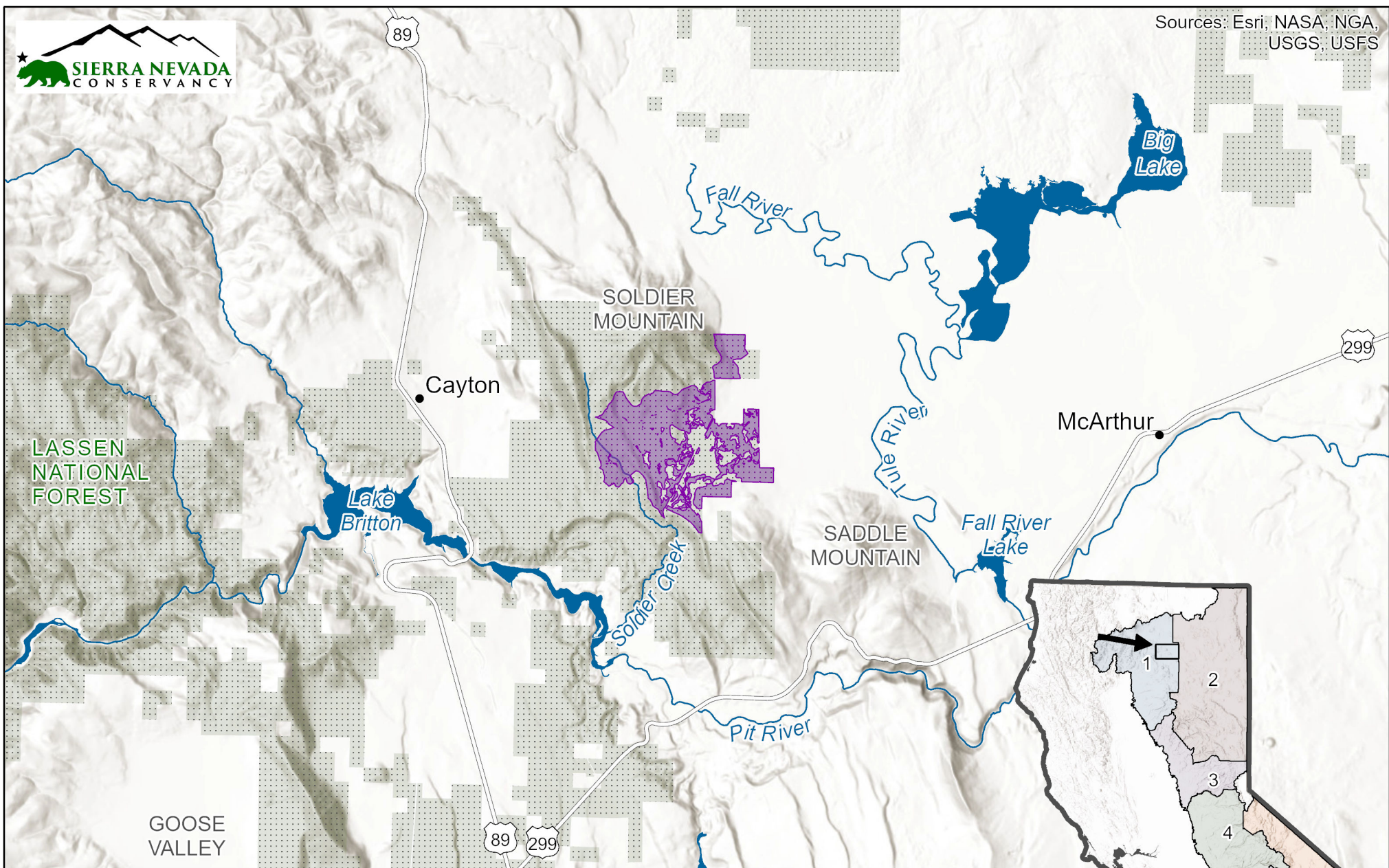
Opposition:

- None received.

Project Performance Measures

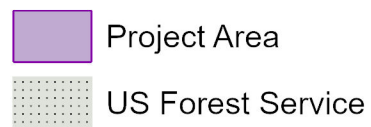
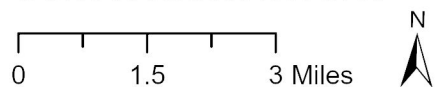
There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Acres of Land Improved or Restored

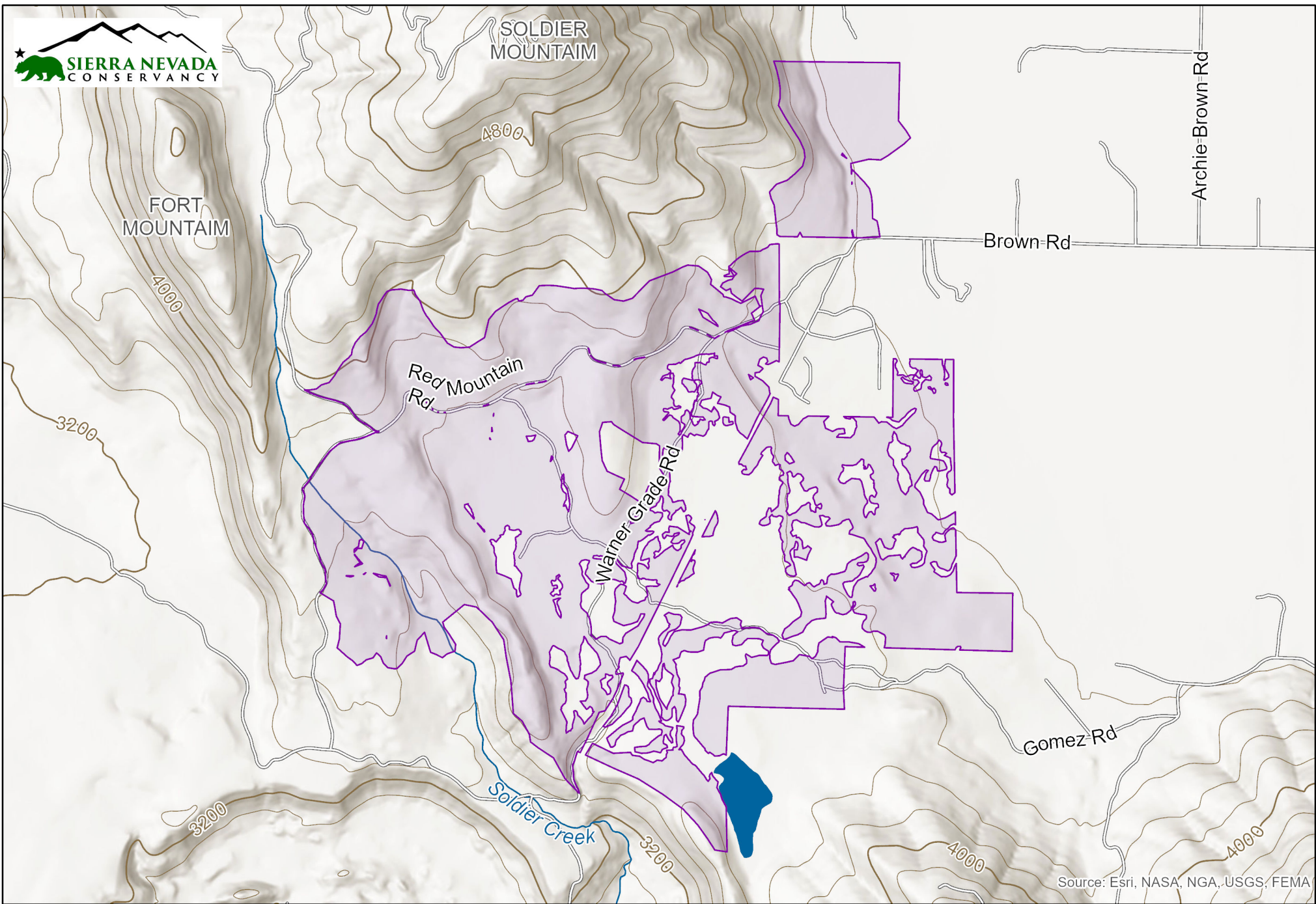


1644: Soldier Mountain WUI Project

Fall River Resource
Conservation District



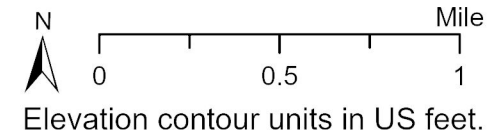
1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion

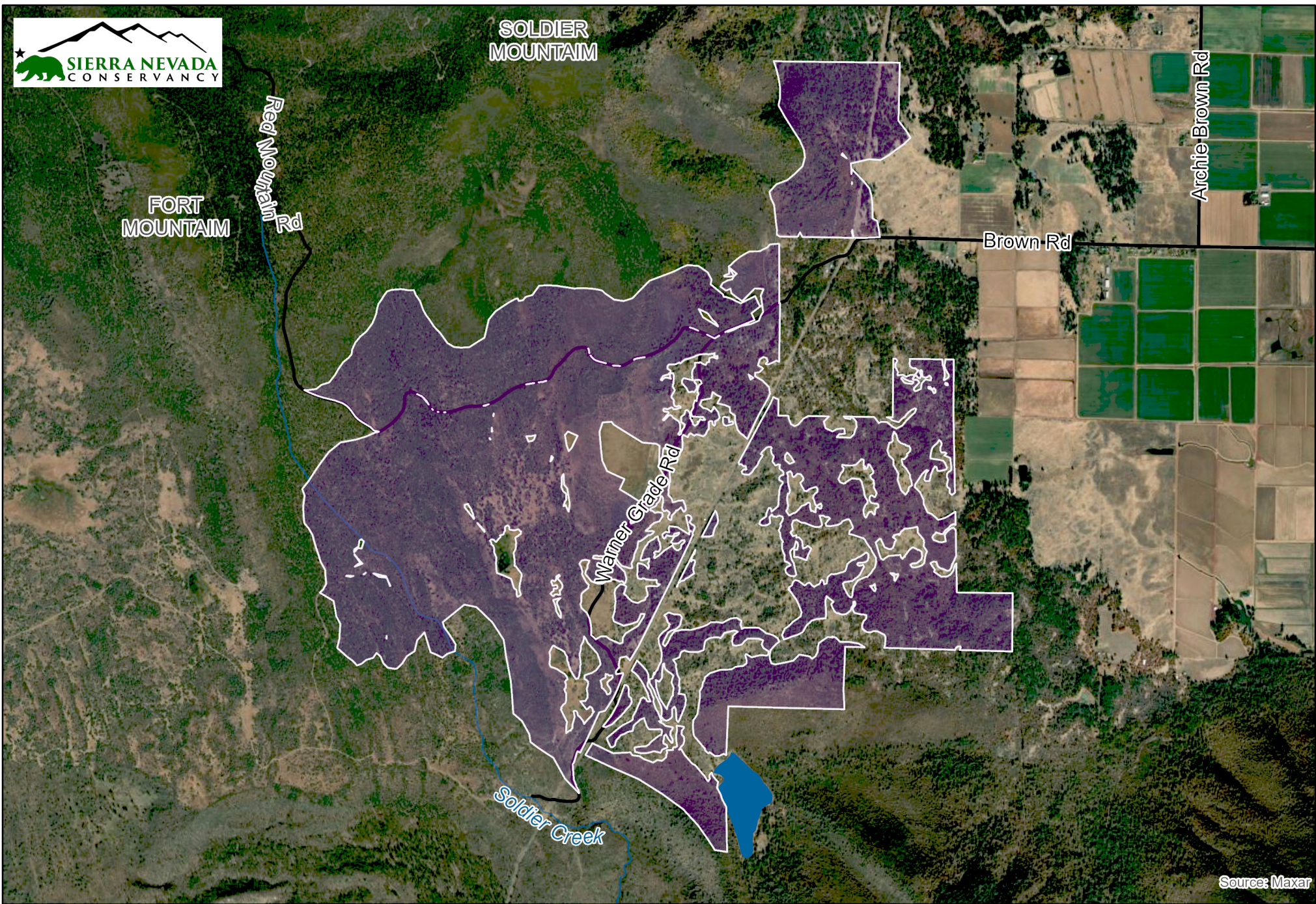


1644: Soldier Mountain WUI Project

Fall River Resource Conservation District

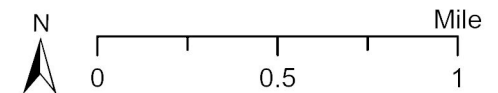
 Project Area





1644: Soldier Mountain WUI Project
Fall River Resource Conservation District

 Project Area



To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

To: Shasta County Clerk
1450 Court Street, Suite 108
Redding, CA 96001

Project Title: Soldier Mountain WUI Project (SNC 1644)

Project Location – Specific: Lassen National Forest, Hat Creek Ranger District. Approximately four miles northeast of Lake Britton and five miles northeast of McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park, northeast of Highway 89. Project center at approximately -121.598, 41.055 degrees.

Project Location - City: Three miles west of Glenburn, seven miles west of McArthur.

Project Location - County: Shasta

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) would provide funding to the Fall River Resource Conservation District in partnership with Lassen National Forest to implement project #1644 Soldier Mountain WUI Project. The project is an approximately 2,336-acre hazardous fuel reduction, forest health, and community-protection project on Lassen National Forest in Shasta County. The project would reduce fuel levels, improve forest health, and increase resilience to wildfire, drought, and insect mortality in a priority wildland urban interface (WUI). Activities under the project include, but are not limited to, mastication, machine piling and hand piling, mechanical thinning, and biomass removal.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Fall River Resource Conservation District
Sharmie Stevenson, Executive Director
P.O. Box 301, Bieber, CA 96009
530-299-3401

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, section 4799.05, subd. (d)(1)

Reasons why project is exempt:

Public Resources Code, section 4799.05 statutorily exempts from CEQA projects for prescribed fire, reforestation, habitat restoration, thinning, or fuel-reduction projects, or to related activities included in the project description, undertaken, in whole or in part, on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed

under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide funding to the Fall River Resource Conservation District to conduct fuels reduction, community protection, and forest-health treatments on the Lassen National Forest. The proposed project was reviewed in its entirety under NEPA in the Soldier Mountain WUI Project Categorical Exclusion Review and Decision Memo signed June 13, 2022.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Mary Akens

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-450-5177

If filed by applicant: N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes ___ No ___

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Lead Agency: Yes

Signed by Applicant: No

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. **Date received for filing at OPR:** _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1647

SNC ID Number: 1647

Applicant: Sierra Institute for Community and Environment

Project Title: Taylorsville Community Defense Zone Implementation

SNC Subregion: Northeast

County: Plumas

Funding Amount Requested: \$751,665

Funding Amount Recommended: \$751,665

Total Project Cost: \$793,661

Project Scope / Description

The Sierra Institute for Community and Environment will implement forest thinning and fuels reduction for a strategic shaded fuel break around the community of Taylorsville by working with nine private landowners. The approximately 300-acre Taylorsville Community Defense Zone (TCDZ), located in Plumas County, lies adjacent to the Plumas National Forest (PNF) and near the communities of Greenville, Crescent Mills, and Genesee.

Treatments will reduce the risk to the community during future wildfire events by creating a stand structure intended to moderate fire behavior and provide safe and effective opportunities for fire-suppression actions. Planned treatments include 133 acres of hand thinning and 129 acres of mechanical treatments, across the 300-acre footprint that will create conditions with low basal area and bulk crown density, low volumes of ladder fuels, discontinuous fuel beds, and a heterogeneous, fire-resilient stand structure. The TCDZ will directly protect approximately 88 homes and 140 residents and increase the resilience of a critical portion of remaining green forest in Indian Valley, following the 2021 Dixie Fire.

The project's community-based strategy focuses on implementing treatments on private parcels that provide connectivity with completed and planned forest management on private industrial timberland and National Forest lands. It also complements the surrounding 168,000-acre North Fork Forest Recovery Project, one of PNF's landscape-scale efforts to reduce fuels around WUI communities. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) funded the planning phase for this project (SNC 1404).

The Sierra Institute for Community and Environment, a nonprofit organization based in Taylorsville, has been a leader in collaborative restoration as part of the South Lassen Watersheds Group and the Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group. The organization has managed multiple SNC grants and currently has six active SNC-funded projects. The participating private landowners are supportive of the effort and have signed landowner agreements committing to allowing the project to occur on their parcels.

Project partners include the Taylorsville Firewise Committee, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, the University of California Cooperative Extension, and the PNF. Other financial contributions total \$41,995. They include \$34,078 of in-kind (community engagement and outreach, Firewise meetings and outreach, and tribal workforce training) and \$7,917 from secured Bureau of Reclamation funding. The project also intends to leverage the High Road to Tribal Forest Restoration project, which provides restoration and forest health workforce training to California tribes.

The project aligns with SNC's Strategic Plan and Watershed Improvement Program by working across land ownership boundaries to improve ecological health and climate resiliency. In addition to direct benefits to the town of Taylorsville, the project sits within the headwaters of the Feather River and provides drinking water to millions of Californians by way of the largest reservoir in the State Water Project, Lake Oroville.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|--|---------------------------|
| SNC six-month Progress Reports | Every six months |
| Bid selection process and contractor selection | May – June 2024 |
| Flagging/layout | May – June 2024 |
| Hand thinning (133 acres) and mechanical (129 acres) treatments; installation of SNC sign | June 2024 - October 2026 |
| Taylorsville Firewise Committee meetings focused on TCDZ implementation | June 2024 - December 2026 |
| Map showing integrated treatments on PNF lands directly adjacent to the TCDZ project | June 2024 - December 2026 |
| Prescribed fire workshop for Taylorsville landowners | June 2025-December 2025 |
| Meeting of Indian Valley Fire Department, PNF fire suppression personnel, and CAL FIRE re: utilizing TCDZ treatments in the event of a wildfire | June 2024- December 2026 |
| Develop map showing planned treatments, completed treatments, and maintenance as completed, including key operational elements (e.g., roads, skid trails, etc.) that could inform suppression activities | June 2024- December 2026 |

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|--|--------------------------|
| Estimated Project Completion Date | December 31, 2026 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Project Management | \$147,030 |
| Implementation | \$514,480 |
| Supplies and Materials | \$600 |
| Travel | \$325 |
| Administrative Costs | 89,230 |
| Total | \$751,665 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Taylorsville Firewise Committee
- Susanville Indian Rancheria
- Plumas National Forest, Mount Hough Ranger District
- Plumas County Fire Safe Council

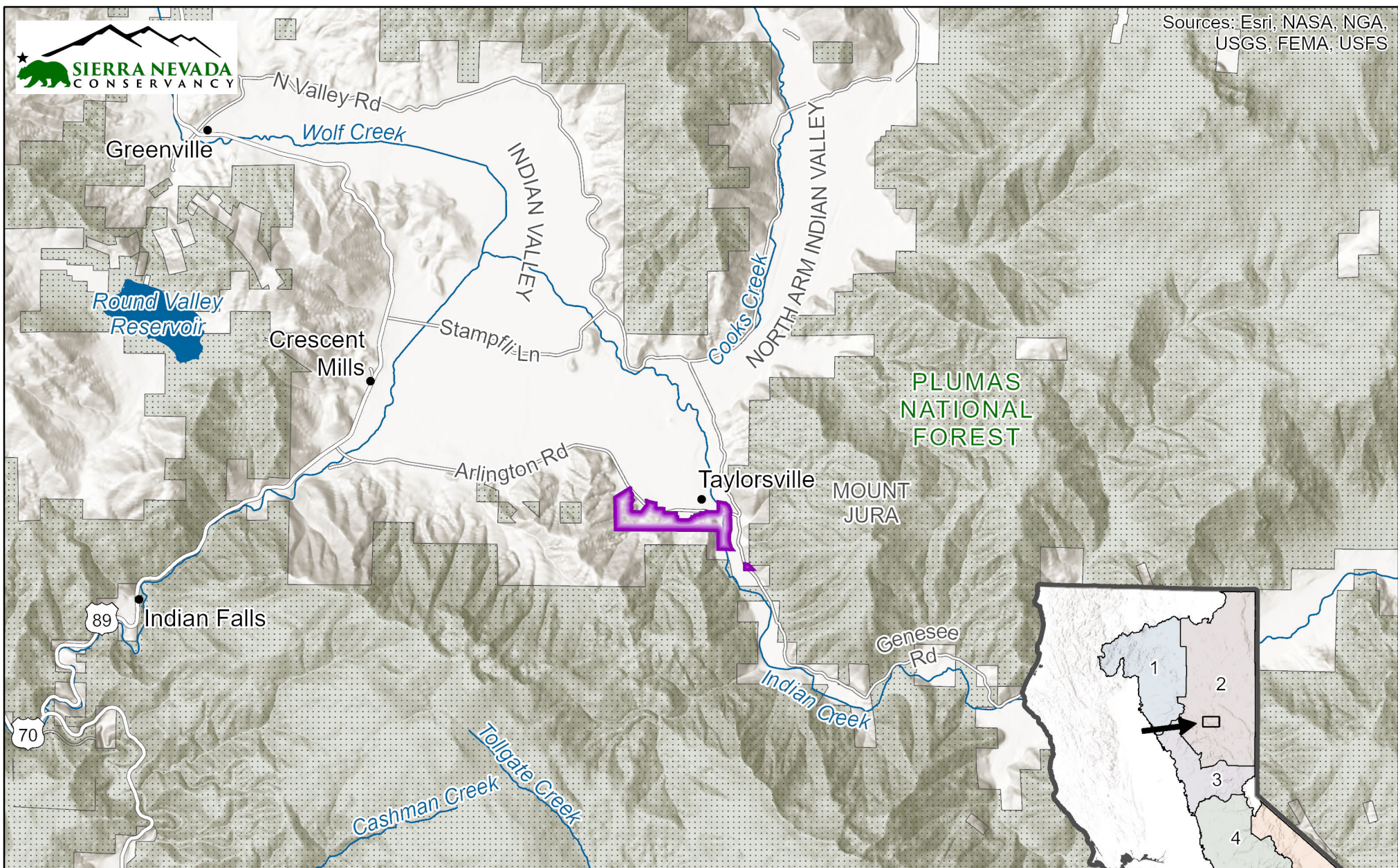
Opposition:

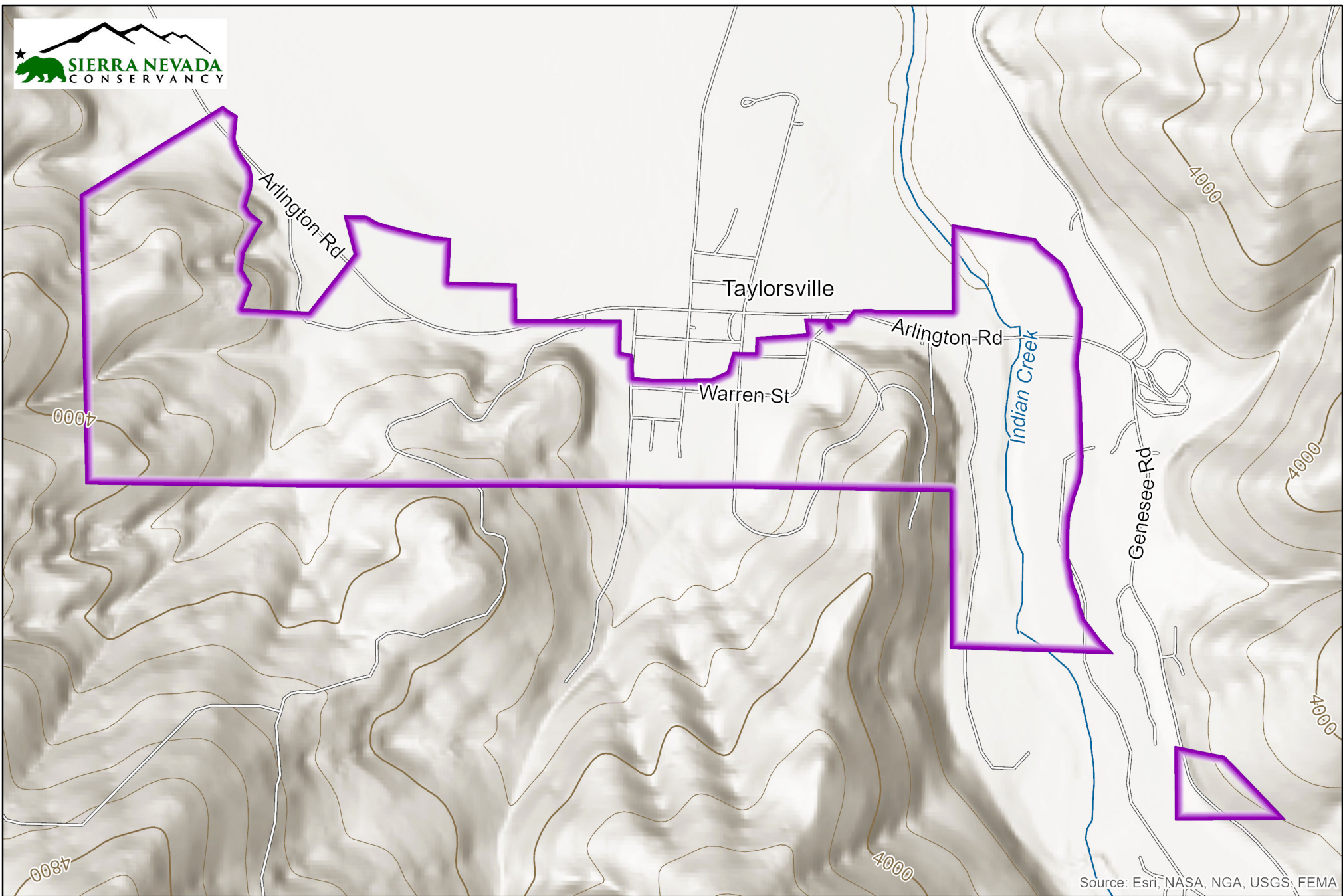
- None received.

Project Performance Measures

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Acres of Land Improved or Restored





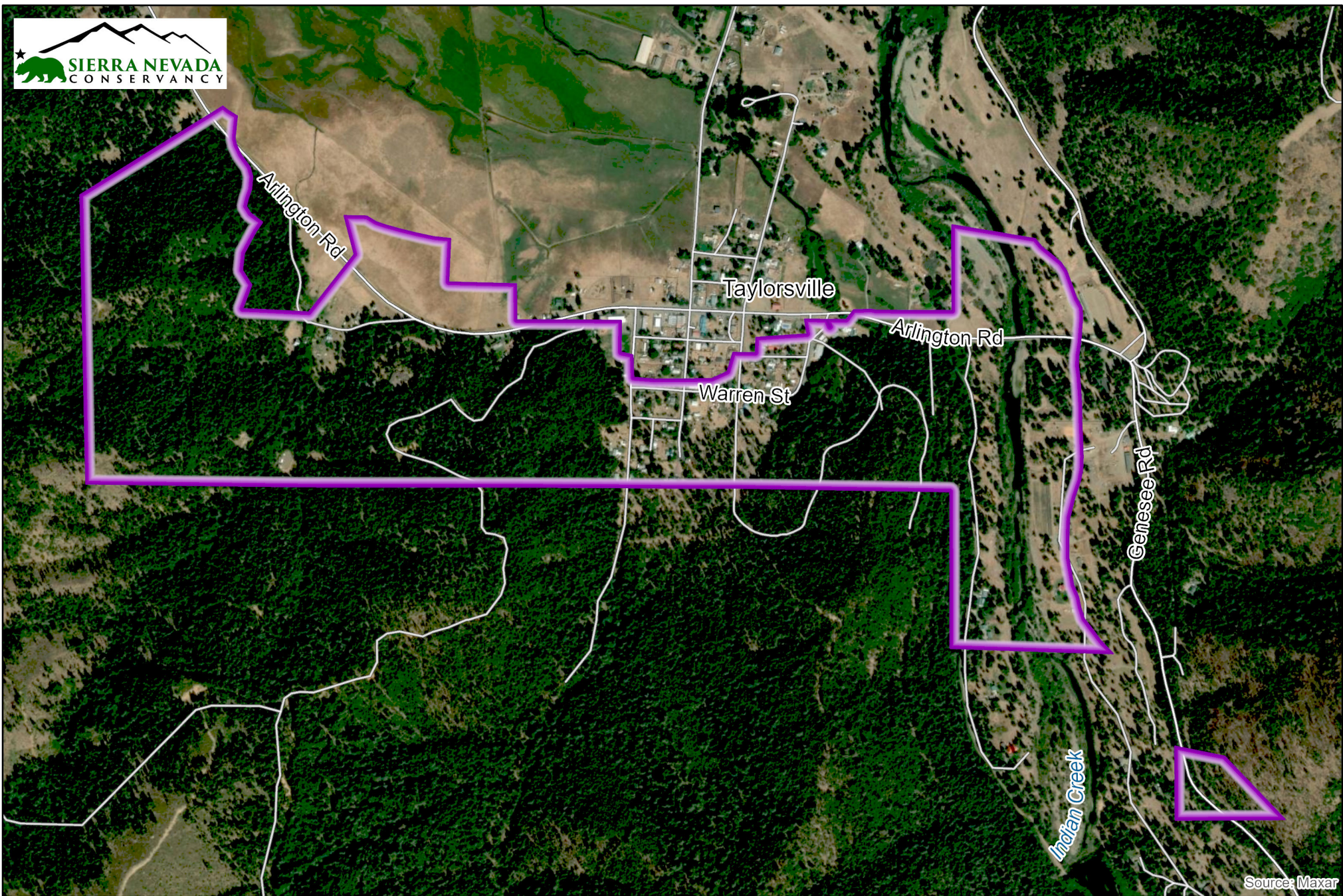
1647: Taylorsville Community Defense
Zone - Implementation
Sierra Institute for Community and Environment

 Project Location



Feet
0 750 1,500

Elevation contour units in US feet.



1647: Taylorsville Community Defense
Zone - Implementation
Sierra Institute for Community and Environment

 Project Location



0 750 1,500
Feet

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

To: Plumas County Clerk-Recorder
520 Main Street, Room 102
Quincy, CA 95971

Project Title: Taylorsville Community Defense Zone Implementation (SNC 1647)

Project Location – Specific: Approximately 300 acres of forested private land on the south side of the community of Taylorsville, between the town and Plumas National Forest. MDB&M Township 26N, Range 10E, Sec 27, 34, 35.

Project Location - City: Taylorsville

Project Location - County: Plumas

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is funding the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment (SI) to implement the #1647 Taylorsville Community Defense Zone (TCDZ) Implementation project located in Plumas County within and adjacent to the community of Taylorsville. The SI will work with the private landowners to implement forest thinning and fuels reduction for a strategic shaded fuel break on the south side of the community of Taylorsville. Treatments will reduce the risk to the community during future wildfire events by creating a stand structure intended to moderate fire behavior and provide safe and effective opportunities for fire-suppression actions. The project will cut and remove trees to eliminate the vertical continuity of vegetative fuels and the horizontal continuity of tree crowns for the purpose of reducing flammable materials to reduce fire spread, duration, intensity, and ignition of tree crowns. Planned treatments include hand thinning and mechanical treatments across the approximately 300-acre footprint that will create conditions with low basal area and bulk crown density, low volumes of ladder fuels, discontinuous fuel beds, and a heterogenous, fire-resilient stand structure. The TCDZ will directly protect approximately 88 homes and 140 residents and increase the resilience of a critical portion of remaining green forest in Indian Valley, following the 2021 Dixie Fire.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Sierra Institute for Community and Environment
Jonathan Kusel, Executive Director
4438 Main Street, Taylorsville, CA 95938
530-284-1022

Exempt Status:

Categorical Exemption: Cal.Code Regs.Tit.14 (CEQA Guidelines), section 15304;
Minor Alterations to Land

Reasons why project is exempt:

CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4, provides that projects that consist of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation, which do not involve removal of mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes, are exempt for CEQA environmental documentation requirements, provided no exceptions apply. The minor land alterations proposed by the project involve hand and mechanical thinning across a 300-acre footprint to eliminate the vertical continuity of vegetative fuels and the horizontal continuity of tree crowns for the purpose of reducing flammable materials to reduce fire spread, duration, intensity, and ignition of tree crowns. All work will be implemented consistent with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection issued Forest Fire Prevention Exemption No. 2-23EX-00799-PLU under the Forest Practice Act, Cal. Code Regs. title 14, section 1038. The SNC reviewed the project and determined that the project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4, and none of the exceptions to the exemptions apply to the project.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Mary Akens

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-450-5177

If filed by applicant: N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes ___ No ___

Signature:_____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Lead Agency: Yes

Signed by Applicant: No

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.**Date received for filing at OPR:** _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1654

SNC ID Number: 1654

Applicant: United States Forest Service, Shasta-Trinity National Forest

Project Title: South Fork Sacramento Fire Resilience

SNC Subregion: Northwest

County: Siskiyou

Funding Amount Requested: \$3,628,600

Funding Amount Recommended: \$3,628,600

Total Project Cost: \$10,289,800

Project Scope / Description

The South Fork Sacramento Fire Resilience Project (Project) led by the United States Forest Service (USFS) Shasta-Trinity National Forest is a 1,157-acre, multi-benefit forest health project within a larger 21,400-acre area that has been analyzed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The purpose of the Project is to improve fire resilience of forested ecosystems and to improve public safety by reducing the likelihood of severe wildfire within the wildland urban interface (WUI). The Project will improve wildlife and northern spotted owl (NSO) foraging habitat and restore the natural role of fire to the ecosystem. The Project, in concert with treatments on the entire 21,400-acre analysis area, will allow for the reintroduction of prescribed fire to a 16,285-acre landscape in the headwaters of the Sacramento River. The Project is located entirely on lands administered by the Shasta-Trinity National Forest within Siskiyou County. The Project is approximately three miles from the City of Mt. Shasta, along the South Fork Sacramento River and is two miles from the Interstate 5 (I-5) and Union Pacific railroad corridors. The Pacific Crest Trail, numerous high-alpine lakes, and year-round high-use recreation amenities exist within the Project area. The Project is located within the Castle Lake sub-watershed, which had pre-COVID-19 visitation of 35,000-42,000 vehicles per year. Visitation rates have greatly increased since the pandemic.

The Project is designed to reduce flame lengths from greater than eight feet in height to less than four feet. Current modeling of the Project area demonstrates that, with the existing vegetation, fuel loading, topography, and predominant wind patterns, much of the area would burn with flame lengths over 12 feet and would likely trap recreationists, prevent the use of suppression forces such as engines and hand crews, limit safe

access and egress, and result in severe burn effects. Best available science was the foundation for this Project design, utilizing the resources of the Northwest Forest Plan Long-Term Northern Spotted Owl Monitoring Program, modeling, and extensive field verification, stand exams, stream conditions and watershed baseline data, and numerous public field trips, working with a collaborative team of agency and community members. Climate-change adaptation is incorporated in the project design. The Project would protect NSO habitat and future population viability. It would also protect important infrastructure, including Methodist Camp, University of Nevada Reno's Castle Lake Limnology lab, and existing recreation amenities. Project activities include: (a) hand and mechanical treatments to reduce fuels near structures, access routes, and in and around campgrounds, plantations and recreation sites; (b) hand pile or mechanical thinning of trees less than 10" in diameter within sensitive NSO habitat to improve fire resilience. Seventy-five acres within the 1,157-acre Project area will receive multiple treatments. The Project aligns with the U.S. Forest Service Wildfire Crisis Strategy and will help meet the Wildfire Crisis Strategy Implementation Plan objectives within two high-risk firesheds.

The Project is adjacent to the 13,000-acre West Mount Shasta Forest Resilience Project developed by the Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District. The Project is also adjacent to lands owned by, or conservation easements held by, the Siskiyou Land Trust, some of which have been funded by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and are being managed as community forests or demonstration forests. Phase two of the South Fork Sacramento Public Safety and Forest Restoration Project includes National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis on an additional 30,000 acres immediately north of the Project, including the Middle Fork and North Fork of the Sacramento River. Additional entities, including the McConnell Foundation, the Siskiyou Fire Safe Council, California State Parks, and the cities of Mt. Shasta and Dunsmuir are planning and/or implementing fuels reduction and forest-health projects within the project vicinity.

The Mt. Shasta-McCloud Management Unit (MSMMU) of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest has awarded four large integrated resource contracts this past year, each with seven-12 bidders and awards made on the basis of best value, versus lowest bid. There are several mills and biomass facilities near the Project. Pile burning will be completed in-house by MSMMU staff; the unit is effective and has no backlog of remaining piles. The SNC has awarded two grants to the MSMMU, (SNC 1360 and 1386), one of which work is complete. The second is in progress and on track to be complete within the agreement timeline.

Partners include the Shasta Valley RCD, Mount Shasta Fire Safe Council (FSC), Siskiyou County FSC, US Fish & Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish & Wildlife, Pacific Forest Trust, Siskiyou County Public Works. Additional Project funding in the amount of \$6,661,200 will be from the USFS, CAL FIRE, and other sources for

timber sale preparation and layout, contract oversight, meadow restoration activities, and hand pile and prescribed fire implementation.

The Project supports the goals of the SNC Strategic Plan by restoring healthy ecosystems in strategic locations. The Project protects sustainable recreation and tourism in the headwaters of the Sacramento River watershed. The project also contributes to sustainable local economies.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|---|---|
| Six-month Progress Reports | Every six months through project completion |
| UNR Limnology Lab Hand Treatments [17 acres] | October 2024 |
| South Fork Sacramento Road (26-Road) Hand Treatments [154 acres] | October 2024 |
| Mechanical Treatments (Castle Lake Road & Campground, Methodist Camp, 26 Road, Gumboot Campground) [160 acres] | July 2025 |
| Stewardship Contracting Fire Management Zone (FMZ) Creation Along Castle Lake Road and 26 Road (Tethered Logging) [105 acres] | January 2025 |
| NSO Habitat Hand Thinning/Mastication [188 acres] | December 2027 |
| FMZ Hand/Mechanical Treatment & Plantation Thinning (Castle Lake Road, 26-Road) [258 acres] | March 2025 |
| FMZ Creation on Steep Slopes (Yoder or tethered) [350 acres] | March 2025 |
| Interpretation of Fuels Reduction and Fire Resilience | January 2028 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | January 1, 2028 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|--|-------------|
| Limnology Lab Hand Treatments [17 acres] | \$25,500 |
| 26-Road Hand Treatments [154 acres] | \$231,000 |
| Mechanical Treatments [160 acres] | \$160,000 |
| Stewardship Contracting (tethered logging) [105 acres] | \$840,000 |
| NSO Habitat Hand Thinning/Mastication [188 acres] | \$282,000 |
| FMZ Creation Hand Thinning/Mechanical (Castle Lake Rd & 26-Road) [258 acres] | \$306,600 |
| FMZ Creation on Steep Slopes (Yoder or tethered) [350 acres] | \$1,750,000 |
| Informational and Educational Kiosks (minimum of 3) | \$6,000 |
| Equipment | \$22,500 |

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Tribal Participation | \$5,000 |
| Administrative Costs | \$0 |
| Total | \$3,628,600 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- CAL FIRE Siskiyou Unit Chief, Darryl Laws
- Siskiyou Outdoor Recreation Alliance Board President, Dave Tricamo
- Mt. Shasta Fire Department Chief, Cory Burns
- Greater Lake Shastina Fire Safe Council
- FWS Forestry, Timberlands Director John Vona
- Fire Safe Council of Siskiyou County
- County of Siskiyou Board of Supervisors, Ed Valenzuela
- Campbell Group, Southwest District Manager Paul Chapman
- California Forestry Association

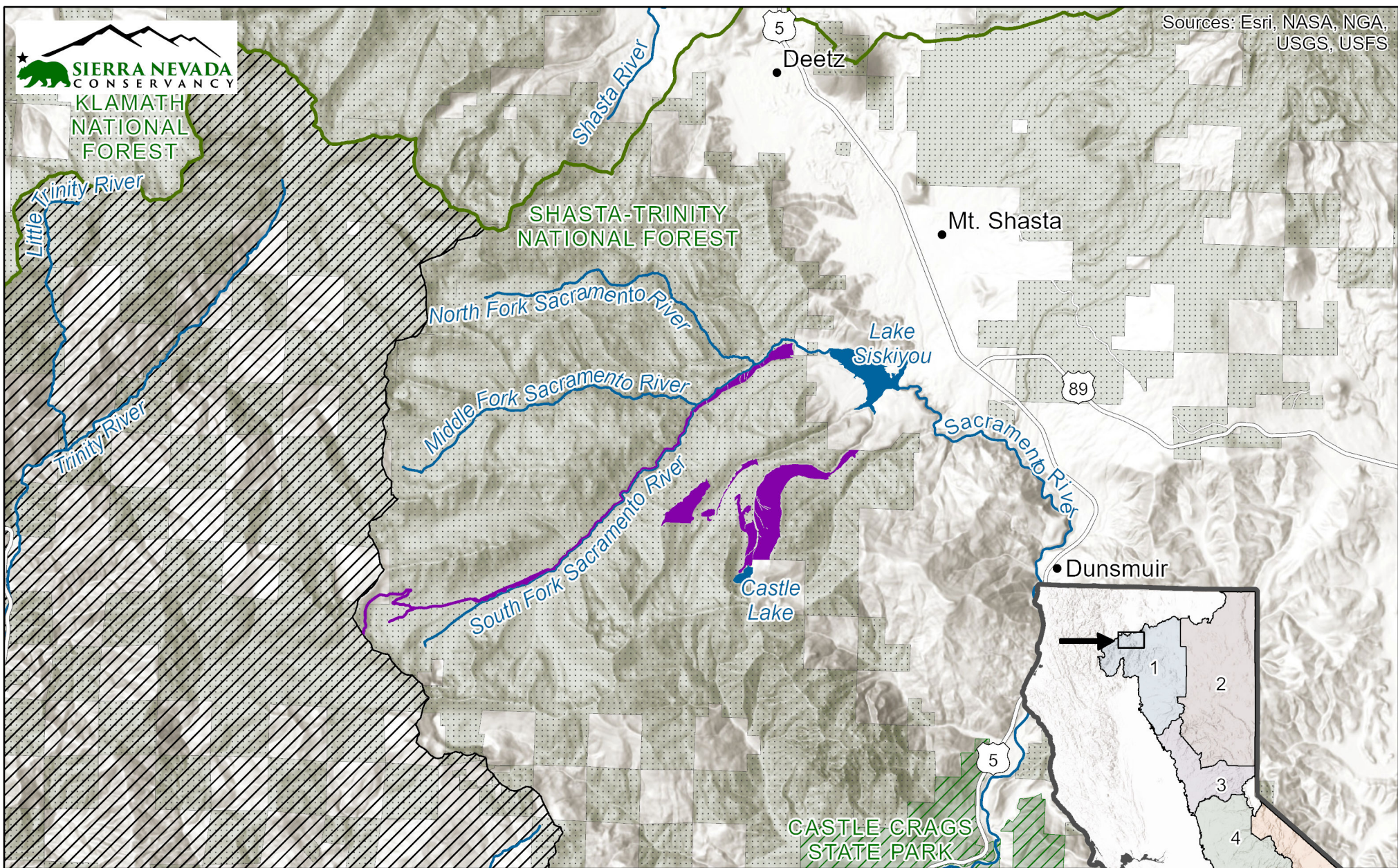
Opposition:

- None received

Project Performance Measures

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Acres of Land Improved or Restored



1654: South Fork Sacramento Fire Resilience

United States Forest Service, Shasta-
Trinity National Forest

0 2 4 Miles



Project Area



Other Projects



State Parks

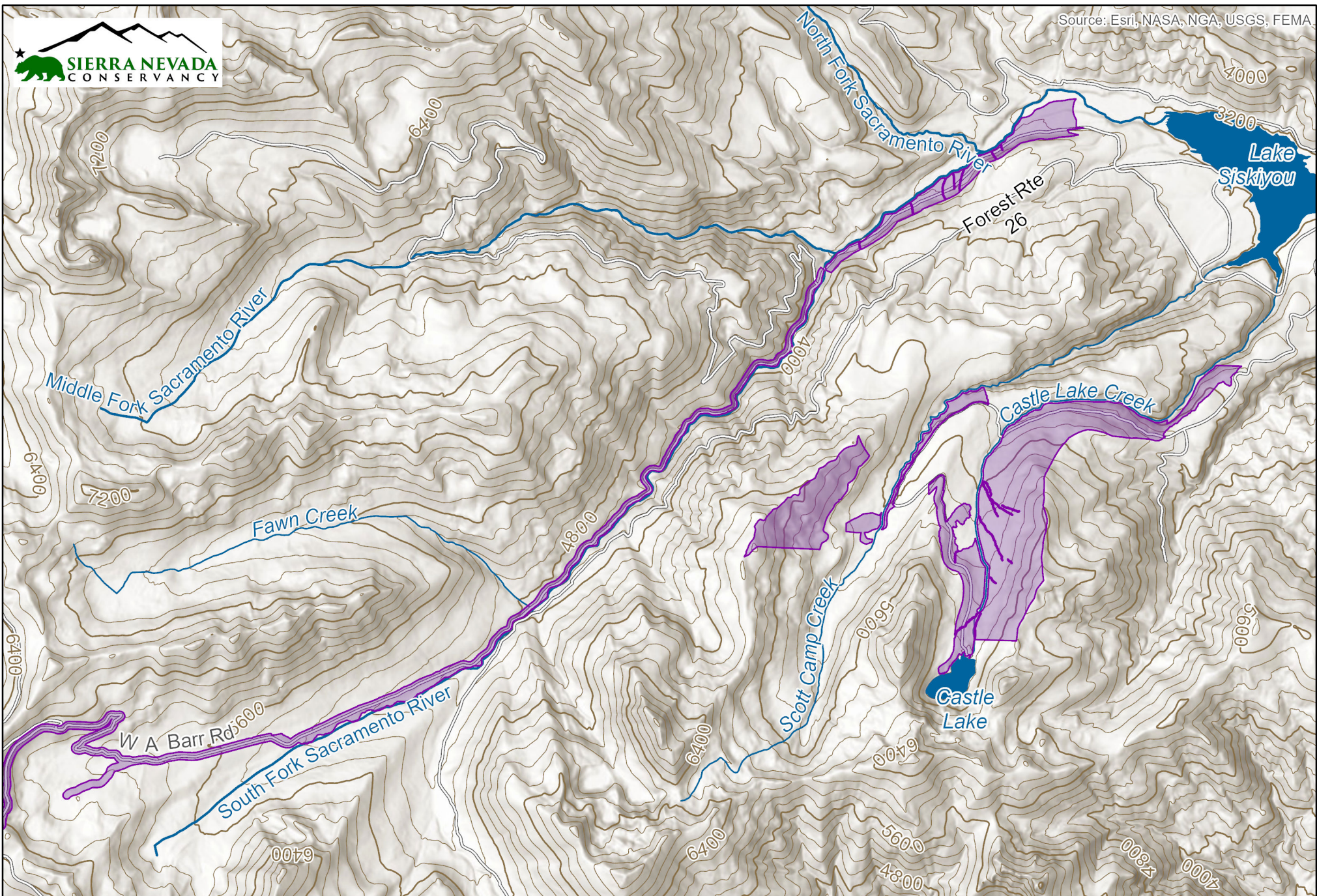


US Forest Service



SNC Service Area

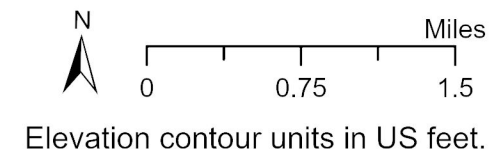
1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion

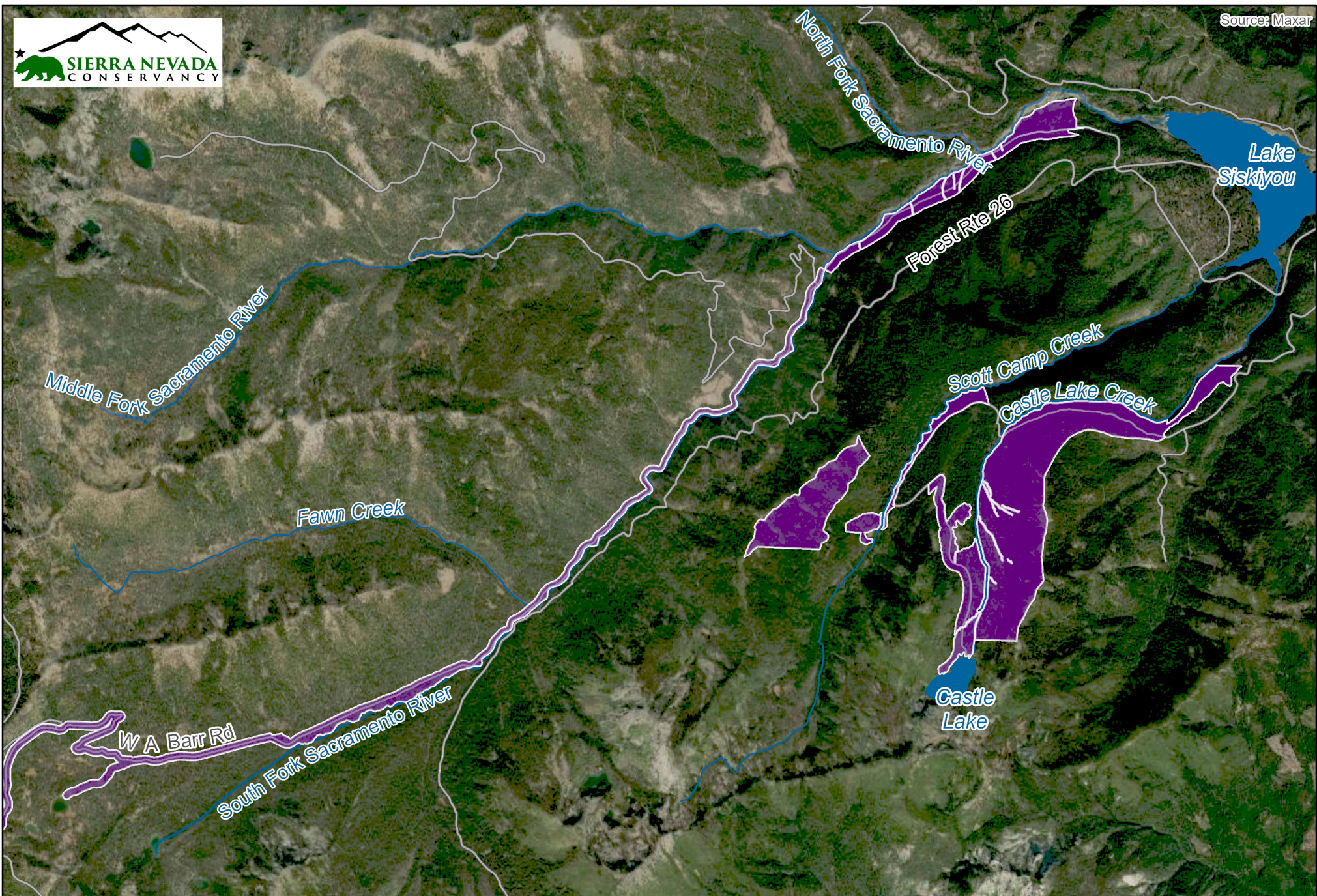


1654: South Fork Sacramento Fire Resilience

United States Forest Service, Shasta-Trinity
National Forest

 Project Area






1654: South Fork Sacramento Fire Resilience

United States Forest Service, Shasta-Trinity
National Forest

 Project Area

N

0 0.75 1.5
Miles

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

To: Siskiyou County Clerk – Registrar
311 Fourth Street. Room 201
Yreka, CA 96097

Project Title: South Fork Sacramento Fire Resilience (SNC 1654)

Project Location – Specific: Shasta-Trinity National Forest, Shasta McCloud Management Unit, Siskiyou County. Directly southwest of Lake Siskiyou along W A Bar Road, and along Castle Lake Creek between Lake Siskiyou and Castle Lake. See attached map.

Project Location - City: Three miles southwest of the City of Mt. Shasta.

Project Location - County: Siskiyou

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) would provide funding to the United States Forest Service, Shasta-Trinity National Forest, to implement project #1654 South Fork Sacramento Fire Resilience. The project will improve fire resilience of forested ecosystems, improve public safety by reducing the likelihood of severe wildfire within the wildland urban interface (WUI), improve wildlife habitat, and restore the natural role of fire to the ecosystem. It covers approximately 1,157 acres, and is part of a larger 21,400-acre project area that has been analyzed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Project activities include hand, mechanical, and mastication treatments consistent with the December 2023 South Fork Sacramento Public Safety and Forest Restoration Project Decision Notice.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Shasta-Trinity National Forest
Rachel Birkey, Forest Supervisor
3644 Avtech Parkway, Redding, CA 96002
530-226-2400

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, section 4799.05, subd. (d)(1)

Reasons why project is exempt:

Public Resources Code, section 4799.05 statutorily exempts from CEQA projects for prescribed fire, reforestation, habitat restoration, thinning, or fuel-reduction projects, or to related activities included in the project description, undertaken, in whole or in part, on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. The SNC would provide funding to the Shasta-Trinity National Forest to conduct fuels reduction and forest-health treatments for recreation area protection, habitat protection, and forest resilience on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. The proposed project was reviewed in its entirety under NEPA in the South Fork Sacramento Public Safety and Forest Restoration Project Environmental Assessment, Finding of No Significant Impact, and Decision Notice signed on December 21, 2023.

Lead Agency**Contact Person:** Mary Akens**Area Code/Telephone/Extension:** 530-450-5177**If filed by applicant:** N/A

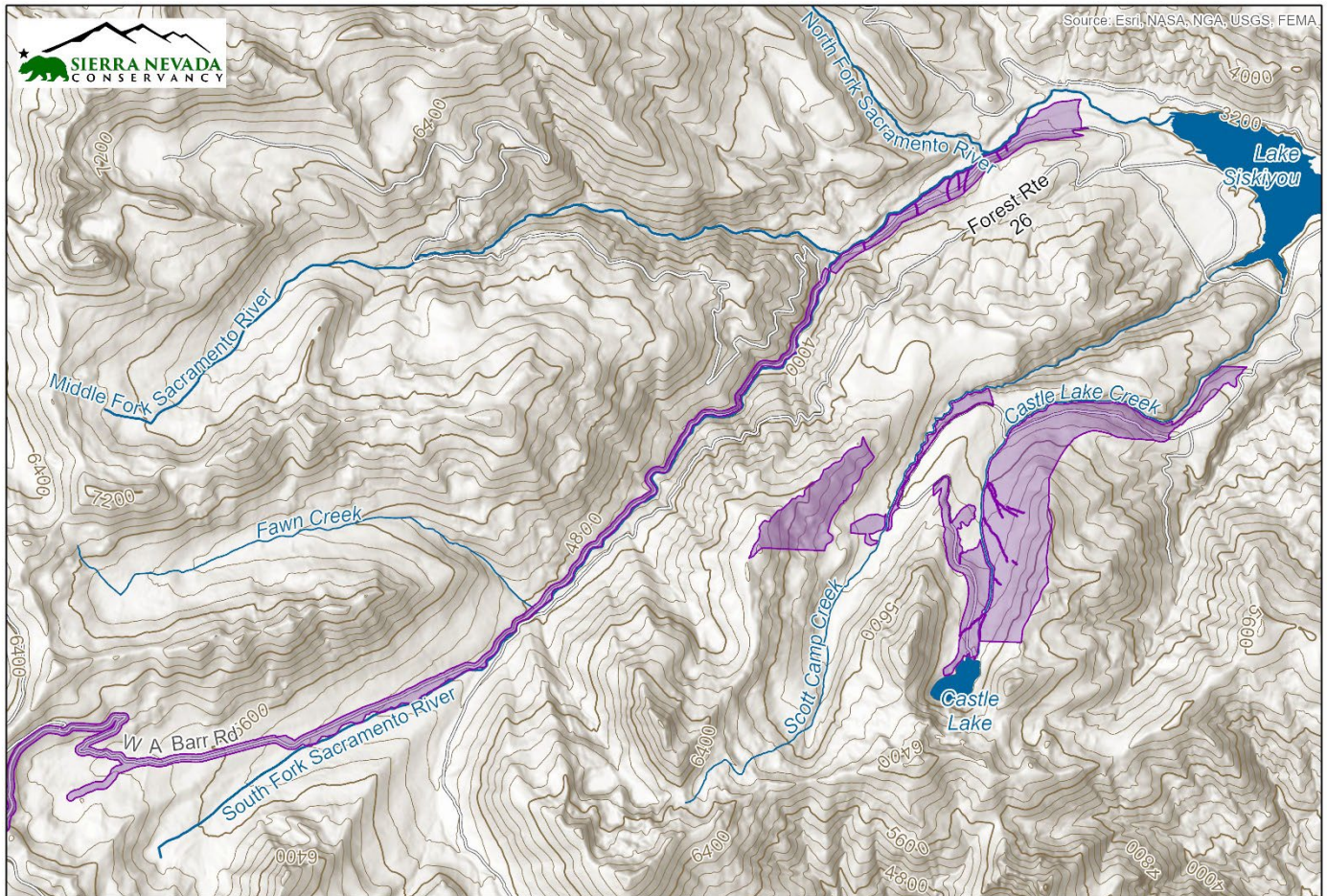
1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes ___ No ___

Signature: _____**Title:** _____**Date:** _____**Signed by Lead Agency:** Yes**Signed by Applicant:** No**Authority cited:** Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.**Date received for filing at OPR:** _____**Reference:** Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

South Fork Sacramento Fire Resilience (SNC 1654)

Project Location

Consistent with Shasta-Trinity National Forest *South Fork Sacramento Public Safety and Forest Restoration Project Decision Notice, December 2023.*



1654: South Fork Sacramento Fire Resilience

United States Forest Service, Shasta-Trinity
National Forest

 Project Area


 Miles
0 0.75 1.5
Elevation contour units in US feet.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1666

SNC ID Number: 1666

Applicant: Save the Redwoods League

Project Title: Giant Sequoia National Monument Restoration and Stewardship Phase Two

SNC Subregion: Southwest

County: Tulare

Funding Amount Requested: \$2,225,300

Funding Amount Recommended: \$2,225,300

Total Project Cost: \$19,207,262

Project Scope / Description

Giant Sequoia National Monument Restoration and Stewardship Phase Two is a 1,462-acre forest health project from Save the Redwoods League (League). The project will take place in two giant sequoia groves, the Alder Creek Grove and the Freeman Grove, both managed by the Sequoia National Forest. The project is located entirely within Tulare County on the Western Divide Ranger District around 6,500ft, near the small community of Sequoia Crest.

A continuation of other Save the Redwood League treatments within Giant Sequoia National Monument, ecological-restoration activities will reduce hazardous fuel loads through manual and mechanical cutting and piling, mechanical removal of standing dead biomass and small diameter green trees, road maintenance, broadcast burning, pile burning, and air curtain burning. These treatments are designed to protect monarch giant sequoias, restore fire and drought resistance, promote reforestation in areas that previously burned, prepare for more regular use of prescribed fire, and to improve habitat complexity across the area. Both phases of this project are part of the United States Forest Service Giant Sequoia Emergency Response and help meet the goals of the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, of which the League and Sequoia National Forest are both members.

A separate Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) project provides funding for work occurring on the portion of the Alder Creek Grove that is on private property and directly abuts portions of this project. Phase One and Phase Two together occur across a much

broader area and encompass two other groves, the Long Meadow and Packsaddle groves. These four groves are targeted due to their relatively large size, the high volume of standing dead trees present, and the presence of core areas within the grove that serve as refugia for wildlife.

The Save the Redwoods League is a nonprofit dedicated to protecting coast redwood and giant sequoias across California. The League has implemented dozens of restoration and stewardship projects across the state, including as a grantee in the previously mentioned SNC project on League-owned land in the Alder Creek Grove.

The Sequoia National Forest is the main project partner, and as part of the League's Master Stewardship Agreement is contributing a secured \$14.7 million to the overall project; the SNC funding is being used as a match. Other main partners include the Tule River Tribe, as a tribal liaison and monitor, and Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS), which is developing a southern Sierra Nevada fuels crew with members from the Tule River Tribe. CAL FIRE is also contributing funds to the project.

This is a Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience grant, helping the SNC meet its goals of creating more fire-resilient forest landscapes, reducing wildfire risk, and accelerating recovery from recent fires within the Sierra-Cascade region. The Alder Creek Grove is within the Tule River watershed and the Freeman Grove is part of the Kern River watershed. The Tule River is the main source of water for the Tule River Reservation. The Kern River flows into the Kern River Valley and is impounded by Lake Isabella.

Project Schedule

| Project Tasks and Deliverables | Timeline |
|---|---|
| Six-month Progress Reports | Every six months until project completion |
| Alder Creek manual cutting and piling | October 2025 |
| Alder Creek mechanical cutting, removal, and piling | October 2025 |
| Alder Creek pile burning | March 2025 |
| Freeman Creek mechanical cutting, removal, and piling | October 2026 |
| Freeman Creek manual cutting and piling | October 2026 |
| Air curtain burning | 2024-2027 |
| Road maintenance | September 2027 |
| Final Report with performance measures reporting | December 2027 |
| Estimated Project Completion Date | December 31, 2027 |

Project Costs

| Project Costs | SNC Funding |
|---|--------------------|
| Contracting, treatments, and monitoring | \$1,823,000 |
| Environmental compliance | \$100,000 |
| Tribal participation | \$100,000 |
| Administrative costs | \$202,300 |
| Total | \$2,225,300 |

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Calaveras Healthy Impact Solutions (CHIPS)
- Great Basin Institute
- Kern River Conservancy
- Sequoia National Forest
- County of Tulare

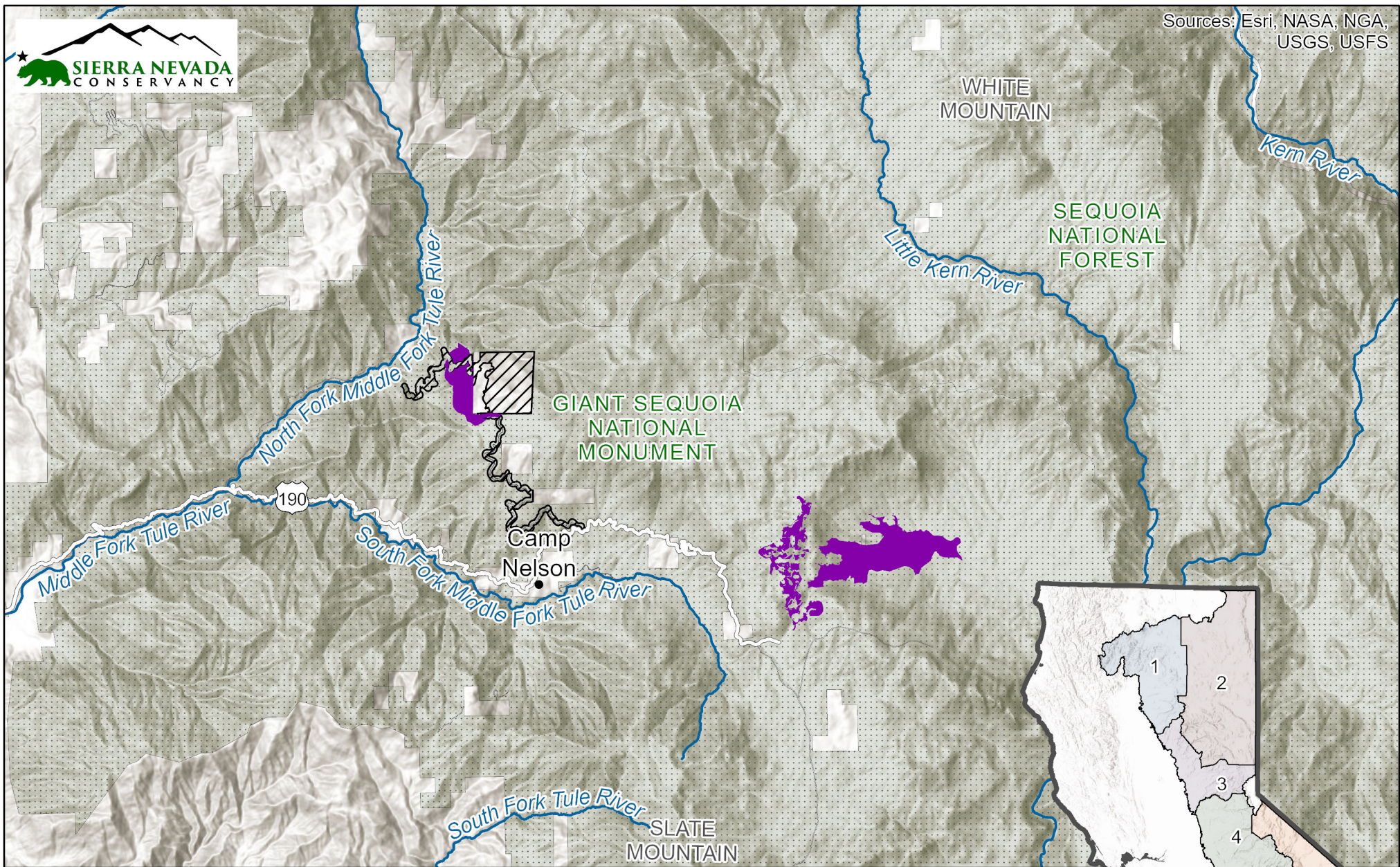
Opposition:

- None received.

Project Performance Measures

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to identify one to three project-specific Performance Measures in their application. Please note, Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified before the grant agreement is executed.

- Acres of land improved or restored.



1666: Giant Sequoia National Monument Restoration and Stewardship Phase Two

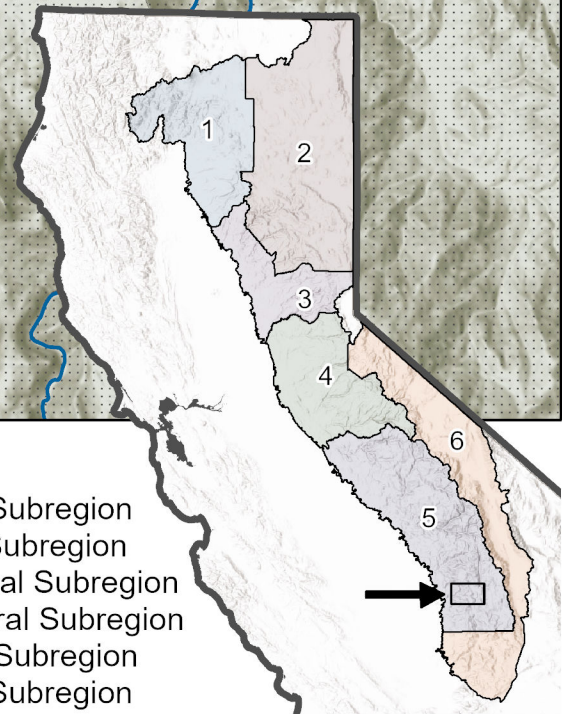
Save the Redwoods League

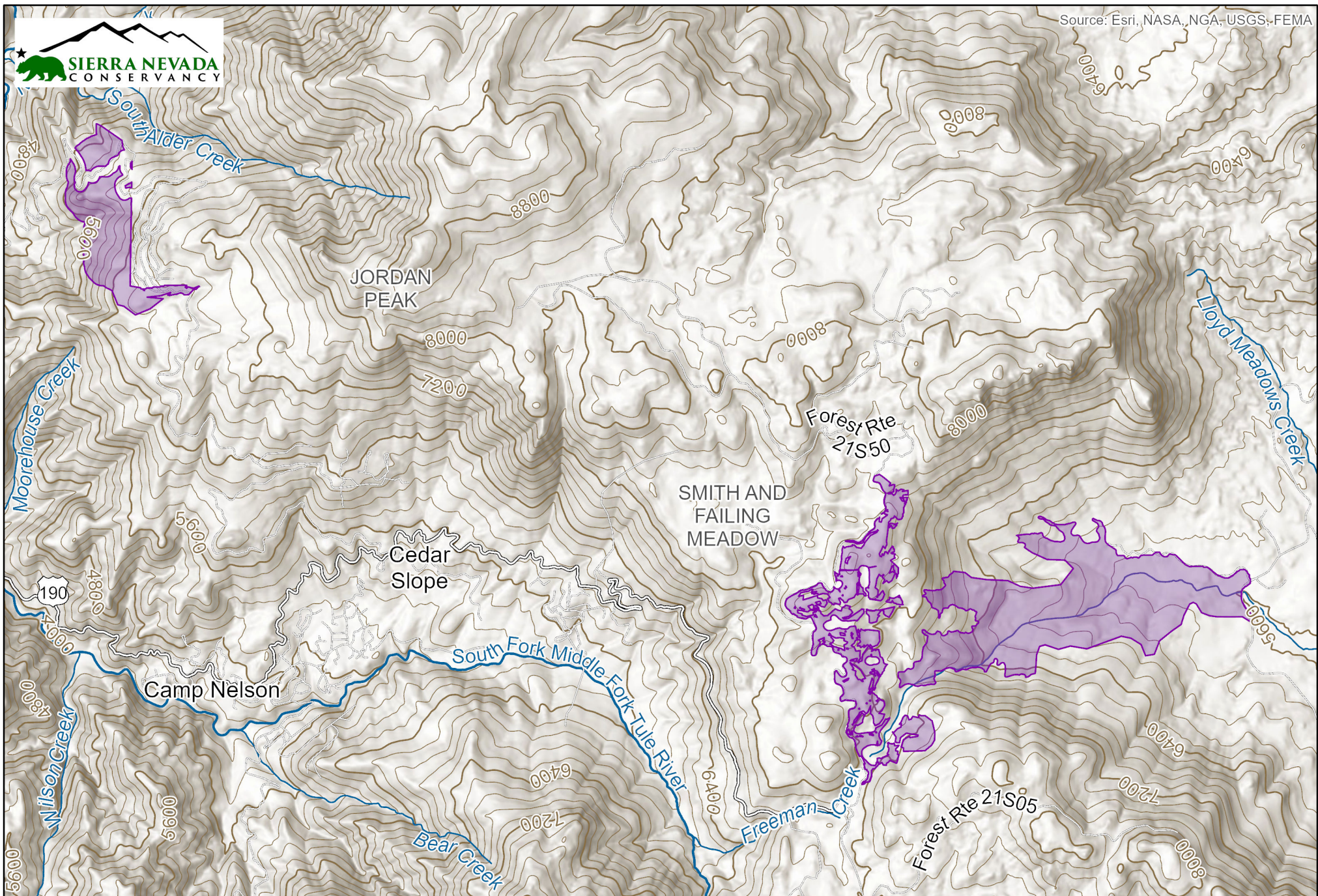
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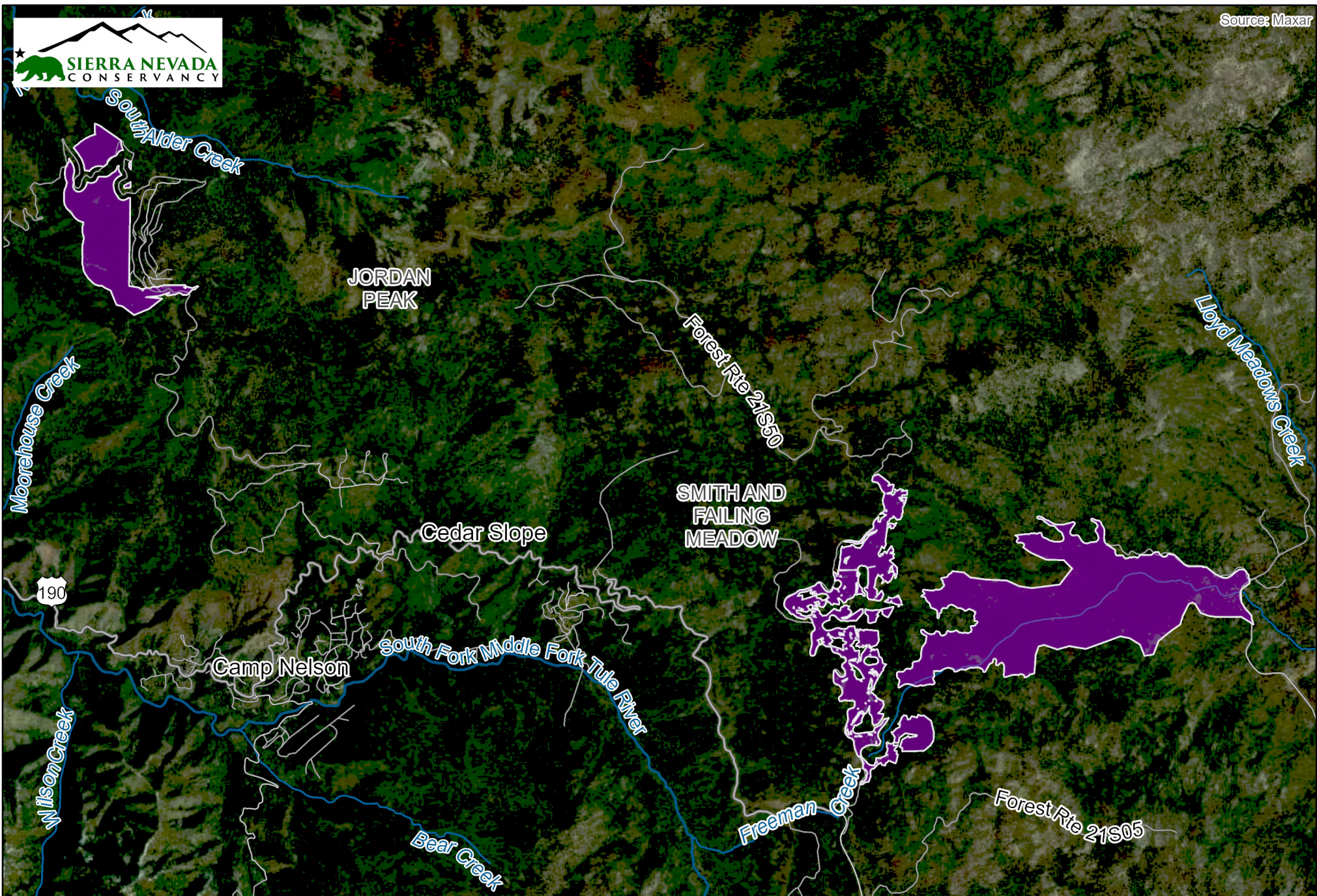


-  Project Area
-  Other Projects
-  US Forest Service

1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion







1666: Giant Sequoia National Monument Restoration
and Stewardship Phase Two
Save the Redwoods League

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

To: Tulare County Clerk / Recorder
221 S. Mooney Blvd, Rm 105
Visalia, CA 93291

Project Title: Giant Sequoia National Monument Restoration and Stewardship Phase Two (SNC 1666)

Project Location – Specific: Sequoia National Forest, Western Divide Ranger District, Tulare County. Two project areas 1) Near Alder Creek Grove, three miles north of Camp Nelson, center approximately at -118.638, 36.188 degrees. 2) Near Freeman Creek Grove, five miles east of Camp Nelson, center approximately at -118.515, 36.143 degrees

Project Location - City: Three miles north of Camp Nelson and five miles east of Camp Nelson.

Project Location - County: Tulare

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) would provide funding to the Save the Redwoods League to implement project #1666 Giant Sequoia National Monument Restoration and Stewardship Phase Two in partnership with Sequoia National Forest. The project will reduce hazardous fuels loads on approximately 1,462 acres to protect monarch giant sequoias, restore fire and drought resistance, promote reforestation in areas that previously burned, prepare for more regular use of prescribed fire, and to improve habitat complexity across the area. Activities include, but are not limited to: manual and mechanical fuels reduction; biomass removal; broadcast burning, pile burning, and air curtain burning where feasible; road maintenance, as needed, to safely access treatment areas and minimize impacts from road use. The proposed project is part of the larger (approximately 40,000 acre) Castle Fire Ecological Restoration Project planned by the Sequoia National Forest.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Save the Redwoods League
Tim Borden, Sequoia Restoration and Stewardship Manager
111 Sutter St., 11th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94104
415-820-5879

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, section 4799.05, subd. (d)(1)

Reasons why project is exempt:

Public Resources Code, section 4799.05 statutorily exempts from CEQA projects for prescribed fire, reforestation, habitat restoration, thinning, or fuel-reduction projects, or to related activities included in the project description, undertaken, in whole or in part, on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. The SNC would provide funding to the Save the Redwoods League to conduct fuels reduction and forest-health treatments for recreation area protection, habitat protection, and forest resilience in the Sequoia National Forest. The proposed project was reviewed in its entirety under NEPA in the Castle Fire Ecological Restoration Project Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact, and Decision Notice signed Dec. 28, 2023.

Lead Agency**Contact Person:** Mary Akens**Area Code/Telephone/Extension:** 530-450-5177**If filed by applicant:** N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes ___ No ___

Signature: _____**Title:** _____**Date:** _____**Signed by Lead Agency:** Yes**Signed by Applicant:** No**Authority cited:** Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. **Date received for filing at OPR:** _____**Reference:** Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy
March 7 & 8, 2024**

Key Meetings and Presentations

December 2023 – February 2024

January 17 – RCRC’s Annual Rural Leadership Reception: Executive Officer Angela Avery attended this event in Sacramento to gather and celebrate the installation of RCRC’s 2024 Officers and present the Rural Leadership Awards.

January 29 – California Leadership Forum: Deputy Executive Officer Julie Alvis and Deputy Executive Officer (Administration) Amy Lussier attended this annual event hosted by California Natural Resources Agency in Sacramento. The topic of this year’s forum was “California for All: Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility.”

January 31 – California Biomass Workshop 2024: Executive Officer Angela Avery attended this one-day event at the Citizen Hotel in Sacramento, hosted by the UC Davis Policy Institute for Energy, Environment, and the Economy. The workshop included five panel sessions, as well as presentations from Secretary for Natural Resources Wade Crowfoot and Assembly Majority Leader Cecilia Aguiar-Curry as keynote speakers.
[More information and a detailed agenda can be found here.](#)

February 9 – TCSI Steering Committee Meeting: Executive Officer Angela Avery attended the TCSI Steering Committee Meeting in Sacramento. This meeting was hosted by the Nature Conservancy.

February 26 – California Tribal Nations Summit: Executive Officer Angela Avery attended the California Tribal Nations Summit in Sacramento. This summit was hosted by the California Natural Resources Agency and is part of the California for ALL Initiative.

February 27 – Forest Strategies and Innovations Conference: Executive Officer Angela Avery attended the Forest Strategies and Innovations Conference in Sacramento. This conference took place at the Kimpton Sawyer Hotel and was put on by Calforests. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy was a sponsor at this event.

February 28 – All Conservancy Spring Meeting: Executive Officer Angela Avery, Deputy Executive Officer Julie Alvis, and Deputy Executive Officer (Administration) Amy Lussier attended the All Conservancy Spring Meeting virtually. This meeting was hosted by the State Coastal Conservancy.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
March 7, 2024

Letters of Support
December 2023
through
February 2024



11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

December 11, 2023

Helen Murray
USDA Forest Service Region 5
1323 Club Drive
Vallejo, CA 95492-1110

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR SUGAR BOWL RESORT WOOD INNOVATIONS GRANT APPLICATION

Dear Ms. Murray:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is writing in support of Sugar Bowl Resort's application to the USDA Forest Service Wood Innovations Grant program to advance preliminary permitting, analysis, and design of a wood energy system that would offset the propane and electricity used at the resort. This project would enable Sugar Bowl to develop the optimum wood energy system design to suit its operations and incorporate this design into its upcoming plans for expansion, paving the way for project implementation.

A wood energy system at Sugar Bowl would add to the momentum growing in the Truckee region for innovative biomass utilization, and bring attention to the benefits of modern wood energy for the thousands of visitors that Sugar Bowl hosts each year.

Sincerely,

Angela Avery
Executive Officer





11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

January 2, 2024

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Forest Health: Post-fire Reforestation and Recovery Grant Program
PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

SUBJECT: FEATHER RIVER RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT – NORTH QUINCY PROJECT

Dear Grant Review Panel:

Thank you for considering this proposal from the Feather River Resource Conservation District (RCD) to fund the implementation of the North Quincy Project. This phase of the project follows several years of planning and collaboration.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is a recipient of a block grant from the Department of Conservation's Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP). In 2019, our organization provided funding to the Feather River RCD to organize and create a Regional prioritization plan to identify projects in the Feather River that would address forest health and wildfire risk reduction. During the project, the landscape within Plumas County was altered drastically by wildfire. In the months following those events, conversations emerged that focused efforts on remaining unburned forests. The "North Quincy Project" was identified as one of the most vulnerable parts of the landscape.

In the next round of RFFCP funding, SNC was able to provide funding to complete environmental compliance. These funds allowed the applicant to conduct a robust, NEPA-compliant review, and design vegetative prescriptions to meet the need of creating resilient forest structures. Additionally, the Feather River RCD has been able to leverage the RFFCP funds to secure \$2,000,000 of matching federal dollars towards the project implementation.

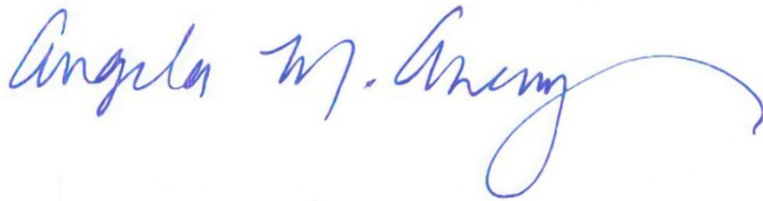
These previous investments should indicate that this is a priority project for both the applicant and partner organizations. It has been vetted and recognized as important to furthering the state's forest resilience and climate action goals. The Sierra Nevada



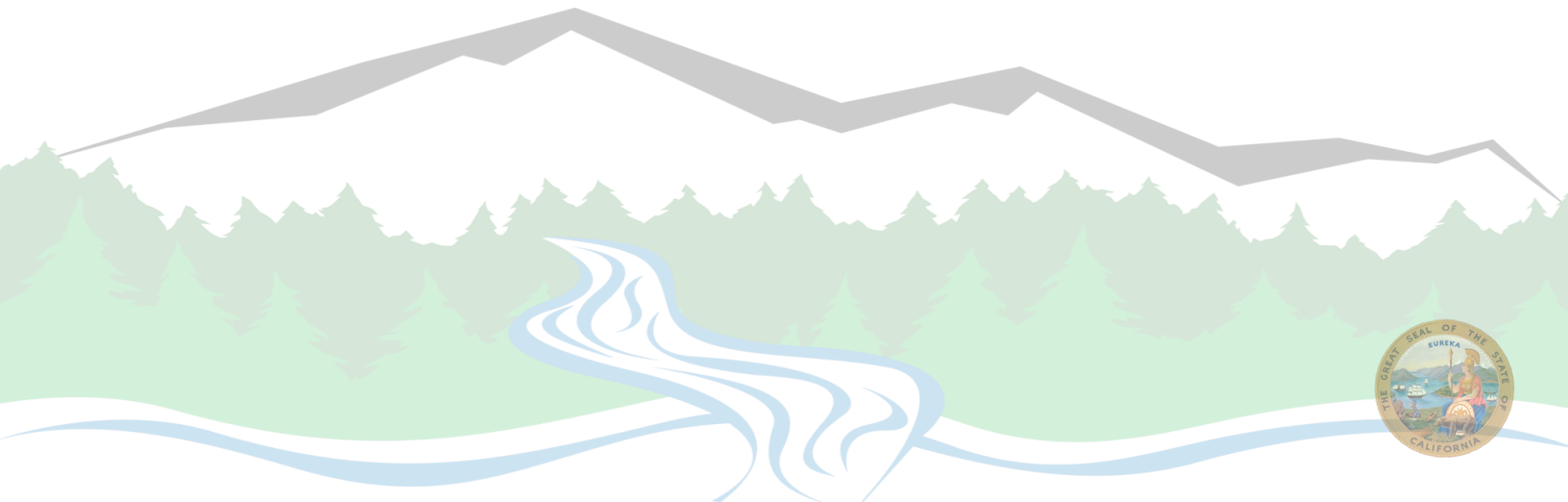
Conservancy supports the North Quincy Project as part of the Conservancy's larger goals related to forest health and wildfire risk reduction for the region.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer





11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

January 2, 2024

CAL FIRE
Forest Health Program
1416 9th Street
PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Attention: Matthew Reischman
Deputy Director, Resources Management
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

SUBJECT: THE WHITEBARK INSTITUTE'S EASTERN SIERRA CLIMATE & COMMUNITIES RESILIENCE PROJECT: PHASE I PRIORITY ACRES

Dear Mr. Reischman:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) supports the Whitebark Institute's grant application for the ***Eastern Sierra Climate & Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP) Phase I Priority Acres***. The project will build on the last several years of planning efforts within the Inyo National Forest and nearby non-federal lands to improve forest and community resilience in the eastern Sierra Nevada.

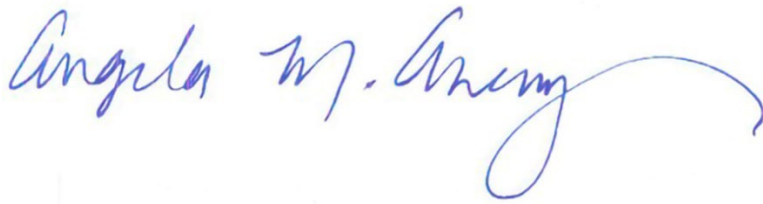
The SNC provided initial funding to launch the ESCCRP in early 2020. At about the same time, SNC began funding capacity-building grants to the East Subregion (Alpine, Mono, and Inyo counties) of the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP). Many aspects of both programs have been successfully administered by the Whitebark Institute, and the ESCCRP is the dominant forest health project within the East Subregion, supported by the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance collaborative. The town of Mammoth Lakes is central to the economic viability of Mono and Inyo counties, and the ESCCRP is identified as a high priority project within the "Eastern Sierra Nevada RFFCP Subregional Plan" of 2022.

The **ESCCRP – Phase I Priority Acres** is the next step to continue restoring forest health within this important landscape. The approximately 2,000+ acres proposed would provide forest health treatments in high wildfire hazard areas that are close in proximity

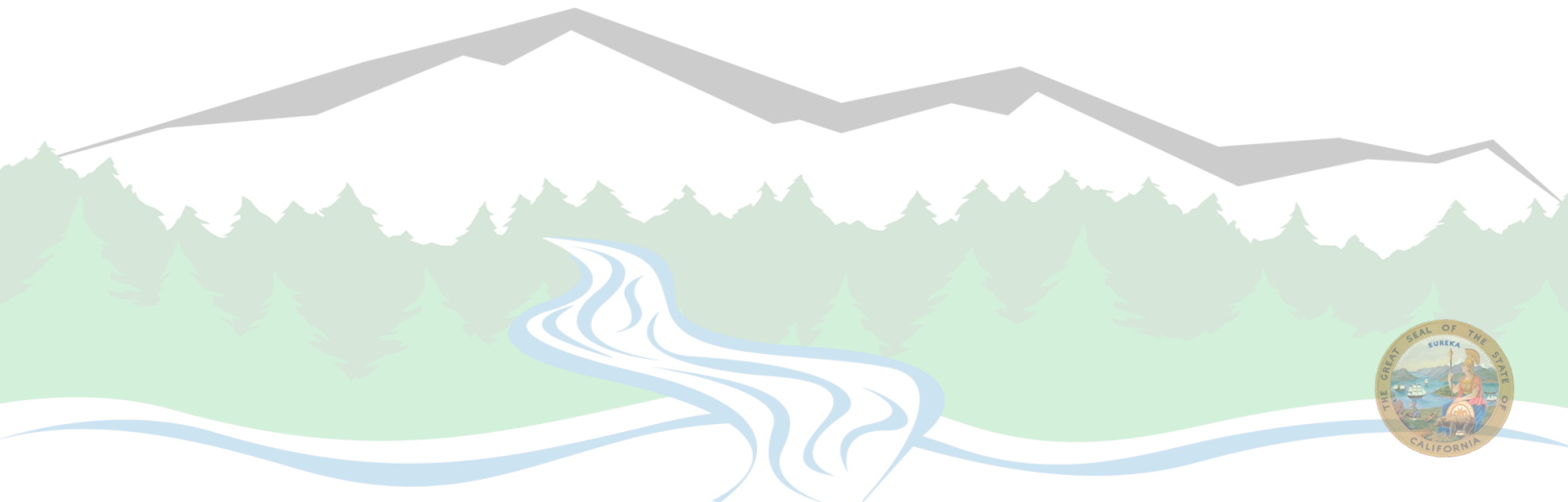


to the town of Mammoth Lakes. Implementation of these acres would allow for immediate action towards restoring forest health and reducing the risk of unnaturally large high-severity wildfires by addressing units with heavy fuel loads in strategic locations. The **ESCCRP – Phase I Priority Acres** is an opportunity for CAL FIRE to continue to serve as an active partner in the Eastern Sierra on our continued journey to achieve Regional resilience.

Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer





11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

January 5, 2024

CalFire – Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit
5366 Hwy 49 North
Mariposa CA 95338
209-966-3622

SUBJECT: CAMP 10 RESTORATION PROJECT

Dear California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention:

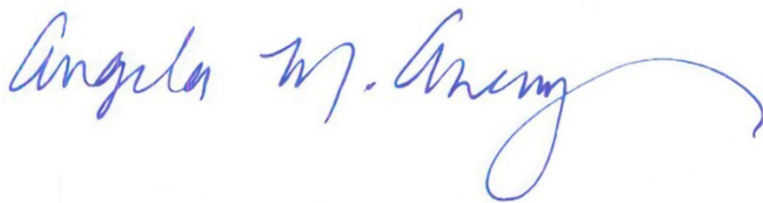
The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) supports the implementation of the Camp 10 Restoration Project and shares goals with this initiative by the National Forest Foundation (NFF). The SNC supports the principal goals of re-establishing a healthy and resilient forest, restoring endangered species ecosystems, increasing carbon and water retention, and ensuring a more adaptive and resilient forest for generations to come. We also support the U.S. Forest Service's mission to increase capacity through partnerships, harmonize forest health, and the implementation of landscape scale treatments in California.

The SNC is a regular partner and supporter of both the NFF and the Sierra National Forest and has confidence that these partners will complete the Camp 10 Restoration Project as designed. The SNC has funded numerous NFF projects throughout the state of California and has been pleased with their attention to detail, professionalism, and expediency throughout. Likewise, SNC partners and funds numerous projects occurring in the Sierra National Forest, including forest resiliency and restoration projects like this proposal. The SNC's support of this project will not in any way prejudice the future actions of the SNC, nor create any implied support for future funding requests to the SNC.

Thank you for considering this request. Please feel free to contact me with questions about support for the project at: angela.avery@sierranevada.ca.gov.



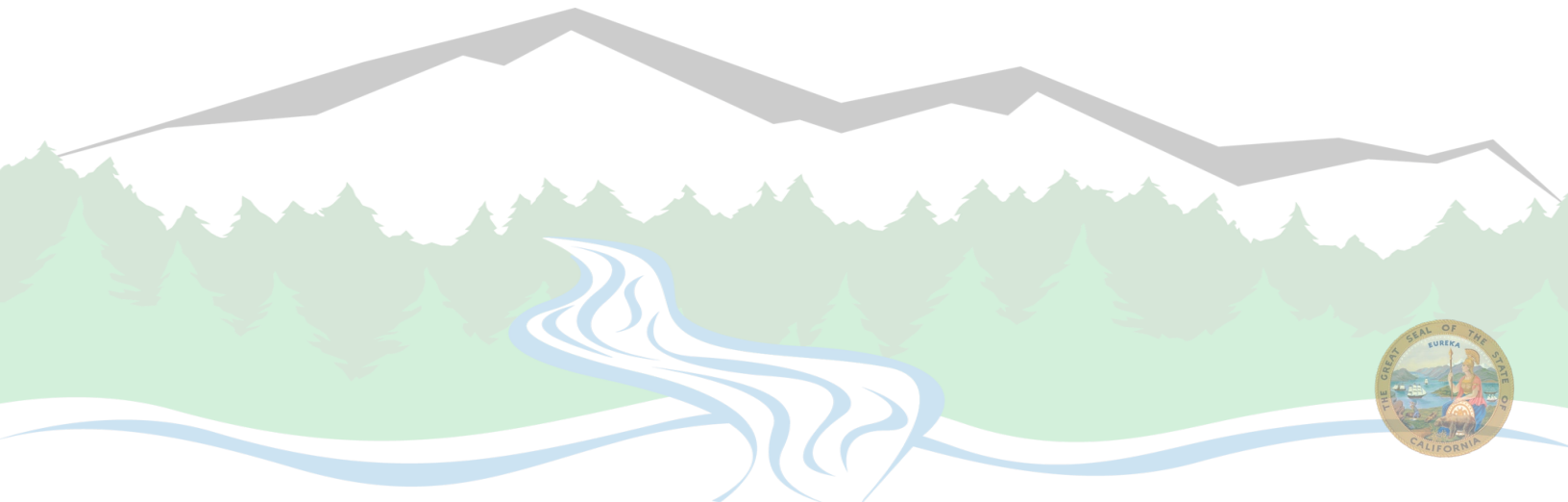
Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer

cc: Sara Vaughan, National Forest Foundation, svaughan@nationalforests.org

Dean Gould, Forest Supervisor, Sierra National Forest, dean.gould@usda.gov





11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

January 5, 2024

Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Forest Health Program
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

**SUBJECT: SIERRA FOOTHILL CONSERVANCY UPPER CHOWCHILLA RIVER
WATERSHED FOREST HEALTH AND FIRE RECOVERY PROJECT**

Dear CAL FIRE:

I am writing on behalf of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), a Regional Block Grantee of the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP), to express support of the Sierra Foothill Conservancy's (SFC) *Upper Chowchilla River Watershed Forest Health and Fire Recovery Project* (ID 57520486) (project), as a regionally significant project.

The project aligns with and advances the SNC's RFFCP, which aims to increase the pace and scale of project development and supports innovative approaches in an area of our state that, now more than ever, requires significant investments in forest resilience projects.

In 2023, SFC was awarded RFFCP funding for the Mariposa Creek Parkway Resilience and Tribal Initiative, which has been expanding partnership capacity between SFC, the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (SSMN), CAL FIRE Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit, Mariposa County, Southern Sierra Prescribed Burn Association, and many others for the purpose of bolstering ecological and cultural restoration efforts along Mariposa Creek, a natural resource cornerstone located in the heart of Mariposa. This RFFCP project focuses on the following components: partnership collaboration and facilitation, prescribed cultural burn technical planning and implementation, forest management planning and permitting, SSMN Tribal engagement, funding capacity development, and public outreach and education.

The SFC's Forest Health Program project proposal builds on their RFFCP project, by expanding approaches and partnerships being cultivated along Mariposa Creek to other

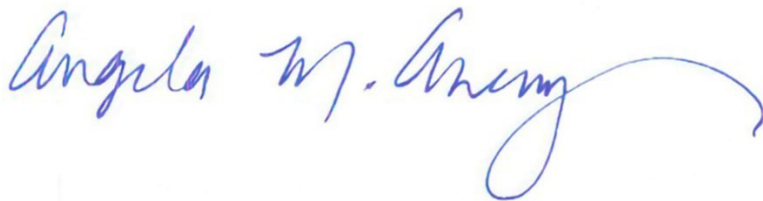


parts of Mariposa County. The project will continue collaboration and capacity building with the SSMN by actively employing their stewardship crew to participate in a variety of restoration activities, including Tribal consultation, Black Oak reforestation, and outreach and education.

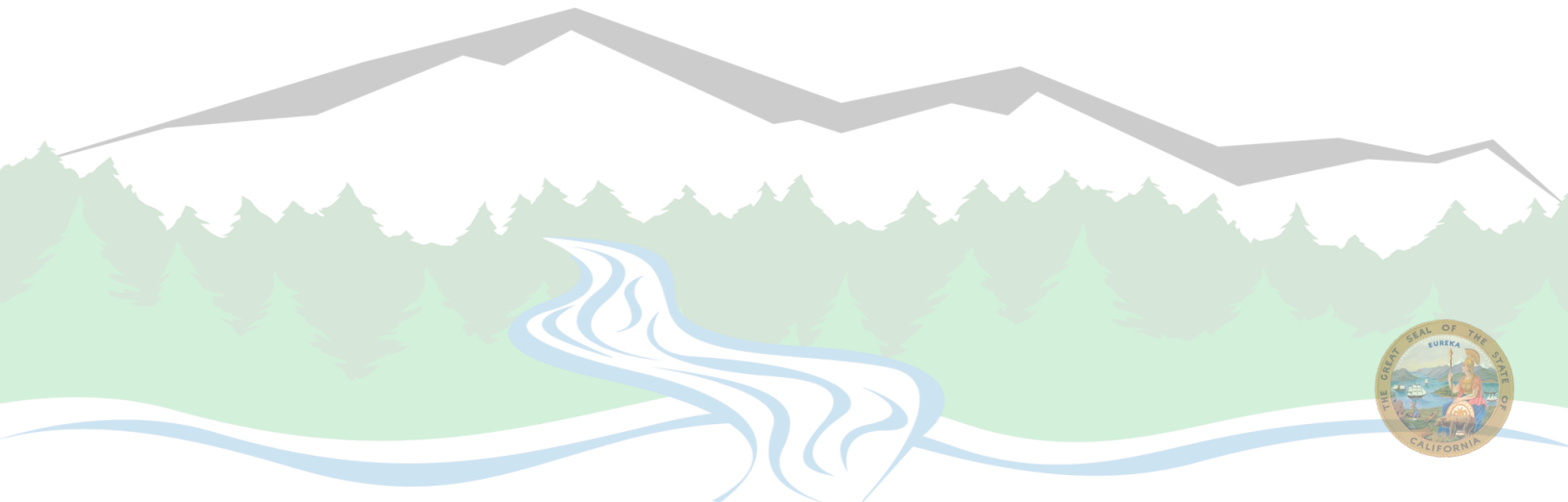
The Sierra Nevada Conservancy hopes you support the Upper Chowchilla River Watershed Forest Health and Fire Recovery Project for its strategic benefits and significance to the region.

If you have further questions, please contact me at angela.avery@sierranevada.ca.gov or RFFCP staff at rffc@conservation.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer





11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

January 5, 2024

Chief Matthew Reischman, Deputy Director, Resource Management,
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
715 P Street
PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

**SUBJECT: THE NEVADA AND PLACER COUNTY COOPERATIVE LANDSCAPE
RESILIENCE PROJECT**

Dear Chief Reischman:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is pleased to submit this letter of support for the Nevada and Placer County Cooperative Landscape Resilience Project in the greater Truckee area in Placer and Nevada counties on behalf of the Truckee Fire Protection District (Truckee Fire) and their partners. The project will reduce wildfire risk and promote forest health and resilience, which are priorities of high importance and value to the surrounding communities. Furthermore, collaborative projects that align implementation across federal, state, and local lands are important to increasing pace and scale and advance wildfire resilience in the region and give first responders a fighting chance to stop or slow the spread of an advancing wildfire. This project strongly aligns with SNC's Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program as well as the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative and SNC's Watershed Improvement Program.

Truckee Fire has convened and engaged key partners, stakeholders, and community leaders in the creation of this project, which acts as a collaborative and landscape scale project involving multiple jurisdictions and land ownership types in the area. It is synergistic with other collaborative efforts focused more on Forest Service land in eastern Placer and Nevada counties.

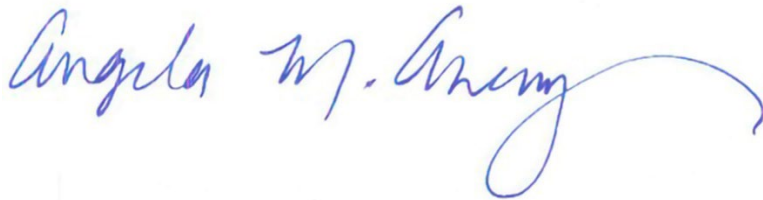
Nevada and Placer counties have seen recurring damaging wildfires over the last decade, causing loss of life, homes, property, and natural resources. It is the primary threat to the mountain town's way of life, deeply impacting local businesses, government services, and the health and safety of citizens. Securing investments



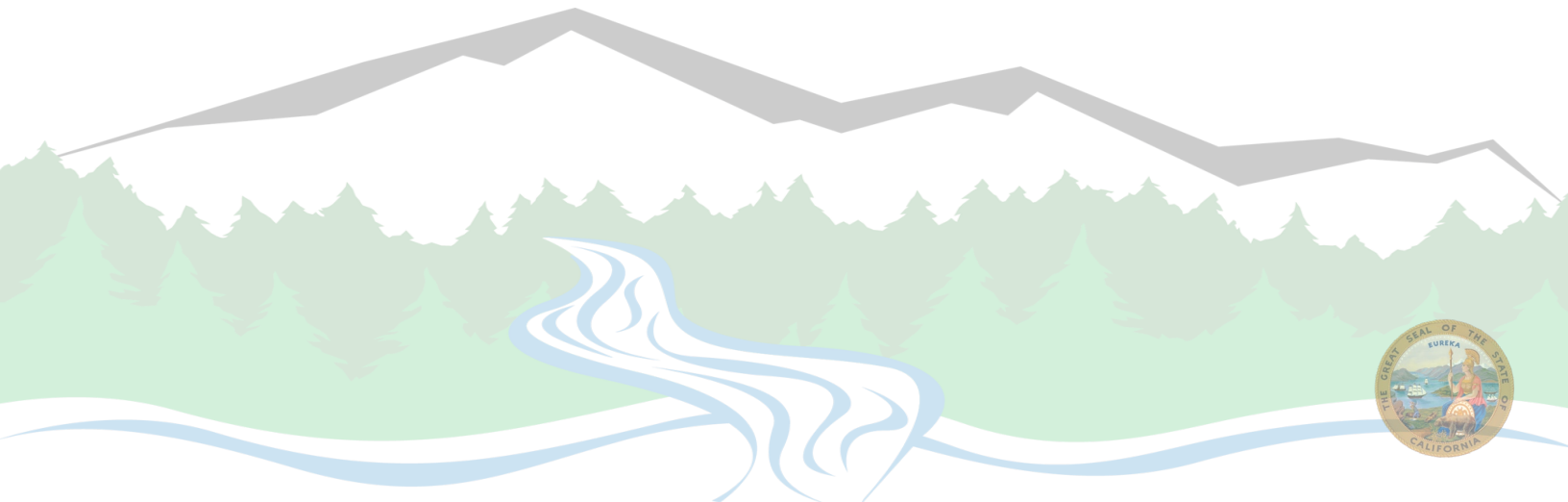
through CAL FIRE's Forest Health Program is essential to Truckee's landscape strategy to reverse this trend and enhance resilience to the threat posed by wildland fire. Given the success of Truckee Fire's multiple previous CAL FIRE grants, and strong partnerships with other land managers and agencies in the area, I am confident in their ability to deliver meaningful results and a successful project which will serve as a cornerstone for future collaborative work, as it exemplifies so many of the core principals of enhancing landscape scale fire resilience.

In closing, we at SNC encourage you to fund this application to the Forest Health Program. It will help to sustain our Region's progress towards living more safely with wildfire, while also ensuring that Nevada and Placer county forests contribute to California's climate goals.

Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer





11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

January 5, 2024

CalFire – Tulare Unit
1968 So. Lovers Lane
Visalia, CA 93277

SUBJECT: WINDY FIRE RESTORATION PROJECT

Dear California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention:

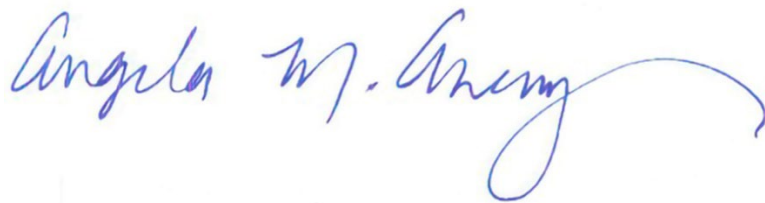
The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) supports the implementation of the Windy Fire Restoration project and shares goals with this initiative by the National Forest Foundation (NFF). The SNC supports the principal goals of re-establishing a healthy and resilient forest, restoring endangered species ecosystems, increasing carbon and water retention, and ensuring a more adaptive and resilient forest for generations to come. We also support the U.S. Forest Service's mission to increase capacity through partnerships, harmonize forest health, and the implementation of landscape scale treatments in California.

The SNC is a regular partner and supporter of both the NFF and the Sequoia National Forest and has confidence that these partners will complete the Windy Fire Restoration Project as designed. The SNC has funded numerous NFF projects throughout the state of California and has been pleased with their attention to detail, professionalism, and expediency throughout. Likewise, SNC partners and funds numerous projects occurring in the Sequoia National Forest and within Sequoia National Monument, including forest resilience and restoration projects like this proposal. The SNC's support of this project will not in any way prejudice the future actions of the SNC, nor create any implied support for future funding requests to SNC.

Thank you for considering this request. Please feel free to contact me with questions about support for the project at: angela.avery@sierranevada.ca.gov.

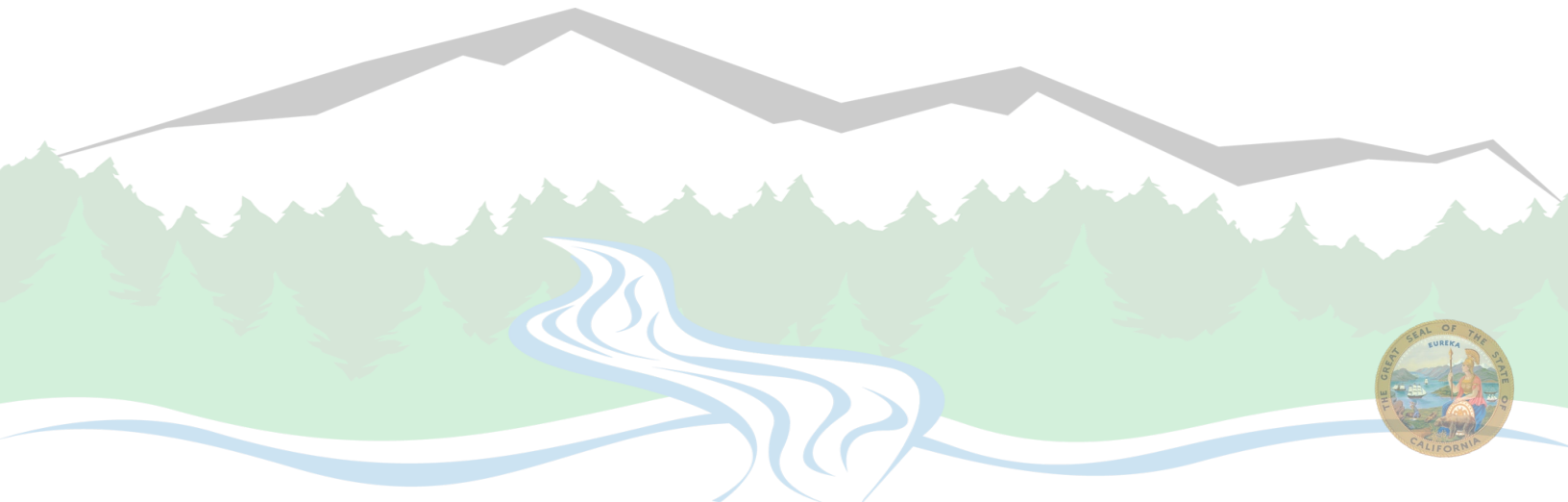


Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer

cc: Anthony Edwards, Forest Supervisor, Sequoia National Forest,
anthony.edwards@usda.gov





11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

January 9, 2024

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Forest Health: Post-fire Reforestation and Recovery Grant Program
PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

**SUBJECT: EL DORADO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS FIRE ADAPTED
PHASE III – HIGHWAY 50 PROJECT**

Dear Grant Review Panel:

I am writing on behalf of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), a Regional Block Grantee of the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, to express support of the El Dorado Resource Conservation Districts Fire Adapted Phase III – Highway 50 Corridor Forest Health Improvement Project (Project) as a regionally significant project.

The Project entails forest treatments to reduce fuel loads, improve forest health and resiliency, and improve emergency ingress and egress along the Highway 50 corridor between Placerville and Echo Summit. This phase of the Project will focus on treating up to 2000 acres within an 11-mile segment of Highway 50 between Placerville and Pollock Pines.

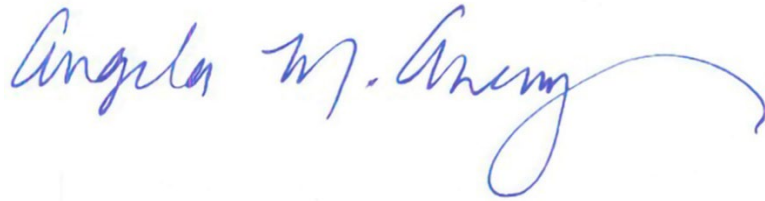
The Highway 50 corridor between Placerville to Echo Summit is a vital regional economic and cultural resource, serving commercial, commuting, trucking, educational, recreational, and emergency traffic. Ignitions from roadside and recreational sources are frequent and Highway 50 itself serves as a primary evacuation corridor and essential staging area for firefighting agencies. The primary purpose and need of the Project is to improve safety for the public, firefighters, emergency response personnel, law enforcement, private land innholders, contractors, special use permit holders, and others by removing hazard fuels in strategic locations.

The SNC hopes you support the Fire Adapted 50 Phase III – Highway 50 Corridor Forest Health Improvement Project as a regionally significant project. for its strategic benefits and significance to the Region.

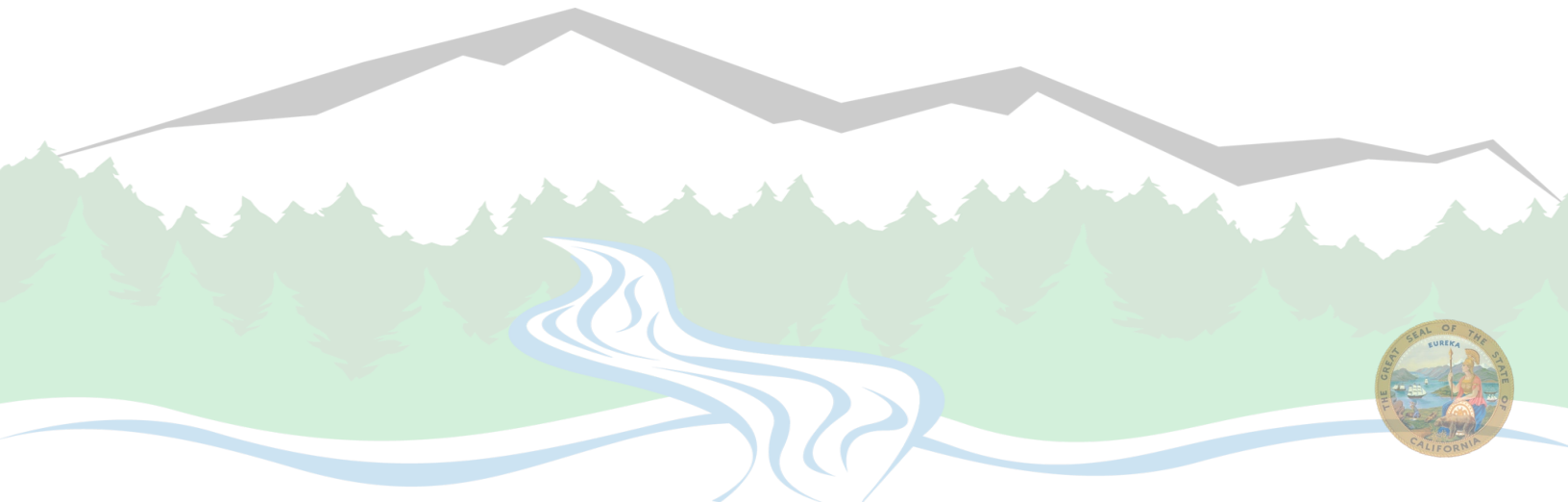


Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer





11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

January 9, 2024

CAL FIRE
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento CA, 94244-2460

SUBJECT: THE FIRE RESILIENT EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Dear Grant Program Staff:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is excited to see the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) team take their resources and package them in more accessible formats to cross-train agency staff and to help landowners in our communities better prepare for wildfire. We also appreciate their effort to work with diverse target audiences who are key in communicating and mitigating risks for homeowners and landowners. These targeted trainings will be of great benefit to communities in the Sierra Nevada, and California as a whole.

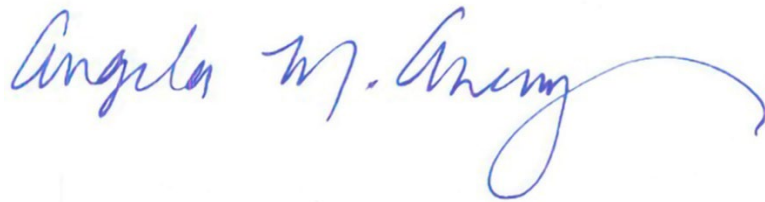
The SNC has a strong partnership with UC ANR and our staff cross-train and work together to advance best practices across the Sierra Nevada. Recent partnership efforts have included wildfire recovery on industrial and non-industrial timberlands, climate-smart reforestation, and supporting community-scale prescribed fire efforts. This grant would further develop curriculum and training resources for defensible space and home hardening, fuel reduction, disaster preparedness, and fire ecology. The UC ANR is a trusted resource and well-positioned to assist California's diverse private landowners, professionals, and communities.

We support funding for the **Fire Resilient Education and Workforce Development Program.**

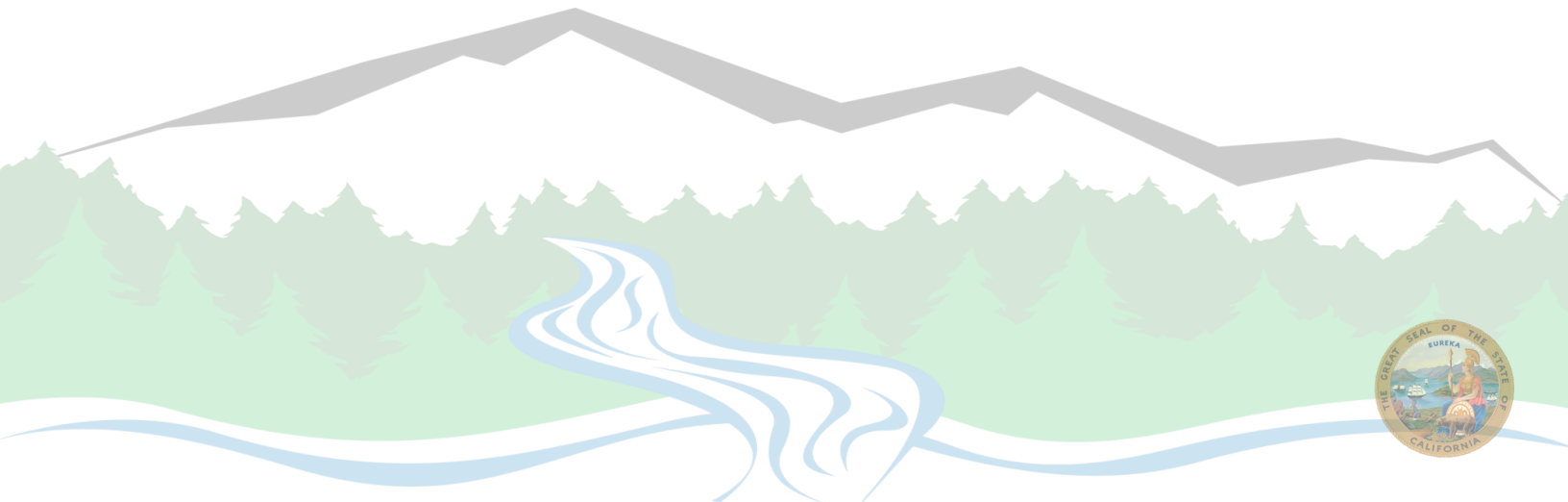
Sincerely,



Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer





11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

January 10, 2024

Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Forest Health Program
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: BURNEY HAT CREEK FOREST HEALTH PHASE III PROJECT

Dear CAL FIRE:

I am writing on behalf of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) a Regional Block Grantee of the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP), to express support of the Fall River Resource Conservation District (RCD), Burney Hat Creek Forest Health Phase III application as a regionally significant project.

The SNC invested RFFCP funds in the Fall River RCD to build their capacity in planning and implementing projects that improve forest health and fire resiliency. Many of the implementation-ready activities under this project are a direct result of planning work through RFFCP investments from the SNC. Thus, this proposed project is a result of SNC's Regional strategy to increase the scale and speed of project development to restore resilience to forested landscapes.

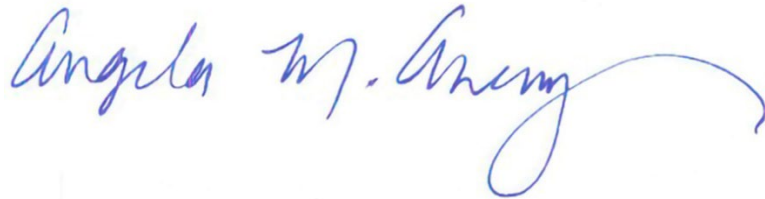
This proposed project also aligns with key goals of the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan in that it directly increases the pace and scale of forest health projects, and outcomes from this work will strengthen the protection of communities in rural Shasta County and achieve the state's economic and environmental goals.

The SNC hopes you support the Burney Hat Creek Forest Health Phase III project for its strategic benefits and significance to the region.

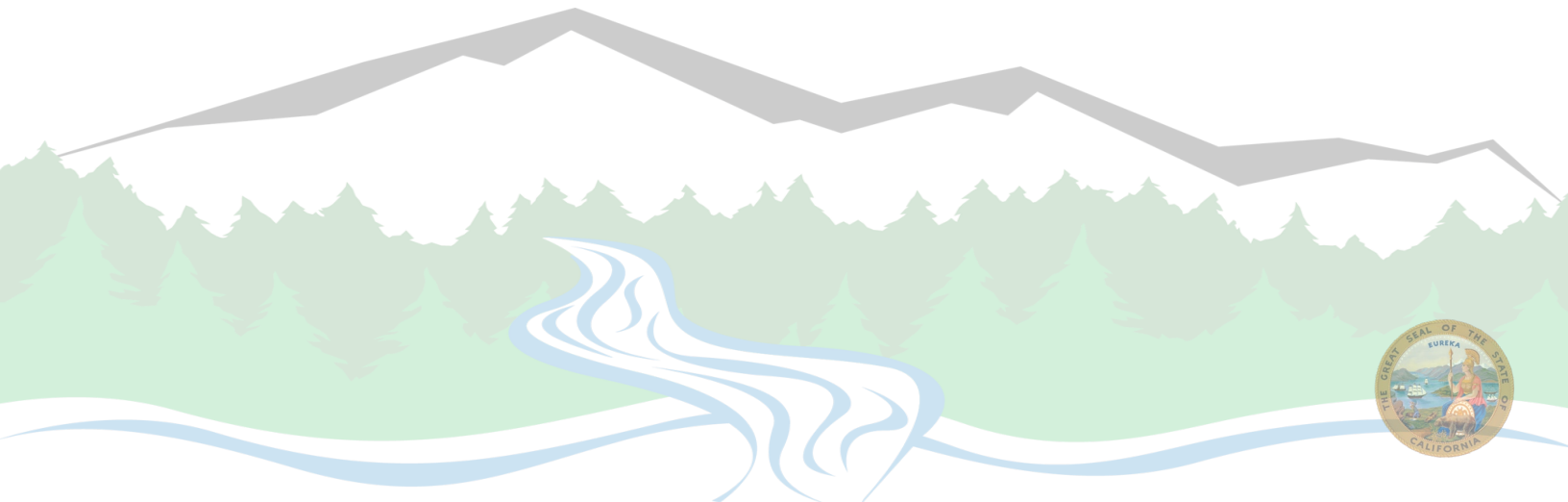
If you have further questions, please contact me at angela.avery@sierranevada.ca.gov or RFFC staff at rffc@conservation.ca.gov.



Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer





11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

January 11, 2024

Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Grants Management Unit
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

SUBJECT: 21-FH-MMU-015

Dear Grants Management Unit:

The Mariposa County Resource Conservation District application for the Southern Sierra All Lands Restoration and Recovery, Phase IV (SSARR) is a project of regional significance supported by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and the Mariposa County Fire Advisory Committee (MCFAC). The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors established the MCFAC as a multi-stakeholder group whose job it is to engage a holistic approach in considering and making recommendations on important topics such as pre-fire coordination, fire prevention education, fire risk reduction, and resource resiliency to both the County Fire Chief and Board of Supervisors. The SSARR project is part of a larger collaborative effort to restore forest health and improve disaster resilience in California's forests and upper watersheds. It will also protect the iconic Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias that has already been impacted by drought, wind events, and wildfire.

This project builds on previous work funded by CAL FIRE and other agencies and is vital to reducing the threat of high-intensity wildfires, protecting public health and safety, and preserving the cornerstone of our local economy, and tourism within our national parks and forests.

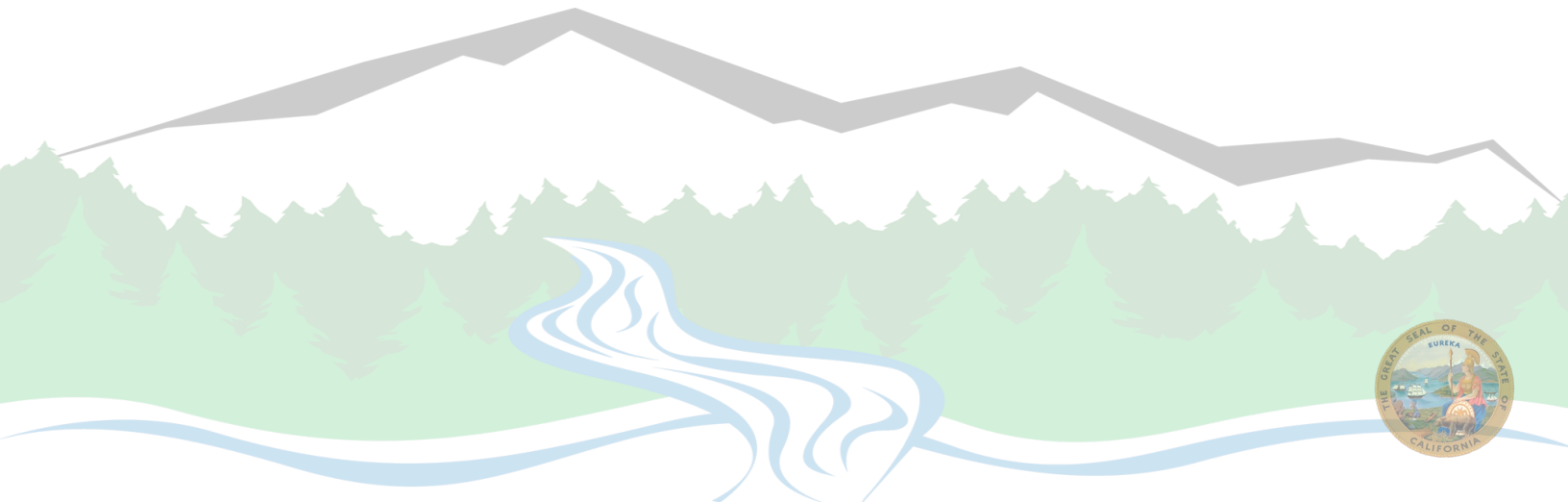
The SNC, the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program block grantee, has been a supporter of the SSARR program of work since its inception and is in the process of awarding the MCFAC a grant to increase their collaborative capacity. This project is an excellent example of protecting and preserving local resources in a strategic and collaborative way that provides multiple benefits.



Sincerely,

Angela M. Avery

Angela Avery
Executive Officer





11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

January 10, 2024

Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Forest Health Program
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: UPPER MOKELUMNE RIVER WATERSHED AUTHORITY – FOREST PROJECTS PLAN – PHASE 1D (DOGWOOD)

Dear Grant Review Panel:

I am writing on behalf of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), a Regional Block Grantee of the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, to express support of the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (UMRWA), Forest Projects Plan – Phase 1D (Dogwood) as a regionally significant project.

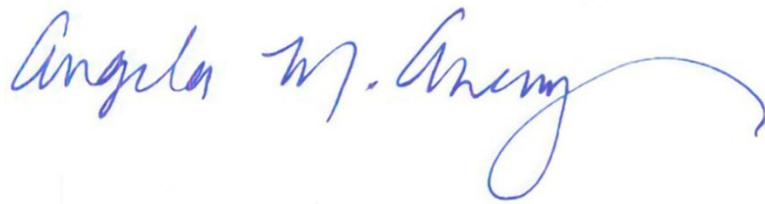
This project advances UMRWA's collaborative partnership with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group which first began with the Cornerstone Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program also known as Cornerstone. The proposed project leverages USFS, Cal Fire, and SNC grant funding to plan and implement critical fuel treatment projects that reduce wildfire risk and protect and restore the health of the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed.

The Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority hopes you support Forest Projects Plan – Phase 1D (Dogwood) for its strategic benefits and significance to the Region.

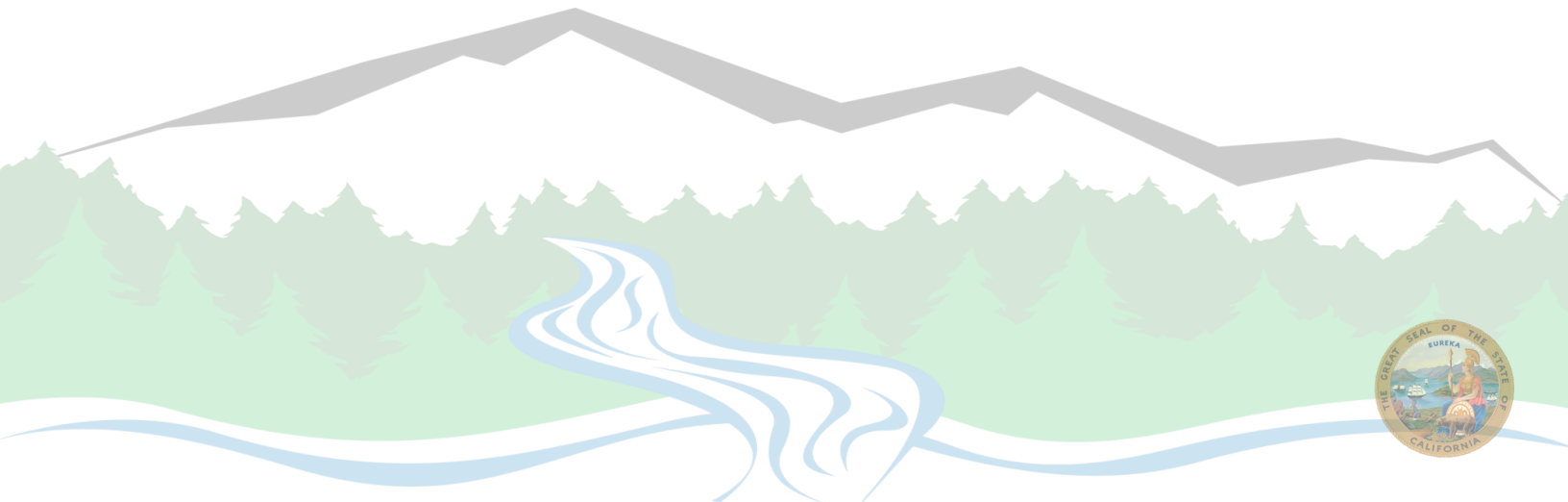
Thank you for your consideration.



Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer





11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

February 12, 2024

Dr. Jennifer Norris
Executive Director
Wildlife Conservation Board
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

SUBJECT: BIG ROCK SOUTHERN SIERRA MIWUK NATION REMATRIATION PROJECT

Dear Dr. Norris:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is proud to support the Big Rock Southern Sierra Rematriation Project (Project). The Sierra Foothill Conservancy (SFC) and the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (SSMN or Tribe) are working to develop a creative and collaborative solution that returns ancestral land and stewardship to the Tribe and achieves permanent protection of the 96-acre Big Rock property's cultural and natural resources.

Located in Mariposa County, the ancestral and contemporary homelands of the SSMN, the 96-acre property is part of SFC's Chowchilla River Headwaters Focus Area, and strategically located between California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Central Mariposa Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) and the Portuguese Ridge CAPP. The property features 2,000 feet of Peg Leg Creek, and a diverse mix of oak woodland habitat, seasonal wetland, and annual grassland. In addition to providing a safe space for common species like mountain lions, bears, coyotes, and deer, the property provides suitable habitat for special status species including wintering for California spotted owl (federally threatened), great gray owl (state threatened), western pond turtle (state species of special concern), Mariposa lupine (state threatened), and slender stalked monkeyflower (state threatened), as well as calico flower (state endemic species observed onsite).

The SSMN and SFC currently work in partnership on restoration and place making initiatives and the Tribe anticipate stewarding the property for healing, implementation,

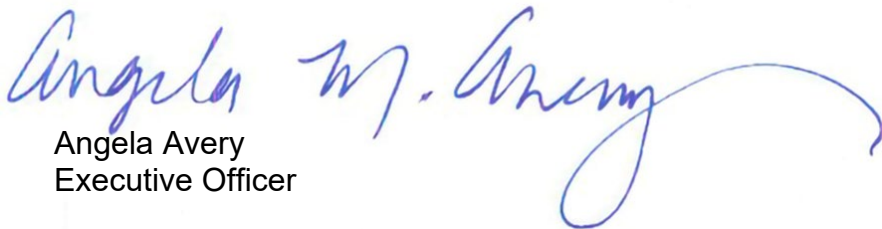


and teaching of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), ceremonies, space to tend and gather food and fiber, and to caretake for the abundant native plants and wildlife present on the property. The Miwuk are currently landless and seeking federal recognition; re-acquiring a portion of their homeland with SFC's purchase and protection of the property would be transformative for their community.

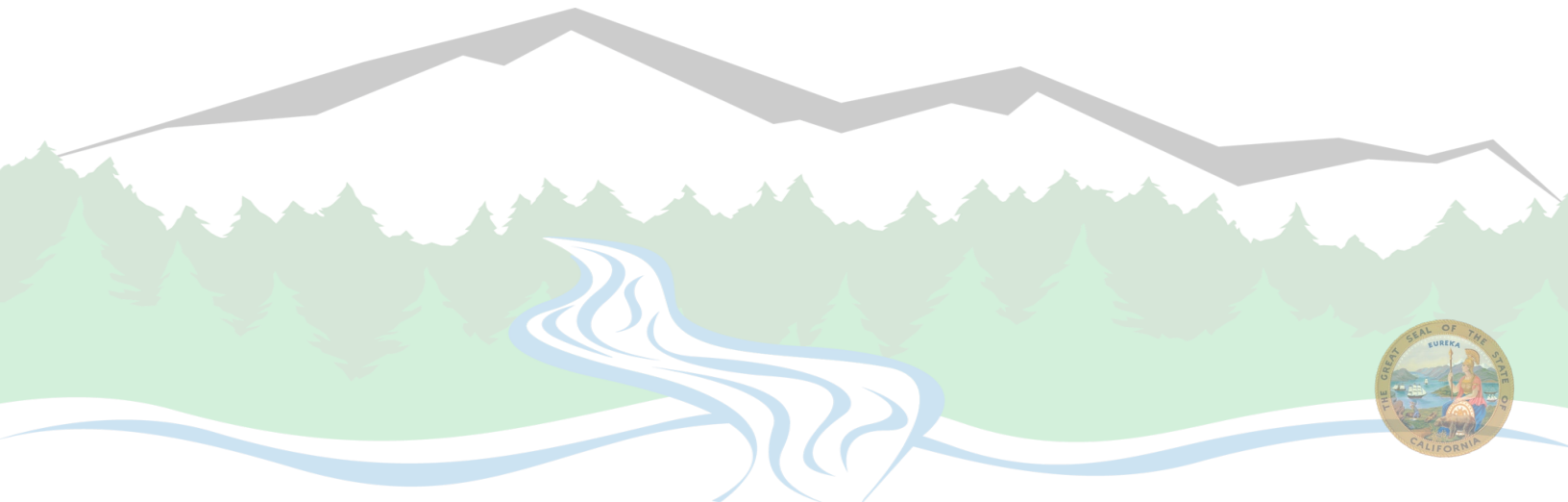
The goal of this Project is to reunite the Miwuk with a piece of their homeland, and return their active stewardship, including much needed forest management and cultural fire to the property. Future benefits include fuels reduction as part of SFC & SSMN's ongoing Regional Fire and Forest Capacity Building Program (RFFCP) funded work, land for the tribe to implement training for their forest-based workforce development programming, and a food and fiber forest for Tribal members to tend. The Project will protect the property for ownership and stewardship of the Miwuk and serve as a refuge for their culture and a space for native species and their habitat from increasing fragmentation, subdivision, development, and a changing climate.

The Project aligns with the SNC's mission to encourage and support efforts that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of California's Sierra-Cascade Region. The SNC has been a partner with the SFC and the SSMN on multiple projects within the Region and currently has multiple active grants with both organizations. We feel that this project is contributing to California's 30x30 initiative to accelerate the conservation of land through voluntary, collaborative action with partners to conserve and restore biodiversity, expand access to nature, and mitigate and build resilience to climate change. The SNC appreciates the opportunity to recommend this Project to the California Wildlife Conservation Board.

Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer





11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

February 12, 2024

Geneva EB Thompson
Deputy Secretary of Tribal Affairs
California Natural Resource Agency
715 P St, Sacramento, CA 95814
20th Floor

**SUBJECT: SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY SUPPORT FOR TRIBE'S
ACQUISITION OF HERSHEY RANCH**

Dear Ms. Thompson:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) supports the Tule River Indian Tribe's proposal to acquire the Hershey Ranch through funding provided by the California Wildlife Conservation Board's Land Acquisition Program and California Natural Resource's Tribal Nature-Based Solutions program. This action will restore Tribal sovereignty to nearly 15,000 acres in the Deer Creek watershed and will make a significant contribution towards redressing the state's historical dispossession of Native American People. The Tule River Indian Tribe is a proud sovereign nation, whose membership is descended from the Yokuts and many other Native People that inhabited the San Joaquin Valley, Sierra Nevada, and Kern River Valley.

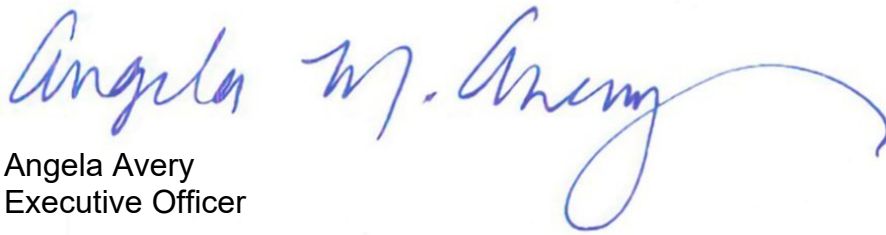
The Tule River Indian Tribe is a partner of SNC through the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, as well as other projects within the reservation that SNC has evaluated through our grant programs. The SNC has not considered funding or any other action for this project, and our current support of this project would in no way prejudice any future actions of the SNC nor create any implied support for future funding requests to the SNC.

The proposed acquisition of the Hershey Ranch and subsequent land restoration work will enhance habitat for endangered species, aid in planned species reintroductions, improve watershed function and water availability for downstream communities, and



contribute towards landscape scale efforts underway to improve wildfire resiliency in the face of ever-increasing danger. I encourage you to consider funding this acquisition as it will increase access for both Tribal members and disadvantaged communities in the Tule Basin to enjoy outdoor recreational activities and will enhance landscape connectivity. This is a unique opportunity that will benefit all Californians and make great progress toward returning culturally and ecologically significant land to California's Native American People.

Sincerely,



Angela Avery
Executive Officer

